

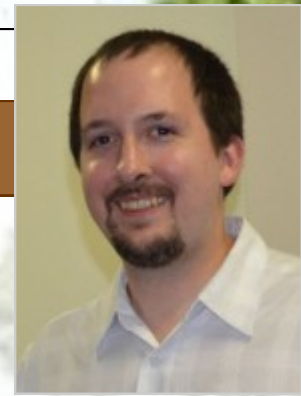
The Night-Heron



Volume T, Number 3

November 2015

A Bird's-Eye View... from Nick



Having been born and raised in Western New York, November meant it was time to put snow tires on the car and bring the winter coats out of storage. It also meant most of the birds have left; aside from the bravest of birds that don't mind a bit of snow. In Florida, November is when things are gearing up for some great months of birding and Manatee Audubon is ready!

Manatee Audubon has several great trips planned for the month of November. I am looking forward to leading the first guided bird walk of the season at our **Open House** (to the general public) at **Felts Audubon Preserve** on November 7th starting at 9:30am. Professional birding guide **Rick Greenspun** will lead a **Siesta Key bird walk** on Tues, Nov. 17th departing from the GREEN lifeguard tower on the beach starting at 7:30am. (NOTE: This is a change in meet-up location since the concession stand by the Siesta Key public parking lot has been torn out for new construction.) And to help you burn off some calories the Saturday before Thanksgiving, Lori will be leading a bird walk at **Robinson Preserve** (on Nov. 21st). Feel free to bring any visiting family members or friends!!

Our guest speaker for the monthly meeting on November 19th, is **Andrew Cox** from **FL Fish & Wildlife Research Institute**, be sure not to miss it and bring a friend or the whole family. Get there early; there were over 60 people in attendance at October's meeting when folks enjoyed the presentation from **Tim Dellinger** of **FL FWC** on **Whooping Cranes**.

We are still in need of several volunteers to help out. Whether it's arriving early or staying after a monthly meeting to help set-up or take down tables & chairs, participating in the monthly **Felts Preserve Workday** clean-up fun, welcoming visitors to a monthly Open House bird walk at Felts Audubon Preserve, submitting event photos or articles for the newsletter, or if you're interested in becoming a board member all help is welcome.

Thanks to Lucette Wombacher and Jim & Carmenza Stephenson who answered questions and provided Manatee Audubon information to guests at the **Florida Native Plant Society's** annual native plant sale (photo at right) held at **Sweetbay Nursery** in Parrish on October 3rd.



MCAS exhibit table at Florida Native Plant Sale. Photo: Lucette Wombacher

Now, let's have some fun & go birding!!

Nick

Nick Ziemba, president
Manatee County Audubon Society

PS—Support our bird rehab buddies at Wildlife Inc. if you can.

INJURED BIRD HELP:

DONATIONS ACCEPTED

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Nov. 19th — “Recovering Avian Species in a Conservation-Dependent World”

NOVEMBER MONTHLY MEETING...

DATE: Thurs., Nov. 19th

TIME: 7pm

PLACE: Hope Lutheran Church
4635 26th St West, Bradenton

Social time starts at 6:30pm.

Speaker starts at 7pm.

Even after the 3 million barrels of oil invaded the Gulf waters in the BP spill, the Gulf Coast and Mississippi River Delta remain among the nation’s foremost birding destinations. Scientists estimate that between **51,600—84,500 individual birds lost their lives due to this oil spill**. And this doesn’t include the lost reproductive output of breeding adult birds, which could easily count for up to another 17,900 loss in typical bird populations. Passage of the RESTORE ACT and the recent \$18.7 billion court settlement may be spawning new hope for the region’s ecological future.

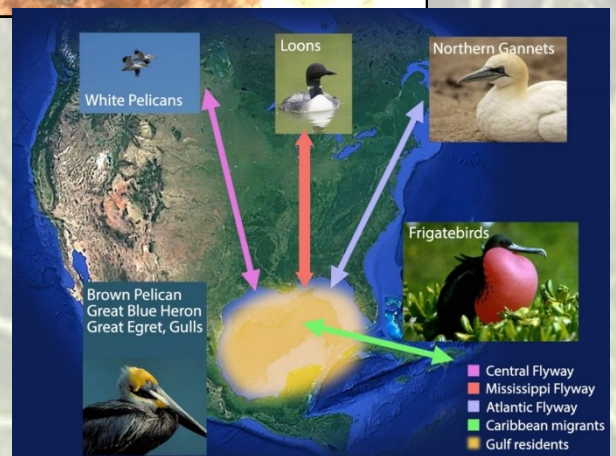
Hear from **Andrew Cox, Avian Research Administrator at Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission**, on the impact & recovery related to birds & wildlife resulting from the BP oil spill. Also, learn about the key projects FWC is leading with respect to protecting specific avian species in Florida.



Andrew Cox,
in waste deep
water, in search of
specific avian
species

Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill
Draft Programmatic Damage Assessment
and Restoration Plan and Draft Programmatic
Environmental Impact Statement

OCTOBER 2015



Kingfishers — Belted, and the rare Mustached cousin



Female



Male

It was so nice to see “my” **Belted Kingfisher** who recently returned to Florida sitting on the power line gazing over the field & nearby stream on Sunday morning as I drove to church. Belted Kingfishers are gradually returning to our area for the winter from their northern nesting locations. It is interesting that, unlike most bird species, the female is more colorful than the male. — Both are slate-blue and have ragged crests and long straight bills, but only the females have the reddish-brown stomach stripe.

Belted Kingfishers spend most of the year alone until they pair up during the breeding season. Males (and occasionally females) establish territories, which usually conform to the shape of the stream or shoreline. Belted Kingfishers are monogamous within each breeding season, but form new pairs every year. The male feeds the female while courting her. Both members of the pair vigorously defend their territory by chasing away intruders while giving loud rattle calls. A pair may select a nest site during courtship, usually high in the bank where floodwaters are unlikely to reach. The male probes the bank with his bill, flying back and forth to the female, who calls continuously from a nearby perch.

Belted Kingfishers excavate burrows in earthen banks, usually avoiding ones with vegetation (especially trees, whose roots get in the way of digging). They generally choose a bank near water, but may use a ditch, road cut, landfill, sand pit, or gravel pit far from water. The male and the female take turns digging the burrow, with males spending about twice as much time digging as females. They usually take 3–7 days to finish it, but may sometimes take up to 3 weeks. The completed burrow extends 3–6 feet into the bank, sloping upward so that rainwater won't collect inside, and ends in an unlined chamber 8–12" in diameter and 6–7" high. Throughout the breeding season a layer of undigested fish bones, fish scales, and arthropod exoskeletons may accumulate and provide some insulation.

Cool Facts

- The breeding distribution of the Belted Kingfisher is limited in some areas by the availability of suitable nesting sites. Human activity, such as road building and digging gravel pits, has created banks where kingfishers can nest and allowed the expansion of the breeding range.

The Belted Kingfisher is one of the few bird species in which the female is more brightly colored than the male. Among the **nearly 100 species of kingfishers**, the sexes often look alike. The two other species of North American kingfishers occur only in extreme southern U.S.:

The huge, crow-sized **Ringed Kingfisher** is a tropical species that barely extends its range into Texas. They are considerably larger and stouter than Belted Kingfishers, with a truly massive bill and almost entirely rusty underparts.

Green Kingfishers occur in south Texas and occasionally Arizona. They are about half the size of a Belted Kingfisher, although with a disproportionately long bill. Their green-and-white plumage is distinctive if seen in good light.

- During breeding season the Belted Kingfisher pair defends a territory against other kingfishers. A territory along a stream includes just the streambed and the vegetation along it, and averages 0.6 mile long. The nest burrow is usually in a dirt bank near water. The tunnel slopes upward from the entrance, perhaps to keep water from entering the nest. Tunnel length ranges from 1 to 8 feet.
- As nestlings, Belted Kingfishers have acidic stomachs that help them digest bones, fish scales, and arthropod shells. But by the time they leave the nest, their stomach chemistry apparently changes, and they begin regurgitating pellets which accumulate on the ground around fishing and roosting perches. Scientists can dissect these pellets to learn about the kingfisher's diet without harming or even observing any wild birds.



Mustached Kingfisher, a very rare find in the mountain forests of Guadalcanal (in the Solomon Islands).

November Monthly Photo Contest Winners

The October Photo Contest winners were:

First Place - tied

- **Royal Terns** by **Kathy Doddridge**
- **Black Bellied Whistling Duck** family by **John Lampkin**

Second Place -

- **Eastern Screech Owl** by **Jeffrey Jaudon**

Because we had two photos tied for First place, a third place award was not announced because it, too, would have also been a tie. (We have some good photographs, as you can see by the wide range of "favorite" votes by those attending the October monthly meeting!)

Thank you to all the photographers who submitted images. We welcome more folks to participate in this monthly photo contest. Simply email your images (& include your name & the bird species) to: ManateeAudubon@gmail.com. Photos need to be received at least 5 days before the monthly meeting so we can get the slideshow prepped.



Article by Scott Niblick

Felts Preserve — Nov. 21st Working Party!!

Article by Jim Stephenson

Having great luck with Audubon events taking place on gorgeous cool mornings, we had another such day for the October Work Day, held this month on the third Saturday of the month so as to avoid Halloween weekend. **NOTE:** The November Work Day will also take place on the third Saturday of the month to avoid a conflict with the Thanksgiving Holiday, since many of us have friends and relatives visiting at that time.

In addition to the usual suspects, **Fred Alan, Steve Black** and **Jerry Knight, Nadine Knapp, Samson Cantor** and **Ed Francis** came out and accomplished a great deal in relatively short order. Thank you, everyone that are helping make Felts Audubon Preserve the really cool place it is.

Samson is an Anthropology major at the University of South Florida who is doing a project on the motivations of conservation minded individuals, taken Audubon as his sample population, he worked with us while learning about Audubon and our individual take on conservation and Audubon in general. He may well be talking to any of you at future events. Please make him welcome.

The need for specificity when giving directions was once again demonstrated when Fred asked me to paint the window sills of the bird blind. I did so and was quite proud of my paint job. Then I got an email from Fred, saying that my job looked really nice, but that he had in mind the outside sills, not the inside ones. Ah well, another work day is coming!

Speaking of which, I'm calling it the **November Working Party!** For November 21st, we'll have a carefully planned set of chores, assigned team leaders who will show participants what to do, and for the first 6 individuals (and their spouses) that contact me ([301 466-1973](tel:3014661973), aladdinllc@gmail.com) **reserving a place on the team, we'll provide lunch.** Menu: Steak and/or charbroiled chicken, fire roasted potatoes, Roast sweet corn in the husk (if available another veggie if not), beer, soda or water. I'll get a reminder email out prior to the event. Don't miss it! I think we'll have a grand time!



There was an unusual surprise project for the Sept Felts Work Day: removing a boat from the ditch!

The Celery Fields & Pinecraft Park

Article by Jim Stephenson

On a clear, sunny, and, at last, cooler morning, Nine of us met at **The Celery Fields** to check out the avian comings and goings there. If you haven't been to The Celery Fields for a while, you should really drop by and take a look. The new visitors center is up and operational as of October 10. It is open daily from 10AM to 2PM. (We were there too early to actually look inside, but intend to return to do so.)



Water levels seem to be down from what we've seen before, and there are a lot of clumps of water plants in the pond directly across the street from the nature center. Birds were not as plentiful on this trip as is in the past, but the beauty of the day more than made up for it.

Our group (by then 12 birders) then went on to **Pinecraft Park**, where we spotted an assortment of **Warblers, Woodpeckers, Owls**, and even a **Bat** hanging upside down in a large hollow in a tree.



We concluded the day with lunch at **Der Dutchman**, where I, at least, consumed much more than I needed to replace the calories burned walking. As always, a day spent with fellow Audubon members was rewarding not only for the time spent outdoors and the birds but for the conversations with friends, not often enough seen.

Tram Birding at Oscar Scherer State Park

Several birders enjoyed relaxing "birding by tram" at **Oscar Scherer State Park** in Sarasota. Trip leader **Matthew Press** helped to spot some great species, including a few of the remaining **Florida Scrub Jays** which have been so popular at this location.

(Photos by Deb Yodock)



Audubon Assembly—Oct 23-24 in Orlando

This year's **Audubon Assembly** featured the theme of "**Parks: The Natural Heart of Florida**". **Eric Draper** kicked off the 2015 Audubon Assembly in style! The welcome lunch at the Audubon Assembly offered a chance for attendees to meet each other before the work & fun officially started. Among the annual "work" is defining the **2016 Conservation Priorities** so Audubon can have a strong, representative voice in State of Florida and local legislative issues.

Here is a series of snapshots from this major event attended by virtually all Audubon Chapters in Florida.

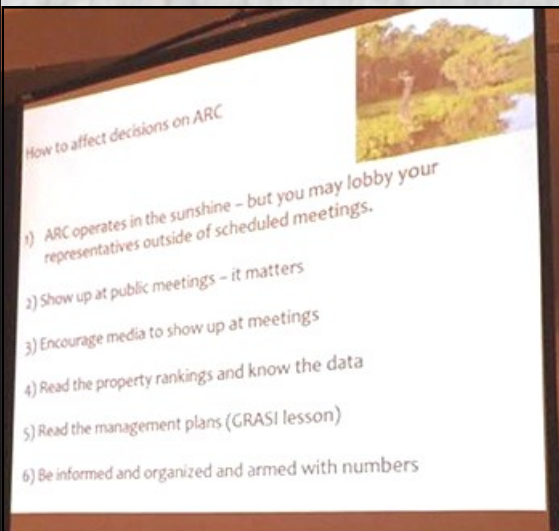


Manatee Audubon was pleased to have 3 people participating at this year's Assembly. This gathering provides attendees with an ideal time to exchange ideas on how to make local Chapters more effective & fun.



With respect to conservation issues being discussed at this year's Assembly, here's an example: Water pollution concerns raised by federal regulators could create new hurdles to extending State Road 7 farther north in Palm Beach County. — The Environmental Protection Agency has come out against a federal permit the State needs to proceed with the long-planned road construction along-

side the **Grassy Waters Preserve**. — **IMPACT:** The road could lead to "substantial and unacceptable impacts" to wetlands relied on for wildlife habitat as well as drinking water for the cities of West Palm Beach, South Palm Beach and Palm Beach, according to the EPA's Sept. 28 letter.



Upcoming Events & Key Contacts

NOVEMBER EVENTS

Friday, November 6-7

Apopka Wildlife Drive (overnight) with Ed & Amy Francis, 720-357-4447, ecf361@gmail.com. Caravan leaves Friday 6:45AM from behind Starbucks (University Blvd near 75). Stop in Lakeland to bird **Circle B Bar Reserve** (bring a lunch) then drive on to our hotel in Apopka. Saturday morning we'll bird newly opened 11 mile Apopka Wildlife Drive, with stops for birding & photo opps. After a picnic box lunch (included), we'll visit the **Avian Reconditioning Center** (ARC) in Apopka for close up encounters with almost all of Florida's Hawk, Kite, Falcon and Owl species and a Falconry demonstration. Trip signup required (limited to 20). Cost is \$35 (ARC donation & box lunch) plus Hotel (\$99 incl breakfast) and Gas.

Saturday, November 7

Open House (to the general public) 8am - noon at **Felts Audubon Preserve**, with President Nick Ziemba leading the guided bird walk at 9:30am.

Saturday, November 14

Siesta Key Shorebirds bird walk -- Rick Greenspun 284-2055 birddoggie1@gmail.com --- Meet at 7:30am on the beach by the GREEN Lifeguard Tower at Siesta Key Beach. (Park in the public parking lot near where the old concession stand used to exist.) Shorebird walk with our own experts **Rick Greenspun** and **John Ginaven**. Learn how to ID those small birds of similar shapes and colors. Some Walking, Great Photo Opportunities

Thursday, November 19

Monthly Meeting at 6:30pm (social hour) with **Andrew Cox**, of FL Fish & Wildlife's Avian Research Institute as our featured guest speaker starting at 7pm. Hope Lutheran Church, 4635 26th Street West, Bradenton in the Fellowship Hall. Bring a buddy!

Saturday, November 21

Work Day at Felts Audubon Preserve (ph: 729-2222). Routine clean-up (clean benches, signs, groom trails, etc.). **FREE LUNCH** for the first 6 who register their participation: see page 5 of this newsletter for more details.

Wednesday, December 2

Eagle Extravaganza -- Leader: Deb Yodock, ph: 228-1269 (d.yodock@yahoo.com). On Lena Road by the cell tower, approx ½ mile south of SR 64 (east of I-75). Plan to arrive by 4:30pm. Bring a lawn chair, binoculars & a camera.

Tuesday, December 8

Emerson Point Bird Walk -- Lucette Wombacher 776-8424. lucettew@msn.com -- See shorebirds, warblers with our resident Emerson Point expert. Extensive Walking, Great Photo Opportunities. Depart at 8:30am from parking lot near Visitors' Center. Bring water, bag lunch, bins, camera; wear hat, sunscreen.

Thursday, December 10

Manatee Hot Spots -- Billie & Jerry Knight 592-7622 billieknight@yahoo.com are leading this popular outing. Meet at Felts Preserve @ 8 AM Carpool rides as we travel to local birding hotspots: Palmetto Rookery, Hightower Road, Bishop Harbor. Target birds are wintering ducks, Roseate Spoonbills, Barred Owls. Limit 20 people, Lunch after at Popi's Restaurant.

CHAPTER OFFICERS 2015-2016

President — Nick Ziemba 716- 785-4732
Vice Pres — Deb Comeau..... 752-1835
Secretary — Jim Stephenson 301- 466-1973
Treasurer — Lucette Wombacher 776-8424
Asst. Treas -- Jack Schneider 792-1794

Monthly Meetings of Manatee Audubon are held the third Thursday of each month from September through April. Fellowship starts at 6:30pm; the featured speaker starts at 7pm.

Location: The public is invited to attend monthly meetings held at Hope Lutheran Church, 4635 26th St West (south of Cortez Rd.), Bradenton.

Manatee Chapter Board meetings are monthly on the 2nd Wed at 6pm in the main Manatee County Library. These meetings are open (if you want to attend).

2015-2016 STANDING COMMITTEES (* = Board member)

Beach Nesting Bird Stewardship	Dee Hanny 745 -1553
Christmas Bird Count	Dick Comeau* 752 -1835
Conservation	Open
Education	Deb Comeau* & 752 -1835
Field Trips	Jim Stephenson*... 301- 466 -1973
Felts Audubon Preserve	Connie Zack* 758 -2929
Felts Open House	Fred Allen 723 -6045
Historian	Amy Miller* 758 -7478
Hospitality	Deb Comeau* 752 -1835
Jr Audubon / Audubon Adventures..	Ed* & Amy Francis... 720-357-4447
Membership Directory & Dues	Steve Black* 376 -0110
Membership Recruitment	& Karen Willey 794 -8773
Newsletter Editor	Lucette Wombacher*.. 776 -8424
Photo Contests.....	Open
Photo Displays.....	Lori Roberts* 678- 521 -1965
Publicity	Scott Niblick* 757- 613-3948
Social Media—Facebook	Deb Yodock* 228 -1269
Webmaster	Open
Member at Large.....	Billie Knight 592 -7622
	Jim Stephenson*... 301- 466 -1973
	Kim Jones*..... 587 -2037



Manatee County Audubon Society

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Ph: 941-729-2222 www.ManateeAudubon.org

Manatee County Audubon Society is a chapter of National Audubon Society Inc.

