

The BROWN PELICAN



**SARASOTA
AUDUBON
SOCIETY**

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October 2006

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

Another year has flown by and once again we look forward to another Florida winter, warts and all!

We've had a bad dose of red tide lately, killing many fish and shorebirds. More and more we see that this noxious algae bloom is thriving on run off from lawn fertilizers and pesticides. Please find a way to get your lawn care folks to use the proper applications in controlled amounts. Better yet, get rid of your lawn and plant a Florida-friendly backyard.

Don't miss Saturday, November 18 at the Florida House where you can get info on how to have a healthier yard. SAS will have a booth there, helping to spread the green word. With a little effort, you can help in the fight to save our urban/suburban environments. That's also the location to buy tickets for the second Homescape Tour (same day) sponsored by Florida Native Plants and Sarasota County.

Try hanging a bird feeder in your backyard. Winter is the best time to attract goldfinches, buntings, etc. Last winter, for the first time ever, I had a female Painted Bunting searching for seeds underneath my feeders. There are some great squirrel proof feeders on the market now, so no more squirrel feeding!

Want to know where you are? Dave Munro will help us find ourselves on Siesta Key. He's giving lessons in how to use GPS (Global Positioning Systems.) Should be fun. Call Veronica Tarnowski at 955-2875 to register for Nov 5, adults and Nov 12, kids.

We've got a fascinating line up of speakers for our monthly meetings and our trips and events should satisfy everyone. It's a great mix of beauty, information and discovery.

Can't wait to see you all. —*Jeanne Dubi*

CORPORATE SPONSORS

We are extremely grateful that FLORIKAN has become a Roseate Spoonbill corporate member. In addition to a generous donation, Florikan helps SAS in other ways. They allow Least Terns to nest on the roof of their building near the Celery Fields. While the Least Terns can be a nuisance to Florikan employees, they have decided that saving them is worth the inconvenience. We can't thank them enough. Florikan is a manufacturer of and advocate for the use of environmentally friendly fertilizers and a staunch supporter of reducing nitrate and other harmful substance run off into our waterways.

WILD BIRD CENTER (351-9500), a new store on N. Lockwood Ridge Road and University Parkway, is helping us with our monthly refreshments and has pledged 3 gift certificates this season. Check out their fun-filled grand opening on Oct 6, 7, 8. Thanks, WBC for helping us help the birds!

ANNUAL APPEAL

A huge bee-oot-i-ful thank you to all who responded to our donation request last spring. Altogether we received \$14,105 before the end of our fiscal year at May 31, 2006. Of that, \$3,225 was designated for the Celery Fields and \$1,610 for Education. The rest was undesignated and we only had to use \$182.53 to balance our books! At the July board meeting, we voted to add another \$3,000 to the Celery Fields Fund for future use and \$5,587.47 for Education of which \$5,000 will go to Crowley in the current fiscal year. We also set up a Contingency Fund of \$500.

DATE CLARIFICATION

The boat trip to the Alafia bird sanctuary is Wednesday, Mar 14. Since the first boat is full, we have arranged for another on Wednesday, March 28, so keep those reservations coming! All reservations received after Sept 1 will be assigned to the March 28 boat.

Second Monday • October-May • 7 PM social period, followed by meeting and presentation.

Our Meeting Place—Fellowship Hall, First Congregational Church, 1031 South Euclid, Sarasota *Directions:* US 41 to Bahia Vista. If coming from the south, turn right on Bahia Vista; if coming from the north, turn left. Take Bahia Vista to Euclid, then north on Euclid to the church.

NESTING BIRD REPORT

BEACHES

Over the summer, our beach monitors braved the heat and showed their endurance while checking out the very special nesting birds along our beaches: Least Terns, Snowy & Wilson's Plovers and Black Skimmers. Least Terns had a very poor year. Their nesting site on N. Lido was washed out by Alberto and they were too late to re-nest. Three Snowy Plover chicks were seen on N. Lido, one surviving as of August 10 and one surviving on Siesta Key. Black Skimmers never organized a nesting site on N. Lido, their traditional nesting site. Our depression turned to joy when we found that Bean Point on Anna Maria Island was the site of choice for them. Since they nest later than Snowies, they were able to establish a colony there, an enormous one. There were over 500 skimmers with well over 60 nests counted. As of August 12, some were still sitting on eggs. Sharp-eyed turtle monitors alerted us to two Wilson's Plover chicks on Palmer Point, which still survive as of Aug 20.

Thanks to Coordinator Bonnie Samuelsen and her teams for the tremendous effort this summer. Terry & Charlene Proeger, Ruth Ellen Peipert, Theresa & John Ginaven, Ron Platt, Ken Pearlman, Rick Greenspun, Freda Perrotta, Jerris Foote, Jim Smith, Nancy Douglass, Eric Seckman, Nancy Edmondson, Gail O'Hara, George Dubro, Lois Schneider, Janny Wurts and Jeanne Dubi. Thanks also to the following who helped on the International Shorebird Survey that was embedded in the regular monitoring: Stu Wilson, Kenya Leonard and Keri Ferenc.

A special thanks to the Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program for a grant which enabled us to buy GPS units, an invaluable resource in pinpointing nest sites.

ROOFTOPS

We located four rooftops where Least Terns set up nesting colonies. One at Florikan which seemed to be doing very well until TS Alberto drenched our area. It's possible that some of the young had already fledged, but no terns were seen after the rains. Least Terns also set up home on top of Audi/Porsche on US 41 opposite old Darby Buick. The same thing seems to have happened there. A third location, in the Sarasota Commons shopping center never seems to have become established since there was major rooftop and façade renovation going on. We're glad to say that the fourth location was highly successful: the old Publix (now Robb & Stucky Outlet) on University and Lockwood Ridge Road. That colony of about 150 survived the rains and fledged young—not sure how many.

A big thank you to Ramsey Frangie of Ramate Construction, and former President of Crowley Museum & Nature Center, for making two chick-a-boom boxes for rooftop nesting terns. These devices—boxes on top of long poles—have been used to great effect in St Petersburg for scooping up young chicks that fall off rooftops. We didn't have to use them this year, but we're ready for the future! Thanks Ramsey.

HIGH SCHOOL PROJECTS

Barry Rossheim, zoology teacher at **Venice High School**, has found two student interns to volunteer for a long term project on behalf of SAS—entering all of our bird records from 1952 to the present into a database. Once complete, we'll be able to view historical data on birds of Sarasota County. Thanks to Dr Christine Andrews from Florida Gulf Coast University (and Sanibel/Captiva Audubon) for developing the database, to Edith Miller for organizing and sorting through the cards to come up with an estimate of the records (about 40,000), and of course to Barry and VHS seniors Nicole Whalen and Heather Acton. Mike Bartlett, Info Systems Facilitator at VHS, helped to get the computers networked, a critical step in the set up process. In order for the interns to learn more about birds, **Wild Bird Center** and **Thayer's Software** have donated a copy of *Thayer's Birds of North America* to VHS.

Sarasota High School senior Mike Witzer, executive intern to Denise Erb, Honors Science Teacher, is reviewing and editing the eagle video tape footage taken over several months at Crowley. The Bald Eagles, first seen nesting in 2001, were captured on tape as they set up their nest and raised young. We hope that Mike can reduce the footage to presentation length. We'll premier the tape at one of our monthly meetings and use it for educational purposes, too.

OUR SPONSORS

The activities of Sarasota Audubon are funded in part by donations from Florikan ESA and Wild Bird Center.



WOODCARVING FUNDRAISER

Handcrafted carvings of birds and ornaments will be available for purchase at the October and November monthly meeting crafted by Stu Hills. Get a head start on your holiday shopping with beautiful carvings of humming birds, egrets, and roadrunners. Painted wooden hanging ornaments include Belted Kingfishers, Red-headed Woodpeckers, snowmen, and Scandinavian santas. All proceeds go to support Sarasota Audubon.

AUDIT REPORT

Thanks to Carolyn Primus and Eb Blackett for conducting an audit of SAS' financial records for the year ended 5/31/06. Their report indicates that everything is kosher; Penney Rist has done another fine job keeping tabs on all the income and expenses. Thanks to the three of you for your splendid efforts.

BIRDING HOTSPOTS

The new revised *Birding Hot Spots of Sarasota and Manatee Counties* is available! It includes an updated checklist of area birds and provides explicit descriptions of, and directions to, good local birding spots. Several new spots have been added. *Hot Spots* is available at meetings, on day trips, and by mail. Cost \$6 (add \$1.75 for mail). **Send to Sarasota Audubon Society, P.O. Box 15423 Sarasota, FL 34277-1423. Please mark your envelope "Hot Spots"**

SUMMER AND EARLY FALL CONSERVATION NOTES

Efforts to preserve our natural habitat and protect birds and other wildlife in Sarasota County continued with some success and some frustrations. Red tide is back, but hurricanes so far aren't. The Counties' revised Comprehensive Plan mostly held the line against even more overdevelopment, but the implementing regulations to stop fake agricultural pre-development clearing and paving over gopher tortoises are still being worked on. Sarasota City backed off from ridiculously high density for new downtown residential buildings, but allowed incompatible density next to some single-family areas.

Generally, the lower the density and intensity of development, the better for wildlife and the environment. Signature campaigns for two referenda backed by Sarasota Audubon and several other environmental and neighborhood groups to slow sprawl east of the urban services boundary and slow increased density throughout the unincorporated County continue, but fell short of enough for the November ballot. Since the most effective argument against those referenda was that they would just encourage sweetheart annexations of developer-owned lands into North Port and Venice, referenda-supporters presented another proposed referendum to the County Commission to continue County land development regulations on eastern annexed land. Faced with a citizens' poll showing massive citizen support for such a referendum even among residents of North Port and Venice, those two City Commissions agreed to a six months moratorium on annexations while they work out joint land use agreements with the County. If no agreements by January, the referendum is anticipated on a March ballot, perhaps with the original two as well.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, Sarasota Audubon can back voter issues, but not political candidates or parties. One race in which the winner was decided in the September primaries was for the County Commission seat formerly held by David Mills, which was won by Joe Barbetta. His fourteen years on the Planning Commission showed consistent support for environmental goals and positions, and he will join several other County Commissioners having consistently to partially good environmental records. A similar shift toward the environment seemed to occur in Charlotte County, but not in Manatee or North Port.

The November elections are rapidly approaching, and many national, state and local candidates and ballot issues have strikingly different environmental records or effects. While Sarasota Audubon is not allowed to endorse or recommend candidates or parties, if you care about our natural environment (and what Auduboner doesn't?), check the recommendations of such organizations as the League of Conservation Voters, the political arm of the Sierra Club, and others with a different tax category, as well as candidates' statements and debate points, and then factor that information into your calculations of which candidates or ballot issues deserve your support. —*Wade Matthews, Conservation Chair*

OCTOBER MONTHLY PROGRAM

October 9: *The Underwater World* Videographer Bob Hills will show us the wonders below the surface of the world's oceans.

TRIPS, 2006-07

Roberts Bay on the *Carefree Learner* with Sarasota High School students to monitor breeding birds on the mangrove islands. Members more than welcome. Two trips on most days: 9:40 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. Boat is docked next to *Le Barge* at Marina Jack's. Call Rick Greenspun at 346-8535 to secure a spot. **Sept 27; Oct 25; Nov 29; Dec 7 & 8; Jan 24; Feb 21; Mar 21; Apr 25; May 9.**

SPECIAL CLASSES:

Introduction to Birding—5 Sessions Two classroom sessions with handouts, slides, and tips for beginners, followed by three field trips to practice skills. First two sessions will be held on **Thursdays, Jan 11 & 18** in the Bee Ridge Park building (on Wilkinson between Swift and Beneva), Room B, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Field trip locations will be determined but will be held on **Saturday, Jan 27; Saturday, Feb 3; and Wednesday, Feb 7;** all at 8 a.m. Cost of the classes is \$50 for members; \$65 for non-members. **PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.** Send a check made out to SAS and mail it to Sarasota Audubon Society, P.O. Box 15423, Sarasota, FL 34277. Mark the envelope "Birding Class". Call Jeanne Dubi at 355-1709 for more details.

GPS Classes: Sundays, Nov 5 (adults) & Nov 12 (kids) at 2 p.m. Dave Munro, our webmaster and techie, will teach us how to use GPS (Global Positioning System) units. Learn to find longitude/latitude positions, distances and more. We have a limited number of GPS units, so **REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.** Call Veronica at 955-2875 to **SIGN UP.** Meet at the Siesta public beach parking lot, close to the restrooms.

ACTIVITY LIST—NOVEMBER

Wednesday, Nov 8: Laurel Landfill Check out this very birdy landfill site in Laurel. Leader: Mark Leggett, 925-7220. Meet at McDonald's (Bee Ridge/Cattlemen) at 8 a.m.

Saturday, Nov 18: Rye Wilderness A very nice Manatee County park that hosts scrub-jays and wintering warblers. **BRING LUNCH.** Leave McDonald's at 8 a.m. Leader: Lynn Jakubowicz, 355-4073.

Tuesday, Nov 28: Red Bug Slough Join leader Ken Pearlman, 587-5992, on a walk in one of our newer county parks. And it's close to home! Meet in the parking lot of Red Bug Slough, just south of Proctor on Beneva, at 8 a.m.



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The BROWN PELICAN

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 ★ *Welcome to the following new members:* ★
 ★ *Mr. & Mrs. Arcand* *Susanna Galle* ★
 ★ *Rachel Anderson* *Phillip Goodell* ★
 ★ *James Arendall* *Mr. & Mrs. Grekowitz* ★
 ★ *Mary Bader* *Kathleen Hagen* ★
 ★ *William Beckmeyer* *Bonnie Hendrickson* ★
 ★ *George Benesh* *Kathleen Henehan* ★
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 ★ *Cheryl Chay* *Richard Lockwood* ★
 ★ *Patricia Clarke* *Mary Loeb* ★
 ★ *Michael Chrommie* *Vickie Ludwig* ★
 ★ *William Davis* *Jack Lungmus* ★
 ★ *Mr. & Mrs. Dean* *Dorothy Mantell* ★
 ★ *Phyllis Distasio* *Barbara Martin* ★
 ★ *Kate Freeman* *Alan Miller* ★
 ★ *James Moore* ★
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 ★ *Dr. William Nies* ★
 ★ *Virginia Perlman* ★
 ★ *Virginia Prior* ★
 ★ *Margaret Rieth* ★
 ★ *Simon Rosenthal* ★
 ★ *Merle Schwartz* ★
 ★ *Barbara Simon* ★
 ★ *Virginia Simmons* ★
 ★ *Tollyn Twitchell* ★
 ★ *Ellen White* ★
 ★ *Martha Wheeler* ★
 ★ *Jay Woodland* ★
 ★ *For Membership information, email* ★
 ★ *lynn@sarasotaaudubon.org or* ★
 ★ *leave a message at 364-9212* ★



SAS NAME TAG

If you are a new member or do not have an official SAS NAME TAG, you can get one delivered right to your door. Send your name, full address and telephone number, along with your check for \$4.50 made out to: Michael Fox, 2749 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34237. For an extra \$2 (total of \$6.50) you can get a badge that attaches by magnet—no pinholes!

Be sure to identify yourself as a member of Sarasota Audubon Society.