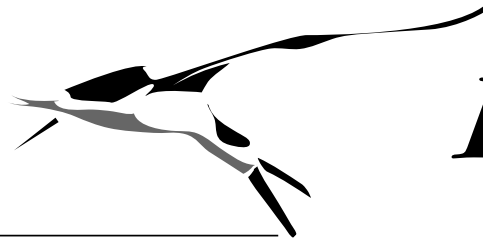


WING



BEAT

December 2007 & January 2008

Volume XLI Number 2

President's Message

Happy Holidays to all members of Clearwater Audubon Society. This past year has been very successful in terms of environmental issues here in Pinellas County. Concerned citizens voiced their opinions about the proposed changes at Brooker Creek Preserve put forth by the Board of County Commissioners. We were able to show our concern for that wonderful piece of land and the commissioners listened. We were also influential in the changes at Shell Key. Hopefully that beautiful island will continue to be an important nesting & resting area for our shorebirds. These things can only happen when we make our voices heard and we work together.

Clearwater Audubon would like you to join us and get involved. We have field trips almost every weekend. We sponsor monthly meetings at Moccasin Lake Nature Park that are free to the public. We are also looking for ways to increase our visibility in the community. If you have any ideas or projects that you would like to see Clearwater Audubon get involved in please get in touch with us. You can call 447-4785. You do not have to be a member to share your ideas. --Paul Trunk

Inside this issue

Wingbeat Sponsors..... page 2
Calendar of Clearwater Audubon Events..... page 3
Christmas Bird Count Volunteer Details..... page 4
Eagle Watch by Joan Brigham..... page 5
Saddle Creek Field Trip Report by Steve Baetzner..... page 5

Trinidad in 2008 by Tom Pickard..... page 5
Email to the Editor from Lynn Sumerson..... page 5
Clearwater Audubon's Phone..... page 6
Greening Clearwater & Dunedin by Liz Drayer..... page 6
An Unusual Morning at Moccasin Lake by Madeleine Bohrer... page 6

Advocacy Corner

It is great to see more and more of our members taking action on environmental issues. Recently we've been involved in:

Greening of Clearwater. The City of Clearwater is undertaking an effort to promote responsible environmental policies and sustainability. Clearwater Audubon is making recommendations to the city and participating in focus group meetings.

Changes to the county's comprehensive land use plan. Members are reviewing proposed changes which affect parks and preserves. Thank you Barbara Walker.

Funding for Largo's McGough and Bonner Parks. After proposing cuts to the parks' hours of operation and staff, the city council voted to continue funding at current levels. Thank you City of Largo.

Support for public land acquisition. Members have written letters to newspapers and government officials in support of various land acquisition initiatives, including the Florida

Forever acquisition of Cross Bar Ranch and Dunedin's purchase of the J.C. Weaver property. Thank you Jane Williams.

Approval of new Shell Key Management Plan. The Pinellas County Commission adopted a new plan that includes increased protections for birds in this important nesting area. Thanks to Lorraine Margeson, Jane Williams, Aydelette Kelsey, Paul Trunk, Barbara Walker, Dana Kerstein, and the Pinellas County Commission.

Clean Water Restoration Act. Members participated in Audubon's national call-in asking Congress to sponsor this important legislation.

Special thanks to Mike MacDonald and Lynn Sumerson for their long-time and continuing support of conservation advocacy! There is more going on and our Advocacy committee is growing. Contact Liz Drayer at edrayer@tampabay.com to get involved.

Volume XLI Number 3
December 2007 & January 2008

WING BEAT

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February, April, June, August, October, & December
by the Clearwater Audubon Society

Clearwater Audubon Society serves North Pinellas County.

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www.clearwateraudubon.org

Editor: Aydelette Kelsey
*Mr. McMullen has been redeployed to Iraq.
Our thoughts are with him & his family.*

Wingbeat submissions deadline for the next
issue is February 10, 2008. Please submit
articles to: Aydelette Kelsey via email:
a@akcreative.com

Wingbeat advertising deadline for the
next issue is February 10, 2008.
Please address ad rate inquiries to
Jane Williams at 727.447.7394

Please submit ads to: a@akcreative.com

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Secretary Barbara Carmen-MacDonald 538 8688
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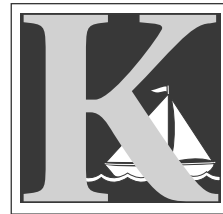


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December & January Calendar for Clearwater Audubon

Monthly Program - December 3rd, 2007

Birds as Art

Art Morris

Arthur Morris is a nature photographer and writer specializing in birds. He taught elementary school in New York City for twenty-three years. For eight years he conducted the shorebird survey at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge for The International Shorebird Surveys, Manomet, MA. Two of his images--out of 19,000 entries--were awarded prizes in the 1997 Wildlife Photographer of the Year Competition, and another was similarly honored in the 2000 contest. In April 1995, Mr. Morris became a Canon contract photographer, part of their "Explorers of Light" program. He has been featured in six episodes of the "Canon Photo Safari" television show. A gallery exhibit of his work hung at the prestigious Roger Tory Peterson Institute in Jamestown, NY in the summer of 1999. To see some of Arthur Morris' photography in advance, visit his site: www.birdsasart.com

Saturday, 12/1/07, 9AM

Moccasin Lake Nature Park

Meet at Moccasin Lake Nature Park to observe resident songbirds and raptors in oak and xeric hammock plus waterbirds. Easy $\frac{3}{4}$ mile trek on shell trail and boardwalks. Contact Mike MacDonald at 727-538-8688.

Saturday, 12/9/07, 8AM

LONG DAY TRIP to Richloam State Fish Ponds

Meet at Countryside Shopping Town, in front of Sears by US19, bring lunch and drinks: shorebirds, songbirds, waders, turkeys, Woodstorks and Sandhill Cranes in the Green Swamp, northeast of Dade City. Easy pond trails. Contact Lynn Sumerson at 727-7907-8822.

Sunday, 12/23/07, all day

Annual Christmas Bird Count

See page 4 for additional details.

Monthly Program - January 7th, 2008

Distribution & Habitat Use of the Florida Burrowing Owl

Mark Mueller, Florida Fish and Wildlife

Mark compiled and evaluated historic sighting databases into a Geographic Information System (GIS), did field-work to check for continued presence at a limited number of historic, "non-urban" breeding sites, and then used active sites and surrounding land cover to test for resource

selection. He will present on this technical stuff but also be sure to include some good photos and a funny story or two. Mark Mueller completed a Master's in Environmental Science & Policy at the USF in 2006, researching the Florida Burrowing Owl. Before that he majored in Environmental Studies at Eckerd College. Since finishing school he's worked at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Fish and Wildlife Research Institute in St. Petersburg, performing GIS-based habitat research on manatees and right whales. He's been involved with St. Petersburg Audubon Society's beach-nesting-birds efforts since 2002 and recently joined the St Pete Audubon Society board.

January Field Trips

Saturday, 1/5/08, 9AM

Moccasin Lake Nature Park

Meet at Moccasin Lake Nature Park. We'll find resident songbirds and raptors in oak and xeric hammock, plus waterbirds. Easy $\frac{3}{4}$ mile trek on shell trail and boardwalks. Contact Madeleine Bohrer 727-518-6241.

Friday, 1/18/08, 6AM, to Monday, 1/21/08, 6PM

(or later)

MULTI-DAY TRIP to see South Florida Specialties

Meet at Coachman Fundamental Middle School. This has become a much loved annual trip lead by Clearwater Audubon Society President, Paul Trunk, who shows us a host of indigenous & migratory species. For details or to reserve a spot, contact Paul Trunk, 727-447-4785.

Saturday, 1/26/08, 9AM

Clearwater Specialties & Miniature Art Society Annual Exhibit

Meet at Brighthouse Stadium north parking lot. We'll look for songbirds, raptors & water birds in the City of Clearwater; lunch in Largo, then enjoy a docent interpretation of the world's premier Miniature Art show. Contact: Mike MacDonald at 727-538-8688.



To see additional Web Resources for each of these events, check out the calendar pages at clearwateraudubon.org.

Clearwater Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count

Sunday December 23, 2007

The 108th Annual Christmas Bird Count will contribute to more than a century of data on early-winter bird populations across the Americas, most of it collected by volunteers like you. Below are the leaders of each Christmas Bird Count Zones shown on our map. Participate by contacting the leader of a zone you are interested in, or by calling Clearwater Audubon's Ken Rowe at 727.781.0745, or via e-mail at ksr28@verizon.net

Zone 1

Paul Trunk
447-4785
trunk_p@popmail.firn.edu

Zone 2

Marianne Korosy
772-7584
mkoros@aol.com

Zone 3

Merle Hubbard
939-1549
Cell 727-743-3978
merlinhubb@tampabay.rr.com

Zone 4

Dana Kerstein
441-1609
hkerstein@tampabay.rr.com

Zone 5

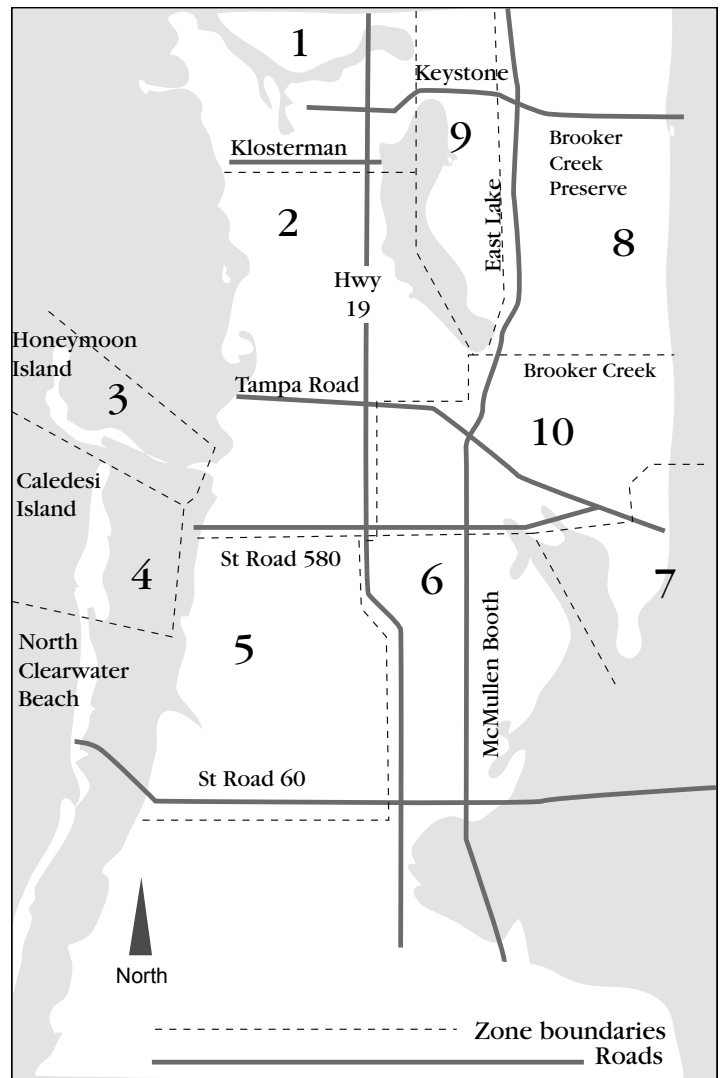
Mike MacDonald
538-8688
curmudgin@hotmail.com

Zone 6

Joan Brigham
446-9367

Zone 6A Coopers Point

Ellen Pfau
786-3718
Epfau@cwshomehealth.com



Zone 7

Sid Crawford
785-3960

Zone 8

Ken Rowe
781-0745
ksr28@verizon.net

Zone 9

Dorothy Fritzing
531-8654

Zone 10

Dr. John Rippon
725-4292
jwilrippon@aol.com

Eagle Watch

by Joan Brigham

The Bald Eagle was removed from the endangered species list in the lower 48 states on June 29, 2007-proclaimed as 'recovered' from their threatened status - a true success story. As their population rises, their habitat continues in jeopardy. The management plan, both state and federal, is still in the process of being approved and until then, the eagles will continue to be protected by the Endangered Species Act. Florida is also planning to remove the eagle from its Imperiled Species List, anticipating delisting in December.

As eagle watchers we will have to be vigilant, prepared for a likely increase in requests for building permits near nest sites and violations due to lack of knowledge about continued protection.

In North Pinellas County our birds are busy refurbishing nests in preparation for this nesting season. No birds are incubating eggs as of this writing.

More observers are always welcome. We need as many eyes as possible to ensure the eagles and their nest sites are safe.

Saddle Creek Trip Report

by Steve Baetzner

Seven of us set out for Saddle Creek, a wooded area along side a small stream in the Lakeland area. Despite the cloudy conditions and the intermittent sprinkles of rain that accompanied us to our destination, we kept dry all the time we birded and we managed to come up with a total of 40 species. One of our first and best finds was an Ovenbird, lying low in a brushy area near the creek. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Indigo Buntings were everywhere, constantly flitting across our path through the woods. There was much discussion as to what these little brown birds were and it was decided that they were female Indigos. Whatever they were, there were lots of them!

We saw no ducks and very few water birds. Common Moorhens were about the most abundant waterfowl we came across. We did see a few egrets and a Little Blue

Heron and a Tri-colored Heron at a pond near our picnic area. And a magnificent Wood Stork soared over our heads as we came out of the woods. One of the birders we met along the trail and joined up with, on his way home, stopped while we were eating lunch and reported a Bittern was down among the rushes in the pond. Yours truly was way too pooped to get up and go down and look but two others in our party did so and reported they saw nothing more than a heron or two. Several Kingfishers were also sited at the park and on the way home. It wasn't a "great pickin's" kind of day but we decided 40 species wasn't bad. The group of birders we met reported seeing 13 species of warbler however. There were also throngs of Golden Orb Weaver spiders hanging from the trees and several pretty butterflies including a Buckeye that landed on my shoulder!

Trinidad - November 2008

by Tom Pickard

Clearwater Audubon is organizing a birding trip to Trinidad and Tobago November 8 - 17, 2008. We will spend 7 nights at the famous Asa Wright Lodge in Trinidad and 2 nights at the Blue Water Inn in Tobago.

If you want lots of tropical birding with little effort, this is the trip for you. You can roll out of bed, grab a coffee and a stool in the screened-in porch of the lodge, and see 20 colorful species before breakfast! Ask anyone who has been there.

Day trips are easy and varied. Among the highlights are seeing hundreds of scarlet ibis returning to roost for the night, walking from the lodge to see manakins and oil birds, and taking night trips to see potoos. The small island of Tobago has both mountain and seacoast birding.

We expect to keep the cost below \$3000 --- air fares being the big unknown. That cost will include everything except drinks and personal purchases.

If you are interested, please contact Tom Pickard at 727.734.3398 or tompickard@hotmail.com. This will not obligate you to go, but we must find out soon if there is sufficient interest to push ahead with the logistics. We need ten people to proceed. Fifteen of us went in 1998. I saw sixty lifers!

Email to the Editor **Member Alert:** Some members of St. Pete Audubon have had their scopes stolen from their car trunks. Thieves have followed their cars after seeing them use the scopes for shore birds. When they get out of their cars to walk a trail, their trunk is broken into and the scope stolen. Let's advise our members to walk the trails first, then bird the shore before going home. -Lynn Sumerson

Can You Hear Me Now?

Clearwater Audubon Society Phone Line Provides Vital Service To The Community

from *Liz Drayer & Barbara Walker*

The Clearwater Audubon Society now has its own phone number: 727.442.9140. For years the society's president has answered calls from the public and provided information on bird identification, bird behavior, rescue of injured birds and more. The new phone is being answered by Barbara Walker, one of our group's most active members.

"What an amazing thing it is to take these calls," says Barbara. "They paint a picture of what is going on in Northern Pinellas County between people and birds. Every person has a story to tell and the sum of those experiences tells an even greater tale of habitat loss and the difficulties birds face in a densely populated county."

Since assuming responsibility for the phones, Barbara has fielded calls on a variety of subjects, including students' homework questions (e.g., what is the Indian name for turkey?), where to place bird nesting boxes, and the potential effect on birds from the construction of the Walmart proposed for Tarpon Springs. She researches some questions herself and refers others to society members or outside experts.

Providing information about birds and conservation is an important way the Clearwater Audubon Society serves the public. Responding to citizens' phone calls is one more example of how we do this.

Clearwater And Dunedin Look at Ways to Get Greener

by *Liz Drayer*

The cities of Clearwater and Dunedin are studying ways to become more sustainable, or environmentally friendly. Clearwater has partnered with the USF, which is studying ways the city can improve energy efficiency, waste management, air and water quality, preserve critical habitats, and more. The Clearwater Audubon Society participated in a focus group meeting hosted by the city and presented its own list of "greening" ideas. USF will present its recommendations to the city council at its December 6 meeting. Residents can show support for this initiative by attending.

Dunedin has hired a "sustainability coordinator" to increase recycling and seek accreditation from the Florida Green Building Coalition. New programs underway include removal of invasive plants from Hammock Park,

regular beach cleanups, promotion of alternative transportation like carpools and bikes, and a switch to environmentally friendly cleaning products for city facilities.

If you live in these cities, please call your mayor's office and voice your support for these programs. Residents of other incorporated areas can ask their local governments what they are doing to get with the green program.

An Unusual Morning at Moccasin Lake

by *Madeleine Bohrer*

What do you get when you mix a half dozen experienced birders and a Girl Scout troop? A great way to spot birds on a Saturday morning! And what a wonderful way to open the first Moccasin Lake walk of the season. There's nothing like young eyes and ears to spot ½ inch-sized frogs, turtles poking their heads out of a pond, and the tiniest of birds flitting through the treetops. The early morning rain didn't deter anyone, and even though the birds were somewhat scarce, it was a morning to remember.

The first bird we saw was a Great blue heron. Perfect: a nice, big bird for the Girl Scout troop to practice using binoculars. Then, a beautiful Red-shouldered hawk flew just overhead. There were plenty of Chimney swifts darting here and there. We slowly moved toward the grove by the windmill and kept our eyes open for the Brown thrashers we commonly see there. No thrashers...but instead we found a pair of Yellow-billed cuckoos showing their pale, distinctive neck and breast and their beautiful, spotty tails! I could barely contain myself! We all got a great look at them.

After my heart rate went back to normal, we continued our walk past the butterfly garden where the Gopher Tortoise came out of his hole to say hello. We also had Zebra Longwing, Black Swallowtail, and some type of Sulphur butterflies. We heard Cardinals, Blue-gray gnatcatchers, Titmice, a Catbird, and a Carolina Wren. At the lake, far away on a tower was a pair of Bald Eagles. Thank goodness we had two scopes with us. Everyone was amazed at the clarity scopes afford us. They were particularly impressed by the feathers of a female Anhinga drying her wings nearby. (I remember the days of my old "coke bottle" binoculars and what a difference it made to have "real" binocs.) The scopes were great for the Girl Scouts who, by the way, were 2nd, 3rd, and 4th graders—an amazing bunch—very knowledgeable and enthusiastic.

It is such a joy to share nature with people because you know it will not stop there: they will, in turn, share their love for the outdoors with others and hopefully encourage them to respect earthly plants and creatures.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Clearwater Audubon serves North Pinellas County

Clearwater

Mr. Mark Joseph Runge
Ms. Mary Van Meer
Ms. Barbara Brace
Ms. Carol J. Stirr
Mr. Thomas Sponenberg
Mr. Clifford Moffitt
Ms. Lois R. Arner

Dunedin

Roselee C. Kelley
Blythin Leggett
Ms. Frances Caputo

Largo

Ms. Antonia Leewandowski

Oldsmar

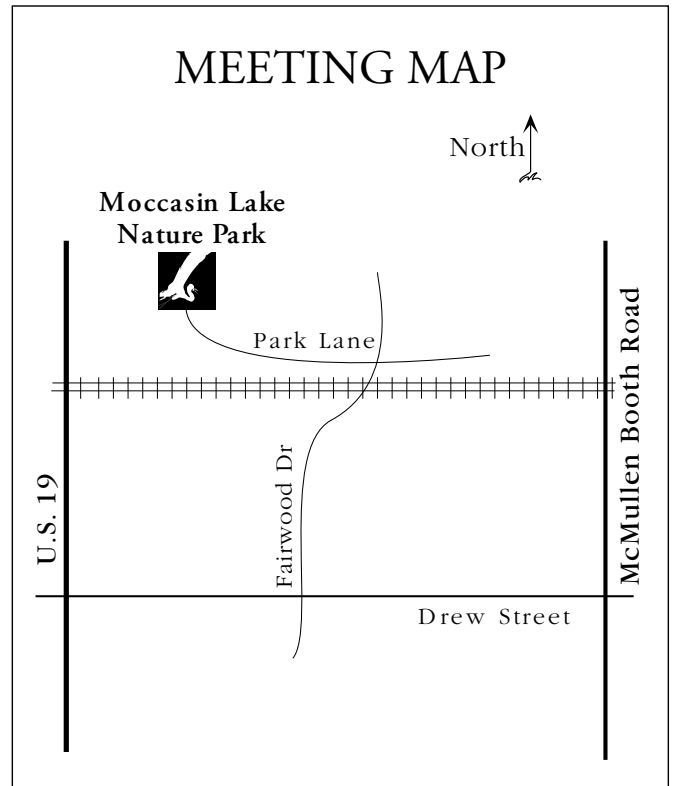
Mr. Brian Suttmiller

Palm Harbor

Mr. Mike Catalano
Ms. Margaret Walter
Mr. Jim Caldwell
Mr. James Wells
Mr. John P. Halada
Cedric M. Smith

Safety Harbor

Mr. David Kailing



Audubon Membership Form

- National Audubon Membership includes an automatic membership in your local chapter as well as annual subscriptions to Audubon Magazine, Florida Naturalist, & Wing Beat. Introductory membership to National Audubon is \$20.00 (National renewal will be handled by National Audubon.) Make your check payable to National Audubon Society.
- Chapter Only Membership enrolls you as a member of the Clearwater Audubon Society and includes a 6-issue annual subscription to Wing Beat. Annual dues are \$15.00. Your renewal date will appear after your name on your mailing label. Make your check payable to Clearwater Audubon Society.

Member Name(s) _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

- Please save resources and send WingBeat via Email.
- This is a gift membership for someone else. My name is _____

Mail to: Debbie Trunk, CAS Membership Chair
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WHAT IS THE CLEARWATER AUDUBON SOCIETY?

by Liz Drayer, Board Member & Conservation Chair

Our purpose is embodied in our motto: "Conservation through education." Our activities include:

- protection of nesting, wintering and migrating birds through Project Colony Watch, rescue of chicks fallen from rooftop nests, Project Eagle Watch, and participation in the county-wide beach nesting bird survey;
- education, including Audubon Adventures for elementary school students, environmental education scholarships for teachers and students, free birding classes for the public, and a speakers bureau;
- sponsorship of projects at local nature parks;
- field trips to prime birding locations in Florida, throughout the United States and internationally;
- monthly meetings held October through May featuring speakers on a wide array of environment-related topics;

- participation in bird surveys, which provide data for vital ornithological research;
- participation in local nature festivals;
- publication of our bimonthly newsletter, Wingbeat, and our website, at ClearwaterAudubon.org;
- advocacy at the local, state and national levels.

YOU CAN HELP!

Whatever your interests or skills, we can use your help protecting birds and the environment. If you like working outdoors, writing, speaking, organizing, baking, or just meeting new people, we have opportunities for you. Call Paul or Debbie Trunk at 727.447.4785 and we'll tell you how you can help.