

# WING BEAT

December 2008 & January 2009

Vol. 42 No. 3

## President's Holiday 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. Several very important issues were negotiated, and they were resolved in a way that significantly strengthened the protections for the Preserve and other properties in the Environmental Lands Division. 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 do not have to be a member to share your ideas. Contact our phone number, or through our web site, or any officer of the Society. We will be happy to listen to your suggestions.

**Mike MacDonald, President**

**727-409-0459**



Photo Courtesy of Scott Patterson

The photograph was taken on October 29<sup>th</sup> at the North Beach of Fort Desoto. Birders' help is needed re-sighting snowy plovers. Snowy plovers are listed as threatened by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and recent surveys suggest this species is continuing to decline in parts of their Florida range, particularly in Southwest Florida. Instructions on what information to collect (band colors, positions, location, etc.) and where to report these sightings are posted on the Florida Bird Conservation Initiative's website or see page 6 for details. [http://www.floridaconservation.org/FBCI/docs/FBCI\\_SNPL\\_Banding\\_key.pdf](http://www.floridaconservation.org/FBCI/docs/FBCI_SNPL_Banding_key.pdf)

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## WingBeat

December 2008 & January 2009  
Vol. 42 No. 3

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**Clearwater Audubon Society** serves all of North Pinellas.

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**WING BEAT** Editor - Barb Walker

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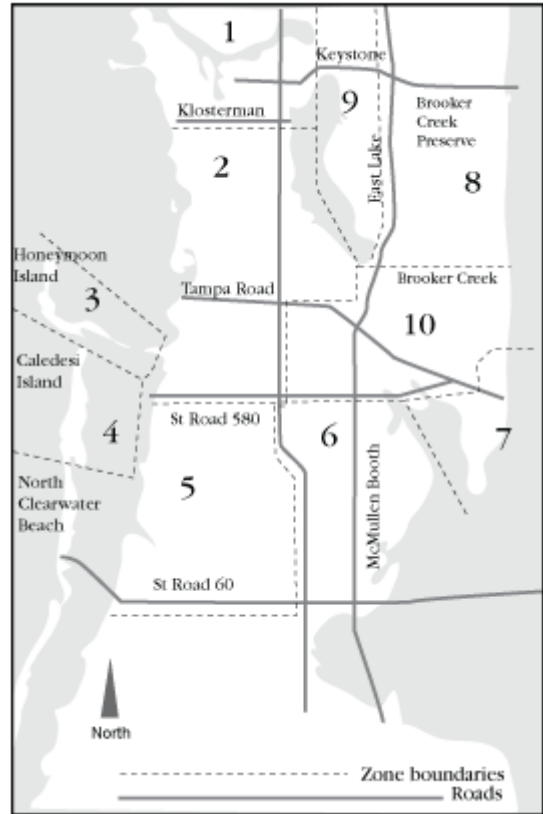
2127 NE Coachman Road  
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727. 461. 5828

## Christmas Bird Count Sunday December 21, 2008

### Zone Map

Below are the leaders of the Christmas Bird Count Zones shown on the map. If you are interested in participating in the Christmas Bird Count, you may contact the leader of the zone you are interested in, or call Merle Hubbard at 939-1549.

Zone 1.....	Paul Trunk, 447-4785
Zone 2.....	Marianne Korosy, 772-7584
Zone 3.....	Merle Hubbard, 939-1549 Cell 727-743-3978
Zone 4.....	Dana Kerstein, 441-1609
Zone 5.....	Mike MacDonald, 409-0459
Zone 6.....	Joan Brigham, 446-9367
Zone 7.....	Sid Crawford, 785-3960
Zone 8.....	Ken Rowe, 781-0745
Zone 9.....	Dorothy Fritzingler, 531-8654
Zone 10.....	Dr. John Rippon, 725-4292



*On Christmas Day, 1900, 27 conservationists decided to protest the traditional bird shoot in which teams competed to see who could shoot the most birds and animals in one day. Instead of killing birds, the conservationists counted them. Now, volunteers from all 50 states, every Canadian province, parts of Central and South America, Bermuda, the West Indies and Pacific Islands count and record every individual bird and bird species encountered during one calendar day. Please support this event!*

## Annual Holiday Conservation Celebration

*Joint meeting with  
St. Petersburg Audubon Society  
And  
The Pinellas Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society*

December 10th, 6:30 pm  
Pinellas County Extension,  
12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo

**Featured Speaker:**

**Photographer James Valentine**

Co-Author, *Florida: Magnificent Wilderness*

Refreshments, Awards, Environmental Exhibits, Silent Auction Fundraiser, and Door Prizes

## Audubon of Florida Award for Crist: 2008 Champion of the Everglades

Lauded for his support of restoration efforts and management decisions, Governor Charlie Crist on Friday October 24<sup>th</sup> was named Audubon of Florida's 2008 Champion of the Everglades at the Audubon Assembly in Crystal River. Previous award winners include former Governor Bob Graham and former U.S. Representative Clay Shaw.

In June Governor Crist announced plans to purchase nearly 300 square miles of land from U.S. Sugar. If purchased, the land would be used to store and treat water from Lake Okeechobee. Now the question is whether the state can afford the \$1.75 billion price tag for the U.S. Sugar tract. Audubon also applauded Crist for his management picks to oversee clean-up efforts.

As of the date of this publication the purchase agreement has been amended to save the jobs of the U.S. Sugar workers and accommodate an effort to produce ethanol.



Photo Courtesy of Barbara Walker

## State Revenue Shortfalls Prompt 10% Budget Reductions for Natural Resource Agencies

As a result of state revenue shortfalls, Governor Crist has requested 10% budget cuts from all state agencies. The current state budget situation is daunting, and no agency will be immune from the belt-tightening necessary to help our state weather this economic downturn. For many of our lean natural resource agencies, these proposals raise grave concerns that reductions will come at the expense of natural resources.

## State Parks Propose Closure or Transfer of 21 Parks

To meet this reduction, the Florida Park Service is proposing to “temporarily close” nineteen state parks to public access and reduce their management to a “caretaker” staff until the state budget returns to levels that can support the full functioning of the parks. An additional three parks, managed for other agencies, will be returned to those agencies. Some of these closures could have grave implications for Florida’s rarest natural communities and wildlife. Florida’s parks and other conservation lands are held in trust for the people of Florida. Holding land in trust means a commitment to good management and responsibility for stewardship of vulnerable natural resources. Audubon is calling on Governor Crist to give substantial consideration to the impacts of these reductions on the state’s ability to adequately manage these sensitive resources.

## Outstanding Conservation Award

By Mike McDonald

It is an honor to recognize & reward the Conservation endeavors of Dana Kerstein.

Shortly after joining Clearwater Audubon Society in 1996, Dana served as Field Trip Committee Chair, and then served as President from April 2000 to March 2004.

Since 2000, Dana has worked for the protection of Nesting Birds on Three Rooker Island, Anclote Bar, and other barrier islands off the west coast of Pinellas County.

Dana organized an outstanding and faithful group of dedicated volunteers to assist her work on this project, which includes roping off nesting areas, erecting informational signage, picking up trash, informing visitors to respect & keep dogs away from these critical bird nesting areas, and population counts.

Dr. Harvey Kerstein, Dana’s husband, provided most of the boat transportation for this project. He and all the volunteers who have worked with Dana, deserve awards for efforts in support of this Conservation Project.

Dana’s nesting bird project soon became the *Conservation Projects Committee*. Dana has been the Chair of this Committee ever since.

Clearwater Audubon Society owes a great debt of gratitude to Dana, and all the people who have worked on this Conservation Project to protect the Nesting Birds on Pinellas County barrier islands.

We are always looking for new volunteers. If interested, please email Dana at [hkerstein@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:hkerstein@tampabay.rr.com) or call 727-441-1609.

# Hog Island Experience

By Craig Sroka

My experience on Hog Island in Falmouth, Maine has opened my eyes to the world of birds. Up until now, birds have been a daily presence, but noticed with little thought. Sure, I would briefly slow down to notice a colorful, out of the ordinary species that would cross my path. However, the observation would be short lived with not much reflection.

After spending some time with expert ornithologists and naturalists that included; Scott Weidensaul, Dr. Sarah Morris, Greg Budney and Dr. Stephen Kress, I soon discovered a deeper appreciation for birds. The days exploring Hog Island, Muscongus Bay and surrounding areas were spent on guided walks with experienced Hog Island staff who shared their knowledge and insight on birds and their environment.

Along with the daily field excursions filled with the sights and sounds of Hog Island, I had the opportunity to explore ornithology through workshops and lectures that included; Hog Island History, History of Birding, Introduction to Birds, Bird Vocalization, Bird Banding and Bird Migration.

One of my most memorable experiences included observing terns and Atlantic puffins on the Eastern Egg Rock Boat Cruise. I was in awe as I witnessed the beauty of many Atlantic puffins and terns in their natural setting. The puffin and tern experience was followed up with a lecture on restoring seabird populations with Dr. Stephen Kress, founder of Project Puffin, which brought back the Atlantic puffin to the Maine coast, which he began with Pete Salmonsohn in

1973. He shared with me their book, Project Puffin: How We Brought Puffins Back to Egg Rock, along with a curriculum guide, Giving Back to the Earth, to help me incorporate activities that will teach young people to appreciate and understand the Atlantic puffin along with the need to respect and protect seabirds and the ocean.

As an educator, it is my responsibility to share with my students the knowledge that I have gained from my experience on Hog Island. It is up to us to teach our future generation the importance of conserving and restoring our natural ecosystems. The first step in teaching conservation is through modeling an appreciation of our natural world. When an appreciation for nature is developed, a sense of ownership naturally takes place. With ownership comes the desire to protect and share with others the wonders of nature.

I will always be grateful to the Clearwater Audubon Society for awarding me the opportunity to experience the wonders of Hog Island of Maine. This experience will always be a part of my life as I continue my education of birds. Because of this experience I can honestly say that I will be a lifelong birder. I will never again allow a bird to cross my path without taking notice and make an attempt to identify, closely observe and ponder its path.

Now that I have a deeper knowledge and appreciation for birds, I will take advantage of the opportunity to share my newly found passion with young people for years to come. Through sharing, I hope to help others learn to appreciate the beauty and fascination of birds.

***“Thanks again Clearwater Audubon for sending me on a wonderful journey that has truly changed my life forever.” Craig Sroka***



## Hog Island Audubon Camp

By Madeleine Bohrer

I was one of the fortunate recipients of a grant from Clearwater Audubon to attend the Hog Island Maine Audubon Camp last June for a week long Field Ornithology class. “Fortunate” is an understatement. I had no clue what to expect and was consistently floored by the caliber of teachers, the stupendous surroundings, and the boundless wealth of knowledge I have yet to discover. This was deep bird-immersion from 5 a.m. until 10 p.m.—from lectures and field trips to studying and transcribing field notes to my journal.

Here in Florida we are treated to a lovely variety of wintering passerines but in Maine these same birds are busy nesting and tending to their broods. Then, there are the sea birds—wow!—Petrels, Puffins, Guillemots, and Gannets. The forests are filled with spruce trees and carpeted by moss and ferns; no pokey palmettos here. Wildflowers color lovely grassy meadows and hills. The night sky is crowded with stars and when a firefly floats by you think a star has come by for a visit.

The knowledge and experience our teachers brought to each day was unparalleled. Greg Budney, Curator of Natural Sounds at Cornell University's Macaulay Library, taught us the anatomy of sound and how to listen. Sara Morris, Associate Professor of Biology at Canisius College, Buffalo, New York, gave by far the best lecture on field identification—I will never forget it. Scott Weidensaul, renowned author and all-around nature encyclopedia, could have talked for hours without a boring moment. Peter Vickery from Maine Audubon brought a lifetime of local indispensable birding knowledge. Captain Anthony and his wife Susan Schubel took us out on the Muscongus Bay to island hop and opened another whole world of things to think about.

People say Hog Island is a magical place and they are right. My week there went way beyond any and all imaginings. I am more than grateful to have had the opportunity to spend a week there and hope Clearwater Audubon can continue the wonderful tradition of sending youths and adults to learn about the things we love and value so deeply: birds and Nature. I would encourage our members to go to one of their workshops—you will not regret it.



## Reporting Banded Snowy Plovers

Snowy Plovers are listed as threatened in Florida, and recent surveys suggest this species is continuing to decline in parts of their range in the state, particularly the Southwest. Research determining the underlying reasons for these declines is ongoing, and one important aspect of this work is gaining a better understanding of the annual movement and distribution patterns of Snowy Plovers in Florida. To this end, biologists have individually marked Snowy Plovers throughout Florida with unique color-band combinations, and we need your help re-sighting and reporting observations of these individuals as we continue to build a better picture of where and when Snowy Plovers move.

*If you see a banded Snowy Plover...*

**1. Approach the bird slowly, and please try to avoid any disturbance to the bird (Life is rough enough for a plover!)**

**2. Record the following information:**

**a) BAND COMBINATION-** please write a detailed description of the bands, the i) color and ii) relative position to other bands, and iii) position on each leg (left or right, and upper leg-tibia or lower leg-tarsus). See examples of band combos and colors at the Florida Bird Conservation Initiative website:

[http://www.floridaconservation.org/FBCI/docs/FBCI\\_SNPL\\_Banding\\_key.pdf](http://www.floridaconservation.org/FBCI/docs/FBCI_SNPL_Banding_key.pdf)

**Types of bands used:** metal (aluminum) and color bands.

**Colors:** possible colors include red (R), orange (O), yellow (Y), dark green (G), light green (g), dark blue (B), light blue (b), white (W), and black (K). No bands are bi-colored/tri-colored (2/3 colors on one band). Sometimes two bands of the same color are placed over each other on a leg (this may look like one very tall band). *Remember that bands can discolor, and occasionally fall off. Please specify if you are unsure of any of the bands or if you failed to see all parts of the leg clearly.*

**b) LOCATION-** use a GPS unit, find your latitude and longitude on a map (<http://www.getlatlon.com/>), or write a detailed description (please include common place names that we can use to plot your location on a map).

**c) DATE/TIME**

**d) NOTES-** i) describe any injuries, ii) with a flock? (if so, flock size and composition)

**3. If possible, get photo-documentation**

**4. Please report your observations to the following emails:**

[rpruner@ufl.edu](mailto:rpruner@ufl.edu); [bsmith@sccf.org](mailto:bsmith@sccf.org);  
[wendy.bear@myfwc.com](mailto:wendy.bear@myfwc.com); [chris.burney@myfwc.com](mailto:chris.burney@myfwc.com)

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**Chris Burney**  
**Shorebird Partnership Coordinator**  
Species Conservation Planning Section  
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

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**Southwest Regional Office**  
3900 Drane Field Rd  
Lakeland, FL 33811  
**Phone:** (863) 648-3200  
**Fax:** (863) 701-1248  
**Email:** [chris.burney@myfwc.com](mailto:chris.burney@myfwc.com)

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Photo Courtesy of Danny Bales

## The Bald Eagle Soars in Florida

Florida Fish and Wildlife Press Release  
October 22, 2008

It's only fitting the bald eagle should make such stunning population gains in recent years in Florida and across the United States. With a diving speed between 75 and 100 miles per hour and the ability to soar to 10,000 feet and to sail through the air for hours, this national symbol represents majesty and strength and tenacity.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), through sound conservation plans, will ensure the bald eagle continues to increase in numbers in Florida. The FWC's Bald Eagle Management Plan sets very rigid regulations for protecting the areas where this migratory bird makes its home during the cold-weather months.

"The goal of the plan is to maintain a stable or increasing bald eagle population throughout the state in perpetuity," said Ulgonda Kirkpatrick, FWC eagle plan coordinator. "To achieve this goal, bald eagles and their nests have to be protected through science-based management, regulation, public education and law enforcement."

When the founding fathers named the bald eagle as the national symbol in 1782, its population was estimated at more than 300,000. Nearly 200 years later, its population decline reflected man's intrusion into eagle habitat. By the 1950s, their numbers had dropped to 10,000 breeding pairs in the United States. Further activities, such as spraying crops with DDT, took an alarming toll on the bald eagle within another decade. Fewer than 500 pairs existed by the 1960s.

This drastic decline sounded the alarm, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) officially named the bald eagle as endangered in 1967, a full five years before the Endangered Species Act passed in 1973. In Florida, monitoring of the bald eagle began in 1973 and only 88 active nests were found.

That call to arms for the nation's symbol worked, allowing the majestic bird to make a comeback. In 2007, the FWC reported more than 1,100 documented nests – a 300-percent increase.

The USFWS removed the bald eagle from the endangered species list in 2007, and in 2008, the FWC also delisted the bald eagle along with adoption of a new state Bald Eagle Management Plan.

"This is a historic occasion," FWC Chairman Rodney Barreto said in April 2008 when the bald eagle was delisted. "Bald eagle conservation efforts have been a success story that reflects great credit on agencies and people who worked tirelessly to make it happen. Good news is hard to come by sometimes when we're dealing with an imperiled species, but we've all earned the right to celebrate a victory today."

Delisting the largest bird of prey -- and one of the largest birds in all of North America -- does not mean the bald eagle will not be protected. The FWC Bald Eagle Management Plan and the new state rule protecting eagles (F.A.C. 68A-16.002) will ensure that the bird's numbers never again dip so close to the brink of extinction. The bald eagle is also protected under two federal laws: the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

Florida is the destination for approximately 1,400 breeding pairs of bald eagles, according to reports from the FWC in 2005. They leave the colder climate of the Midwest for, not only warmer temperatures, but also the abundance of water Florida provides.

Bald eagles nest in pine trees close to lakes, marshes, rivers and seacoasts. The nesting season in Florida begins in October as the couple works together to build a large nest with twigs, leaves and grasses. By spring, the female will lay between one and three eggs. For 35 days, the pair will share incubation duties. At 12 weeks, the fledglings are ready to leave the nest, but despite their status as fully-fledged birds, they have a 50-percent chance of surviving that first year.

While the FWC and other entities have worked to enact protections for the bald eagle, the eagle itself has adapted to urbanization by building nests in cell towers and on telephone poles. Its recovery can also be attributed to the management efforts of the FWC that create buffers around bald eagle nesting sites.

Sound conservation practices will ensure the bald eagle will never be listed again as endangered.

### **The FWC's Bald Eagle Management Plan**

State permitting near bald eagle nesting sites falls in three categories: disturbance, scientific collecting and nest removal. The FWC's Bald Eagle Management Plan may be found at [MyFWC.com/eagle](http://MyFWC.com/eagle).

The Web site has information about the annual nesting surveys, a nest site database, and a technical assistance section for permitting. For more information, call 352-732-1225 or e-mail, [eagle\\_plan@MyFWC.com](mailto:eagle_plan@MyFWC.com). Answers to questions about bald eagle nesting are available at 386-758-0525 or [baldeagle@MyFWC.com](mailto:baldeagle@MyFWC.com).

**Report potential wildlife law violations, 24 hours a day, to the toll-free Wildlife Alert Hotline, 1-888-404-3922.**

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## **Eagle Watch**

By Joan Brigham, Eagle Watch Chair

Hopeful is our outlook this Eagle Watch season. As of this date, Joe Zarolinski, *Eagle Watcher Supreme*, reports all birds are on territory and one pair is incubating. So far, so good. However, Lynda White, Florida's Eagle Watch Coordinator, is concerned about the number of last years failed nests along the west coast. We are looking forward to a more productive year as we also had nest failures in North Pinellas last year, including Dunedin which failed twice. Eagle Watchers locating and observing nests play an important part in ensuring the eagles continued safety, especially now that they have been delisted. Additional Eagle Watchers are needed and welcomed. If you are interested please call 727-442-9140 or 727-431-2856.

## **The Abbott Nest – Part I**

By Barb Walker

Tarpon Springs - In October of 2007 the Clearwater Audubon Society received a call from Dr. Shaun Abbott. I will forever be grateful for his call that day for at the time we did not fully realize the important events which would follow. Dr. Abbott was concerned because a dead tree in his yard had fallen. He wanted to put up a nesting box as replacement habitat.

While we talked about nesting boxes one topic kept surfacing. Dr. Abbott kept mentioning bald eagles in his neighborhood which sits languorously along the Anclote River in Tarpon Springs. He also talked about concerns regarding the impact of a proposed Wal-mart Super Center directly across the river from his home.

Threatened sandhill cranes and endangered wood storks were among the species Dr. Abbott observed from his

property. He was astonished at the diversity of bird life in the area. "Anyone can look at that habitat and see that a Wal-mart Super Center does not belong there" he said. At that point I made plans with Dr. Abbott to visit his property. Because of Dr. Abbott's job as an emergency room physician and the variety of hours he kept he gave us his trust to monitor the property at our convenience.

On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007, I went with Mathew Poling, now a student at the University of Florida, to Dr. Abbott's house. We went through the yard and descended the stairs onto the dock and observed the beauty of the Anclote River. Throughout the end of 2007 and well into 2008 I checked the property. Dr. Abbott continued to call in his sightings to me. He frequently reported bald eagles which intrigued me enough to keep going back. But by late February a territory dispute between bald eagles had occurred at the Grey Oaks subdivision and my time was sufficiently diverted.

In early September of 2008 I received an email from the Concerned Citizens of Tarpon Springs who were objecting to the Wal-mart Super Center in part due to the negative environmental impacts on the Anclote River. The email urged those who had concerns to attend the City of Tarpon Springs Planning and Zoning meeting on September 22<sup>nd</sup> and voice those concerns. I attended the meeting because I had been actively monitoring the area and had received sufficient reports on the wildlife which utilizes that coastal area. It was fortunate that Wal-mart's presentation was lengthy and public comment was postponed until a later date. Because of that delay a fateful series of amazing events occurred allowing for a change in the course of history.

***To find out what happened read Part II in the next edition of Wing Beat.***



Photo Courtesy of Danny Bales

Students recommend the osprey as the state bird in a vote held on Election Day in all Florida counties.

## Kids Recommend Osprey to Be New State Bird

Florida Fish and Wildlife Press Release  
November 5, 2008

The osprey is the winner in a statewide vote of fourth-through eighth-graders to be Florida's new official state bird. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and the Department of Education teamed up to conduct the election as a civics lesson for the kids.

Students across the state participated in campaign activities at their schools, researching their favorite candidates, designing posters and participating in debates regarding the bird they would most like to have considered for Florida's state bird as an alternative to the current state bird, the mockingbird.

The civics lesson for the kids doesn't end with this vote. They also will have the opportunity to follow this initiative as the students' selection will go through the legislative process to decide if the osprey should become the new state bird. The FWC will prepare a bill for introduction for the 2009 Legislative Session. The bill must be approved by the House, the Senate and Governor Charlie Crist before the osprey is officially designated as the state bird. Teachers and students can follow this process at [www.vote4bird.org](http://www.vote4bird.org).

"This project gave students the chance to participate in the democratic process in a very meaningful way," said Judy Gillan, outreach coordinator for the FWC. "They learned about exercising their vote, and they will learn about bills becoming laws. It also gave them an opportunity to learn about some of Florida's greatest species of birds."

After the osprey, in popularity, were the snowy egret, great egret, brown pelican and black skimmer. More than 77,000 students voted in Florida, with fourth-, fifth- and sixth-graders casting the most votes. Broward, Orange and Brevard counties had the most students participating, but students in all counties in Florida were represented in the vote.

## Project Osprey Cam

By Barb Walker

Dunedin - On Wednesday October 29<sup>th</sup> the osprey nest which was located on the lights above the putting green at St. Andrews Links was removed and placed on top of a Progress Energy platform. The pair of osprey which use that nest have been spotted in the area recently and took to the nest on the platform easily.

The next step will be the installation of a web cam. The web cam and accompanying educational program will enable students to become 'citizen scientists' from their classrooms. They will monitor the nests online and then record their data in a citizen scientist journal which will be provided to them. In addition to studying the biology of osprey students will look at worldwide osprey populations as well as local and statewide populations. They will learn about habitat requirements and the need to conserve, replace and restore habitat for large raptors such as the osprey. One of the web quests the students will complete is a study of osprey migration and the need for continued protection in the western hemisphere.

Garrison Jones Elementary and Cypress Woods Elementary will be among the first to participate in the program which hopefully will gain widespread interest throughout Pinellas County and beyond. The program isn't limited to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Adults are encouraged to participate as well. One way for anyone to participate is by joining the osprey blog. If you want to blog about the osprey please go to [www.DunedinOpsreyCam.com](http://www.DunedinOpsreyCam.com) and click on Contact Us. Additionally, the First Annual Osprey Open will be held on March 28<sup>th</sup> at St. Andrews Links. Volunteers are needed. If you are interested in participating on the education or hospitality committee please contact Barb Walker at 727-442-9140 or [barball@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:barball@tampabay.rr.com).

## Join the Great Backyard Bird Count Count for Fun, Count for the Future February 13-16, 2009

New York, NY and Ithaca, NY-Bird and nature fans throughout North America are invited to join tens of thousands of everyday bird watchers for the 12<sup>th</sup> annual **Great Backyard Bird Count** (GBBC), February 13-16, 2009. A joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, this **free event** is an opportunity for families, students, and people of all ages to discover the wonders of nature in backyards, schoolyards, and local parks, and, at the same time, make an important contribution to conservation. Participants count birds and report their sightings online at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org).

“The Great Backyard Bird Count benefits both birds and people. It’s a great example of citizen science: Anyone who can identify even a few species can contribute to the body of knowledge that is used to inform conservation efforts to protect birds and biodiversity,” said Audubon Education VP, Judy Braus. “Families, teachers, children and all those who take part in GBBC get a chance to improve their observation skills, enjoy nature, and have a great time counting for fun, counting for the future.”

**Anyone can take part**, from novice bird watchers to experts, by counting birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the event and reporting their sightings online at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org). Participants can also explore what birds others are finding in their backyards-whether in their own neighborhood or thousands of miles away. Additional online resources include tips to help identify birds, a photo gallery, and special materials for educators.

The data these “citizen scientists” collect helps researchers understand bird population trends, information that is critical for effective conservation. Their efforts enable everyone to see what would otherwise be impossible: a comprehensive picture of where birds are in late winter and how their numbers and distribution compare with previous years. In 2008, participants submitted more than 85,000 checklists.

“The GBBC has become a vital link in the arsenal of continent-wide bird-monitoring projects,” said Cornell Lab of Ornithology director, John Fitzpatrick. “With more than a decade of data now in hand, the GBBC has documented the fine-grained details of late-winter bird distributions better than any project in history, including some truly striking changes just over the past decade.”

Each year, in addition to entering their tallies, participants submit thousands of digital images for the GBBC photo contest. Many are featured in the popular online gallery. Participants in the 2009 count are also invited to upload their bird videos to YouTube; some will also be featured on the GBBC web site. Visit [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org) to learn more.

Businesses, schools, nature clubs, Scout troops, and other community organizations interested in the GBBC can contact the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at (800) 843-2473 (outside the U.S., call (607) 254-2473), or Audubon at [citizenscience@audubon.org](mailto:citizenscience@audubon.org) or (215) 355-9588, ext 16. The Great Backyard Bird Count is made possible, in part, by support from **Wild Birds Unlimited**.

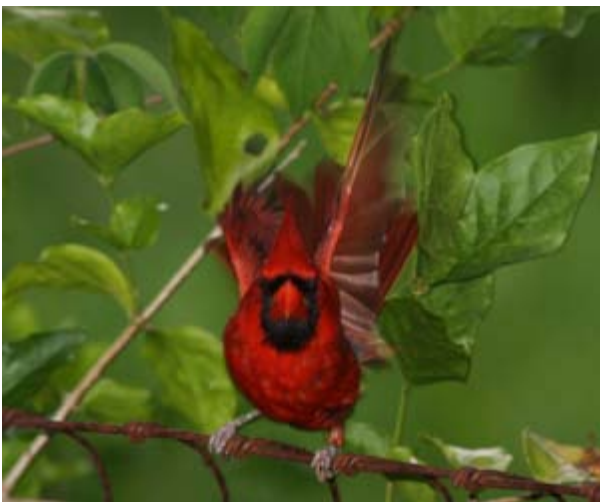


Photo Courtesy of Barbara Walker

## Preservation of Open Spaces

We could lose approximately 2,000 cardinals or 1 cardinal per 12 acres when we lose one 25,000 acreage home range for a black bear. It is estimated that bald eagles will lose 1.9 million acres by the year 2060. It is estimated that wood storks will lose 200,000 acres by the year 2060. To learn more about the future of Florida if we continue development at the current rate review the report cited below. **To volunteer for advocacy for the Clearwater Audubon Society please call 727-442-9140.**

**Source:** FWC

Report - Wildlife 2060: What’s at stake for Florida?  
<http://myfwc.com/wildlife2060/Docs/FWC2060.pdf>

## Clearwater Audubon Society Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Home \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Home \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

To ensure you receive our electronic newsletter please fill in your email address, if you do not have email please call 727-442-9140 to request a paper copy.

Which membership category? Chapter @ \$15/year \_\_\_\_\_ National @ \$20/year \_\_\_\_\_

Please enclose check to Clearwater Audubon Society for Chapter membership, or National Audubon Society for National membership

**Clearwater Audubon Society**  
P.O. Box 97  
Clearwater, FL 33757  
Attention: Barbara MacDonald, Membership Chair

How can you help Clearwater Audubon Society achieve its Purpose? [check all that apply]

advocacy \_\_\_ conservation \_\_\_ education \_\_\_ field trips \_\_\_ finance \_\_\_ hospitality \_\_\_  
media/PR \_\_\_ membership \_\_\_ newsletter \_\_\_ investment security \_\_\_ other \_\_\_ [list below]

When can you help Clearwater Audubon Society achieve its purpose? [check all that apply]

am _____	am _____	am _____	am _____
SUN pm _____	MON pm _____	TUE pm _____	WED pm _____
nite _____	nite _____	nite _____	nite _____
am _____	am _____	am _____	am _____
THU pm _____	FRI pm _____	SAT pm _____	HOD pm _____
nite _____	nite _____	nite _____	nite _____

If not a Florida resident, which months of the year are you available?

From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

Any other information about you that will help Clearwater Audubon Society achieve its purpose:

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**Clearwater Audubon Society**  
PO Box 97  
Clearwater, FL 33757

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Clearwater, FL

## WHAT IS THE CLEARWATER AUDUBON SOCIETY?

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](http://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 the Clearwater Audubon Society at 727-442-9140 or an officer listed on page 2 and we'll tell you how you can help.