



The Skimmer

Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, Inc.

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March 2006

Prez Sez

Saturday the 18th was the annual Orlando Wetlands Park festival. It was a beautiful day with the high near 80 degrees. Maureen and I took a 2 hour nature photography walk with well known photographer and author Milton Heigerg. I learned some new techniques and got some really good pictures (in addition to some mediocre ones). They also had a free tree giveaway and we got a four foot tall magnolia. I hope some of you made it as well. If not, mark your calendar for next year. It is a great opportunity to see a man-made wetlands at its best.

This was also the weekend for the Great Backyard Bird Count. I decided on a new place to bird. It is Hawks Park in Edgewater. It not only contains the YMCA but also some ballfields, scrub habitat and an area with lots of tall Live Oaks and Pines. There were Downy and Red-bellied woodpeckers, doves, robins, red-winged blackbirds, cardinals and many other birds that I heard but did not see. If you just have a short time for a little walk, I recommend it.

According to a recent Audubon Chapter leaders newsletter, "For the past ten years Audubon has had limited involvement with global warming. The situation is now changing. We now know with greater certainty that global warming is the most important threat to our mission, and there is potentially a pivotal role for Audubon that would use our unique grassroots strengths as we work toward changing attitudes in this country." I am sure that they finally heard the comments from chapter leaders like ours who have been pushing them to consider global warming as a high priority for the last several years. The newsletter continues: "There will be more discussion and proposals brought to the May Board Retreat." It is about time. They have the big guns that lobby Congress. We need a real push to join the Kyoto Protocol and decrease our emission of greenhouse gases.

While we are on the subject, the last meeting was apparently a great success. We had a record number of people attend the presentation by Rep. Dorothy L. Hukill, District 28, who filed HB 713, the solar energy bill in the Florida Legislature. It has been assigned to the Utilities and Telecommunications Committee for consideration. It is essential that we show our support for this measure to ensure this first committee approval.

It is also that time of year when we try to get volunteers to take over the jobs of running the club. Volunteers should make themselves known at the March meeting. Elections are conducted at the April meeting. Please help take the load of those of us who have been doing this for several years.

I hope to see you at the March meeting.

—Don Picard

Florida Solar Energy

Support HB 713

HB 713, the solar energy bill filed in the Florida Legislature by Rep. Dorothy L. Hukill, District 28, has been assigned to the Utilities and Telecommunications Committee for consideration. It is essential that we show our support for this measure to ensure this first committee approval.

Please send an e-mail to each committee member, supporting the bill. Your e-mail can be short and sweet.

Names and e-mail addresses of the committee members:

Littlefield, Kenneth, Chair	ken.littlefield@myfloridahouse.gov
Henriquez, Bob, Vice-Chair	bob.henriquez@myfloridahouse.gov
Allen, Bob	bob.allen@myfloridahouse.gov
Anderson, Thomas	tom.anderson@myfloridahouse.gov
Antone, Bruce	bruce.antone@myfloridahouse.gov
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Flores, Anitere	Anitere.flores@myfloridahouse.gov
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Richardson, Curtis	curtis.richardson@myfloridahouse.gov
Roberson, Yolly	yolly.roberson@myfloridahouse.gov
Vana, Shelley	shelley.vana@myfloridahouse.gov

For those not familiar with it, key elements of HB 713 are: funding of \$1.2 million per year for five years; rebates of \$4 per watt for solar PV systems purchased, beginning July 1, 2006; \$5 per watt rebate if system manufactured in Florida; rebates decline 50 cents per watt annually for five years; maximum rebate \$20,000 for residential system and \$100,000 for commercial or public building; Public Service Commission to establish net metering rules; support for consumer education, protection, system certification, etc. The bill is a modest, but critical step toward more widespread solar use in Florida..

Recent federal energy bill provides 30 percent purchase rebate for solar PV systems for two years, maximum of \$2,000. This would add to HB 713 provisions.

—L.B.

Conservation Notes



Tipping points

Anyone who has paddled a canoe knows what's meant by a "tipping point". One can lean a bit over the side, but leaning too far causes the canoe to flip into a new steady state – an upside down, wet state.

Catherine and I learned that lesson several years ago in a canoe trip on Juniper Springs Run. At the time I couldn't imagine that earth's climate could reach a tipping point, even though I had long been concerned that human hands were blindly turning up earth's uncalibrated thermostat.

Climatologists have begun to discuss possible global climate tipping points. An abrupt switch in earth's gradually warming climate could occur when a process can no longer be reversed – at least for several thousand years. A potential tipping point is when Greenland ice cap melting becomes irreversible. That might happen in a few decades or even sooner if humans continue mindlessly producing greenhouse gases by extravagant energy use and reckless fossil fuel burning. Greenland holds enough ice to raise sea level 23 feet.

The concept of climate, as distinguished from weather, adds to public confusion about climate change.

Climate may be likened to a gigantic three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle with trillions of constantly changing weather pieces. No wonder that studying past climate trends and projecting a future course became feasible only with computers. The overwhelming swarm of changing conditions in air and seas must be analyzed over many years to make sense of past, present and future climate. Only the largest super-computers can do this successfully.

Two great discoveries stand out among many scientific achievements leading to a better understanding of earth's complex and changing climate system.

One critical finding was that average global temperatures and atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations have been linked for at least 740,000 years. Whenever the planet was in a warm period between ice ages, concentrations of the principal greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide were relatively high. During eight ice ages, temperature and atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations were relatively low. Atmospheric greenhouse gases and average global temperatures always rose and fell together.

The momentous revelation that greenhouse gases and global temperatures were linked came from sophisticated analyses of air bubbles and moisture trapped in ice layers deep within arctic and antarctic glaciers. Beginning in 1958, scientists working at 11,000 foot elevations under brutally frigid conditions have drilled ice cores from as deep recently as 1.7 miles. Analyzing ancient ice layers compressed from annual snowfalls is somewhat like studying annual tree rings. Information from glacial ice cores and tree rings has been reinforced by studies of ancient layered sediments drilled from lake and ocean bottoms.

Another great scientific achievement came when scientists began measuring precisely the concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide. In 1896 the Swedish physical chemist, Svante Arrhenius, stated that we were "vaporizing our coal mines", and estimated that it would raise earth's temperature

about nine degrees F. He thought the nine degree temperature rise would happen in about 2,000 years and regretted not being around to enjoy milder Swedish winters. Subsequently, scientists doubted whether carbon dioxide emitted from burning coal and other fossil fuels would accumulate in the atmosphere.

Until the 1960s many scientists believed that carbon dioxide from fossil fuel burning would not accumulate in the atmosphere. They knew that oceans held 50 times as much carbon dioxide as the atmosphere, and expected the seas to swallow puny emissions from human activities.

Early attempts failed to measure atmospheric carbon dioxide precisely. Instruments were not nearly accurate enough and local emissions by factories or cars caused wide variations.

In 1958 Charles Keeling resolved to improve atmospheric carbon dioxide measurement. He designed and built an instrument with a precision of one part per million (ppm) or less. His carbon dioxide gauge was installed atop Hawaii's Mt. Mauna Loa at an 11,000 foot altitude where readings would not be skewed by local emissions.

Within a few years, the Keeling instrument (now used worldwide) made it abundantly clear that atmospheric carbon dioxide content is rising. The concentration is now 380 ppm, about 27 percent higher than when industrialization began, around 1800.

Concentrations of all atmospheric greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) have risen beyond all previous peaks in 740,000 years and the rate of rise is accelerating.

The earth is now the warmest it has been in 740,000 years. The temperature rise since 1800, evidently the swiftest in 740,000 years, is accelerating.

The arctic has warmed twice as much as the average global increase, and in southeast Greenland, over five times as much.

Greenland glaciers last year were sliding into the sea two to three times faster than in 1988, 1996 or 2001 when the rate was steady.

The sudden acceleration of Greenland glaciers entering the sea suggests that the great ice heap may be approaching a tipping point of irreversible melting.

Let's hope there's still time to prevent Florida from taking a future 20-foot deep bath.

At last month's meeting, many of us heard Representative Dorothy L Hukill describe her renewable energy bill HB 713, filed Jan. 13 in the Florida Legislature.

HB 713 would give a modest but much-needed boost to solar energy in the Sunshine State. Passing the bill would be a vital step toward more pollution-free solar energy – long overdue in Florida. Significant solar use is essential in helping to prevent future submersion of Florida's coasts.

—Lee Bidgood



Bird Rescue Center

February Report: Eagle Rescue

“Eagle in distress” calls bring out bird lovers, onlookers and wildlife rehabbers like nothing else! There were two or three eagles fighting near an active eagle’s nest in the north-eastern corner of the Catholic school yard. As we approached, they flew. One was reported to have an injured wing and foot, with blood on his tail. It was getting dark so we left, yet continued to watch the nest area daily.

He was spotted days later at Fairgreen Golf Course. Because he could fly, we were able to photograph, but not capture him. The photos substantiated the injuries that had been reported.

The third call came a week later from the nest site. They were fighting again. Reg, our hotline volunteer, took the call, alerted Rehabbers, and then went to protect the site until they could arrive. The eagle was on the ground, at one time on someone’s porch, and also in the road. She called the police to help guard it until the Wildlife Rehabilitators could arrive. It was captured by Richelle from the Marine Science Center, received emergency treatment at Bird Rescue Center by Dr. Lamborn, then was transported to the Center for Birds of Prey by Gina, who works there and is a BRC volunteer. A great example of how well our organizations can work together.

We also saw 1 hawk, 3 doves, 1 wren, 1 cormorant, 5 seagulls, 2 gannets, 1 loon, 7 pelicans, 1 black vulture, 1 turkey vulture, and 4 ducks. We are watching a sandhill crane with a leg injury in Edgewater. We are pretty sure it is the one we observed last year. It can fly, raised 2 chicks last year, and seems to get along okay, though it limps when walking. We hope to get photographs to help evaluate it.

—Phyllis Falk Lamborn

The Bird Rescue Center is comprised wholly of volunteers.

They meet on the second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

The March 9 meeting is scheduled to meet at Venetian Villas Rec. Room.

Please call Phyllis—386-423-1434—to confirm & for details.

Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need,
but not every man's greed.

—Mahatma Gandhi

From the Field

March Field Trip: Blue Heron Wetlands Treatment Facility

The February trip planned for the Orlando Wetlands was rained out however, an advanced scouting trip produced very few birds at that site so we did not really miss out on anything exciting.

The March 4th field trip will be to the Blue Heron Wetlands Treatment Facility just Southwest of Titusville. This site is very similar to the Orlando Wetlands but is much closer. All members and non-members are welcome to participate.

—Gail Domroski

Native & Nice

Juniperus virginiana,

Past columns have focused on the smaller natives: flowers and shrubs. This month’s subject, the stately red cedar, is a departure. Scientifically known as *Juniperus virginiana*, the red cedar—or juniper—is a common sight in our area.

Evergreen red cedars are easy to grow in poor, sandy soil; they tolerate both salt and drought. Seedlings sprout readily and are easily transplanted. Their growth is slow, but over time they become massive specimens, reaching 30 feet or more.

In winter, female red cedars produce bluish berry-like cones. Combined with the fresh cedar fragrance, the branches with their showy cone clusters make an ideal holiday decoration.

Native red cedars’ cones provide abundant food for scores of species of wildlife and their dense branches offer protected habitat. Mockingbirds and other songbirds often shelter their nests deep inside these conifers; cedar waxwings get their name from their fondness for this tree.

During the warmer months, look closely and you will sometimes see thumbnail-sized butterflies resting on the branches of native red cedars. Called juniper hairstreaks, these mint green to brownish butterflies seek out junipers for their larval food plant. One subspecies, called Sweadner’s juniper hairstreak, lives only in Florida, common only in coastal hammocks. Its numbers are dwindling rapidly because of habitat loss.

Credit note: Some information was taken from Doreen Cubie’s “Backyard Habitat” article that appeared in the Dec/Jan 2006 issue of National Wildlife Magazine

—Donnadine Miller

EcoSpun™ Bags

Our chapter's logo looks great in black on these white bags. Eco-Spun™ is fabric made from recycled plastic bottles. It's bright, soft and very durable. Leave them in your car so they'll be handy whenever you go shopping. We use ours for a weekly shopping trip to the supermarket.

We'll have them at every meeting.

We think they're a good deal at \$8 ea.



New Members

Hal & Tammy Copeland, Carolyn Creech, Jody Graham, Glenn Green, Irene B Hambruch, Mick Kelly, William Kluttz, Bernice Massel, A K Patterson, Mel Schack, Tracey Walden, Dorothy Livingston.

—Richard Domroski



Officers & Chairs

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Field Trips: Gail Domroski	428-0447	radg1@prodigy.net
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New Member Greeter: Mary Yon	423-5934	
Publicity: Catherine Bidgood	423-4682	CBidgood@ucnsb.net
Ways & Means: Vacant		

Meetings

Meetings Meetings are held the 1st Wednesdays
Oct. thru March

Edgewater library 103 Indian River Blvd. **7: P.M.**
Smoke-free environment. Refreshments are served.
Plenty of parking. Public welcome.

March 1 - Phyllis Lamborn - Bird Rescue Center

Field Trips

Field trips begin at **8:00 A.M.** unless otherwise noted. Meet
in the Market Square parking lot Edgewater, Ridgewood
Ave. & 442, between Dunkin Donuts & Chik-Fil-A.

Bring lunch & drinks. Don't forget bug-spray!

March 4 - Orlando Wetlands Park

Questions? Contact Gail Domroski 428-0447

Audubon members and guests are all welcome.

Programs & Field trips subject to change.

SOUTHEAST VOLUSIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 46

New Smyrna Beach, FL. 32170

Nonprofit Org.

U.S. Postage

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New Smyrna Beach, Fl.

Permit No. 59

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BIRDS, OTHER WILDLIFE AND THEIR HABITAT THROUGH EDUCATION AND ACTIVISM.**