

# The Brown Pelican

The newsletter of the Sarasota Audubon Society

PO Box 15423, Sarasota, FL 34277-1423 | www.sarasotaudubon.org | 941.364.9212

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January 2009

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Happy Holidays to our Audubon family. Thanks again for a wonderful year from all of us on the board of SAS. Let's keep going!

A heartfelt note of gratitude to Kathryn Young for editing our newsletter over the past year. We appreciate the effort. Kathryn will be spending more time organizing great trips such as Sanibel Island and Station 5. Many more ideas from "Wren" to come.

*Jeanne Dubi, President*

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

### It's Renewal Time

It's time to renew! Please check your membership label. If you are a member of National Audubon, the stated expiration date is the one we have received from National. They are currently updating their database, and some errors have occurred. If you are only a local member, the expiration date is Sarasota Audubon's. Please feel free to email any questions to me at: membership@sarasotaudubon.org since the expiration dates are easily confused in the database.

### E-Brown Pelican

Would you like to receive *The Brown Pelican* in an e-version? You can do it for a trial period to see if you'd prefer it the electronic way. It saves \$6 per year per member too. We will send both to you for 3 months. If we don't receive a message saying otherwise, we'll happily discontinue the snail mail version.

*Lynn Jakubowicz, Membership Chair*

## JANUARY ACTIVITIES

### Monthly Meeting: January 12, 2009, 7 p.m.

Manatee Audubon has done a wonderful job of converting the 30-acre Felts Preserve from pasture/dumping ground into marvelous wildlife habitat. Join us as for a presentation on how they did it and see what it looks like now.

### FIELD TRIPS

**Sat, Jan 17: Lettuce Lake in Tampa** A 3,500-ft boardwalk, observation tower and numerous nature trails through Hillsborough River habitat. Meet at Starbucks

(University & I-75) at 7:30 am. Bring Lunch. Leaders: Lynn Jakubowicz, 355-4073, and Karen Jensen.

### Wed, Jan 21: TECO Plant & George Simmons Park

Join Leader Stu Hills (922-5261) to see manatees and shorebirds at two different spots in Hillsborough County. Meet at Starbucks (University & I-75) at 8 am. Bring Lunch.

### Celery Fields Clean Up

Two dates for your calendars: Tuesday, Jan 13 and Tuesday, Feb 10. Join us as we clean up our adopted road, Palmer Blvd. Meet at the gazebo (Palmer & Raymond) at 8am. We supply gloves, bags and vests, you supply effort. Contact Jeanne Dubi, 355-1709.

## TRIP REPORTS

### Laurel Landfill, Nov 29

Nineteen birders were treated to eagles, eagles, and more eagles at the Laurel Landfill. We did manage to spot 41 other species, including thousands of gulls, vultures, and crows, but the Bald Eagles stole the show. Numerous adults and juveniles dominated the area and dined on our "leftovers!"

*Lynn Jakubowicz, Leader*

### Ding Darling, Dec 6



Photo: Rick Greenspun

Ding Darling Wildlife Refuge in Sanibel was so full of birds we had a hard time leaving. We saw 1 Marbled Godwit hiding among 50 plus Willets. The refuge also gave us good looks at hundreds of White Pelicans, at least 5 Reddish

Egrets dancing, approximately 50 Roseate Spoonbills, Dunlins and Semipalmated Plovers.

Some of us were treated to more (8) Marbled Godwits, 1 Piping Plover, 1 American Oystercatcher and 4 Wilson's Plovers on Friday at Bunche Beach. We were lucky to have hit this beach during low tide, as it gave us all the above and more shorebirds. It was a nice mini get-away to see birds, friends and beaches. Hope you can join us on the next one.

*Kathryn Young, Leader*

## Myakka River State Park, Dec 10

We had 18 people who attended our Myakka River State Park bird walk. It was a beautiful sunny, windy, muggy, fun day and we sighted a total of 54 different species. The bird of the day was a juvenile Crested Caracara sitting in a tree across the river from the weir. All participants got good scope looks at the bird. Other notable sightings included Black & White and Pine Warblers, Ruby Crowned Kinglet, Tufted Titmouse, Great Crested Flycatcher, Wilson's Snipe, three Northern Pintails, Bald Eagles and five Wild Turkeys seen by two members as they were driving out of the Park after our group had disbursed.

Owen Comora, Leader

## Lemon Bay, Dec 16

Thirteen participants enjoyed a new SAS trip location—Lemon Bay Preserve. The weather was Florida terrific with high sun and temp and low humidity. Some 53 species were observed. Bird highlights included Prairie Warbler, Red Knot, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron and Common Ground-Dove.

Mark Leggett/Stu Hills, Leaders

## UPCOMING TRIPS

### Andalucia, Spain, Sept 19-26

Southern Spain is one of Europe's busiest migratory flyways and the fall peak is in September. After meeting our experienced British bird guide in Malaga on the 19th, it's birding and sightseeing. There is an optional one-week extension after the 27th.

Price? 700 pounds sterling (approximately \$1200) for one week's hotels, 2 daily meals, transportation, guiding and a guide book. Arrange your own air travel to and from Spain.

This is an incredible opportunity to bird in a premier European area for a fantastic price. Contact leader Karen Jensen at (941) 927-2446 or [karensarasota@yahoo.com](mailto:karensarasota@yahoo.com).

### Amelia Island/Fernandina Beach, April 2-4

Join Karen Jensen and Jeanne Dubi on a two-night trip to northwest Florida. Stopping at the Marjorie Kinan Rawlings home in Cross Creek, the Kingsley Plantation, Fort Clinch and Little Talbot State Park, there'll

be plenty to see. Cost includes 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 2 dinners, as well as 2 nights at the Hampton Inn in Fernandina Beach, transportation to and from Sarasota and all park fees. Contact Karen Jensen at 941-927-2446 or [karensarasota@yahoo.com](mailto:karensarasota@yahoo.com) for more details.

## CONSERVATION NEWS

*Where's the money?* While Sarasota's purchase money for environmental land and conservation easements is from voter-approved bonds against dedicated tax sources and the Federal government just prints the stuff, Everglades restoration and most acquisition of environmental land in Florida depends on the State legislature that is constitutionally prohibited from running a deficit. The financial crisis is reducing tax income to the extent that serious cuts in

the important Florida Forever purchase program will almost certainly occur and it could be entirely suspended in the coming year.

*Lumps of coal for Christmas.* The outgoing Bush administration is rushing through regulations that will remove important protections in the Endangered Species Act, permit or speed approval for currently prohibited mining, drilling, road building and other development in public lands, as well as relax prohibition of dumping coal mining waste in mountain streams. Several environmental organizations are seeking judicial action to stop these environmentally damaging actions, since otherwise the Obama administration must go through lengthy hearings and other procedures to reverse them.

*But some good news.* Nationally, almost all of the environmentally sensitive appointments of the incoming Obama administration have been praised by environmental organizations. The only one that has drawn some flack is Senator Ken Salazar of Colorado as Secretary of Interior, and even he has an 81% lifetime pro-environment voting record, nine percent better than Obama's, according to the League of Conservation Voters.

In Florida, the voters in November approved Constitutional Amendment 4, which allows complete prop-

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September 19-26

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April 2-4

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## Eco Tip of the Month

Stop using plastic bottled water. Buy a 12-pack of iced tea in glass bottles and refill from your faucet. Tip: you can wash the bottles in the dishwasher, but not the metal tops since they rust. You can wipe those out with a soapy paper towel and let them air dry.

erty tax exemption for private land with a perpetual conservation easement. The forthcoming legislature must pass implementing legislation defining what sort of land is eligible and the requirements of an easement. This can be a huge benefit to wildlife and could more than compensate for budget-induced reduction in land acquisition by the State if the legislature adopts definitions like those used by the water management agencies and by Sarasota County, and if it brings a State agency into the approval process so as to favor land in wildlife corridors. The other part of Amendment 4, providing for some tax relief for temporarily preserved land, will obviously have only temporary benefit for wildlife.

*Midnight Pass.* As you may recall, for many years Sarasota Audubon, along with other local environmental organizations, has opposed re-opening Midnight Pass because of a determination back in 1990 by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) when re-opening was denied that it would result in net environmental harm. We have always maintained that we would reconsider our position if that environmental conclusion changed. Several years ago the Sarasota County Commission, responding to political pressure, re-applied to the DEP for permission to re-open the pass.

The DEP and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission have examined the newly submitted environmental information, but have come to the same conclusion of net environmental harm and, for that and other reasons, have denied the application to re-open. The County is now examining the costs of a possible appeal. Sarasota Audubon's position remains unchanged. Stay tuned.

*Wade Matthews, Conservation Chair*

## SEA GRASS SURVEYING

Sarasota County began its seagrass program in order to expand its knowledge of seagrasses in Sarasota and to reach out to the community.

Twice a year both County staff and volunteers venture out into Sarasota's coastal waters and take note of what type of seagrasses they see. The County is interested in seagrass because it is so important environmentally and economically to Florida.

Seagrass beds provide food and/or shelter for marine creatures such as scallops, manatees and sea

turtles, as well as improving water quality and stabilizing shorelines.

What makes this program so enjoyable is that mapping seagrass is fun, easy and helps to protect this valuable natural resource. Also, the survey can be conducted from a kayak, boat or simply by wading.

If you have any questions please contact Amanda Domingues at (941) 861-0894.

## SAS' MARK LEGGETT LEADS FREE BIRD WALKS ON SARASOTA COUNTY LANDS

For a few years now, Mark has volunteered to lead bird walks on environmentally-sensitive lands for Sarasota County. This season, he is committed to three a month, making him one of the busiest trip leaders around. Along with a County expert on either plants or wildlife, the walks are filled with information about habitat and also provide knowledge of how the County manages each unique property. Check out the schedule for January:

Jan 6: Lemon Bay Preserve, 8—11am.

Jan 20: Manasota Scrub Preserve, 8—11am.

Jan 30: Lemon Bay Preserve, 8—11am.

Reservations required. Contact Deborah Zeilman, Natural Resources, 861-6267; [dzeilman@scgov.net](mailto:dzeilman@scgov.net)

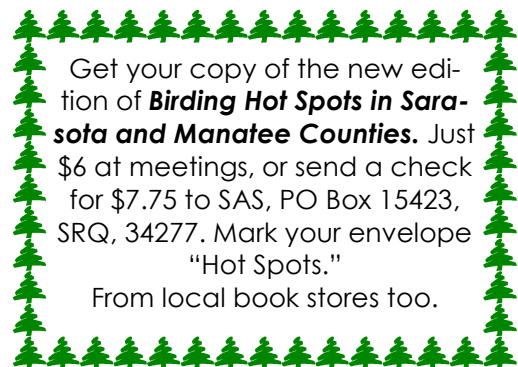
## BIRDING AROUND THE STATE

### Space Coast Birding Festival, Titusville—Jan 21-26

A great 5 days of birding trips and workshops, including Merritt Island NWR and a pelagic voyage. Check out [www.space-coast.com](http://www.space-coast.com)

### Florida Ornithological Society, Ruskin—Apr 24-26

Although quite some time away, this FOS meeting is close to home, so mark your calendars. With field trips, seminars and presentations, this annual gathering is a must. Check out the website: [fosbirds.org](http://fosbirds.org)



If you would like an official name tag, send your name, address and telephone number, along with a check for \$6.75 made out to: Michael Fox, 2749 Ringling Blvd, SRQ, 34237.  
For an extra \$2 you can get a magnet tag—no pin holes!

**Audubon  
Society  
Name Tag**

# Welcome, New Members!

Deborah Azeff  
Jerry Balash  
Dexter Baum  
Jody Bedard  
Kelley Berkey  
Bill Birdsongs  
Arthur Black  
Noah Brenneman  
Danamichele Brennen  
B. Brunnschuetz-Bryant  
Ruth Burton  
Bob & Donna Carlson  
Kamlesh Chainani

Carol Chellew  
Michael Chommie  
John E. Clay  
Laura/Bernard Cohen  
Yvonne Cosden  
Harold R. Cuning  
Ruth Dachoff  
Jane P. Daganhardt  
Kathryn Devlin  
Dean Dye  
Shirley Engelhardt  
Lawrence Evans  
Lynne Fellows

Juilio Fernandez  
Dr. William Fogel  
George Freeman  
Dean Fritz  
Andrea Goldberg  
Ruth Grain  
Judy Harding  
Brett Heinz  
Gwen Kelly  
Ron Mayberry  
Verona Morse  
Dr. Robert Thommes  
Joanna/Dennis Truscott

## Want to be a tree saver?

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with the *Brown Pelican* e-version.  
We'll deliver it right to your inbox.  
E-mail [lynn@sarasotaaudubon.org](mailto:lynn@sarasotaaudubon.org) to sign up.



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