

Wing Beat

October & November 2009
Vol. 43 No. 6

Reach us by calling 727-442-9140 or visit us at www.clearwateraudubon.org

Join us for the 2009 Audubon Assembly

Please join Audubon of Florida on October 23 and 24 in St. Petersburg for the 2009 Audubon Assembly and dialogue on Coastal Conservation and Climate Change.

Celebrated oceanographer Sylvia Earle, Ph. D., is the Assembly's keynote speaker. The two-day program brings together conservation leaders and scientists—as well as policy makers, and business people from across Florida to discuss strategies to protect our coasts, birds and wildlife, and secure our quality of life.

Come enjoy two days of Audubon fellowship. Connect with nature and birds on expert-led and self-guided field trips. Celebrate Audubon chapter milestones, too: St. Petersburg Audubon turns 100 and Clearwater Audubon is 50 this year. Deepen your knowledge at exciting learning sessions. And share your stories of how climate change is affecting your life and the places you care about.

All-inclusive Assembly registration package is only \$120/person if booked on or before October 6, 2009.

Package includes programs, workshops, pizza party, cocktail reception (with cash bar), Friday evening banquet, breakfast, two lunches and field trips. To take advantage of the Early Bird package now go to <http://www.audubonofflorida.org/index.html>. Book hotel accommodations separately.

To register by mail, contact Lisa Reichert to request a registration form 305-371-6399, ext. 120, or email lreichert@audubon.org.

Don't miss the Dialogue on Coastal Conservation and Climate Change beginning at 9 a.m. Friday, October 23. **This session is FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.**

The conference will be held at certified green hotel, Hilton, St. Petersburg, Carillon Park. www.hiltonhotelstpete.com
950 Lake Carillon Drive, St. Pete, 33716

Clearwater Audubon Cruise from Beautiful Tarpon Springs

Have you been to the top of the Anclote Key lighthouse?

Join Clearwater Audubon Society on Saturday, November 7th for a 3-hour boat cruise to Anclote Key and *spectacular* views from the Anclote lighthouse. Our charter boat, operated by **Sun Line Cruises in Tarpon Springs**, will depart the dock promptly at 4:00 p.m. and return by 7:00 p.m. We will float down the Anclote River enjoying a variety of wading birds, shorebirds, dolphins and other wildlife with a cash bar and the company of good friends. Arrival at Anclote Key will be an hour before sunset and participants can stay on the boat, take a short walk on the island, or climb the narrow, steep stairs to the top of the famous lighthouse for spectacular views of the landscape in a setting sun. Back on the boat, enjoy dinner provided by Clearwater Audubon as we journey back to the Tarpon Springs boat dock.

Please join us – tickets are selling fast! A maximum of 45 tickets will be sold to this special event celebrating Clearwater Audubon's 50th anniversary. Tickets are \$30 each or 2 for \$50. Send your personal check made out to Clearwater Audubon Society to our Treasurer, Jane Williams, at 217 North Hillcrest Avenue, Clearwater, 33755.

More information can be found at www.clearwateraudubon.org and at www.sunlinecruises.com. Call Mike MacDonald at 727.409.0459 or email Marianne Korosy at mkorosy@gmail.com with questions.



Tarpon Springs Chamber of Commerce 2008 Business of the Year

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Clearwater Audubon Society serving all of North Pinellas since 1959

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WING BEAT Editor - Barb Walker

Submissions deadline for the next issue

is December 10th, 2009. **Submissions must be un-formatted in Times New Roman.**

Please submit articles via email to: submissions@clearwateraudubon.org or mail to the address above, Attn: Wingbeat Editor.

WING BEAT advertising deadline for the next issue

is December 10, 2009. Business size ads are \$25 per issue.

Please address other rate inquiries to

Treasurer, Jane Williams at 727-447-7394.

Please submit ads via email to: adsubmission@clearwateraudubon.org \ or mail to the address above, Attn: Wingbeat Ads.

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227 of 1000 members have elected to receive the Wing Beat electronically. This has the advantage of earlier receipt, living color, and is easier on our budget and the environment. If you received this in the snail mail please consider electronic edelivery. Please call 727-442-9140 or email barbirbird@tampabay.rr.com to initiate electronic edelivery. CAS will not release your email address to any third party.

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mention Clearwater Audubon Society.*

RCW Safe Harbor: a creative program for conservation

By Kristina Jackson, FWC biologist

Florida's natural beauty and diverse habitats attracted wildlife to the state long before they attracted people. However, as our population grows, habitat for wildlife is shrinking. More than half of Florida's endangered or threatened species live on private lands. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has found a way to conserve this wildlife and help private landowners by offering "safe harbor."

Red-cockaded woodpeckers (RCWs) have lost about 97 percent of their habitat – old pine forests – and since 1973 have been protected under the Endangered Species Act. The occurrence of this endangered species on private property caused landowners to avoid managing for long-rotation timber or old longleaf pines, which attracted RCWs. Maintaining these old pines can increase the RCW population and thereby increase the landowners' regulatory responsibilities. Some landowners were cutting their older pines to prevent RCWs from setting up homes there. This was a no-win situation for the landowner and the wildlife. So Safe Harbor was created.

The Safe Harbor program offers private landowners an opportunity to preserve habitat for RCWs while maintaining flexibility in using their property. A landowner commits to protecting the birds already on their land and adding to RCW habitat. If new birds move onto or are born on a property, they can be relocated by our biologists if the landowner needs to cut timber or build on the site. The program is voluntary and a landowner with suitable habitat can sign up even before they have birds.

Dixie Plantation is a 9,000 acre tract of land in Jefferson County in Northwest Florida and is a charter member of the Safe Harbor program. It is located in an area dedicated to preserving habitat for quail hunting. The frequently burned, open longleaf pineland favored for hunting bobwhite quail is good habitat for RCW and other rare Florida species such as Bachman's sparrow, Eastern indigo snake and gopher tortoises.

"Before the Safe Harbor agreement ... we did not want an endangered species to come on Dixie Plantation because of the severe restrictions that the Endangered Species Act placed on [landowners]," said John Finlayson, a Dixie Plantation trustee. "Now that we've signed the Safe Harbor Agreement, we welcome the red-cockaded woodpecker to come and live on Dixie Plantation. The Safe Harbor Agreement is the greatest thing that has happened for endangered species."

Most landowners are good stewards of their land and can make an important contribution to the recovery of imperiled species. Safe Harbor engages private landowners in activities that create or improve wildlife habitat. The Safe Harbor Program helps landowners balance their land-use needs with the needs of an imperiled species such as RCW.



You may not own land with old pines, but you can help by spreading the word. Contact Kristina Jackson at the FWC, Kristina.jackson@myfwc.com or 352-732-1225.

Learn more on the FWC's Web site at: www.myfwc.com/safeharbor.

(Photos courtesy of volunteers.)



Bald Eagle Season Takes Off!

By Barb Walker

Last year we counted and monitored 28 nests. Can you believe we are up to 30 already as the season takes off?

At this point we have greater than 50% of our eagles back on territory and have seen some nest building activities too.

Anyone interested in participating in Eagle Watch please call Barb Walker at 727-789-0183 or email barbibird@tampabay.rr.com.



Photo: Ed Tess

A Bald Eagle presentation is scheduled for October 3rd with West Pasco Audubon. Please join us at 3pm at Starkey Educational Center. For further details please visit:

<http://www.westpascoaudubon.com/index.html>.

Public Programs 2009

Presented at Moccasin Lake Nature Park; mix-n-mingle at 7:00PM; Public Program at 7:30PM

October 5th "American Oystercatcher" Ann Paul and Ann Hodgson

Ann Hodgson and Ann Paul will share the program, "American Oystercatchers in the Tampa Bay Estuary". The talk will highlight the biology and behavior of this charismatic shorebird, outlining its distribution range-wide, the reasons why the species is facing population decline and the conservation effort of biologists across the southeast US. We will also discuss the long-term research that Audubon of Florida's Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries Program has conducted on regional populations and local conservation efforts, as a quarter of the state's American Oystercatchers reside in the Tampa Bay estuary.

November 2nd Pot Luck and Camp presentations and a History of Clearwater Audubon 50th Anniversary Special starting time 6:00

October & November Field Trips

TRIP: Saturday, October 3, 2009, 8AM – Moccasin Lake Nature Park: Madeleine Bohrer @ 518-6241, meet in parking lot; songbirds & raptors in oak & xeric hammock, water birds in lake. ¾ mile shell trail & boardwalks.

TRIP: Saturday, October 10, 2009, 8AM – John Chesnut County Park: Ellen Pfau @ 786-3718, meet at shelter #6; songbirds, raptors & waterbirds in uplands & freshwater wetlands habitats; 1 mile boardwalks, paved & sand trails.

TRIP: Saturday, October 17, 2009, 7:45AM – North Anclote River Nature Park: Merle Hubbard @ 939-1549, meet at Staples NW corner Tarpon Av @ Keystone Rd; migrant songbirds & raptors at this quiet little known gem. 1 mile shell, grass & boardwalk trails.

TRIP: Saturday, October 24, 2009, 10AM, Big Birds for Beginners, *Honeymoon Island Nature Center*: Lynn Sumerson, 596-8822; short lecture on shore & water birds then survey State Park shoreline & Dunedin Causeway, 3miles sand trails & driving.

FEST: Saturday, October 24, 2009, 8AM to 5PM, *Circus McGurkis*, Lake Vista Park, St Pete @ 623-2468; fun, food, entertainment, conservation & education for every age & lifestyle.

TRIP: Saturday, October 31, 2009, 8AM – Ft. DeSoto County Park: Lynn Sumerson @ 596-8822, meet at Tri-City Mall in front of Party City; migratory songbirds, raptors, water & shore birds; causeway & shoreline drive + 1-2 mile trail walk on Tampa Bay's north shore.

TRIP: Saturday, November 7, 2009, 8AM – Moccasin Lake Nature Park: Madeleine Bohrer @ 518-6241, meet in parking lot; songbirds & raptors in oak & xeric hammock, water birds in lake. ¾ mile shell trail & boardwalks.

TRIP: Saturday, November 14, 2009, 7:30AM – Circle-B-Bar Ranch: Lynn Sumerson @ 596-8822, meet at Tri-City Mall in front of Party City; eagles & other raptor, songbirds, water birds [resident White Pelicans] & alligators at former cattle ranch in xeric oak habitat on the shores of Lake Hancock. 3½ mile sand trails.

TRIP: Saturday, November 21, 2009, 8AM – Philippe County Park: Merle Hubbard @ 939-1549, meet in parking lot at end of entry road; raptors, shorebirds & songbirds along the shores of Old Tampa Bay.

TRIP: Saturday, November 28, 2009, 7:30AM – Gateway & Roosevelt Wetlands: Mike MacDonald @ 409-0459, meet at Tri-City Mall in front of Party City; water, wading & song birds

Meet Olivia

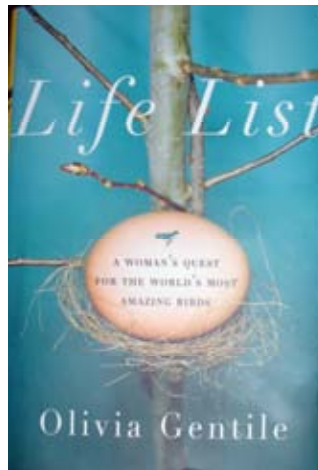
Thanks to an upcoming visit to Pinellas County you will have *two* chances to meet Olivia Gentile.

Olivia Gentile will be presenting her book, "Life List", at the Seventeenth Annual St. Petersburg Times Festival of Reading on October 24th. The festival will take place at 140 Seventh Avenue South, Bayboro Harbor, St. Petersburg from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Olivia will also be speaking at the Audubon Assembly Luncheon which begins at 12:30 on October 24th.

To find out more about Olivia Gentile and her fabulous book visit <http://www.oliviagentile.com/home/>. The website is extraordinary. This is a book and story you don't want to miss!



"Olivia Gentile has done us an incredible favor by writing about the touching and dramatic story of Phoebe Snetsinger who was the first person to see 8,000 different species of birds. Phoebe's quest came about when she learned she had only 1 year left to live. Phoebe defied those odds and lived but the quest still came with a high price." Barb Walker, Wing Beat Editor

CONNECTIONS

Match the number of chapters to each state.

STATE	#CHAPTERS	STATE	#CHAPTERS
1. CA	a. 25	7. MN	g. 10
2. CO	b. 12	8. MT	h. 02
3. CT	c. 11	9. NY	j. 42
4. FL	d. 51	10. PA	k. 24
5. OH	e. 22	11. TX	m. 30
6. MI	f. 20	12. WA	n. 12

ANS: 1,d; 2,c; 3,n; 4,j; 5,f; 6,h; 7,b; 8,g; 9,m; 10,k; 11,e; 12,a.

City of Dunedin Launches Osprey Cam for Students

This year a pair of nesting ospreys can be viewed online at www.DunedinOspreyCam.com. The City of Dunedin received a donation from Sparky Jones, founder of Friends of Sun Coast Wildlife, which enabled the city to place a wildlife nest cam in the osprey nest at St. Andrews Links, right along the Marquis Pinellas Trail. The location was selected by Art Finn, Dunedin Parks Director.

Dunedin based business owner Dan Zucker of Zucker & Zucker created and is hosting the website and has coordinated with Scott Falcon, IT for the City of Dunedin. Content has been provided and designed by Clearwater Audubon Society Osprey Watch volunteers to fulfill the sites main purpose which is public education. "St. Andrews Links is a great location for school groups or scout groups to see the nest from the ground" said PGA Professional Paul Sylvester and General Manager of St. Andrews Links. St. Andrews Links is also planning an Osprey Open in the spring.

Fourth or Fifth grade classes anywhere in the state are encouraged to participate online. Educational materials will be updated and added on a regular basis. Teachers who wish to participate with their classes may contact barbibird@tampabay.rr.com or can call 727-442-9140. Students will learn how to be 'citizen scientists'. Last year students participated with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission statewide in a vote for a new state bird. The osprey was 'elected' on November 4th, 2008. "Hopefully the website will help complete that effort as well," said Barb Walker, Osprey Watch Coordinator for Clearwater Audubon Society.

Ospreys, also called 'Fish Hawks', are a protected species and certain guidelines and permits are required when working around osprey nests. Those guidelines can be found at <http://www.myfwc.com/>. In general ospreys are tolerant of human activity and have held up well to intense development pressure. Many Florida ospreys, as well as other wildlife, make their homes on golf courses.



The nesting pair of osprey at St. Andrews Links will likely be spotted in late October or early November. It is entirely possible for them to visit the nest between now and then. One chick began fledging by March 23rd of last year while many other nests in the county were still incubating.



Students can view from their classrooms or from home, like Cypress Woods Elementary student, Leah Walker. Leah also observes 3 osprey nests on her way to and from school while on the bus.

Volunteers are needed for the Osprey Open!

Contact Barb Walker at 789-0183

Saturday, March 27, 2010

7am Registration

8am Shotgun Start

18 Hole 2 person scramble

\$35 per person, send payment directly to St. Andrews Links.

St. Andrews Links is located at 620 Palm Blvd., Dunedin, FL 34698.

If you have a disability which requires accommodations please call 727-298-3199 48 hours prior to the event.

Photo: Walt Spina



President's Message

By Mike McDonald

Several encounters with other Audubon people over the summer months illuminated some of the endeavors of your Society. Apparently Clearwater Audubon is doing things in the education arena that impress other Chapters. This discovery underscores both our successes and the need to expand your Chapters' education component. Three new power point programs have been created to that end: Birds of the Bible, Eagle Watch, & Osprey Watch. Additional programs are being developed.

Another challenge is overcoming the decline in our scholarship outreach. With the closing of the Maine Audubon camp and the current economic situation, your Chapter awarded only one scholarship last year; that scholarship took place as the clock ran out on the application deadline.

Scholarship plans have been made to focus on conservation 'clubs' in Pinellas County schools. We have identified three High Schools where we will focus our scholarship efforts. Your Chapter is partnering with the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs to support their teen program: Save the Environment through Education & Knowledge [S.E.E.K.]. Volunteers are needed to help with these endeavors. Contact your Chapter's Education Chair, Lynn Sumerson [727-596-8822], or me, Mike MacDonald [727-409-0459].

You will also be receiving our first annual Appeal Letter. It will outline your Chapter's accomplishments and where we need your support. Your generosity in support of Clearwater Audubon Society's endeavors will be greatly appreciated.

Imperiled Species Listing Process Comments and Position

By Mark Mueller and Dave Kandz

Representative members from St. Pete Audubon (SPAS) and Clearwater Audubon attended a recent meeting with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission regarding the imperiled species listing process. The recommendations from St. Pete Audubon and endorsed by Clearwater Audubon are as follows:

1. The name of the new single listed species category must remain "threatened" as included in the draft rule. The terms 'threatened' and 'endangered' are referenced in local ordinances and comprehensive plans.
2. The process should consider data deficiencies and other biological considerations.
3. A watch list category is also recommended.

We are very concerned about the evaluation and listing of species for which there is insufficient quantitative data to validly measure it against the very specific, purely quantitative IUCN-derived criteria proposed in the draft rule. Therefore, SPAS recommends that FWC add a provision in the FWC-initiated evaluation process to clearly allow for the expert opinion of the biologist panels to be employed in the final listing decisions in cases where it is determined that insufficient quantitative data is available for that species. In such a case, the panels should be allowed to recommend retention on the "threatened" list until such time as the necessary data can be gathered to allow for a more complete re-evaluation using quantitative criteria in the future.

Such evaluations based on expert biological opinion are made under the ESA for federal listing decisions. Such an exception is already allowed in the draft rules in the case of a listing request initiated by the public, but apparently cannot be undertaken by FWC staff or expert biological panels. This should be corrected.

Such a provision could be limited only to species that are currently listed as "Species of Special Concern", "Threatened", or "Endangered". SPAS recognizes that there were biological concerns that led to these species being placed into these imperiled categories in the first place, even though available quantitative data may have been limited at the time (indeed, one of the previous criteria used insufficient information as one of several possible reasons for listing a species as SSC).

Species such as Least Terns are presumed to be "doing fine" due to their adaptability to man-made nesting substrates - gravel rooftops. However in the long-term this nesting habit is almost sure to vanish due to building code changes. Data supporting good productivity on natural beach nesting sites is non-existent, and even rooftop productivity numbers do not reflect sufficient reproductive numbers to ensure species survival. Yet the preliminary FWC rating assigned to LETE would not provide for any listing. **Clearly this process needs additional review.** Florida's rampant development climate puts many, if not all species at risk due to loss of habitat. If a species is known to require diminishing habitat for survival, that fact should trigger a full evaluation before the species is presumed to be "not at risk".

For the same reasons, we wish to specifically applaud and reinforce the provision in the draft rule that species currently listed as "Species of Special Concern" should have that title and any associated legal protections maintained until a complete management plan and full listing criteria evaluation can be performed for that species.

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 _____ SUN pm _____ nite _____	am _____ MON pm _____ nite _____	am _____ TUE pm _____ nite _____	am _____ WED pm _____ nite _____
am _____ THU pm _____ nite _____	am _____ FRI pm _____ nite _____	am _____ SAT pm _____ nite _____	am _____ HOD pm _____ 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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WHAT IS THE CLEARWATER AUDUBON SOCIETY?

Reach us by calling 727-442-9140 or visit us at www.clearwateraudubon.org

Our purpose is embodied in our motto: **Conservation though 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 www.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.

Our Motto: *Conservation Through Education*

Supporting our community since 1959