

The eSkimmer

Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, Inc.

Issue Vol. IV- No. 7

November, 2009

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

Prez Sez

Those of you who attended the September meeting may remember the short presentation I gave on the Audubon study linking changes in bird migration patterns to climate change over the last 40 years. Audubon scientists used the data from the Christmas Bird Counts of the same period. The usefulness of citizen Science cannot be overstated. Now we have an opportunity to participate in a local version of citizen science in partnership with the Volusia County. Jennifer Winters is the Sea Turtle Habitat Conservation Plan Program Manager and has been managing a program of Piping Plover monitoring with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. This project is about complete (read: financing ends) and she would like to get a shorebird monitoring group started here this winter in hopes that the surveys could be continued in future years under similar parameters, and to have a resource group to assist with seasonal nesting and shorebird restoration projects.

Given our interest in Smyrna Dunes park and the informal work we (especially Nancy White) have been doing there, it seems like a really good fit for us. But if we are going to commit, we need more than just a couple of folks. If you would like to help, let me know.

If you are interested in learning more about climate change, come to our November meeting. Our guest speaker will be Fred Mosher, Ph.D., a meteorologist for the last 30 years and now Assistant Professor at Embry-Riddle University.

In case you missed it, The Farmton Project passed muster in front of the Volusia County Council recently. This development would put 20,000 homes south of Indian River Blvd. and West of I-95. This is in addition to the 10,000 homes that will go into the Restoration Project North of 442 and West of I-95, which passed last year. These massive developments in the middle of the forests will decrease habitats for many species, including Black bears and increase interactions between people and bears. The obvious result of this will be the extermination of all bears from Volusia County. It will also put great pressure on local roads as people shop in NSB or visit the city and try to get to the beach. With little off-beach parking, there will be decreased access to the beach for people who do not live on beachside in NSB. In addition,

Meetings

Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesdays
Sept. thru March at 7 P.M.

Edgewater Library 103 Indian River Blvd. 7 p.m.
*Smoke-free environment. Refreshments are served.
Plenty of parking. Public welcome.*

Next meeting is Nov. 18, 2009

Speaker: **Fred Mosher, Ph.D.**
Meteorologist & Asst. Prof. ERAU

See November Speaker *page 5*

Topic: Global Warming

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. Don't forget bug-spray!

Thurs., Nov. 12 - Lake Apopka 6 a.m. (1)

Sat., Nov. 21 - Lake Woodruff NWR 7 a.m. (3)

See *In The Field* p.3

Questions? Contact Gail Domroski 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.

there will be more pressure for increased beach driving areas which will further impact the nesting sea turtles. I intend to send a letter to the Florida Department of Community Affairs against these developments. Come to the meeting to make your input.

—Don Picard

Please forward this **eSkimmer** to friends.

Backyard Naturalist

Reminiscing

Back in the day, I was a teacher, taught art at Hawthorne elementary school in Baltimore (MD) county. I taught for ten years and then went into the retail business and some other activities, one of which was writing for a local paper for a while and then writing for another local paper for a while longer. My stories were essays, mostly, chronicling my sometimes bizarre life. Here is one.

Uncle Jim Just Flew In.

I was headed up the stairs this spring morning. I was coming from the faculty lounge and going to the art room. A fourth grade class was filing down the stairs in an orderly manner. They were going on a field trip.

"Mr. Miller?"

It was Jeffry. We were on the landing between floors and he was looking up at me and clutching something in his hand. The rest of the class kept on going.

"I found this," he said as he pushed his fist toward me.

"I found it on my way to school and Mr. Gross won't let me take it with us. He told me to give it to you. Here."

Jeffry was placing the treasured something in my open hands. It was wet. It was warm. It was feathered. It was a baby bird. Jeffry scooted back into line and was gone. I stood there looking at a problem.

I took the bird into my art room and rigged a little perch of dowels and placed him on it. I expected him either to fly crazily about the room or keel over dead. He did neither. He gripped the perch and fluffed his feathers, did a little body shudder move and looked right at me. "Well, what do we do next?" he seemed to be indicating in bird body language.

"I'm off to my first class, see you in an hour Uncle Jim."

Uncle Jim - I had given him a name just like that. I went to teach my class and checked back in on Uncle Jim. He was fine. He hadn't moved. He was still perched right where I had left him. Same thing next hour. At lunch time, I got a hard boiled egg and some milk from the cafeteria and made a mush of egg yolk and a few drops of milk which I offered to Jim on the end of a drinking straw. As soon as he saw the straw coming toward his beak, he opened wide and gobbled the mixture. Good sign. When they eat for you they usually make it. This one looked okay. He looked fine. His feathers had dried and were pretty much all there. His tail was a little ratty and I wasn't so sure he could fly; he hadn't yet anyway. He was a starling. He settled in for a little snooze after his meal and I left for mine.

I took him home with me after school. I perched him on the dead tree in the living room that for a very short time was the home of my now happily caged marmosets. He settled in right away and seemed perfectly at home. He

liked my mush mixture and gobbled it up at each offering. I had spiced it up a bit adding peanut butter and a little syrup. His droppings on the paper beneath his perch showed that all systems were normal. I should be able to release him soon.

That night I went to bed in a peaceful house. The monkeys were quiet, the bird was well fed and safe and it was spring. Sometimes things do work out with a minimum of inconvenience.

The next morning I awoke with Uncle Jim on my mind. He had been okay when I went to bed but the first night was usually difficult for wild foundlings. So it was with some apprehension that I went into the living room.

He was gone.

The tree was empty. I quickly surveyed the room. Since it was devoid of furnishings, this was easily done. He was gone all right and at a glance I could see where and how. Out was where and through the open window was how. I had removed the screen to wash it and left the window open because the weather was nice. We were on the second floor so I left the windows open all the time.

Oh well, I hadn't gotten to know him very well but he was okay and that was the goal.

I went to school and didn't really think about Jim much that day.

I got home that afternoon, plopped my groceries inside the door and glanced at the tree. I was reaching for my groceries when I realized I had seen a bird. I looked again. Uncle Jim was back! He was sitting on the same perch as if this was the way it worked. I offered him some mush and he took a little just to be polite but it was clear he really didn't need it.

That night I closed the window. The next morning he was still there. I opened the window. He flew out. That night he returned. This went on for months. One night he didn't return.

I like to believe that he finally hooked up with a congenial group of starlings and had a happy bird life. Every now and then I think about him and tell this story. Maybe he tells it about me.

—Gil Miller

If we have some space next month, we'll include the story explaining the dead tree in the living room. It's a lot of fun, has monkeys in it — the tree *and* the story.

Trees outstrip most people in the extent and depth of their work for the public good.

—Sara Ebenreck, *American Forests*

Wandering Members

Alberta to New Smyrna Beach

The drive home this fall was terrific. Beautiful colors and three quarters of a million birds. I left yellow and green colors in Canada and had orange leaves as far south as Atlanta.

I left our cabin west of Calgary, Alberta on October 11. It was cold with snow flurries and icy patches to Regina, Saskatchewan, a distance of 500 miles. On the prairie, east of Calgary, I started seeing northern geese. That day, I saw some 50,000 Snow Geese and about the same number of Canadas. I also saw several White-fronted and a couple of dozen Tundra Swans.

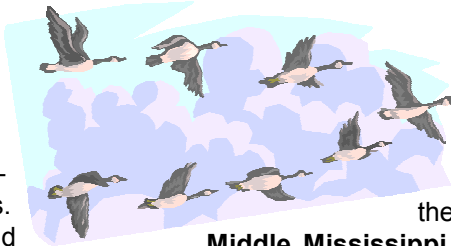
I spent Monday, Canadian Thanksgiving, with relatives in Regina and headed south Tuesday morning. Just out of the city, I passed a field full of Snow Geese with a few dark geese mixed in – a 30,000 plus flock. The sloughs in Saskatchewan and North Dakota were mostly frozen and bare of birds. **Des Lacs NWR** seemed to have a lot of geese but I didn't stop to investigate.

I spent a couple of hours at **Audubon NWR** south of Minot, ND and saw 21 species plus several unidentified sparrows. There were at least 60,000 Canada Geese on the lake and just before leaving I spotted 2 immature Snows and then about 25 Tundra Swans. The highlight there was a flock of 75 Sandhill Cranes feeding on a stubble field within the refuge.

Wednesday I spent four hours in **Desoto NWR**, in Iowa. This refuge is interesting geographically as it is around an isolated bend in the Missouri River, cut off by the federal government in 1959. Since the Nebraska / Iowa border was the old river channel, and it was established long before the cutoff was made, the refuge is in parts of both states and one crosses the border several times driving around the interior roads.

My species count here was 26, with several flocks of turkeys, White Pelicans, two Bald Eagles and a few thousand geese including the first White-fronted since Canada. Based on the nests in the bare-ish trees, this is probably a great birding spot in spring, summer and fall.

Thursday was special. Just into Kansas I passed a field with more than 100,000 mixed black birds. I couldn't stop as I was on the freeway and it was busy. I did stop a few miles farther along at the **Squaw Creek NWR**. What a resource! 7000 acres of mainly marsh. I estimated at least 200,000 American Coots and almost as many ducks, a few thousand geese and White Pelicans, shore birds, raptors, many swallows, a few Great Egrets and a Bald Eagle. Mixed in with some Gadwells was an albino which showed up like a light bulb in flight. I also got a lifer. I had heard but never seen a Bull Frog. As I was leaving the refuge, one was sitting right in the middle of the road!



All in all, 30 bird species and a half million birds by noon.

The rest of the trip was much less successful as I apparently got ahead, and probably east of the waterfowl migration. I visited the

Middle Mississippi NWR and **Crab Orchard NWR** in Illinois and **Okefenokee Swamp NWR** near the Georgia / Florida border but saw very few birds.

I arrived home late Saturday, and Sunday morning got my only life bird of the week. A Sooty Tern must have been blown landward by the high winds and flew right past our living room window!

—Ken Gunn

In The Field

October Trip Report

Friday October 9, seven people traveled to Canaveral National Seashore to look for Fall Migrants. Only problem was that it did not feel like fall - temperature reached at least 90 and the mosquitoes were out in force. Anyway, we did see 23 species and few good ones at that. There were several Indigo Buntings, Black-throated Blue Warblers, Palm Warblers, a few Blue Grosbeak and one Yellow-breasted Chat.

Fall Migration

Many thanks to all who helped with the September 19, 2009, fall Migration Count. Participants were Charles & Maritta Buchy, Helga Carlson, Roger Cutler, Dick & Gail Domroski, Andrea & Roger Peterson, Fern & Sheldon Murphy, Ken Park, Don Picard, Ron Picard and Carolyn Ragan.

This year we saw 89 species and 6238 individuals. Last year we saw 81 species and 4625 individuals. The higher individual count was mostly in Laughing Gulls. Any questions, call Gail @ 428-0447.

November Trips

Thursday, November 12th 6 a m. (1) *

We will travel to Lake Apopka for a guided tour with a St. Johns River WMD staff member. We hope to have access to areas not open to the public without a guide. Lake Apopka is in the headwaters of the Ocklawaha River and was targeted for cleanup under the Surface Water Improvement and Management Act of 1987. Major activities include marsh and floodplain restoration and the creation of a marsh flow-way system that filters Lake Apopka's waters by circulating lake water through restored wetlands. In 1996, the Florida Legislature passed Chapter 96-207, Florida Statutes, furthering its previous mandate to clean up the lake by providing funds to buy additional agricultural lands north of the lake. Restoration of these farmlands to functioning wetlands is expediting

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cleanup efforts. Public recreation access is limited to the Clay Island portion of the property.

A 1998 Christmas bird count (CBC) identified 174 species of birds, the highest species total for an inland count in the 100-year history of the annual CBC. Bird diversity is extraordinary in this area, and the bird list, which continues to grow, now includes more than 270 species. Other wildlife include alligators, turtles, otters and bobcats.

We need to leave by **6 a m** in order to be in Zellwood by 8 a.m.

Saturday, November 21st 7 a m. (3) *

We will be going to Lake Woodruff NWR. Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1964 to provide habitat for migrating and wintering birds. The refuge contains 21,574 acres of freshwater marshes, 5,800 acres of Cypress and mixed hardwood swamps, 2,400 acres of uplands, and more than 1,000 acres of lakes, streams, and canals. The biological diversity of the wetlands provides nesting, overwintering and stopover habitat during migration for neotropical songbirds, migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds and raptors (215 bird species have been counted).

Additionally, endangered and threatened species benefit from the wetland habitat and management practices of Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge contains over 5,000 acres of freshwater and more than 50 miles of waterways, which are utilized by the endangered Florida manatees as foraging, breeding and calving areas. More than 23 miles are designated as manatee protection zones.

Other Federally endangered or threatened species which are known to inhabit the refuge include the Eastern indigo snake, American alligator, Wood stork, and the Snail kite, which is a very specialized raptor feeding only on Apple snails. Like the Limpkin, wading birds occur on the refuge in unusually abundant numbers.

- * 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.

This year's CBC will be January 2, 2010. Hope you'll be available to help with this important, fun count.

A complete listing of all field trips for this season 2009-2010 — may be found on our website:

http://sevolusiaaudubon.org/field_trips.htm

Information is there including links to the destinations.

Take a look. It's very thorough.

—Gail Domroski

Field Trip Sightings

Canaveral National Seashore — Oct. 9

Brown Pelican	Blue Jay
Great Egret	Carolina Wren
Snowy Egret	Gray Catbird
Black Vulture	Northern Mockingbird
Turkey Vulture	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Osprey	Palm Warbler
Royal Tern	Common Yellowthroat
Mourning Dove	Yellow-breasted Chat
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Northern Cardinal
Downy Woodpecker	Blue Grosbeak
Pileated Woodpecker	Indigo Bunting
White-eyed Vireo	

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<http://sevolusiaaudubon.org>

Of Interest

Link to our SEVAS website **Of Interest** page
http://sevolusiaaudubon.org/of_interest/of_interest1.htm

Includes:

Volusia County hikes, Events

Suggested Reading

More added weekly.

We plan to keep this page active and timely.

Please Bookmark us and check back frequently.

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November Speaker

Our November speaker will be Dr. Frederick R. Mosher, Associate Professor at Embry-Riddle University. He is also a member of the Halifax chapter of the Audubon Society.

Dr. Mosher was born in Delaware and grew up in Maryland. He moved to Florida in 2004. He earned a B.S. degree in Physics at University of Maryland and an M.S. and Ph.D. in Meteorology at University of Wisconsin – Madison.

After a hitch in the US Army, Dr. Mosher returned to University of Wisconsin on the staff of the Space Center and Engineering Center. In 1984 he joined the National Weather Service, heading first the Technique Development Unit then the Aviation Support Branch and finally was named Scientific Operations Officer at the Aviation Weather Center. He joined Embry-Riddle University as an Associate Professor in 2004.

He is a fellow of American Meteorological Society and has published over 50 technical papers. He has also served on numerous government committees on weather satellite information, interactive meteorological computer systems, future aviation weather information systems, and lighting detection systems.

Dr. Mosher and his wife Karen reside in Port Orange. They are parents of two adult daughters.

Dr. Mosher will present a very down-to-earth explanation on climate change. A short synopsis of his presentation follows. Come and bring a friend. This is an opportunity to become much better informed on a very critical aspect of the twenty-first century.

Birds and Climate Change

Climate change. Is it real? Is it happening now? The answer is yes, yes. Some recent examples from the news: The plant zone map for the US has recently been revised, and the zones have shifted north almost a whole zone width. The Audubon Society released its study based on the Christmas count that shows birds wintering 300-400 miles further north than previously. The Arctic ice cap has been melting more during the recent summers. Locally the black mangrove trees are spreading north from the historic northern limit of Cape Canaveral to St. Augustine. The northern range of the mangrove tree is limited by winter temperatures below 28 degrees for more than 6 hours. Winters are not as cold and the growing season is getting longer. Why?

The temperature of a location is determined by the balance of energy gain and energy loss. Many factors contribute toward these energy gains and losses. The

Sun is the original source of our energy, but how much we get is influenced by the orbit of the Earth (closer to the Sun gives more energy) and the tilt of the Earth (winter and summer). The Earth's orbit and tilt do vary somewhat, which has caused the Ice Ages and warming periods of the past. Looking at these orbit factors would indicate that the climate should be cooling, not warming. Other factors which could influence climate change include greenhouse gas changes, aerosol changes, cloud changes, and land use changes. Greenhouse gases include Carbon Dioxide, Methane, CFCs, and Nitrogen Dioxide. Aerosols are small particles in the air which can reflect sunlight. Clouds both reflect sunlight back to space and trap infrared energy from the surface. Studies have shown that the greenhouse gases appear to be the primary cause of the recent climate warming, with Carbon Dioxide being the most significant gas followed by Methane.

Change is always stressful. As the climate changes, one would think that birds can just fly to the new climate they are use to. While that is the case for some birds (note the birds staying further north in the winter), the long distance migratory birds in particular have problems with timing their migration to the availability of food (bugs, etc.) sources which are climate dependent. Birds flying north from the tropics don't know that spring is coming early in the US, so they may arrive after the peak abundance of bugs has past.

Climate change is happening. The root causes of the climate change are the modern life style that is heavily energy depend, and the food preferences of most people. The question is not "is climate change happening", but do we want to do something about it? Since most people don't want to decrease their standard of living, the choices come down to technology innovation and adoptive strategies. Both require major funding and political will.

—Ken Gunn

The issue of climate change is one that we ignore at our own peril. There may still be disputes about exactly how much we're contributing to the warming of the earth's atmosphere and how much is naturally occurring, but what we can be scientifically certain of is that our continued use of fossil fuels is pushing us to a point of no return. And unless we free ourselves from a dependence on these fossil fuels and chart a new course on energy in this country, we are condemning future generations to global catastrophe.

—Barack Obama

Please forward this  to friends.