

# The eSkimmer

Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, Inc.

Issue Vol. IV- No. 5

September, 2009

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

## Prez Sez

### *New Season, New Hopes*

Welcome to a new season of the Southeast Volusia Audubon Society. I hope you had a great summer and are ready for everything that fall and winter in Florida have to offer.

We are returning to our previous meeting night of the third Wednesday of the month. The location and time remain the same. There are two reasons for the change. One is to de-conflict with the Sierra Club which meets on the first Wednesday, and the other is to see if a new night will attract more participants.

Ken Gunn, Program Chair, has already started with an impressive set of programs\*. He is putting together a series of talks about the world around us (in Central Florida). He hopes to finish with a speaker explaining what we can do to make it better.

Gail Domroski, Field trips Chair, is hard at work putting together a set of two field trips per month, one on the weekend and one on a weekday. The highlight for me will be the November 12<sup>th</sup> guided tour of the Zellwood Muck Farms. With the reports from last year, I am expecting five or ten new life birds for my list.

During the summer, I initiated the blog capability that our web service provides. I am using it for people to share stories about birds and birding. You are cordially invited to send in your stories for publication. Birding is a great pastime and should be shared.

During the September meeting, I will discuss the goals for our chapter for the year. YOU are an integral part of this process. It is YOUR club. The Executive Board works (volunteers) for you. Please be involved.

I will also present the report on Birds and Climate Change developed by National Audubon after reviewing the results of 100 years' of Christmas Bird Counts. Of 305 species studied, 177 of them shifted their southward migrations and stopped short of their traditional wintering grounds. In fact, 60 species stopped at least 100 miles north. Find out what is going on and what it means.

—Don Picard

\* See Speakers p. 2

## 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 Sept. 16, 2009**

Speaker: **Town Hall format**

President Don Picard will outline chapter's  
goals & objectives for the coming year.

Programs & Field trips subject to change.

## 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!

**Friday, Sept. 18, 2009**

**Smyrna Dunes Park**

*See In The Field p.2*

Questions? Contact Gail Domroski 428-0447

Audubon members and guests are all welcome.

If you'd like to have The eSkimmer emailed  
monthly, contact us at [the.skimmer@yahoo.com](mailto:the.skimmer@yahoo.com)

Type Subscribe in the subject line.

Please check out our website at  
<http://sevolusiaaudubon.org>  
and the birding stories at  
<http://blog.sevolusiaaudubon.org>

## In The Field

### September Field Trips

#### Friday Sept 18th (3) Smyrna Dunes Park - 8

Meet at 8 am. at Edgewater Market Square parking lot to car pool (ent. Fee \$3.50 per vehicle) or about 8:30 at park picnic shelter if you live north of Edgewater. We will walk the boardwalk thru the hammock to look for migratory land birds and the ocean and inlet beaches to look for shore birds.

#### Saturday Sept. 19th

(3) International Migratory Bird Count.

(See **Fall Migration** next column)

#### Friday Sept. 25th

(3) Tomoka State Park- Meet at 7 am.

Tomoka is a bird-watcher's paradise—"sometimes" Birders know how that goes—with over 160 species sighted, especially during the spring and fall migrations. We will walk the nature trails and shorelines in search of both upland and wetland species.

Numbers in parentheses before location indicate degree of difficulty. (1) Easy or no walking. (2) Walking less than 1 mile. (3) One plus mile walking and/or uneven terrain.

Bring water, snacks and lunch if you want to stay and visit some.

—Gail Domroski

## Speakers

This season I am putting together a series of talks about the world around us (in Central Florida). I hope to finish with a speaker explaining what we can do to make it better.

**Oct.** The state and nationally acclaimed environmental writer, Ms Dinah Pulver of the Daytona Beach News-Journal will give us a State of our Water report.

**Nov.** Dr. Fred Mosher of Embry-Riddle University will speak on Global Warming, a subject important to all of us who live in the world but particularly us denizens of the lowlands of Central Florida.

**Dec.** Mr. Gary Knight, or one of his staff, from the Florida Natural Areas Inventory, will give us a State of our Land Report. FNAI's website is [www.fnai.org](http://www.fnai.org) should you wish to do a bit of homework before the meeting.

In the new year, I plan to have speakers who address the States of our Flora and Fauna. Stay tuned and try to think of friends who might be interested in our programs.

—Ken Gunn

## Fall Migration

SEPTEMBER 19, 2009

The North American Migration Count in Florida is sponsored by Florida Ornithological Society, and is supported by local Audubon Societies, local bird clubs, and other interested organizations.

**PURPOSE:** The mission of the North American Migration Count (NAMC) is to:

Obtain a "snapshot" of the progress and "shape" of spring and fall Migration.

Obtain information on the abundance and distribution of each species.

Initiate more participation among birders within a state and between states.

Create challenges and goals among birders while collecting useful information.

Aid in organization and centralization of date.

HAVE FUN.

**AREA OF COUNT:** The area of a count is not a circle, but the boundaries of a County. The idea is to have a contiguous interlocking set of non-overlapping counts across North America. It is desirable to get as much of each county surveyed as resources permit.

**TIMING OF THE COUNT:** Each spring and fall another picture will be acquired of the migration pattern. From these we may discover the shape of migration particular to each species. The date of NAMC has been chosen to capture as many migrants as possible before they reach the final destination. It will not be peak migration everywhere. The Southern areas will have the lingers and the northern areas will still await many of the breeding species when the spring count takes place.

**COUNT DATES:** The NAMC takes place across North America on the third Saturday of September and the second Saturday of May each year. The near-term counts are September 19, 2009, May 8, 2010, and September 18, 2010.

Anyone who would like to help with any of these counts, please call Gail Domroski @ 428-0447.

I have no doubt that we will be successful in harnessing the sun's energy.... If sunbeams were weapons of war, we would have had solar energy centuries ago.

~Sir George Porter, quoted in *The Observer*, 26 August 1973



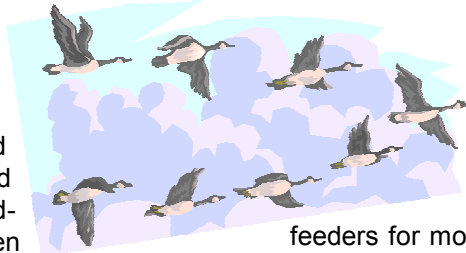
## Wandering Members

### Canadian Feeder Watch

We had several Black-capped and Mountain Chickadees, a few Dark-eyed Junco and our resident pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches at our feeders when I arrived at our summer cabin in Southwest Alberta in early March. Within the next two weeks, a couple of White-breasted Nuthatches and a pair of Varied Thrush each spent a few days on their way farther north. By the time I left for Australia in early April we had been visited by a Downy Woodpecker and experienced flyovers by a number of Common Raven.

When I got back north from Australia in May, migration and nesting was in full swing. The Pine Siskin had arrived and laid claim to the feeders, although they had to share the ground underneath with juncos. Blue Jays and Robins were also here and preparing to nest. Within a few days, an influx of American Tree, Chipping, Lincoln's, and White-crowned Sparrows occurred. A lost Yellow-rumped Warbler showed up and before the first sparrows left a couple of Song Sparrows joined them. By the time the sparrows thinned out a pair of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks came for a week and overlapped about a day with a pair of Evening and one female Black-capped Grosbeak.

The first of at least two families of Rufous Hummingbirds arrived in mid-May and nested somewhere nearby. They were followed by a transient Calliope and one Ruby-throated female who stayed the summer so must have had a mate and nested, but I never identified the male.



We were visited by a juvenile Gray Jay in June and the pair of Northern Flickers, who nested above us, stopped by occasionally over the summer. The Siskin fledged the end of July and we had about 100 of them at the feeders for most of August. This is double last year's count but still only half of the 2007 crop. The Red-breasted Nuthatches seem to have had a more successful year as there is now an extra one or two of them at the feeder. We had as many as eight Evening Grosbeaks at a time when they spent a couple of days on their way south, so they also had a good year.

It was a banner year for Black-capped Chickadees as there is now a circus when they show up for their noon feeding. Chickadees and Nuthatches, here at least, do not sit on the feeders. They flit in, pick up a seed, take it to a nearby tree, shell it and eat it, then return and do it all over again. With 12 – 15 Chickadees and 3 – 4 Nuthatches, the air is a danger zone for over half an hour every day.

Finally, the Robins have fledged, strengthened their wings and left. The Blue Jays have also fledged but are still here. They scrap with the resident squirrel for hundreds of seeds scattered on the ground by the now-departed Siskin.

The Ravens are still here and fly over us often, one of the few Corvids who winter in the Alberta foothills.

—Ken Gunn

### BIRDS WATCHING by Gil Miller



Your grandchildren will likely find it incredible - or even sinful - that you burned up a gallon of gasoline to fetch a pack of cigarettes!

~Paul MacCready, Jr.

Please forward this **eSkimmer** to friends.

### Suggested Reading

*Two Books Every Naturalist Should Own*

**Crow Planet** by Lyanda Lynn Haupt

**Mind of the Raven** by Bernd Heinrich

*Volusia County Public Library has both books.*

## Visitor

### *Bird Lady Flew in From Rochester*

Being a birder in western New York State has its limitations. Snow and freezing ponds and lakes being one of them. Four years ago after spending hours on the internet I designed my own birding trip to Florida for the coming winter. I found a site on the internet, <http://www.birdingpal.org/> which gives the names of local birders willing to take visitors out or at least give directions to the local hot spots.

I was visiting friends in Vero Beach. The Vero Beach listing had two birders, no names given, just a "click me" button. I clicked and sent an email. Jack Taylor responded saying he would be glad to take me birding. My friends and family thought I was being reckless – a lone woman meeting up with a total stranger named Jack. Perhaps Jack the Ripper came to their minds. My friends in Vero Beach also thought I was engaging in risky behavior. But I knew something they did not. Birders are wonderful people, well generally anyway. And the name Jack Taylor was a good omen. Joe Taylor of Rochester, NY, was a legendary birder, first member of the 700 club and instrumental in fostering and supporting the fledgling American Birding Association many years ago. I had no fear.

Upon arriving at Vero Beach I called Jack and he outlined the plan. Saturday he would pick me up and we would go to the Indian River Golf Club before it opened and do a bird survey. From their website: *"In 1995, the Indian River Golf Club was designated an Audubon Signature Sanctuary by Audubon International. It was the 3<sup>rd</sup> in the world to receive this coveted status."*

At 7 a.m. Jack pulled up and I met him for the first time. He was a delightful 80 year old, Vero Beach resident. We arrived at the golf club, passed through the gate and met two other bird surveyors. Two golf carts awaited us. My driver was an Episcopal priest, a funny and amusing man. And my friends back home had worried! We had a delightful day before the golfers appeared. I got about 40 life birds that day.

Two days later Jack again picked me up. This time I convinced my non-birder hostess to join us. Off we went to Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area in central Florida about 60 miles west. A Melbourne birder joined us and we piled into her spacious van. We stopped at a local fisherman's restaurant buying Jack his breakfast.

Another fabulous day! Another 40 plus life birds. Amazing views of Limpkins, Barred Owl, Crested Cara Cara and many more. Jack knew the spots and we would drive up and there they would be. Nothing like an expert guide.

Stopping at the same restaurant we bought Jack his lunch. I had ordered fried squash. Consequently he nick-

named me "Fried Squash" and emails were addressed that way. Jack gave me many tips on places to go and we kept in touch by email a few times. About a year ago, my emails went unanswered. I had thanked him many times for his graciousness and generously sharing his time and knowledge with me. I hope he knew how much confidence and encouragement he had given me. Good birding, Jack, wherever you are.

Now I am back in Florida for a fall visit. The emphasis has been on butterflies and backyard nature study. Walking slowly to find spiders, butterflies and whatever else lives closely underfoot. The commonplace becomes the uncommon under the loupe and magnifying glass. Today was spent in search of wildlife at Smyrna Dunes Park. Butterflies took our interest as we spotted several species, including a Queen. Lots of shorebirds and a possible Clapper Rail just off the boardwalk. We ended our outing with a picnic lunch under a cool and pleasant pavillion at the boardwalk entrance.

—Carolyn Ragan

## Donnadine Miller Memorial 5k

### *Annual Race & Pet Walk - Oct. 17, 2009*

This annual race (people race, pets walk) a fund-raiser for Greyhound Pets of America (GPA), was named for Donnadine Miller, who at one-time chaired it.

Donnadine, a longtime SEVAS member, passed into the light April 7, 2008.

SEVAS (and others, of course) can support the race in several ways. For information:

email [gpadaytona@cfl.rr.com](mailto:gpadaytona@cfl.rr.com)

Call GPA 386-239-3647



## Officers & Chairs

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