

# The eSkimmer

Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, Inc.

Issue Vol. VI- No. 2

February 2011

The Southeast Volusia Audubon Society promotes the protection of birds, other wildlife and their habitat through education and activism.

## Prez Sez

In A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens wrote: "It was the best of times. It was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness,..." Does that sound familiar?

As reported in \*Politico on Jan 20<sup>th</sup>, top staff members for key House and Senate Republicans met in a closed-door session Tuesday with energy industry interests to work on strategy to handcuff the Obama administration's climate change agenda. Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) – a member of the Senate GOP leadership – is looking to introduce a bill preempting all federal agencies from regulating greenhouse gases outside of Congress passing a climate change measure. That would include blocking greenhouse gas regulations not just under the Clean Air Act, but also under the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. His plan also would stop states from regulating greenhouse gases, as well as public nuisance litigation related to climate change.

Worse, staffers indicate: "There's anywhere from 12 to 15 Democrats that we are eying that we think would have an interest in supporting a bill like this."

On the more local front, Gov. Rick Scott has appointed Billy Buzzett, vice president of the St. Joe Co., one of Florida's largest land development companies, to oversee the state Department of Community Affairs and charged him with the responsibility to merge the department with the DEP and the DOT. It is well established that Gov. Scott considers the DCA as a job-killing agency.

According to the \*Sun-Sentinel, Buzzett led the master planning of more than 100,000 acres and titled more than 30,000 residential units during his eight years at St. Joe. The North Florida real estate company gave the maximum \$25,000 contribution to Scott's inauguration.

In a great article in the Jan 23 \*Daytona News-Journal, Dinah Voyles-Pulver writes: "Over 25 years, more than 200,000 acres of land was conserved in Volusia and Flagler counties, and now it recharges and protects underground water supplies, preserves room for wildlife and provides miles of trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding." Although it's important to continue preserving en-

See Prez Sez p. 3

## Meetings

Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesdays  
Sept. thru April at 7 P.M.  
Edgewater Library 103 Indian River Blvd.

*Smoke-free environment. Refreshments are served.  
Plenty of parking. Public welcome.*

**Next meeting is February 16, 2011**

Speaker - **Ed Garland**

St. Johns River Water Management District.

*The District's Role In Planning For Future Water Supply Needs*

*see February Speaker p. 5*

Programs & Field trips subject to change.

## Field Trips

Meet in the Market Square parking lot Edgewater,  
Ridgewood Ave. & 442 between Dunkin Donuts & Chik-Fil-A.  
(Meeting time listed with trip)

Bring lunch & drinks.

**Sat. Feb. 5th (1) Viera Wetlands - 7am**

*A complete list of field trips is available on the SEVAS website.*

[http://www.sevolusiaaudubon.org/field\\_trips.htm](http://www.sevolusiaaudubon.org/field_trips.htm)

Questions? Contact Gail Domroski 386-428-0447  
Numbers in parentheses indicate degree of difficulty.  
(1) easy or no walking. (2) walking less than one mile.  
(3) One plus mile walking and/or uneven terrain.

Field Trips are free.

Audubon members and guests are all welcome.



## The Bags are Back!

This time they're 100% unbleached cotton, in two styles: standard and shoulder.

Made in the U.S.A., of course, and a little less expensive than EcoSpun.

We'll have them for sale at every meeting.

## Conservation Notes

### Guns Galore

The horrible tragedy in Tucson, Arizona has an upside in business and commerce. Gun dealers have enjoyed a remarkable increase in sales.

The rate of gun deaths in Arizona is 50 percent higher than the national average. Last year Arizona passed a law allowing some individuals to carry concealed weapons without permits.

Jared Loughner used a Glock 19, a semi-automatic \$499 pistol with a 33 cartridge magazine to kill six people and wound 14 others.

Bloomberg News reported that Greg Wolff, who owns two gun stores in Phoenix and Mesa, said two days after the shooting his business doubled. The Glock 19 is made of reinforced plastics and is one the lightest and easiest to use of any handgun. It is manufactured by Glock GmbH in Austria. Glocks have rifling inside the barrel that foils ballistic tests intended to match a bullet to a particular gun. Law enforcement officials hate that.

According to the FBI, handgun sales increased 60 percent in Arizona, a day after the Tucson shooting. Handgun sales also rose substantially in Ohio, California, Illinois and New York.

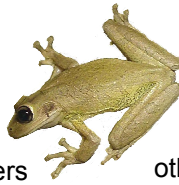
Back in 2007, Seung-Hui Cho used a Glock to kill 32 people at Virginia Tech.

Recently in the Florida legislature, Republican Senator Greg Evers introduced a bill to allow guns on the campuses of Florida universities and colleges. People with concealed weapons permits would have to wear their guns openly. Utah is the only state allowing concealed weapons on university and college campuses.

In Appalachia, mountain decapitation continues to make coal mining cheaper, less labor intensive and more profitable. Blasting the tops off mountains to expose coal deposits severely damages the environment and threatens the health and water supplies of people living in valleys below. Creeks in valleys below the mountains are poisoned, choked by fall-out and often lose most aquatic species as debris falls from mountaintop blasting.

Meanwhile a coal industry front group, Friends of Coal has issued a "call to arms" to protest possible regulations intended to restrict mountaintop decapitation. Last fall Democrat Joe Manchin, a candidate who later won a seat in the US Senate fired a rifle, while condemning President Obama for attempting to limit greenhouse gas emissions. While firing his weapon, Manchin said he would take "dead aim" against the President's so-called 'war on coal'.

We live in a violent nation. Every year almost 100,000 of us are shot with guns, including 10,000 killed. Contrary to arguments by the NRA, guns do not make us safer. In a recent survey described by the non-profit TruthOut organization, these findings were significant:



US civilians had more firearms, including more handguns per capita than any of 23 other high-income nations.

The US has less restrictive gun control laws than the other 23 nations.

The US firearms homicide rate was over 19 times that of the average for the other 23 nations.

The US accidental firearms death rate was 5.2 times that of the average for the other 23 nations.

I hope that the coal industry's call for action against citizens and government agencies opposing mountain decapitation does not lead to more violence. Some observers suggest that rightwing agitation may have been partly responsible for the Tucson tragedy.

Our citizens and government at all levels seem reconciled to having a well-armed populace, with violence far far worse than in other high-income nations. We ought to demand improvements in our situation.

—Lee Bidgood

*Lee Bidgood, Conservation chair, emeritus writes on a variety of topics.*

*Sometimes he just gets plain ticked off at what's going on.*

*Lee lives Gainesville, FL with his wife Catherine.*

## Christmas Bird Count Ponce Inlet

Thanks to everyone who helped with the 111<sup>th</sup> Ponce Inlet Christmas Bird Count. We had a high number of 41 participants and were able to split our circle into 11 areas giving everyone more time to observe and count birds. We also had our highest species count at 137 with the possibility of up to 140. Rare Bird Documentation forms have been submitted for 3 additional species – Red-eyed Vireo, Eastern Fox Sparrow and Grasshopper Sparrow, species that have previously not been reported in our CBC circle. Two Least Tern were also reported as observed, however photographic evidence, which we do not have, is required for this species. According to Bill Pranty, Florida CBC Editor, there is no documented record of this species in Florida during the winter months. Our total individual count was 35,959, within 3000 of the 110<sup>th</sup> count.

Participants covered 473 miles by vehicle, 17 miles by boat, nearly 22 miles on foot and contributed 92 hours overall on this effort.

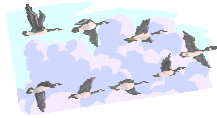
Thanks again to all.

—Dick & Gail Domroski

Please forward this  to friends.

## Wandering Members

### Panama



Beth and my trip to Panama with another couple began Wednesday, October 13. On Friday afternoon, we left Canopy Tower and transferred to a hotel in Panama City. Saturday we crossed the continent, south to north, through the Panama Canal.

We left port in the Pacific Queen, a 119 foot tour boat, at about 8:15 AM. We picked up our canal pilot shortly after 10:00 and made our appointment to the first lock at 10:30. The Miraflores Locks are in two stages, raising the vessels about 54 feet to Miraflores Lake. A few miles later Pedro Miguel Lock raises the vessels another 31 feet. The canal route then goes through a narrow cut in the Continental Divide and continues up the Chagres River, then across man-made Gatun Lake, a distance of just over 20 miles. We were struck by the almost total lack of boaters and fishermen and by the dearth of wildlife. We did see several raptors near the end of the trip, many of which I could not identify, but one was my second lifetime look at a Black Hawk-Eagle.

At the end of the lake, Gatun Locks return the travelers back to sea level in three steps. We just made our 3:30 PM appointment there and were placed in the chambers in front of a car carrier. This vessel was about 90 feet above water and over 40 below and was 106 feet wide – 4 feet less than the width of the chamber. As we sat looking ahead to an 85 foot drop to the Caribbean and this hulk chugged toward us from the rear, handled only by six or eight train engines, each marginally larger than our Prius, we hoped real hard that the brakes worked. They did (all three times) and in retrospect it was a great experience.

We docked at Colon and were off the boat by 5:45 PM. Busses took us back to Panama City in less than an hour and a half.

There were many interesting things about the canal and the trip, and the tour guide was excellent - full of history and statistics. For example, this was the first time that cement was used in such an application so the builders had no idea of the strength of the structure. As a consequence, they elected to make the cement walls of the locks 50 feet thick.

To me the most extraordinary facet is that the canal is operated completely without pumps. The locks are filled by gravity and discharged to the sea or the next lock through humongous underground culverts. Each cycle dumps 27 million gallons of fresh lake water into the ocean and a dump from one chamber to the next is accomplished in seven minutes. What an engineering fete! The lake holds 4.2 million acre feet of water or nearly 1.4 trillion gallons so that represents a lot of dumps.

Anyway, how many can say they have crossed the Continental Divide in a boat?

—Ken Gunn

### Prez Sez from p. 1

Environmentally sensitive land, particularly to link corridors of land already under public ownership or conservation, the financial condition of the state, and the politics, will make it difficult to add money to the land conservation efforts at both the state and local levels.

A front page story in the *\*Orlando Sentinel* headline: "Hunting Florida's Black Bears may be best way to ensure their future". The article talks about, among other things, the carrying capacity of our forests to sustain bears, and the cultural carrying capacity of residents as bears patrol neighborhoods. No one talks about the carrying capacity of Florida to sustain an unlimited population of people. How far can we strain our resources like water and wetlands?

Our February speaker is Ed Garland from the St John's River Water Management District. The district is responsible for our water supply from issuing utilization permits to seeking new sources. There has been lots of talk in the past about injecting water from the St John's River into the aquifer. It should be an interesting presentation. Come ready to listen, and to ask hard questions about our future.

It will take a renewed activism to stem the tide of people wanting to push back all the protections we won over the years.

—Don Picard

### Links in Prez Sez

\*Politico <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0111/47867.html>

\*Sun-Sentinel [http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2011-01-06/news/fl-scott-growth-official-20110106\\_1\\_rick-scott-scott-administration-state-kurt-browning](http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2011-01-06/news/fl-scott-growth-official-20110106_1_rick-scott-scott-administration-state-kurt-browning)

\*Daytona News-Journal <http://www.news-journalonline.com/news/local/east-volusia/2011/01/23/conservations-catch-22-no-money-to-buy-more-acres.html>

\*Orlando Sentinel <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/local/os-central-florida-bear-hunt-20110122,0,7272271.story>

There is a spiritual side to our connection with the planet. And in this material world, that's anathema. It is somewhat worrying. What I say.. it makes life. It gives us fulfillment. It makes us whole human beings. And without it, we make mistakes. And, boy, are the leaders of the world making mistakes at the moment.

—Bob Brown



# From the Field

Merritt Island - 01/07/11



It was a chilly morning but 9 of us traveled to Merritt Island to tour Peacocks Pocket, the ponds along the drive to the beach and Bio-lab road. It was still fairly dry and the only large numbers of ducks were in the deeper ponds going toward the beach. Along Peacocks Pocket we found several Wilson's Snipe, a few Ring-necked Ducks, White Pelicans and Roseate Spoonbills. In the ponds there were several large flocks of ducks including Shovelers, Scaup, Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teal, Mottled Duck and Hooded Merganser. Along Bio-lab road we found the usual assortment of wading and shorebirds including a good view of American Avocets.

Lake Apopka Restoration Area – 01/22/11

Although it was early, fairly cold and very windy, 11 hardy birders enjoyed a guided tour of the Lake Apopka Restoration Area. Our guide was Lorri Lilja. She was very knowledgeable and helpful and did a great job guiding us to the largest concentration of birds. The windy conditions kept most of the ducks on the water for distant but easy viewing and the many raptors kept us entertained with their aerial displays. We saw 9 species of ducks including Gadwall and Ruddy Duck. Also enjoyed good views of Black-necked Stilts, several Wilson's Snipe, lots of Tree Swallows and a few Purple Martins. Raptors included Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Red-Shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Merlin and at least a dozen or so Northern Harriers. We listed 70 species at Apopka and added 7 species on the trip home. (see list)

—Gail Domroski

## Bird list - Merritt Island January 7, 2011

- Mottled Duck
- Blue-winged Teal
- Northern Shoveler
- Green-winged Teal
- Redhead
- Ring-necked Duck
- Lesser Scaup
- Hooded Merganser
- Pied-billed Grebe
- Brown Pelican
- Anhinga
- American Bittern
- Great Egret
- Green Heron (pictured)
- Double-crested Cormorant
- Great Blue Heron
- Snowy Egret
- Little Blue Heron
- Tricolored Heron
- Reddish Egret
- White Ibis
- Glossy Ibis
- Roseate Spoonbill
- Wood Stork
- Black Vulture
- Turkey Vulture
- Osprey
- Bald Eagle
- Northern Harrier
- Red-shouldered Hawk
- American White Pelican (pictured)
- American Kestrel
- American Coot
- Sandhill Crane
- Black-bellied Plover
- Killdeer



- American Avocet
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Greater Yellowlegs
- Willet
- Lesser Yellowlegs
- Marbled Godwit
- Ruddy Turnstone
- Sanderling
- Western Sandpiper
- Least Sandpiper
- Dunlin
- Short-billed Dowitcher
- Long-billed Dowitcher
- Wilson's Snipe
- Bonapart's Gull
- Laughing Gull
- Ring-billed Gull
- Herring Gull
- Forster's Tern
- Royal Tern
- Mourning Dove
- Common Ground Dove
- Belted Kingfisher
- Red-bellied Woodpecker
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- Loggerhead Shrike
- Fish Crow
- Tree Swallow
- American Robin
- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- Palm Warbler
- Common Yellowthroat
- Savannah Sparrow
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Common Grackle
- Boat-tailed Grackle

I value my garden more for being full of blackbirds than of cherries, and very frankly give them fruit for their songs.  
~Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, 1712

## Bird list - Merritt Island January 7, 2011

- |                           |                        |                          |
|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Gadwall                   | Turkey Vulture         | American Crow            |
| Mottled Duck              | Osprey                 | Fish Crow                |
| Blue-winged Teal          | Bald Eagle             | Purple Martin            |
| Northern Shoveler         | Northern Harrier       | Tree Swallow             |
| Northern Pintail          | Cooper's Hawk          | Carolina Wren            |
| Green-winged Teal         | Red-shouldered Hawk    | American Robin           |
| Lesser Scaup              | Red-tailed Hawk        | European Starling        |
| Hooded Merganser          | American Kestrel       | Yellow-rumped Warbler    |
| Ruddy Duck                | Merlin                 | Palm Warbler             |
| Pied-billed Grebe         | Sora                   | Common Yellowthroat      |
| American White Pelican    | American Coot          | Eastern Towhee           |
| Double-crested Cormorant  | Sandhill Crane         | Savannah Sparrow         |
| Anhinga                   | Killdeer               | Northern Cardinal        |
| American Bittern          | Black-necked Stilt     | Red-winged Blackbird     |
| Great Blue Heron          | Greater Yellowlegs     | Common Grackle           |
| Great Egret               | Lesser Yellowlegs      | Boat-tailed Grackle      |
| Snowy Egret               | Dunlin                 | <b>seen on trip home</b> |
| Little Blue Heron         | Wilson's Snipe         | Red-headed Woodpecker    |
| Tricolored Heron          | Ring-billed Gull       | Pileated Woodpecker      |
| Cattle Egret              | Forster's Tern         | Eastern Bluebird         |
| Green Heron               | Rock Pigeon            | Northern Mockingbird     |
| Black-crowned Night Heron | Mourning Dove          | Cedar Waxwing            |
| White Ibis                | Belted Kingfisher      | Pine Warbler             |
| Glossy Ibis               | Red-bellied Woodpecker | Wild Turkey              |
| Roseate Spoonbill         | Long-billed Dowitcher  |                          |
| Wood Stork                | Eastern Phoebe         |                          |
| Black Vulture             | Blue Jay               |                          |



## Native 'n' Nice

Aptly named, beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*) is a common native shrub that can be seen growing wild in undisturbed areas. Although it's pale spring flowers are rather inconspicuous, they attract butterflies. However, in late summer it produces showy purple berries that occur in dense multiple clusters along the stems and attract birds.

Left on their own, beautyberries are open and spreading, growing into a graceful shrub with arching branches. To produce a more compact form (and more flowers and berries), severely prune near the ground in late winter.

Self-sown plants will spring up close to mature ones; or new plants can be grown from cuttings. They are tolerant of various soil types and water and sun conditions.

—Donnadine Miller

Donnadine Miller was an active member of SEVAS and wrote this column for years for *The Skimmer*. She passed away April 7, 2008. This archived article is from *The Skimmer*, Jan. 2005

## Backyard Naturalist

### Visitor

For some weeks now—I'm not so good at indexing time—a male Cardinal has been banging at my window.

When I first heard the thwack-clacking, I was in the den reading. The noise had been going on, I imagine, for awhile before I became aware of it. It was coming from the living room. When I'm reading, I emerge slowly back into



the world around me almost as if coming out of a dream. So I wasn't fully alert when I realized that a bird was banging against the bay-facing window with some determination. I was into the scene now, fully awake and in tune. The bird was a male Cardinal and he was launching the at-

tack from a perch in the big Red Cedar tree in front of the wall of windows on the west side of the house. He'd fly in and smack into the window. The sharp "clack" told me he was hitting beak first. He was concentrating on one window, high up in the wall. I stood watching for a long time. What in the world was he after?

I looked around the room for a clue. I spotted the small artificial Christmas tree on the long table behind the sofa. It had tiny red ornaments that I supposed could be mistaken for berries. It was viewable from the cedar tree. Aha! I put the tree away—and I fully expected that to be that.

Nope. Thwack, clack. I waved a big straw broom in front of my side of the window. Still nothing. I got the ladder and put a small wooden cat that usually peeks out from behind a door, on the window ledge. The cardinal didn't care. Thwack.

Oh well, he didn't seem to be injuring himself. Let him have the window.

The next morning—you must know, I'm a late sleeper—I was awakened, rudely, I'll add, by a tapping on the window to the right of my headboard. I opened the blind and there was the cardinal, clinging to the screen covering the lower half of the window, pecking away at the window pane. For a split second we stared at each other. I swear he winked.

This hasn't let up one little bit. He has now figured out where I am at any given time and pecks at the window of the room I'm in—bedroom, den, kitchen. He's visited windows on all sides of my house.

I've taken photos, shot a short video clip and have gotten to enjoy this little break from the humdrum. I hope he sticks around.

—Gil Miller



## February Speaker

### Ed Garland

Our February speaker will be Mr. Ed Garland, a Communications Specialist with the St. Johns River Water Management District.

Ed has been with the District for seven years and is responsible for communicating the District's mission through writing, public speaking and media interviews. He is a former reporter for Florida Today, where he wrote a weekly column and covered assignments throughout Brevard County. He has also worked for newspapers in Maine and New Hampshire, his native state and attended the University of New Hampshire. He has lived in Florida since 1993.

Ed will be speaking about the District's role in planning for future water supply needs and how people can do their part to protect this precious resource.

The Powerpoint presentation will show that we have a limited supply of potable water in Florida. The vast majority of our water comes from the Floridan aquifer, a groundwater source. In the coming years, we will need millions of additional gallons of water to meet growing demands.

The District is working with partners, primarily public supply utilities, to develop alternative sources of water, including brackish groundwater, surface water (the St. Johns River) and desalination to meet those impending needs.

They also realize that water conservation is critical to meeting future demands and have established requirements for consumptive use permit holders and residents alike. Water conservation is the cheapest alternative for delaying the need for additional water sources.

—Ken Gunn



## Officers & Chairs

President: Don Picard	<a href="mailto:president@sevolusiaadubon.org">president@sevolusiaadubon.org</a>
Secretary: Fern Murphy	<a href="mailto:sailorchick@bellsouth.net">sailorchick@bellsouth.net</a>
Treasurer: Bill Cox	<a href="mailto:billmarsha@pshift.com">billmarsha@pshift.com</a>
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Membership: Richard Domroski	<a href="mailto:sevas.skimmer@gmail.com">sevas.skimmer@gmail.com</a>

Thanks to Fern Murphy for proofing this issue (in fact, every issue).