A Bird’s-Eye View…

We thought this was “the Sunshine State”. Recent continuous & heavy rains have resulted in postponing our planned early October field trip to Duette Preserve, but fear not, it will be rescheduled. The inclement weather at least is a sign that fall is here and the influx of migratory birds continues. Neither birders or birds regret the lack of hurricane winds, so we’ll be happy with the significant rainfall. Felts Audubon Preserve will surely be filled with blooms making birds & bees quite content.

As our Manatee Audubon birding season returns to a calendar filled with fun monthly events, our mission for connecting people with birds & the places they live via educational opportunities continues to expand.

- We are working on ways to fund our ongoing “Give a Child a Day in the Wild” elementary student outreach where teachers can bring bus-loads of kids to Felts Audubon Preserve. Strong endorsements for this program have been secured to further encourage teachers to schedule these field trips with their students. Last school year, we had over 300 students participate in this program.
- The Audubon Adventures educational materials provide kids participating in Junior Audubon a new way to connect with nature. Parents or grandparents can bring their favorite kids to these monthly Junior Audubon adventures on the 3rd Saturday of each month from Oct through April. So help by telling others about this fun learning opportunity. It’s totally FREE this year!! They can call the Manatee Audubon office (729-2222) or Steve Black (376-0110) for more info on Junior Audubon.

Join the Manatee Audubon Meet-Up Group

Online meet-ups are ways many people find others with similar interests… via various clubs & organizations to join. Manatee Audubon has officially launched a birdwatching “meet up” group. To reflect the number of birders in Manatee Audubon, we need more people to add their name to the meet-up group.

Here’s how to accomplish this: click on this link http://www.meetup.com/find & type in “Manatee Audubon” in the FIND field. Then, when you’re at the HOME page for the Manatee Audubon “meet up” group, in the right hand corner, click on “JOIN US”. You’re done.

There are no fees. You will get a few reminders when Manatee Audubon trips are scheduled, but technically, there is no need to do anything else. IF you do want to comment or tell us about recent bird sightings, this is a place you can share your passion for birding & nature!

NOTE: If you have never been on the official www.MeetUp.com website, you may need to establish a free account or connect using your Facebook account.
October 16th Meeting — Jason Lauritsen, Corkscrew Swamp

Date: Thurs., Oct 16  Time: 6:30—8pm  Presentation: 7pm

NEW Location:
Hope Lutheran Church
Fellowship Hall
4635 26th Street West
Bradenton, FL

There’s no place like home… and there are so many species that don’t pay rent or a mortgage, but we are so glad they call Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary their home. They welcome us as guests to entertain us with their behaviors. Serving as their “landlord” Jason Lauritsen is the Director of Audubon Florida’s Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, who will share news about what’s happening “at home”.

Jason received his B.S. in Animal Ecology from Iowa State University, and his Masters in Science Education from the University of Iowa. He has held a variety of resource management, research and science education positions taking him from Iowa to Ecuador, Alaska and Chicago.

While serving in his current position, he is responsible for directing every aspect of the sanctuary, which therefore requires his careful eye during weekly flyovers to check on changes at Corkscrew. But “most importantly” he personally led the swamp buggy tour at Corkscrew Swamp for Manatee Audubon participants in spring 2014. (Thanks Jason! It was a spectacular field trip!!)

Come learn more about Corkscrew Swamp, and if you haven’t had a chance to go birding there, be sure to add it to your 2014-2015 itinerary. — See you at our new monthly meeting location on Oct. 16th!

Earn Funds for Manatee Audubon via Amazon.com

With Christmas less than 3 months away, remember if you shop on Amazon.com for items, please access the Amazon.com website from the link on the Manatee Audubon home page. Without any additional cost, Manatee Audubon earns up to 5% of the purchase price of items you buy. For your convenience, you can also CLICK HERE to also get to the Amazon.com website with Manatee Audubon being credited as the “referral” site. During the last 11 months, this program has earned almost $800 for Manatee Audubon. Happy Shopping!!
About 14 birders joined trip leader, Steve Black, on a clear, but quite windy Saturday at Ft. DeSoto Park on Sept. 13th. Despite the high winds, over 50 species were spotted. Among the highlights were: a White-winged Dove, White Morph of Reddish Egret, Yellow Warbler, Spotted Sandpiper, and an Eastern Kingbird. It was the white morph of the Reddish Egret which inspired this newsletter’s featured species.

Manatee Audubon members welcomed Dave Goodwin (FOS President) and Wes Biggs (FL birder hall of fame & operator of Florida Nature Tours) as guest participants on this trip. Their stories & species insights added to the fun. Dave Goodwin also brought a “hot off the press” copy of the newly updated Robertson & Woolfenden “Florida Bird Species: An Annotated List” by Jon Greenlaw, Bill Pranty, & Reed Bowman” reference book. Looks like a resource for birders who enjoy details on various species sighted in Florida.

Jerry & Billie Knight reported they were heading to Fort Desoto on Sept. 17th, but decided to stop at Felts Preserve on the way.....they never made it to Fort D. As the rains ended, the trees near the Bird Blind were alive with dropping migrants: dozens of Red-eyed Vireos, White-eyed Vireos, 8 species of warblers, with the best being male Blackburnian, Prothonotary, and a most cooperative Kentucky, Veery, Summer Tanager, Eastern Wood Peewees, plus all the regulars. What a treasure we have in our “backyard” of Felts Audubon Preserve!
The 3rd Annual Wings & Wildflowers Festival, to be held Oct. 3-5 at Venetian Gardens, 201 E. Dixie Ave., Leesburg, is bringing some of the nation’s top birding, wildflower and nature experts to Lake County to share their knowledge. A surprise addition to this year’s festival’s lineup is James Currie, internationally acclaimed birder and the host of the Nikon’s Birding Adventures TV show. Festival-goers will have an opportunity to meet Currie as he discusses his new book, “When Eagles Roar,” at 1:45 pm on Fri, Oct. 3 at the Leesburg Community Center in Venetian Gardens.

Other keynote speakers include Greg Miller, the inspiration behind the star-studded film "The Big Year," Stacy Tornio, editor of the premier national birding and gardening publication "Birds & Blooms" magazine and Roger L. Hammer, an award-winning naturalist and author who served as the director of Castellow Hammock Nature Center in Miami. Join us on an overnight trip to this festival so we can experience the fun & adventure with your birding buddies. The hours of the main festival grounds are as follows:

- Friday, Oct. 3, 2014 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Saturday, Oct. 4, 2014 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Sunday, Oct. 5, 2014 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Lots of naturalist-led bird walks as part of the festival program. Register for our group excursion by emailing Jim Stephenson (President@ManateeAudubon.org) & to get details about hotel accommodations; general festival info online at: http://www.wingsandwildflowers.com Plan is to drive up Thursday for early morning Friday birding events.

Car Birding in Duette Preserve

(2649 Rawls Rd, Duette, FL) - Trip Oct. 6th.

Billie & Jerry Knight will lead us through Duette Preserve in a caravan of vehicles to cover acreage, yet get to maximize the species seen. Minimal walking. Target birds are Scrub Jay, Northern Bobwhite, Northern Flicker, Wild Turkey. Meet at SE corner of Walmart parking Lot SR 64 at I-75 for a 7:30am departure to the preserve. (If you are meeting Manatee Audubon at the Preserve, but sure to call Jerry & Billie in advance (ph: 592-7622) so they know you are joining the group & that you drive to the correct entrance.) Some walking; Bring Lunch. $3 per car entry fee.

Oscar Scherer Park – Tram Ride Birding

Join us Oct 15th on a wagon ride of Oscar Scherer Park (1843 S Tamiami Trail, Osprey, FL) , where we’ll search for Florida Scrub Jays, Eastern Towhees, Brown Thrashers, and other pine flatwoods species. Get out and walk, stop and photograph or ride all the way. Bring a lunch; the Grill at the park may not be open on this day.

Meet at Lowes, at Fruitville near I-75 in Sarasota straight out from entrance far enough to not block parking for customers. We will leave Lowes at 8:30. Park entrance fee is $5 per car load, so carpooling is encouraged. There is a limit of 25 on the tram. The cost of the tram for our group is $50. Depending on the number of participants, the cost could be between $2—$5 per person. PLEASE BE SURE TO HAVE CHANGE!!!!! (You don’t have to ride the tram; there are sandy trails throughout the park.) To sign up, call Connie Zack 758-2929.
The Reddish Egret stands out as one of North America's most beautiful and interesting members of the heron family. This stately wading bird has a very limited range in the US, primarily restricted to the Gulf Coast states, south Florida and the southern Atlantic Coast states.

This long-necked, long-legged wader stands 30" tall and inhabits coastal tidal flats, salt marshes, shallow open salt pans and mangrove-lined shores and lagoons. It prefers to feed in protected bays and estuaries as well as calm, shallow coastal waters. The bird's unique feeding behavior makes it so much fun for birders to observe, study and photograph.

If you have never observed the "water dance" of a Reddish Egret, it is difficult to describe this feeding behavior because words really don't do it justice. It dances in circles, leaping in the air, flapping its wings and occasionally jabbing its bill downward and grabbing a fish all at the same time. Now imagine the same bird doing all these things and looking beautiful and graceful while doing them.

The bird's two distinctly different adult color morphs also make it stand out from other members of the heron family.

- The far more common dark-morph Reddish Egret has a mostly slate gray or bluish body and a reddish head and neck with a pink and black bill.
- The other morph is almost pure white Reddish Egret. In the southern United States, these "whites" may make up 5 to 10 percent of the population, though that portion can be as high as 15 to 20 percent in scattered places in Texas and Florida.
- Interestingly, mated pairs can be of the same or different morphs, and young birds in the same nest can be either or both color morphs. Neither morph is truly spectacular until the breeding season, when the birds take on high color: bright blue legs; a jet-black tip on a four-inch bill that, partway to the head, abruptly bursts into shocking pink; and violet-blue skin around the eyes.

Reddish and white morphs readily mate, and the mix of offspring is guaranteed to warm a geneticist's heart. Even two reddish parents may occasionally find a white chick in their nest, but two whites never make a reddish one. This caused confusion among early ornithologists, and for years many of them, believing the whites to be a separate species, named them Peale's egrets. John James Audubon thought the white morph was simply the immature stage of the reddish egret.

Populations of Reddish Egrets remain challenged, potentially due to a combination of (1) available forage fish from certain types of nets being used by some commercial fishermen, and (2) as "salinity increases parts of bay waters, the forage fish fare poorly, and spoonbills—perhaps reddish egrets, too—go hungry," according to Jerry Lorenz, an Audubon research biologist, who studies roseate spoonbills and their food fish in Florida Bay and the Keys.

There is nothing else in nature that quite matches the "dance" of the Reddish Egret. If you have never had the experience yourself, head to the less populated areas of shoreline. You will applaud their dancing!

### Reddish Egret Fact File

**Nest Sites:** In colonies are typically in red mangroves or brackish marshes.

**Nest:** Platform of sticks, twigs with little or no lining on the ground or 3 - 15' above water.

**Clutch:** Most often 3-5 eggs but as many as seven. Eggs are pale blue-green.

**Incubation Period:** Both sexes will incubate the eggs for 25 to 26 days.

**Nestling Period:** Both parents feed young by regurgitating fish for 3-4 weeks.

**Fledging Period:** At about 4 weeks old, but will not be capable of sustained flight until 6 - 7 weeks.

**Food:** Mostly eats a variety of small fish — minnows, mullet and killifish — but also crustaceans, frogs, tadpoles and some aquatic insects.
Build Friendship & Have Fun – Volunteer Opportunities

Open House Events – November & subsequent months.

Welcome Team -- We need friendly folks to welcome visitors to Felts Audubon Preserve. Host/Hostess volunteers simply arrive before 8am to set up a welcome table with Audubon literature (items provided by MCAS), and then open the gate to the parking lot. It’s great if you are able to bring some bottled water or even a pot or box of hot coffee for guests.

Bird Walk Leaders – If you are a veteran of Felts Preserve, why not share what you’ve learned about the various places to reliably see different birds? We aim to deliver a 60-90 minute guided bird walk for those attending our Open House events. As the bird walk leader, you’ll need to arrive by 9am so folks can start to ask a few questions while gathering in the parking lot near the welcome kiosk.

Contact Amy Miller (ph: 758-7478 or email: 941miller@gmail.com ) if you are able to volunteer for either of these roles during one or more months.

Volunteers Needed: Keep Felts Preserve Beautiful

Scrubbers, painters, pruners, etc.. Even gals & youth can help with routine maintenance to keep Felts Audubon Preserve looking its best.

- There’s a list of the monthly maintenance projects posted at Felts.
- We’ll even “pay” volunteers who work 2 full mornings during official “Work Days at Felts Preserve” with a nifty Felts logo t-shirt. But don’t wait too long before volunteering…this free t-shirt offer is only good while supplies last.
- Official “work days” are scheduled on the last Saturday of each month. Bring work gloves, bottled water; wear hat & bug spray / sunscreen. Contact Tom Heitzman (ph: 737-3169) or Fred Allen (733-6045) with any questions.

Volunteers Needed: Anna Maria BayFest

This Oct. 18th event needs 2 teams of birders (one morning team 9:30am – 1pm, one afternoon team 1pm – 5pm). Objective is to tell folks about the fun & great learning opportunities while participating in Manatee Audubon events.

Handout our events schedule & gather names of folks interested in more information, Jr. Audubon, photo contests, etc.. Easy way to meet people & share your enthusiasm for birding in Manatee County and the surrounding area!

Contact Jim Stephenson (301-466-1973) if you can help!

2014 14th Annual BayFest (10/17/2014 5:30 PM - 11:00 PM)

14th Annual BayFest 2014
BayFest 2014: Friday, October 17th - 5-10pm and Saturday, October 18th - 10am-10pm: A 2-day family friendly event, featuring: Continuous band music provided by a host of live entertainers on stage, a Food Court with local island restaurants and vendors, the LaFerrari Classic Car Show on Saturday featuring vintage cars, AMI Fitness Kids Zone, Island Fine Arts, Jewelry & Crafts, Wine, Beer, Rum Runners, Margaritas and more! BayFest is being held on the corner of Pine Avenue and South Bay Boulevard on Friday. Then on Saturday it expands all along Pine Avenue as we close the street to feature even more vendors, fun and the Classic Car Show!

For Information call 941-778-1544.

Band Line-Up Friday (TBA):
Mike Sales - MC

Band Line-Up Saturday (TBA):
Chris Grumley – MC all day
October & Early November – Bird Walks & More

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, October 2</td>
<td>Wings and Wild Flowers Festival - Venetian Gardens, 103 E. Dixie Ave, Leesburg, Florida, Jim Stephenson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, October 3</td>
<td>Wings and Wild Flowers Festival - Venetian Gardens, 103 E. Dixie Ave, Leesburg, Florida, Jim Stephenson</td>
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<td>Saturday, October 4</td>
<td>Wings and Wild Flowers Festival - Venetian Gardens, 103 E. Dixie Ave, Leesburg, Florida, Jim Stephenson</td>
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<td>Monday, October 6</td>
<td>7:30am OPEN HOUSE at Felts Audubon Preserve</td>
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<td>Wednesday, October 15</td>
<td>8:30am Oscar Scherer Park Connie Zack (ph: 758-2929) <a href="mailto:zacoto@tampabay.rr.com">zacoto@tampabay.rr.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, October 16</td>
<td>8:30pm Monthly Membership Meeting – Manatee Audubon</td>
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<td>Saturday, October 18</td>
<td>9:00am Junior Audubon</td>
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<td>10:00am BayFest - Anna Maria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, October 25</td>
<td>8:00am Laffey Key, Matthew Press, <a href="mailto:thezoneexpert@yahoo.com">thezoneexpert@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<td>8:00am Work Day, Felts Preserve 729-2222</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, November 4</td>
<td>8:00am OPEN HOUSE at Felts Audubon Preserve</td>
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Be certain to check the [www.ManateeAudubon.org](http://www.ManateeAudubon.org) website for any updates or changes to individual events.

**CONTACTS** — Manatee Chapter Board meetings are on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 5:30 in the main Manatee County Library building.

**CHAPTER OFFICERS 2014-2015**

- President — Jim Stephenson 301-466-1973
- Vice Pres — Deb Comeau 752-1835
- Secretary — Patty Petruff 747-1789
- Treasurer — Lucette Wombacher 776-8424

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- Steve Black 376-0110
- Dick Comeau 752-1835
- Dee Hanny 745-1553
- Amy Miller 758-7478
- Scott Niblick 757-613-3948
- Lori Roberts 404-941-4365
- Jack Schneider 792-1794
- Deb Yodock 794-1269
- Connie Zack 758-2929

**INJURED BIRD HELP:**

- Call [778-6324](tel:778-6324) for what to do. Someone will call you back.

**2014-2015 STANDING COMMITTEES**

- Beach Nesting Bird Stewardship — Dee Hanny 745-1553
- Christmas Bird Count — Dick Comeau 752-1835
- Conservation — Open
- Education — Deb Comeau 752-1835
- Field Trips — Connie Zack 758-2929
- Felts Audubon Preserve — Tom Heitzman 737-3169
- Felts Open House — Amy Miller 758-7478
- Hospitality — Betty Sartin 747-0908
- Junior Audubon — Steve Black 376-0110
- Membership — Lucette Wombacher 776-8424
- Newsletter Editor — Lori Roberts 404-941-4365
- Newsletter Mailings — Betty Benishek 254-7662
- Programs — Jim Stephenson 301-466-1973
- Photo Contests — Scott Niblick 757-613-3948
- Photo Displays — Deb Yodock 794-1269
- Publicity — Lori Roberts 404-941-4365
- Webmaster — Jim Stephenson 301-466-1973

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.