

The eSkimmer

Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, Inc.

Issue Vol. V- No. 5

October, 2010

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

Prez Sez

Welcome to a new season of your club. I hope you had a good summer. I know it was hot here, but it was also hot up North – even in New England and the Canadian Maritimes where Maureen and I spent much of the summer. Any thoughts about global warming?

While you have been away, Ken (also away) has lined up some great speakers for your enjoyment, and Dick and Gail have put together an extensive list of places to bird. We hope you will join us in both. Bring friends. All our meetings and field trips are open to the public. You don't have to be a member to participate. Give us a try and then decide to join or not.

Unless you slept away the last couple of months, you know this has been a "different" election season. The primary season has resulted in a slate of candidates that no one could have imagined six months ago. For once, the parties have made clear distinctions in their platforms. There is little doubt on where they stand on issues near to our hearts and purses. Now it is up to us to select the people who will be running Florida, the county and our cities, and representing us in Washington. It is incumbent on each of us to make an informed decision and register our choice either at the polling booth or by absentee ballot. Voting is not just a RIGHT, it is a RESPONSIBILITY to those who have fought and died to ensure our right to vote. So please GET OUT AND VOTE.

Anybody remember Farmton? It is a group of developments on a huge tract of land that spans from the intersection of I-95 and Indian River Blvd. in Edgewater all the way into Brevard County. The Volusia county council approved it, but the Florida Department of Community Affairs denied it based on a large number of objections, Farmton people tweaked it, the VCC approved it again, and the FDCA again denied it. As I write this, it is being argued in front of an administrative law judge in DeLand where the FDCA and the Edgewater Citizens Alliance for Responsible Development (ECARD) are arguing against the proposal based on habitat issues, unsuitability for development issues, and legal issues such as violations of the Volusia County Planning documents. Remember, the county changed its comprehensive plan based on a couple of "stakeholder meetings".

Since city and county officials are so totally willing to

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 October 20, 2010

Speaker - **Lisa Roberts**

Executive Director - Florida Wildflower Foundation.

Importance Of Using Native Plants In Your Gardens

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!

Sat., Oct. 9 - 7 a.m. (2)

Lori Wilson Park in Brevard County

See Field trips p. 3

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.

accede to the wishes of big developers, even against the wishes of their constituents, it is necessary to pass Amendment 4 in the November election. It will give voters oversight control over how their communities grow. We will get a chance to vote on changes to city and county comprehensive plans. I urge you to look at it and vote yes.

—Don Picard

<http://floridahometowndemocracy.com/>

Please forward this eSkimmer to friends.

Conservation Notes

Lee Bidgood, Jr.: Why melting icebergs matter to Florida

Former House Majority Leader Dick Arney testified before Republican Congressional members that man-made climate change is no threat because God would never allow mankind to destroy His creation.

Arney's argument might comfort some people, but he failed to say that if God were concerned about mankind destroying creation, He could simply eliminate mankind.

I think we are risking eliminating ourselves without the Almighty's help.

Meanwhile Florida could become a national sacrifice to worsening climate change.

The first eight months of this year tied the record high global temperature set in 1998, as the Arctic continues warming at twice the global rate. The greatest Arctic menace to Florida is 624,000 cubic miles of ice atop Greenland where melting is accelerating. Recently a giant ice cube the size of Manhattan broke off a glacier in northwest Greenland and may threaten shipping in northern seas.

I have difficulty visualizing 624,000 cubic miles of ice, but can imagine an enormous island the area of all 26 states east of the Mississippi and 80 percent covered with ice averaging over a mile thick. That's Greenland! If that colossal ice sheet melts completely, it would raise sea level around 23 feet.

The West Antarctic ice cover is likewise thinning. Continued mountain glacier melting worldwide along with expanding warmer seas also raise sea level.

Even a 10 or 15 percent Greenland melt, with our usual destructive coastal storms, would destroy the economy and ecology of Florida's coastal counties where 77 percent of Floridians live and work. Without effective political action here, nationally and internationally, Florida after several millennia or even centuries could become a submerged memory.

Virtually all scientists have concluded that humans are responsible for increased greenhouse gas emissions that are raising global temperatures and destroying 8,000 years of climate stability that fostered our rise to global dominance. Recent wild weather and climate research strengthen those conclusions.

Research on Ellesmere Island northwest of Greenland indicates that atmospheric carbon dioxide greenhouse gas levels about four million years ago were only slightly higher than now, but Arctic temperatures were 34 degrees F warmer than now. These findings add to many scientists' concerns that we may soon reach a "tipping point" when Arctic melting becomes irreversible.

Worldwide extreme weather should have erased any remaining doubts that we have destabilized our climate



while overheating the planet with greenhouse gases. Record Russian heat, drought, fires and smoke have killed thousands and halted exports of a severely damaged wheat crop. Luckily, most of Russia has cooled with welcome rain.

Unfortunately, tragic flood damage continues in Pakistan with thousands lost or starving and millions homeless. Devastating Chinese landslides and floods have killed thousands and destroyed countless homes. Heat, drought and floods have ravaged Africa.

In this nation, we have suffered record heat, drought and lethal floods in many different places, but are better able to cope with weather disasters than Russia, Pakistan, China or Africa.

Our nation should take prompt, drastic action to become a global renewable energy leader and require that we use energy far more efficiently. That would provide healthier air, less greenhouse gas emissions, increased energy independence and not least, far more jobs than the equivalent fossil fuel energy.

Florida could and should be preserved for our descendants.

Editor's Note: This Op-Ed piece appeared in the Gainesville Sun, Monday, Sept. 27, 2010.

<http://www.gainesville.com/article/20100927/OPINION03/9271000>

Lee Bidgood is Conservation Chair, emeritus. He writes from Gainesville, FL where he lives with his wife Catherine.

Of Interest

Sites to visit online:

Clean Water Network of Florida

<http://cleanwaternetwerk-fl.org/>

Florida Bluebird Society

<http://www.floridabluebirdsociety.com/blitz.htm>

Florida Wildflower Foundation

(Our October Speaker is Executive Director)

<http://www.floridawildflowerfoundation.org/>

We simply must do everything we can in our power to slow down global warming before it is too late. The science is clear. The global warming debate is over.

~Arnold Schwarzenegger

National Audubon Society

A letter from the new president.

Dear Audubon Members:

I am now a few days into my new role as President of the National Audubon Society. It is a blend of discovery and delight. In every encounter, I learn something new about Audubon's conservation initiatives, achievements and opportunities. And I have been reminded time and again of the importance of the Chapter network in delivering real conservation success.

Even before I started, I had the opportunity to meet with several current or past Chapter leaders in my home county. To a person, they told me about their passion for Audubon and how much their engagement means in their communities, with their friends and with their families. That kind of engagement is precious in our fast-paced world and it represents great opportunity.

So far, staff members have gone out of their way to make me feel welcome and connected to our far-flung network. They are generous with their insights and eager to hear about my experiences, impressions and plans for the future. We are already collaborating on many fronts. The good work of the Policy and Communications teams led to publication of my first opinion piece as Audubon's CEO on Day Two. My op-ed urging the Senate to take decisive action to ensure the long-term restoration of the Gulf Coast ran in newspapers from the Miami Herald to the Juneau Empire, as well as on a number of national web outlets.

I am also working closely with staff on the first trips I'll make to Audubon field locations through mid-October. The primary purpose of these visits is to let me experience the unique ways in which birds connect people with nature and inspire the concern, commitment and action that have fueled Audubon's conservation successes throughout its history. Seeing Audubon from the grassroots – and going birding – will give me a view of the organization from the field. We've had some media interest (the hook is about a CEO going to the birds – it's corny, but it's working) and that'll enable me to shine a light on the great work that's happening from Coastal Louisiana to St. Louis. I'll have the opportunity to meet with some staff and some volunteer leaders, but the primary purpose of this first trip is to connect with Audubon's historic legacy.

I will make numerous follow-up trips to meet the many special people whose commitment and extraordinary contributions make possible our collective conservation achievements. I hope that by first seeking to better understand a very important source of their passion, my actions will speak for themselves: I respect all they bring to our work and I truly believe what I said in my first note to staff: We Are All Audubon.

Only a few days into the job, I am grateful for this exceptional opportunity and for the trust I've been given.

The Audubon network is unique and well-respected within the conservation community and you are vital to its success. I look forward to future opportunities to meet face-to-face and to the many and varied victories we will achieve together for birds, for other wildlife and for the habitats that sustain us all.

Best regards,
David Yarnold

From the Field

Thanks to all who helped with the Fall International Migratory Bird Count on September 18th.

Daria Bern, Roger Cutler, Cheryl Johnson, Richard Domroski, Gail Domroski, Randy Hitchcock, Bill Mager, Betty Mager, Fern Murphy, Sheldon Murphy, Ken Park, John Park, Don Picard, John Pierce. I'll have the tally sheet at our October meeting. It may also be posted on the chapter website.

Of Note: Two White-tailed Tropicbirds were seen from parking lot 4 at Canaveral National Seashore during the migration count.

FIELD TRIPS

Sat Oct 9 - 7 a.m. We'll travel South to Lori Wilson Park in Brevard County. This beautiful Maritime Hammock can be very good for migrant land birds during both spring and fall. We will also check the beach for gulls and shorebirds.

<http://www.brevardparks.com/visittheparks/parks/prkbch1.php#LoriWilson>

Sat Oct 30 - 7 a.m. Princess Place Preserve, in Flagler County. This park is at the confluence of Pellicer Creek and the Intracoastal waterway. The different habitats of this park make it a great birding spot.

<http://www.flagleronline.com/whattodo/princessplace.asp>

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

http://www.sevolusiaaudubon.org/field_trips.htm

NOTE: 111th Ponce Inlet Christmas Bird Count will be Sunday January 2, 2011. Please call Gail @ (386) 428-0447 if you can help.

—Gail Domroski

A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers, but borrowed from his children.

~John James Audubon

Wandering Members

The Battle of the Garden

I spend a good part of my summers at our cabin in the bottom of the Ghost River valley, itself in a wider glacial age valley leading away from the Rocky Mountains. Physical location is about an hour west of Calgary, Alberta.

Our living room is a log cabin, built about 1922 by Guy Gibson, a WWI veteran who went on to build some 1000 similar structures in the area. Since we have the first, we also have his ghost and we have had several experiences which confirm his existence. He never ventures into the rest of the house but restricts his visits to the portion he built.

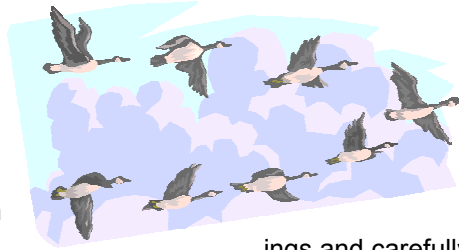
Sometime in the 1930s, someone added a log addition, probably as a bedroom, which is our dining room. In the mid 1980s, a two story addition was built with a kitchen, three bedrooms and two bathrooms. They extended the roof over the log structure, cut out two large skylights, erected new walls outside the existing logs and also built an entry and a pump room. Various outbuildings have been added over the years, including a large garage and a guest house which has become my office.

The gentleman that we bought from had two Malamutes, so the yard was a mess. I filled holes and picked up bones the first summer and our caretaker did a lot of clearing over that winter. I started on lawns and garden the next year and we have gradually gained on the outside appearance over the five summers we have been here.

One of the advantages of living in the forest is the amount of wildlife we have around us, especially deer. We leave the gate to the backyard open so that fawns can follow their mothers in and we have a salt lick just outside the gate to further entice them. This provides a nearly continuous spectacle for our grandkids when they visit and one of the first words for both granddaughters has been "deah, DEAH!!"

One of the disadvantages of living in the forest is the amount of wildlife we have around us, especially deer. They are extremely tame and do not differentiate well between wild plants and my plants. Also one of the larger does learned to stand on her hind legs and thump my bird-feeders with her head, knocking out the seeds which she then ate off the ground. After four years of very poor success chasing the deer away with brooms, rocks and unkind words, I resolved last year to erect an electric fence to form a secure inner yard. Accordingly, before I left last fall, I bought wire, insulators, ground post and a transmission unit.

This spring I built a two wire fence, which after a couple of misruns, distributes electric pulses around a perimeter outside most of my shrubs and flowerbeds. As



soon as the frost was gone, I happily put out my flowering annuals. First night, half the pansies and the most expensive petunias disappeared - cloven hoof prints left little doubt as to the cause. As if to confirm, shortly after breakfast, the culprit returned. She entered through a ten-foot gap I had left between two build-

ings and carefully picked her way through the lawn furniture en route to the remaining pansies. She was extremely belligerent when I tried to run her off but did finally jump over the fence at a point opposite her entry. She immediately circled through the neighbor's yard to our back gate and began to retrace her path through the gap and the lawn furniture. I finally strung wire across the gap and tied it into the system. That seems to have worked over the rest of the summer.

A couple of weeks later, I looked out as a young buck entered the yard and watched as he grazed his way toward the house. No hesitation at all when he got to the fence. He ducked his head, crouched slightly and kept right on walking, barely slowing as he passed under the bottom wire. I chased him off and solved this problem by adding a third, lower, wire to the back half of the fence. That seemed to fix the problem until a couple of weeks ago when Beth looked out to see a buck and a doe standing near my Saskatoon trees. When she chased them, the doe easily ducked under the wire. The buck decided that he was much too important to stoop to such levels so he jumped over the top. Lowering the bottom wire where the doe had passed seems to have resolved that issue, at least for now.

Last month, we looked out to see a large doe strolling across the front yard, aiming for the pansies. I chased her and she ducked under the two-wire fence and left - it is amazing how they can get just low enough to clear the wire without even seeming to think about it. The next day, I returned from town to find her eating her second lilac bush in the front yard. I raised enough fuss that I scared her and she scraped the wire as she left. Between that jolt and the third wire which I added, the front yard has been clear for almost four weeks now.

The other issue has been my strawberry patch. Once we kept the deer from eating it down to the ground, it flourished. True, our pair of resident chipmunks ate a few stems from time to time but damage was minimal. By August we had a lot of berries ripening and several flowers about to produce more. Two berries ripened ahead of the others. I ate one right off the vine and it was delicious. I left the other for Beth to eat the next morning. Next morning we discovered 1) chipmunks like ripe strawberries, 2) chipmunks like unripe strawberries, and 3) chipmunks also like strawberry flowers. We were wiped out. Two strands of electric wire, an inch apart and an inch above the ground around the perimeter, seem to be keep

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Wandering from p. 4

ing the patch safe but the real test will come next June when there are berries to get after.

We left mid-September but I will return for a few weeks around Thanksgiving. I left the electricity on until then and will see how the shrubs survive with no one in the house to counter the occasional breach. Here's hoping!

—Ken Gunn

October Speaker

Lisa Roberts

Our October speaker will be Lisa Roberts, Executive Director of the Florida Wildflower Foundation. Lisa moved to Florida when she was four years old and grew up in the Orlando area. She attended UCF and received her Bachelor Degree in Journalism from that school. She is a certified Florida Master Naturalist and enjoys kayaking, hiking, oil painting and gardening with native plants and wildflowers.

Lisa is a lifelong journalist who worked for the Orlando Sentinel for 33 years, where she often wrote about Florida's natural lands and their recreational opportunities. She left the Sentinel in 2007 to form 321 Communications Group LLC, a public relations and marketing firm in Maitland. In 2008, Lisa became Executive Director of the Florida Wildflower Foundation.

The Florida Wildflower Foundation's mission is to enrich lives with Florida's native wildflowers. Through the sale of the State Wildflower license tag, the non-profit organization increases the visibility and availability of native wildflowers and grasses by funding research, education and planting projects statewide.

Since 2000, the \$15 donation from each State Wildflower license plate sale has:

- Provided more than \$2.3 million for native wildflower education, research and planting projects.
- Spurred the development of the wildflower seed industry by supporting the Florida Wildflower Seed and Plant Growers Association.
- Supported Florida's native nursery industry by increasing demand for flowering native species.
- Built awareness and knowledge of native wildflowers and plants.
- Supported highway beautification through widespread wildflower seeding and planting projects.
- Promoted wildflower tourism and its enormous economic benefits.
- Partnered with like-minded agencies and organizations to support programs such as the Florida Forever land preservation effort.

Ultimately, the Foundation seeks to build a center

for wildflower research and education that conveys to visitors and residents alike the beauty of wildflowers and their roles in Florida's diverse habitats.

To support its research effort, the Foundation in 2007 established the Gary Henry Research Endowment Fund at the University of Florida. The endowment is in honor of the contributions made by the organization's first executive director.

The Foundation is steered by a board of directors that represents organizations and agencies interested in preserving and conserving Florida's native flowers. They include the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Florida Department of Transportation, Florida Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, Florida League of Cities, Florida Master Gardeners, Association of Florida Native Nurseries, Florida Native Plant Society and Wildflower Seed and Plant Growers Association Inc.

Lisa will elaborate a bit more on what The Foundation does and how they do it. She will also discuss the importance of using native plants in your gardening and landscaping and will explain how that contributes to the diversity in our environment. This is a presentation which will be of interest to both birders and gardeners.

—K.G.

Urgent Personal Request from Charles Lee

Dear Friends:

This will be my 38th year with Audubon. In all of the time I have served as a staff member, my great enthusiasm has been inspired by the fact that I was part of a venerable organization. The Florida Audubon Society has now enjoyed 110 years of honor and success.

FAS was around to collaborate with President Teddy Roosevelt on the creation of the National Wildlife Refuge system, and to support the creation of the first National Wildlife Refuge (Pelican Island). We were also around to inaugurate Florida's great venture into conservation through the creation of the Preservation 2000 program, Florida Forever, and the remarkable progress we have made toward saving the Everglades.

The meetings to be held at the assembly are important, including the sessions where we set our conservation priorities for the coming year, and where we discuss the future of the Florida Audubon Society. I hope you will note that the logo on this page reads FLORIDA AUDUBON SOCIETY. That is not an accident.

We are at a crucial time. Our leaders on the board have decided to clearly restore the identity of the organization

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Charles Lee from p. 5

as the Florida Audubon Society; just as it was known for over 100 years. It is therefore extremely important that the deliberations at the Assembly, coming up in just three weeks, be well attended – by Audubon chapter leaders and members who want to see the Florida Audubon Society grow, succeed and prosper.

Please do me a personal favor.

If you have not registered for the Assembly yet, please do it today. The venue is great, the prices reasonable, and the importance of your attendance to the future of the Florida Audubon Society has never been greater. If you have any questions about why I think it is particularly important for you and your chapter to be represented at the Assembly this year, please call me.

Charles Lee

Director of Advocacy

Florida Audubon Society

(407) 620-5178

<http://audubonofflorida.org/>

Backyard Naturalist

Weeds

I've said more than once in this space that I'm a lot of *non*. I'm a non-birder (in a birder society), a non-gardener (in a native plant society).

Well that's two. I'm sure there are more. But I do *observe* (birds and plants and butterflies).

It's a short walk on a boardwalk from the house to CrowMoon Studio where *The eSkimmer* is produced. When my late wife (the gardener) Donnadine was here, the walk was lined with lovely native plants, many in bloom and thriving in what appeared to be a care-free manner. The plants were thriving because the gardener cared. She toiled mightily daily but didn't look upon it as work. To her it was a labor of love. Her little ceramic garden sign said: *Cares melt when you kneel in your garden*.

The walk is still lined with natives. The Gaillardia are there and lovely green shrubs whose identity is a mystery to me. But in two short years, a whole lot of strangers, natives all, have joined the party.

On my walk to the studio today, I brushed by a little white flower. Pretty little thing with a yellow center. When I sat down at the computer I saw that I had friends attached.

I had little barbed seeds on my shirt, my pants, my legs. I plucked one off and took a closer look. Amazing. Two little hooked barbs on the end make it easy for this seed to travel. The plant's genetic information will be carried by any body—bird, man or beast—who happens by. This, of course, wasn't the first time that this has

happened to me. Happens all the time. But today it caused me to stop and think. To muse. And to be filled (again) with awe and wonder of this planet. I've got a whole yard of survivors here. Each linked, sewn into the ecological fabric of life. Some we dismiss, haughtily as "weeds", common intruders into "our" plans. I laugh at myself when I think that way. Intruders indeed. We're the newcomers. We're the intruders.

I will admit, when Donnadine tended the gardens, they were beautiful. She took a lawn from street-to-house in the front and a lawn from house-to-bay in the back and transformed the landscape into a xeriscaped lovely-to-look-at and easy-to-live-with group of gardens, each showing care and thought.

It's still xeriscaped but the gardener is now Mother Nature. I still cut what little lawn there is, which is mainly a network of paths between gardens but I'm an observer. And I'm lazy. So I'm watching the natives design the spaces. I've learned to identify several: Beautyberry,



Firebush, Beebalm (and its many inhabitant creatures) and now my new friend with the hitch hiking seeds: Bidens alba or common (there's that word again) Beggartick.

I photographed one of the (many) plants today and I got up close and downright nosey with my macro lens. This plant too, has many dependant creatures crawling on it, feeding on it, hiding in it.

Take some time and crawl around on your hands and knees in your yard and you'll find microcosmic ecosystems all over the place.

Maybe the traditional attitude of prayer—kneeling—has some connection to this.

—Gil Miller



Officers & Chairs

President: Don Picard	president@sevolusiaaudubon.org
Secretary: Fern Murphy	sailorchick@bellsouth.net
Treasurer: Bill Cox	billmarsha@pshift.com
Newsletter: Gil Miller	the.skimmer@yahoo.com
Programs: Ken Gunn	gunnsatbeach@cfl.rr.com
Field Trips: Gail Domroski	the.skimmer@yahoo.com
Conservation, Emeritus: Lee Bidgood	bidgood@gator.net
Membership: Richard Domroski	the.skimmer@yahoo.com