



The Night Heron

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We are committed to protecting the environment in our community, our state and our country.

We need a Bluebird monitor For Felts Preserve

By Lucette Wombacher

We would like to participate in the Florida Bluebird Society's statewide Bluebird Blitz, since we have been getting Eastern Bluebirds at Felts Audubon Preserve for several years. However, we have been relying on informal sightings rather organized monitoring. As a result, we do not know how many bluebirds have fledged at the preserve.

We need someone who can check the nest boxes once a week during nesting season and document the eggs and fledglings. To participate in the Bluebird Blitz, we need someone to document our bluebirds on the weekends of November 20-21 and April 2-3. Hopefully one of our members would like to become our official Bluebird Monitor. Please contact me (813-760-4959 or lucettew@msn.com) if you want to volunteer.

Welcome to our new members:

Ingrid McClellan
Carolyn Davis
Dr. Betty O'Dell
Nancy Wolfe Stead
Joanne Kinsler
Martha Linclon
John Van Zandt

Rick Greenspun to talk about birding in Panama

Expert birder and photographer Rick Greenspun, right, will speak to Manatee Audubon on Thursday November 18. The meeting, which will begin at 7:30 p.m., will be at the United Methodist Church of Palmetto, 330 11th Avenue West, Palmetto. Rick, a member of Manatee and Sarasota Audubon, will talk about birding opportunities at Panama's Canopy Tower Lodge. An Audubon trip to Canopy Tower is planned for May 24-June 2.



President's Letter from Barbara Singer

You can help keep our engine running

I want to start by saying "Thanks for helping to make us who we are!" Momentum is beginning to build. I equate it to an engine starting to produce the steam needed to take it down the next portion of the track. We have begun to receive donations that will help us fund the events important for the preservation of wildlife. The programs we want to provide are costly but the outcome will last for many years to come.

Felts Preserve is the main benefactor of your donations. It cost \$5,000 to \$6,000 per year to maintain and improve Felts. In the past we have been fortunate to receive grants for maintenance and planting from the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) but due to budget cuts those grant dollars have gone away. We will now have to rely on our members and visitors for financial support. Fortunately we have 8 to 10 dedicated volunteers who put in many hours each month preserving Felts. So, if you can not physically help to maintain Felts, please consider financial support.

We also are committed to:

- Awarding two \$1,000 Environmental Scholarships to high school seniors who plan to continue their education in environmental sciences.
- Supporting our Beach Nesting Bird Program to educate beachgoers on the importance of respecting and giving the nesting birds some space. Again, if you can't participate personally consider financial participation.
- Sponsoring the Junior Audubon program, which has increased its enrollment this year by 33 percent. Our goal is to expose children to the environment and to topics they may never experience so hopefully they will become the new caretakers of the land.

So what do I ask? Do what you can to keep that engine going down the track. Every penny helps and every hour you can donate to a Manatee Audubon project brings us closer to our goals.

Donors since September 2010

Veronica Tarnowski
Don and Betty Bansen
John and Susan Sharp
Eunice Brown
Brenda Twiss
Susan Anderson
Dr. Betty O'Dell
Ruth Erlandson
Jerrold and Joyce Brown
Michael Kennedy
Ken and Nancy Hammond
Carolyn Davis
Jeanne and Mike Dubi
Margaret Kronus
Ingrid McCellan
Edward and CC Hunter
Bruce and Lois Hanny
Dr. Phil and Suzan Gaynes
Louise Thoms
John Van Zandt
Frank and Linda Yanni
Molly McCartney
Robert Rosinsky
Rick Greenspun

Winter birds arriving at Felts
See page 2.

Wildflowers blooming and winter birds arriving at Felts Preserve

By Lucette Wombacher

October 14: I went out to Felts Preserve this afternoon and was pleasantly surprised to find the North Wildflower meadow full of very tall sunflowers. I took several pictures of them. The South wildflower meadow was beginning to bloom with the lavender grasses like last year, with some goldenrod and a few coreopsis mixed in.

I picked up the completed checklists from the Bird Blind. A number of migrants have been spotted including the Tennessee Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Eastern Wood Pewee, Bay-breasted Warbler and two new birds for the preserve, a Veery and a Gray-cheeked Thrush. Some of our winter birds are showing up including the Northern Parula, Palm Warbler, Eastern Phoebe and Yellow-throated Warbler. Water levels have dropped quite a bit, so I expect we will soon see lots of wading birds. We had a total of 52 different species documented in September, and 28 species have been documented as of today, October 14.

Walking the trails, I found an owl pellet along the eastern fence. I also found the remains of two large birds that had been eaten. One was a hawk with brown and cream barred wings, but there was not enough left to determine what kind, the other looked like an Anhinga. What could be preying on such big birds?

Three of our new signs have been put up, and they look sharp. I put the poster of the fall birds in the kiosk.



Yellow wildflowers blooming at Felts Audubon Preserve. Photo by Lucette Wombacher.

Fred Allen reports on butterflies and birds

October 2: Approximately 12 members of the Sarasota Butterfly club, led by Stuart Hills, showed up at the Felts Open House to do a butterfly walk. I joined them and we headed to the butterfly garden. The first thing we found, which we thought was a butterfly caught in a spider web, turned to be an Imperial Moth caught by a Praying Mantis. On the walk we identified 16 different species plus a couple of unknown skippers. The highlight of the walk was on the Blue Trail, where a member spotted a Tawny Emperor. It's the first one I have seen at Felts. Unfortunately no Malachite's yet. I want to thank the members of the Sarasota Butterfly Club for their generous donations

October 22: After filling the bird feeders today, I sat for a while in the Bird Blind and saw a Catbird, two Goldfinch and one very skittish female Painted Bunting. This is the earliest I have seen a Bunting at the feeder.

Steve Black leads Junior Audubon meeting at Felts Preserve

October 16: Five students and two adults attended our Junior Audubon meeting at Felts Preserve. The lesson was titled Stink, Bite, Hide, and Fight. It was how animals defend themselves. In this discussion, one of the animals we talked about was the Monarch Butterfly. These butterflies protect themselves by eating the Scarlet Milkweed, which makes them poisonous if eaten. This protects them from predators. This also makes the Viceroy Butterfly safe because it closely resembles the Monarch. We also talked about how the opossum and the hog-nosed snake play dead to protect themselves, since most animals will not disturb a dead animal. Our next lesson will be on migration, and we are working on some games we can play to show the kids what the birds have to endure during migration.

Carol Webster thanks Felts hosts

September 4: Lee Etchells hosted nine visitors on this Labor Day weekend. It was a nice morning with some light showers. Pileated woodpeckers were seen along with a few unidentified wrens.

October 2: Connie Zack hosted on this beautiful autumn day. Jeanne Dubi and Stu Hills of Sarasota Audubon led a birding and butterfly walk through the preserve. There were 28 visitors and we received \$17 in donations for bird feed. Several people took membership applications. A total of 21 bird species were observed.

Duette Preserve has birds, butterflies and dragonflies

By Dan Irizarry, trip leader

October 9: I led nine birders through various trails at the Duette Preserve in Manatee County in search of migrants and local birds. We struck out on our target birds: no Scrub Jay, and no Red-headed Woodpecker. But we did see a number of interesting birds on the way to the main park road such as a Peregrine Falcon, American Kestrel Northern Harrier, Eastern Meadowlark and a Loggerhead Shrike.

On the main road of the park our best birds were a House Wren and a Common Ground Dove. In the hammock we added a Yellow-throated Warbler, Prairie Warbler, White-eyed Vireo and a Carolina Wren.

While the birding overall was quiet (the cold front had passed earlier in the week), we saw several nice butterflies and dragonflies. There were large numbers of Black Swallowtails and Giant Swallowtails near the hammock where a branch of the Manatee River North Fork meets Trail 5. We also saw a Purple Bluet dragonfly.



Top right is Meadowlark
Bottom right is the Purple Bluet dragonfly
Photos by Dan Irizarry

Dates for Bird ID Class have changed

By Nancy and Bob Dean

Although we request use of the Synovus Bank Community Room a year in advance for our Bird ID Course, Synovus does not actually schedule use of this room until mid-fall. For the first time, Synovus needs to use their room for two bank functions during the second week of the MCAS Bird ID Course. So we have had to set new dates, which will be:

Monday, January 17 from 6:30 to 9 p.m.--no change
Thursday, January 20 from 6:30 to 9 p.m.--no change
Wednesday, January 26 from 6:30 to 8:45 p.m.--new date
Friday, January 27 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.--new date
Field trips remain the same: Saturdays January 22 and 29 beginning at 7 a.m. and lasting 7-8 hours.

Class sessions will be in the Synovus Bank Community Room, 2520 Manatee Avenue, West, which is the northeast corner of Manatee Avenue and 26th Street, West, Bradenton. The course fee is \$40 for MCAS members. The \$55 fee for non-members includes first year membership in Manatee Audubon. The number of course participants is limited to 36 and the course has filled for each of the last two years. To reserve a seat, call Nancy Dean at 941-792-9235.

Note: Please notify Nancy Dean by email at nancybobdean@juno.com or by telephone if you have a reserved seat for the 2011 course and are no longer able or willing to participate.



Woodstorks are easy to identify - they have long legs and featherless heads. Photo by Molly McCartney.

Upcoming Events

Saturday 11/6

Open House Felts Preserve
8 a.m. to noon

Sunday 11/7

Field trip to Sweet Bay
Nursery, 10824 Erie Road,
Parrish. Tom Heitzman, 737-
3169. See birds that frequent
this native plant nursery.
Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the
nursery.

Thursday 11/18

General Meeting
Manatee Audubon Society.
7:30 p.m.
First United Methodist
Church
of Palmetto, 330 11th Ave.
W. Palmetto. Our speaker
will be photographer Rick
Greenspun, who will talk
about birding in Panama at
the Canopy Lodge.

Saturday 11/20

Junior Audubon
meets 9 a.m.
at Felts Preserve

Friday 11/19

Field trip to Rothenbach
Park. Barbara Singer,
504-0228. Search one of
Sarasota's newer parks
for fall birds. Meet at
8 a.m. in Lowe's park-
ing lot, I-75 and S.R. 70
(north side).

Saturday 11/27

Work Day Felts Preserve
8 a.m. to noon

Tuesday 11/30

Field trip to Ackermann
Lake and Celery Fields. Dick
Comeau, 752-1835. Explore
the NEW expanded Celery
Fields for birds that love the
wetlands. Meet at 7:30 a.m.
in Lowe's parking lot, I-75
and S.R. 70 (north side)



David Williamson provided these photos of birds like the ones spotted in Saddle Creek Park. Clockwise from left are the Black and White Warbler, Parula, Brown Thrasher and White-eyed Vireo.

Birders visit Saddle Creek Park in Lakeland

On October 2, ten people attended our second field trip of the season to Saddle Creek Park in Lakeland. Saddle Creek Park in fall migration usually provides some very desirable birds. Even though it was late in migration, the trip proved worthwhile. We identified ten species of warblers and two species of vireos. We spotted 30 species, including the Chestnut-sided Warbler, Northern Parula, Black and White warbler, Brown Thrasher, White-eyed Vireo and Red-eyed Vireo. Trip leader was Steve Black.

Gainesville birding set for January 14-16

By Lucette Wombacher, trip leader

Our trip to Paynes Prairie Preserve and Gainesville's birding hot spots is fast approaching. We are limiting the trip to 24 people and six vehicles. We will car pool and share the gas costs. The cost of the trip is \$185 per person, double occupancy (\$275 for a single room), which includes two box lunches, two nights at the Cabot Lodge with a deluxe breakfast buffet each morning, and complimentary cocktails each evening, all entry fees to the parks and museums, and snacks and drinks for the three days. This amount also includes a \$50 donation to the Manatee County Audubon Society. You will be asked to bring a box lunch the first day and you will be on your own for dinner each day. There are dozens of eateries to choose from within a few blocks of the motel. We will be targeting wintering flocks of Sandhill Cranes, various sparrows, wintering ducks and waders, Brown-headed Nuthatches and nesting raptors. If you want to come, call Lucette Wombacher at 813-760-4959. We need to have everyone's paid reservation by the December 16 general meeting. Send your check to MCAS, P.O. Box 14550, Bradenton, FL 34280 or pay in person at the meeting.

Reserve now for Deans' January 12 field trip

By Nancy and Bob Dean, trip leaders

Because of the popular combination of last year's trip of birding at Lettuce Lake County Park near Tampa, followed by lunch at the historic Columbia Restaurant and a tour of the Ybor City State History Museum (reservation request must be approved by museum staff), with late afternoon birding along Cockroach Bay road (and possible views of the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher), this trip will be repeated on Wednesday, January 12. Participants will depart at 7 a.m. from the SW corner of the Walmart parking lot, 508 US 301 at 10th Street, East, Palmetto. Because of the restaurant meal, reservations should be made no later than the December 16 MCAS meeting. Those, who wish to drive independently may obtain field trip maps from the Deans at this meeting. For reservations, call Nancy Dean at 941-792-9235.