



Winging in the Gap

Happy Earth Day from Sarasota Audubon!
April 16, 2021

News, links to activities and learning sites to keep you up to date and actively learning about birds, wildlife and other topics of interest.
Monthly Newsletter

□ Earth Day is April 22nd □



Above: "Ready For Courting"
Painted Bunting, Male



Right: "Receptive"
Painted Bunting, Female

Painted Bunting Pair
Photo Credit: Lou Newman

Bird Blog: Dressing Up for the Females by Lou Newman

"When your world gets small, nature lets you live large!"
So snowbirds escape to where the action is, Florida! And now look at them -- they are all donning their breeding plumage before they head back north. After all, when they arrive in the north it will be mating season. I mean, think about it, all those June weddings!

Lou's [Blog and photos here.](#)

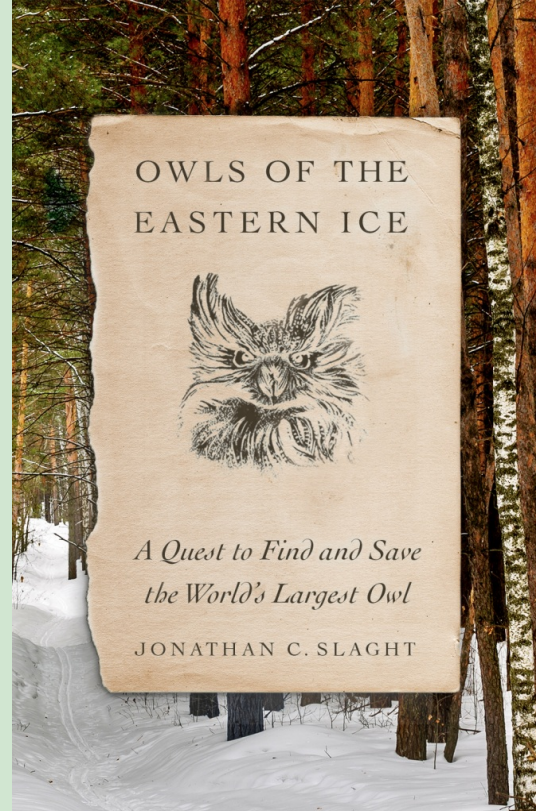
Sarasota Audubon ID tips for [Wood Warblers](#)

Audubon Extra: Owls of the Eastern Ice with Jonathan Slaght
[Zoom 7pm April 21](#)

You will be transported to another world of [snow, ice and adventure](#) with wildlife biologist and author Jonathan Slaght.

Jonathan will discuss his fascinating book "Owls of the Eastern Ice" in which we join a small team in Siberia for late-night monitoring missions, and fireside tales of the fish owls: careful hunters, devoted parents, singers of [eerie duets](#), and irrepressible survivors in a harsh and shrinking habitat. If you haven't already, you will want to read the book after hearing this talk! Or better yet, listen to him read it on Audible.

[Click Here To Register](#)



Congratulations to Jonathan Slaght!
[PEN/E.O. Wilson Literary Science
Writing Award Winner, 2021](#)



☐ Check out the cool data visualization tools linked below that have been set up in the last two weeks! The circulation simulation and the satellite imagery help visualize where the pollution is going. And the Piney Point Dashboard shows water quality conditions - current and baseline.

- **Tampa Bay Estuary Program** is doing an amazing job coordinating and compiling the environmental response on their [Piney Point Dashboard](#).
- DEP's [Piney Point Regional Notification](#) site includes discharge response and regular updates related to water quality.
- USF's Ocean Circulation Group has shared their [predictive model of effluent distribution](#) within the Bay, and

The Lowdown on Piney Point

by Dr. Jennifer Shafer, Science & Environment Council

Thanks to everyone who is working overtime on this response. The Tampa Bay Estuary Program has coordinated the incredibly energetic all-hands effort to monitor and report the developing conditions in Tampa Bay after the Piney Point wastewater release. As reported, the nitrogen level in the wastewater is 200+ mg/l (mostly ammonia) -- 100 times levels in stormwater and 10 times levels in raw sewage.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Thanks to Ed Sherwood, Executive Director Tampa Bay Estuary Program for explaining:

- While the discharge has stopped, the fate and conversion of this 'free' ammonia in the saltwater environment is the concern now. Most plants (algae, macroalgae, seagrass) should be able to readily take up the diluted ammonia from

- NOAA NCCOS is monitoring satellite imagery to [assess chlorophyll](#) within the area.



the direct discharge and the converted nitrite and nitrate in seawater to make biomass (i.e. algal blooms)

- That process will probably take a while (weeks?) though. That's why we're interested in the circulation patterns. How long is this bioavailable nutrient load going to linger over sensitive marine areas?
- Will the heavy rains help crank up the Manatee River flow and push the polluted water mass out of the bay?

Who Am I?



Name that Bird

Here you will find photos (taken by local photographers) of Pieces and Parts of Birds that you can find in Sarasota County. I have tried to include one trait that is unique for each bird. Click the caption to find the answer. Let's have some fun!

~Kath"Wren" Young, Education Chair
Sarasota Audubon



[29. Who Am I?](#)



[30. Who Am I?](#)

**Birds' Blood Keeps them
Warm in Winter!**



Eurasian Blue Tit Photo: Johan Nilsson

Researchers at Lund University in Sweden have discovered that bird blood produces more heat in winter, when it is colder, than in autumn. The study is published in The Society for Experimental Biology (FASEB) Journal.

Until now, the common perception has been that birds keep warm by shivering with their large pectoral muscles and fluffing up their feathers.

by Andreas Nord,
Lund University, Sweden

The secret lies in the energy factories of cells, the mitochondria. Mammals have no mitochondria in their red blood cells, but birds do, and according to the research team from Lund and Glasgow this means that the blood can function as a central heating system when it is cold.

"We had no idea that the birds could regulate their blood as a heating system in this way, so we were surprised", says Andreas Nord.

The researchers will now investigate whether cold weather is the whole explanation for the birds' blood producing more heat in winter.

[Full Article Here](#)

Limited space available in 2022 Panama Birding Trip with Sarasota Audubon Society

Sarasota Audubon would be pleased to show you the birds and natural history of Panama in February/March of 2022.

The trip will consist of two segments and depending on your wishes you could do one or both.

- Canopy Lodge & Tower (Combined 10-night land package)
- Canopy Camp (Additional 5-night package)

This is based on a group of 8 people meeting in Panama City at the Tocumen International Airport.

[More information HERE](#)





Betty Neupert, above and Barb Males, below right.

Photo credit: Kathryn Young

Volunteer Spotlight □ Barb Males & Betty Neupert by Christyna Reagan, CLI Intern

Barb Males and Betty Neupert are the Website Administrators for the Sarasota Audubon Society. They both enjoy learning about habitats and the ecosystems that support the birds that they love.

Working as a team allows Barb and Betty to share the load: they trust each other to handle the website while one goes on a birding trip, or is out of the office for a bit. Together, they work the details required to create and keep up the Sarasota Audubon Society interactive website to make sure everything on it is up-to-date and running smoothly.

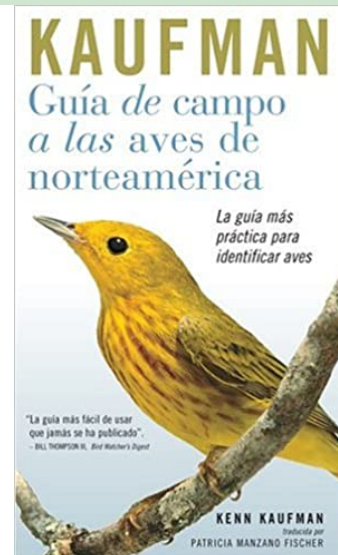
[Read more](#)

Vamos a ver pájaros! Let's go Birding! by Jeanne Dubi

Sarasota Audubon is collaborating with Unidos Now, a local organization working with Hispanic-Latino families to integrate that population into the wider community.

We have translated one of our birding PowerPoints into Spanish (see parte 1 below) for their use and have scheduled four family nature walks: Manatee Audubon's Felts Preserve on April 24, and the Celery Fields Nature Center on May 8, 22, and 29.

Presentation link:
[Vamos a ver pájaros Parte 1](#)



For these intergenerational walks, our two organizations want to provide Spanish speakers to help.

If you speak Spanish and would like to help in this very worthy effort, please contact [Jeanne Dubi](#)

Resources to Advocate for Big Cypress Preserve

Who can you ask to protect Big Cypress?

National Park Service

- Ask to deny Burnett Oil's applications
- Email Big Cypress Superintendent

State of Florida DEP

- Ask to deny 404 permit for oil operations



Photo: Melissa Abdo



Dr. Melissa Abdo, Regional Director, Sun Coast, National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) shared her knowledge of the amazing diversity of the Greater Everglades ecosystem on Monday night. Highlighting the glory that is the Big Cypress National Preserve, she also informed us of the Burnett Oil Company's plans to drill for oil and the permit applications that are currently under review.

Attached you will find a detailed letter from multiple organizations including the NPCA. Any of the facts or language cited in the attached letter can be used as fodder for personalized letters, which carry much more weight than "form" letters. Below are the people to write and the "ASK" (what you are asking them to do in your letter). Be sure to use at least one fact that speaks to you from the detailed letter attached.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection

- Secretary Noah Valenstein noah.valenstein@dep.state.fl.us
- Subject: Burnett Oil Company's applications (404 and ERP), **application numbers: 323836-004 and 397879-002**

(Please note these are not permit numbers, but application numbers)

- The ASK: "Deny the applications to damage wetlands and carry out oil development inside Big Cypress National Preserve."
- Use facts or language cited in our attached letter

National Park Service: Big Cypress National Preserve

- Superintendent Thomas Forsyth Thomas_forsyth@nps.gov
- Subject: Burnett Oil Company's applications submitted August 2020
- The ASK: "Deny any permit applications submitted by the Burnett Oil Company on or around August 2020 to develop oil in the Nobles Grade and Tamiami areas of the Preserve."

(Unfortunately NPS has not publicly shared the permit application #s)

- Further, NPS should prepare an Environmental Impact Statement EIS – not an EA – at minimum.

[Click here for Background on EIS ask to NPS](#)

[February 3, 2021 Organization Letter](#)

The Last Word is Graphic: Earth Day 1971

By Walt Kelly



Next Month's Program

The Merlin App – Bird ID in the Field ~ Jessie Barry

Program Manager, Macaulay Library

[Monday May 10, 2021 via Zoom](#)

[View all past Sarasota Audubon Society programs HERE](#)

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