Red Knot
Photographer: Larry Gridley
A Bird’s-Eye View... a New President is Fledged

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has. -- Margaret Mead

With the installation of the new Manatee Audubon chapter officers for the 2015-2016 season, Jim Stephen-son hands over the presidency to Nick Ziemba (at left).

One of Nick’s goals is to attract younger birders into our organization. He has been active in the few months as a newer member of Manatee Audubon, participating in the monthly membership meetings, attending the Open House at Felts Audubon Preserve and enlisting family help from his wife, Chanel. Although Nick survived incredible winters in Fredonia, NY, we are certain he & Chanel made the best decision to relocate to Bradenton.

Speaking of attracting more birders, the Bradenton Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (BACVB) printed a gorgeous 44-page “Bradenton Area Birding Guide”. Supplies are limited, so if you didn’t get one at our April monthly meeting, be sure to watch for one in fall. But you can check out the digital version at: www.BradentonGulfIslands.com. In fact, we need to drive maximum web traffic to this digital guide to be able to hope for more funding from the BACVB in the future.

If you haven’t been to the Butterfly Garden at Felts Preserve, you’ll be pleasantly surprised. The garden has been renewed with host plants to attract butterflies.

Finally, Audubon Florida needs your Citizen Science help with the Jay Watch program. Training is May 2nd; click here for map. Email Jacqui Sulek to sign up: jsulek@audubon.org

Volunteers needed:
Jay Watch Citizen Science Training Session

Where: Duette Preserve, Manatee County
Meet at the gate: 2649 Rawls Road, Duette, FL 34251*
* Map available here: http://mynfri.com/cdfJfaw
When: Saturday, May 2, 2015; 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon
What to wear: lightweight long pants, closed-toed shoes, hat/visor, sunscreen.
What to bring: plenty of water, snacks, and a smile!
We will provide: training manual, clipboard, pencil
*Jay Watch training sessions are FREE to participants*

~Field practice on mapping and counting Scrub-jays will be followed with a 1 hour classroom session~
Every monthly Manatee Audubon chapter meeting includes some fabulous photos, and April’s favorites are featured here.

First place was awarded to Billie Knight for the Hooded Warbler, with 2nd place to Deb Yodock for the Baby Woodstork with parent, and there was a tie for 3rd place between Billie’s Summer Tanager and the Ruby-Throated Hummingbird by Kathy Doddrige.

Keep emailing your images to: ManateeAudubon@gmail.com even during summer.

Sometimes it’s little things that make such a big difference. Less than 12 months ago, Felts Audubon Preserve did NOT have any photos showing visitors the “Recently Sighted” avian species at Felts Preserve. But as you can see (photo at left), a Dad brought his family to Felts Preserve and the first place they checked out was the Visitor’s Welcome Kiosk to see what species they might encounter. — Funding from donations and membership dues help to make even these lower cost projects affordable. Watch for educational trail signs as one of next enhancements at Felts.

This past month, Manatee Audubon received gracious financial donations from:

Sara Werner
Rick Greenspun
Phillip V. Price
Francine Slack
Patricia Frost

Please welcome Deborah Francisco, who joined our Manatee Audubon “family” this past month. We’re looking forward to birding together!
It was a year of great accomplishment as so many folks contributed their time &
talent to expand the positive community impact of Manatee Audubon. Our Chap-
ter received a significant financial grant from The Mosaic Company which enabled
the opportunity for virtually every 3rd grade student in the Manatee County School
System to get hands-on education at Felts Audubon Preserve via the “Give a Child a
Day in the Wild” field trip program. Karen Willey’s Around the Bend Tours
team led these students in engaging science insights to expand the students’ insights concerning our envi-
ronment, specific wildlife habitats, various avian & other wildlife species, and even some birdwatching with
binoculars. — But Manatee Audubon is also about taking adult birding to the next level, too, with so many
bird walks & field trips led by Manatee Audubon members. We honored everyone who truly made a dif-
fERENCE to make this Chapter the best it can be! And then we installed the new officers for 2015-2016.

Lucette Wombacher,
shows her Meritorious
Service Award to other
members of the Felts Land
Use Committee.

Fred Allen (far right) was
honored as the “Volunteer
of the Year” for Manatee
Audubon, with his dedication
to Felts Preserve. Fred is
there almost every day filling
the bird feeders at the bird
blind, grooming the trails,
fixing fences & updating the
Visitors’ Welcome Kiosk.
Great Egret Award Winners

ARLENE FLISIK

For more than 20 years Arlene Flisik has worked tirelessly serving the National Audubon Society on a local, state, regional and national level. She held leadership positions including the Conservation Chairman and also the VP-Legislative & Public Affairs for Manatee County Audubon Society. Earth Day celebrations at Felts Audubon Preserve with Arlene’s help attracted over 500 attendees! In 2009, Arlene was the only person from Florida selected by the National Audubon Society for meetings in Washington DC with key legislators. It is our privilege to honor Arlene’s commitment & support of environmental issues for decades; it has made a real difference in so many ways.

JACK & BUNNY SCHNEIDER

Due to unexpected timing in a major medical need, Jack & Bunny Schneider were not able to join us for this year’s Awards Recognition Night, but we’ll publically honor them as recipients of The Great Egret Award from National Audubon as soon as possible. They each gave more than 20 years of service to Manatee County Audubon Society. As chapter officers and committee chairs, they were exemplary role models among the initial team transforming a farm into Felts Audubon Preserve over the years. They led field trips, hosted Open House events, recruited new members, were reps at Audubon Assembly state conferences, while adding insight & humor to make it fun for everyone. (How did Bunny find time to hike the Appalachian Trail & write a book about it?) It is our privilege to honor Jack & Bunny’s legacy that inspired so many and continues to make Manatee Audubon a great experience for our community.

AT LEFT…Honoring our recent Past Presidents of Manatee Audubon. From left: Tom Heitzman, Jim Stephenson, and Steve Black.

More “Night of the Stars” annual awards coverage on next page.
Ron Mayberry had a team of outside photographers review photos in the Annual Photo Contest. There were so many excellent images, that ultimately the judges recommended these 7 photos & their photographers receive Annual Photo Contest Winner recognition.

Thank You Judges!!
Trip Report: Ackerman Lake & The Celery Fields – April 18

Ten hardy souls gathered at The Home Depot on Saturday April 18 for a trip to Ackerman Lake and The Celery Fields. At Ackerman, a Tricolor Heron (below left) in full breeding regalia with the bluest beak ever seen by many in our group was a big hit.

At the Celery Fields, the Purple Martin houses are up and tenants have moved in. There were birds everywhere including Black Necked Stilts and over 50 Long Billed Dowitchers. Many ducks are still to be found on the pond across the road from the visitors center and Bird Naturalists from Sarasota Audubon were on hand with scopes and great tips where to look. Of the many birding treats, a couple of more highlights were a Loggerhead Shrike feeding young and a Least Bittern that did a fly by right in front of us. We capped off the day with a much appreciated lunch at the Old Packinghouse Cafe.

(Article by Jim Stephenson)

Award Winners – Recap

It’s been said, “the difference between ordinary and extra-ordinary is just that little ‘extra’.”

The following volunteers’ work led by these Manatee Audubon members made that extra difference this past year.

Thank you to everyone who served to share the fun and educational experience of birding, while protecting our local environment!

Trip Leader Recognition:
- Billy & Jerry Knight
- Connie Zack
- Rick Greenspun
- Deb Yodock
- Steve Black
- Lucette Wombacher
- Lori Roberts

Influential Educator Award:
- Steve Black
- Karen Willey
- Jim Stephenson

Citizen Science Leadership Award:
- Dick & Deb Comeau

Hospitality Award:
- Betty & Lloyd Sartin

Community Awareness of Audubon Initiatives Award:
- Dee Hanny
- Amy Miller
- Mike & Nancy Barnes
- Steve Black
- Scott Niblick

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Thank you to everyone who served to share the fun and educational experience of birding, while protecting our local environment!
The Emerson Point Preserve bird walk on April 14 was pretty special. We had a smaller group of 12 adventurous people, so we went on a quest for the Mangrove Cuckoo. It took a lot of walking, but we found it! Twice! Everyone got to see it, but no photos!

We also saw a number other seldom seen birds: Carolina Wren, Northern Parula, Prairie Warbler, Common Ground Dove. It is nesting season, so we found nesting Pileated and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Ospreys with a baby and a Northern Cardinal on a nest. We had a total of 27 species on this final bird walk.

Sign Up NOW for Beach-Nesting Shorebird Stewardship Weekends

- The stewards are needed for these dates: May 23, 24, 25 (Sat-Mon) and July 3, 4, 5 (Fri, Sat, Sun) on Anna Maria Island. There are 4 shifts per day: 8-11A, 11A-2P, 2-5P, 5-8P with a minimum of 2 Stewards per shift (max of 6).

Contact Dee Hanny (ph: 745-1553; email: ynnahda@yahoo.com) to volunteer. Provide the dates & times you will work as a steward. You simply tell beach visitors about the needs of Least Terns & Black Skimmers.
Recent Red Knot population declines have garnered much attention. Audubon’s climate model brings attention to a new threat: loss of wintering range. The model projects a shift away from over ¾ of wintering areas with suitable climate, with particularly sharp losses in Florida. Most Red Knots winter along or near the shore, so rising sea levels will play a key role in determining the Red Knot’s future whereabouts in winter. We’ll be counting Red Knots on our beaches.

We had a beautiful day for birding at the April 4th Open House at Felts Audubon Preserve. The hosts were Barry & Patti Clauser; they welcomed 33 people. We entertained birders from the UK & Australia, Canada & South Carolina. They were thrilled by the male Painted Buntings as well as the Indigo Buntings, and Red Wing Blackbird, both male and female. The Great Horned Owl put up with us for quite a while as we snapped a lot of pictures of him, before he decided he had enough and flew away. A Ruby Throated Hummingbird was spotted busy on the coral bean plant next to our beautiful butterfly garden. In all there were 34 species seen. Dee Hanny led the bird walk and he spotted a Red Admiral butterfly which he said was a rarity.

Dee Hanny & Lucette Wombacher staffed the Manatee Audubon table at the Open House & Native Plant Sale at Sweet Bay Nursery in Parrish.

Bunting & Wood Duck photos by Deb Yodock.
Website Needs Traffic for Birding Bucks $$$

Remember to visit the www.BradentonGulfIslands.com website and watch the sliding banners to CLICK & link to the Bradenton Area Birding Guide. Tell others, too!!

INJURED BIRD HELP:
- Call our friends at Wildlife, Inc., ph: 941-778-6324 for what to do. Someone will call you back.
- For more tips, or to make a donation, visit http://wildlifeinc.org

Wildlife, Inc.
Education & Rehabilitation
A Non Profit Organization
(941) 778-6324
Serving the Manatee and Sarasota County area since 1988

UPCOMING EVENTS:
Saturday, May 2 — Jay Watch training at Duette Preserve. 8-noon. 2649 Rawls Rd., Duette, FL. Wear light-weight pants, closed-toe shoes, hat, sunscreen. Bring plenty of water!!
Saturday, May 23, 24, 25 - Beach-nesting Shorebird Stewardship Weekend.
Saturday, May 23 — Felts Preserve Workday (grooming & maintenance)

Happy Birding!

CONTACTS — Manatee Chapter Board meetings are on the 2nd Wed of the month every month at 6pm in the main Manatee County Library. These meetings are open (in case you want to attend).

CHAPTER OFFICERS 2014-2015
President — Nick Ziemba 716 785-4732
Vice Pres — Deb Comeau 752-1835
Secretary — Jim Stephenson 301-466-1973
Treasurer — Lucette Wombacher 776-8424

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Jack Schneider 792-1794
Terrer Wonder 794-1269
Deb Yodock 794-1269
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Manatee County Audubon Society
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Ph: 941-729-2222 www.Manatee Audubon.org

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