



Welcome New Members

By Lucette Wombacher

We are always happy to welcome new members to the Manatee County Audubon Society

Inside this issue:

- Audubon Assembly 2-3
2012 — Conference Highlights
- Felts Open House 3
- Fall Migration at Felts Preserve 3
- Bird of the Month: Lesser Yellowlegs 4
- Thank You — Hot Air Balloon Trip 4

Upcoming Events:

- Nov. 3** — Felts Open House; 9:30am bird walk
- Nov. 7** — North Lido Beach & Woods bird walk. Rick Greenspun 284-2055.
- Nov. 15**—Monthly meeting
- Nov. 17**—Boca Ciega bird walk. Nancy Dean 792-9235.
- Nov. 27** — Laurel Land Fill. Bird watch via car. Dick Comeau 752-1835.

Bird ID Course — Jan 21, 24, 28, 31. Nancy Dean 792-9235, nancybobdean@juno.com

The Night Heron

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

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NEXT MEETING... Thursday, November 15th at 6:30pm

— Bald Eagles —

A historical perspective from West Central Florida

Barbara Walker will deliver this program rich in history, field accounts, photography, biology and behavior of Bald Eagles primarily in West Central Florida with state wide comparisons. Rare photos and data cover more than a half of a century of eagle field work including the works of Charles L. Broley, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and accounts by Eagle Watch citizen scientists.



Barbara Walker

Program participants can expect to learn about eagles from a historical perspective covering eagle populations prior to DDT, through the listing and delisting periods. Bald Eagles were removed from the federal list of endangered species in June of 2007 and were delisted in Florida in April of 2008 when the Bald Eagle Management Plan was adopted. Bald Eagles remain a protected species through protective federal and state laws. The program duration is approx. 1 hour with a question and answer period following.

Please note our meetings will begin at 6:30pm with our social hour and the general meeting to follow at 7:15pm.

Location: 1st United Methodist Church of Palmetto (330 11th Ave. W. Palmetto)

Audubon Assembly Packs a Powerful Punch

by Jim Stephenson

If I were to tell you, that a large American city was running out of water; that the only feasible solution appears to be to run a pipeline 90 miles away to a new water supply; that doing so will wipe out a farming community of 500 people and that the creation of this pipeline is being discussed by politicians on several levels, you would probably say "The city must be Gotham City. Lex Luther is on the loose! This is a job for Superman." and assume that the plot came out of a comic book!



Audubon Assembly (Theme: "Conserve Water to Sustain Life"), this year, started out by screening a movie on Thursday evening titled "Last Call at the Oasis". This award-winning film started out by portraying the plight of Las Vegas Nevada, a city of approximately 900,000 people which is rapidly consuming all of the water of Lake Mead and the Colorado River. The most feasible solution to their problem appears to be to pump water from Baker, CA which will wipe out the farmers there. Lake Mead is dropping at the rate of 10 feet per year, and, if the situation is not reversed, will soon be unable to generate electric power. The film went on to show the effects of drought and water shortage around the world and spent some time discussing the effects of some of the worst instances of water pollution in the US. If you have the opportunity to see this movie, you owe it to yourself to do so. Trailers can be found on YouTube.

On Friday, I attended sessions on "**Water for the Everglades**" and "**Water for Special Places**" (like Felts's Preserve, Corkscrew Sanctuary and Silver River). I must confess that when I saw the topic of the Assembly, I thought, "Boy is this going to ever be a waste of time. What is there to know about water. It's a closed

Continued on page 3

Audubon Assembly 2012 -- Conference Highlights

By Jerry & Billie Knight

This was our first Audubon Assembly, so we didn't know what to expect. Upon arrival, lunch was served, with speakers beginning as we ate. **Kathy Castor**, U.S. Representative and coastal advocate, spoke on the BP oil spill and the recently passed Restore Act. Following lunch, the Learning Sessions began. We attended **Water for the Everglades**, which focused on a plan to restore the waterflow back to the Everglades to bring it back to a River of Grass. We then attended **Water for Our Coasts**, which focused on why Florida is important to the birds, particularly during migration season, due to habitat and food source. It was then time for the evening banquet. Keynote speaker was **Cynthia Barnett**, author of *Blue Revolution: A Water Ethic for Florida and America*. The evening awards began with a presentation of the Champion of the Everglades award to **Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar**, who talked of plans to restore the Everglades. Many awards were given out, but the



highlight was the **Guy Bradley Award** given to **Ed Carlson**, who has dedicated 38 years to the protection of **Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary**. In listening to Ed's talk, you know he knows every tree and every bird in Corkscrew.

Saturday morning began with a workshop led by Cynthia Barnett in ways she suggested water ethics in our home, in our business, and in our community. We then attended a workshop on **Creating a Water-Friendly Habitat** with native plants, with part of the workshop led by our own **Steve**

Black, who did a phenomenal job. Steve did a 15-minute presentation on the development of **Felts Preserve** and the use of native plants for water filtration, which was well received by all attending. The closing Assembly luncheon was held, with many awards given out to Florida Audubon chapters for the work they have done throughout the state. Most-memorable award was given to two young bird stewards, John Brice, 9, of St. Augustine, and Nora Flower, 14, of St. Petersburg, for their loyal work in protecting beach-nesting birds.

Insight from the Assembly: Intense 2-day learning session about the importance of conserving our most valuable resource: water, and what we must do to conserve it.

The fellowship was great – met many new birders and got to know some of our own Manatee Auduboners better. Realization of the tireless work Audubon does on the state and national level for the betterment of our environment. 338 people attended the Assembly, the largest conference to date.

The Assembly closed appropriately with Brad Paisley's music video, "Water."

More on 2012 Audubon Assembly

By Deb Yodock

The 2012 Florida Audubon Assembly offered very good panels, lectures and informative speeches to keep everyone engaged. The main focus was better ways to utilize & save water for future generations of people and wildlife. Field trips to local birding spots, including the **Celery Fields** (led by our **Nancy and Bob Dean**), **North Siesta** and **North Lido beach** were enjoyed in the mornings. Discussions on rethinking Florida Water Policy were well attended. Informative sessions on Florida's Special Places, the Everglades and the Coasts were presented. We learned about efforts to deal with: **Environmental Resource Permitting**, Consumptive Use Permitting, **Mitigation Banking**, ways to save ground water and stop the frivolous use of treated water.

Awards were given to a number of well-deserving Auduboners and associates that have given of their time and resources to promote, protect and monitor bird populations. Who knew we had so many monitoring programs like: the **Jay Watch**, **Roof-top Chick Checking** on the **Least Terns**, **Keeping Birds** in mind which looks at nesting occurring on cell towers and the like, **Eagle Watch**, monitoring something like 148 nesting sites, **Florida Shorebird Watch** and the Database that is kept, and even the **Florida Invasive Species Partnership** which we can view via www.ivegot1.org when we are out birding and see an invasive species like a Python or something. Audubon people do a lot! This conference even included the development of Audubon Florida's 2012 Conservation Priorities & Action Plan.



Powerful Punch... (continued from page 1)

system, isn't it? It evaporates and comes back down as rain. What can go wrong? If we need more, we'll just build desalinization plants!" What's the old saying about ignorance being bliss? Right on, my friend! IT IS! I thought that with Blue Spring pumping out 6,000,000 gallons per hour and Silver Spring pumping out 5 times that much we'll never have a problem. Guess what? The northern Florida springs, including the main supply for the Peace River, have all dried up as a result of our pumping too much water out of the aquifer. It only takes a small drop (4 ft.) in aquifer levels to dry up a spring!

As for desalinization, have you ever thought about what you do with the waste from these plants? Kill the coastal wet lands with brine? Bury it to pollute ground water supplies? Yup, ignorance is bliss!

On Saturday, we got to see what other chapters are doing, and, believe me, they're not sitting on their hands! But neither are we. **We had plenty to brag about like Jr. Audubon, Felts's Preserve and our initiative with the Boy Scouts!** There was also a great discussion on the subject of native plants with 5 speakers talking about various aspects of the subject. Our own **Steve Black** presented the changes that have been made to **Felts Preserve** over the years, the removal of exotics and replacement with native plants and the good that has wrought. If you haven't seen those pictures, you should! Manatee Audubon should be rightfully proud of what's been accomplished there. We also had a work shop on what we as individuals can do to conserve water in our homes.

So, it was with mixed feelings that we left this event. Rightfully proud of Audubon's accomplishments and somewhat horrified at what's happening to water supplies and wetlands around the world. I wouldn't have missed it for the world!



Felts Preserve Open House *By Amy Miller*



Saturday, October 6th was a great day for an open house at Felts Preserve. Thank you to Chuck and Liz Kercher for being the host and hostess this month. We had 12 visitors enjoying the preserve, birds, and nice weather. Among the birds noted were **hummingbirds, painted buntings, a great horned owl and Swainson's thrush.** Three visitors were not Manatee Audubon members; we welcomed them to Felts Preserve.

Volunteers are needed for the open house on December 1, February 2, March 5, April 5, and May 4. Contact Amy Miller (758-7478) if you can participate during any of these Open House events at Felts Preserve.

Fall Migration at Felts *By Billie Knight*

By Billie Knight



With the arrival of October, fall migration is in full swing. To date, 68 species of birds have been seen at Felts during October. With the passing of one of our fronts, there were **Swainson's Thrush, Scarlet Tanagers, and Eastern Wood-Peewee's** that stayed at Felts for a few days before moving south. The **Philadelphia Vireo** first spotted in September was seen again, along with a **Yellow-billed Cuckoo.** The **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** has been seen in the Butterfly Garden all summer.



Yellow-billed Cuckoo

With the passing of another weak front, the **Indigo Buntings** arrived. The male and female Indigo Buntings are feeding regularly at the feeders. One thing you have to remember with fall plummage is the Indigos will not gain their beautiful blue plummage until late winter. A female **Painted Bunting** showed up for Felts Open House on October 6th at the fountain, and the male has been seen on the property. We have also welcomed the return of our **Gray Catbirds, House Wrens, Palm Warblers, and Eastern Phoebes,** who will stay at Felts all winter. The mulee grass in the south field is beautiful, waiting the arrival of our winter sparrows. Our resident pair of **Great Horned Owls** show up every night and sit atop the snag by the bridge looking out over Felts Preserve.



Photographer John Whitehead
MCAS Library



Manatee County
Audubon Society

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**2012—2013
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Vice Pres. — Jim Stephenson
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Secretary — Patty Petruff
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Dee Hanny	745-1553
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Amy Miller	758-7478
Carole Munro	896-6102
Bunny Schneider	792-1794
Jack Schneider	792-1794
Connie Zack	758-2929

Manatee Chapter Board meetings are on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at the Manatee County Library, Downtown Bradenton Branch.

INJURED BIRD HELP: Call 778-6324 for what to do. Someone will call you back.

Bird of the Month: LESSER YELLOWLEGS

By Dick Comeau

I will always remember asking one of the top birders in North America what his favorite all-time bird was (kind of a dumb question, I later thought). I was very much surprised when he immediately said “the Lesser Yellowlegs”. I was expecting something far more exotic like a hawk, an owl, or some especially colorful migrant, but over the years I have begun to appreciate the beauty of the Lesser Yellowlegs. To see a shorebird perched in the top of a boreal taiga type tree in the Arctic tundra and you will know this shorebird is different.

For birders, distinguishing **Lesser Yellowlegs** in the field from **Greater Yellowlegs** can be problematic unless they are right next to each other. With a spotting scope or a good pair of binoculars one can see that the Lesser Yellowlegs bill length is about the width of its head. The Greater Yellowlegs bill length is about 1 ½ times the width of its head. The Greater Yellowlegs bill appears slightly upturned and is blunt while the Lesser Yellowlegs bill is straight and sharply pointed. The calls sound similar but the Lesser Yellowlegs has 2-3 note call whereas the Greater Yellowlegs has 3-5 note call. This is helpful when they are moving or flying overhead. Similar species as the yellowlegs are **Stilt Sandpiper** (greenish-yellow colored legs, smaller, with drooped bill) and the **Solitary Sandpiper** (greenish legs with barred tail).

The Lesser Yellowlegs are active foragers looking for small aquatic invertebrates i.e. insects, flies, small fish, seeds etc. During breeding season both parents provide parental care for the nesting and the chicks but the female tends to start her migration south before the chicks can fly. The father hangs in there to protect the chicks until they fledge. Migration from the arctic regions is a long trip with many of the Lesser Yellowlegs spending their winters in Central and South America but some choose to winter in Florida which is a real plus for Florida birders.



Wonderful Hot Air Balloon Trip

by Nancy & Bob Dean

We send our gratitude to our Audubon friends for your gift of a hot air balloon ride, which we elected to take over the fall leaves in NH. Our scheduled hot air balloon ride was cancelled due to fog. Andre Boucher of A&A Balloon in Derry, NH was sympathetic, but fully booked; as it was colored-leaf season. Fortunately, he scheduled a make-up flight from 4-7 PM on Sunday the 7th, just prior to our Monday return flight. Despite cloudy skies, he was able to safely launch his 9-passenger balloon from a Salem, NH site chosen after he tested wind conditions with a helium-filled balloon at the parking lot, where we assembled. He decided upon a nearby athletic field. Here, passengers helped the crew unload the basket & 400 lb. balloon.

After filling the balloon, first with cold air from a large fan, followed by heated air, all nine of us loaded up and flew for a little over an hour from a height of 150' to just a few feet above the surface of a pond. We especially enjoyed the low flight levels when we could exchange greetings with people on the ground and brush the tops of pine trees. At higher altitudes we could see from the city of Boston to the White Mountains. Missing one open field, Andre maneuvered the balloon to a cul-de-sac having underground electrical service, where we landed gently on somebody's lawn. Before disembarking, Andre boosted the balloon a few inches off the ground and the recovery crew from the chase-vehicle maneuvered us onto the driveway & cul-de-sac, where we individually got out of the basket and all teamed up to fold the balloon, bag it, and load the gear into the trailer behind the chase car. Upon returning to our meeting place, Andre briefly described the history of ballooning followed by a balloonist's toast as we sipped pink champagne (Andre', of course) and nibbled on crackers & cheese. All received certificates and other souvenirs.

2012—2013 Standing Committees

Beach Nesting Bird Stewardship -Dee Hanny 745-1553
Christmas Bird Count — Dick Comeau 752-1835
Conservation —Carole Munro 896-6102
Education — Jim Stephenson 301-466-1973
Field Trips — Barb Singer 922-4488 and
Connie Zack 758-2929
Felts Audubon Preserve — Tom Heitzman 737-3169
Felts Open House — Amy Miller 758-7478
Historian — Don Bansen 794-0255
Hospitality — Patti Clauser 776-9063

Junior Audubon — Steve Black 376-0110
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