



# LAUGHING GULL

The Newsletter of the St. Lucie Audubon Society

Volume 32 Issue #4

P.O. Box 12474, Fort Pierce, FL 34979

January 2008

## President's Message

In lieu of the usual president's monthly message, I have asked St. Lucie Audubon member, Jane Brooks, to write a timely message concerning the windmill proposal by Florida Power & Light currently before our County Commissioners. She is particularly interested in this because one of the proposed public beaches to have windmills is named for her late husband, John Brooks, in honor of his conservation work. Here is Jane's message:

### JOHN BROOKS PARK

For more than 30 years I have been involved in one way or another in trying to acquire and protect some of the natural Florida for the enjoyment of present inhabitants, visiting tourists, and future generations. During this time the citizens of St. Lucie County have voted for two large bond issues for such purchases. Many of us worked long and hard to persuade owners to sell and the state to buy Green Turtle Beach, now known as John Brooks Park.

I am in favor of developing alternative, non-polluting sources of energy. If FPL wants to locate wind turbines on its own property, I would want to be a part of a study and evaluation of such a proposal. BUT, regardless of the pros and cons of wind turbines, I am opposed to ANY use of public lands for ANY purpose other than the ones for which they were acquired.

The management plan for John Brooks Park states that it was purchased by the state and subleased to the county "to preserve a section of coastline from further development, protect its native plants and animals, and provide recreational opportunities to the people of St. Lucie County". Further goals include "protect environmentally significant natural communities" and "maintain the land in as natural a state as possible".

I cannot conceive how the commercial installation of these huge machines would fit into these purposes. Stay tuned for how the Board of County Commissioners will act.

## Calendar of Events

### Meeting:

Thursday, January 3, 2008

"Treasured Waters" Indian River Lagoon,  
presented by Camille Yates.

### Field Trip:

Saturday, January 5, 2008

Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge

(see back page for details).

## New Members

Katherine Sheridan   Clarice Stevens,  
Robert Matteson   Jose Gonzalez  
Donald Brehany   Susan Matteson  
Joseph Dangelo   Anna Pavlik  
E Fasciglione   Lawrence Smith

## Upcoming Events

### Conservation of Priceless Florida

Oxbow Eco-Center Lecture Series

Saturday, January 5<sup>th</sup> at 11 am

Dr. Reed Noss is the Shine-Davis Professor of Conservation Biology at the University of Central Florida and President of the Florida Institute for Conservation Science. He has spent decades studying biodiversity and ecology and has worked on numerous efforts to protect wildlife corridors on a regional level.

The Oxbow Wake up Call lectures are held the first Saturday of the month from November through April at 11:00 am. Lectures are free and we provide shade-grown, bird-friendly coffee. Remember to bring your own mug!

### Meeting Place: Oxbow Eco-Center

5400 N.E. St. James Dr., Port St. Lucie, FL 34983  
772-785-5833

1.7 miles south of Midway Rd. / 1.8 miles north of Airoso Blvd. on St. James Dr. (S. 25th St.)

## Feathered Friends

By Dotty Hull

### National Audubon Society's Fort Pierce Christmas Bird Count

St. Lucie Audubon Society participated in the 108<sup>th</sup> annual Christmas Bird Count sponsored by National Audubon Society. Eleven teams totaling 33 individual birders covered a 15 mile circle from Indrio Road to Prima Vista Boulevard and from Header Canal Road to the ocean.

We awoke at 6:00 A.M. to a downpour of rain. We feared this day would be a repeat of last year's dreadful weather on count day. Soon the sun came out and it was a delightful early winter day with temperatures in the low 80s. The birds also seemed to like it. A total of 123 species were seen, compared with 109 in 2006.

Some highlights of the count were 13 Roseate Spoonbills, 1 Broad-winged Hawk, 1 Snail Kite, 5 Bald Eagles, 7 Northern Bobwhites, 2 Purple Gallinules, 4 Limpkins, and 82 Sandhill Cranes. The complete report will be available soon on our website at <http://www.saintlucieaudubonsociety.org>

The After-count Dinner held at Oxbow Eco-Center was well attended by many who counted birds all day. We enjoyed sharing our sightings of the day and tallying the results. Thanks to Gale Parmentier for preparing the turkey and stuffing and to all who bought covered dishes to complete the meal.



## JUNGLE CRUISE

1:00 PM Daily

See alligators, turtles, birds and more.  
River Park Marina on Prima Vista Blvd.

## BIRD WATCHING CRUISE

4:00PM Wednesday (seasonal)

Experience Bird Island & see several hundred nesting birds! Rivergate Park/ Midport Rd.



**RESERVATION REQUIRED: River Lilly 772-489-8344**

### 2007-2008 Chapter Officers & Committee

**PRESIDENT:** Al Parmentier 489-6176 [alparm@comcast.net](mailto:alparm@comcast.net)  
**VICE PRESIDENT:** Liz Dunleavy 489-9050 [DunZippy@aol.com](mailto:DunZippy@aol.com)  
**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Edie Schor 468-0580 [edieschor@comcast.net](mailto:edieschor@comcast.net)  
**CORRESPONDING SECRETARY:** Millie Estersohn 879-9485 [mehe70@comcast.net](mailto:mehe70@comcast.net)  
**TREASURER:** Kari Fowler 462-2529 [fowlerk@stlucieco.gov](mailto:fowlerk@stlucieco.gov)  
**BIRD EDUCATION CLASSES:** Wren Underwood 785-5833 [underwoe@stlucieco.gov](mailto:underwoe@stlucieco.gov)  
**MEMBERSHIP CHAIR:** Dotty Hull 340-2226 [fbird40@bellsouth.net](mailto:fbird40@bellsouth.net)  
**FIELD TRIP CHAIR:** Hank Hull 340-2226 [hankhull@hotmail.com](mailto:hankhull@hotmail.com)  
**PROGRAM CHAIRS:** Grace Stock 871-2882 [graceestock@peoplepc.com](mailto:graceestock@peoplepc.com)  
 Liz Dunleavy 489-9050 [DunZippy@aol.com](mailto:DunZippy@aol.com)  
**CONSERVATION CHAIR:** Kari Fowler 462-2529 [fowlerk@stlucieco.gov](mailto:fowlerk@stlucieco.gov)  
**EDUCATION CHAIR:** Terri Brown [tmbrown761@bellsouth.net](mailto:tmbrown761@bellsouth.net)  
**NEWSLETTER EDITOR:** Veronica Berrones 785-5833 [berronev@stlucieco.gov](mailto:berronev@stlucieco.gov)  
**NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTOR:** Nettie Brolman 461-3658  
**DIRECTORS AT LARGE:** Terri Brown [tmbrown761@bellsouth.net](mailto:tmbrown761@bellsouth.net)  
 Margaret Seiler [seilerocean@aol.com](mailto:seilerocean@aol.com)

## Notes from the Burrow

By Terri Brown

Thank you for all of your help and support on our past gopher tortoise relocation projects. Both Platt's Creek and Gator Trace Green have now been cleared for development and over 100 tortoises were rescued from those sites. At this time we do not have any on-going relocations but we will ask for volunteers again if the need arises.

Our fund-raising efforts continue. On Saturday, December 8, the Gopher Tortoise Committee had a booth at Heathcote's Holiday Market. Gopher tortoise t-shirts and tote bags were sold, and the booth raised over \$100. Thanks to the following volunteers for working that day: Karie Fowler and her son, Ian, Terri Brown and her daughter Kristin.

### Bird Identification Classes

February 26<sup>th</sup>, March 4<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>.

Tuesday evening sessions from 7 - 9 pm.

Field trips Saturdays following the class by  
St. Lucie Audubon.

Cost is only \$30.

Classes will be held at Oxbow Eco-Center  
5400 St. James Drive, Port St. Lucie, FL 34983  
**For more details, call the Oxbow @ 785-5833.**

### A Birder's Lament

Submitted by Michael Chiaramonte

We are not nerds, nerds, nerds,  
 We love all birds, birds, birds.  
 Are not dorks, dorks, dorks.  
 Admire storks, storks, storks.  
 Applaud all birds both great and small.  
 We know their every call.  
 Stereotyped by others.  
 Excited over anything that flutters.  
 If we meet another birder by chance,  
 We click our bills and dance.

Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary will host a Chapter Workshop titled **Taking Action for Birds in a Changing Climate**. Scheduled for Friday, March 14, 2008, at the Holiday Inn in Kearney, Nebraska, the workshop is open to all Audubon chapter members and the general public. For more information or to register, visit Audubon Nebraska at [www.audubon.org/states/ne/](http://www.audubon.org/states/ne/) or call (402) 797-2301.

## Internet Sites of Great and Grave Importance

**[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Save\\_St\\_Lucie/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Save_St_Lucie/)**

Save St. Lucie Alliance, probably the newest guy on the block. It's a long IP address and you have to type it absolutely correctly. Definitely worth checking out. By all means check out the links. Definitely cutting edge at the moment and hope it stays that way concerning the wind turbines. Kudos to those willing to stick their necks out and be counted. It's so new that I'm still learning.

**[www.stlwaterfrontcouncil.org](http://www.stlwaterfrontcouncil.org)**

Another grass roots organization but it's been around for a while with a proven track record with lawsuits in their "portfolio" to prove there's a bite behind that bark. It can read like a history book if you're so inclined or pick your subject de jour. You can't consider yourself "educated" unless you know the issues.

**<http://www.presqueisle.org/audubon/conserv.html>**

A direct link to an article that appeared in the Presque Isle Audubon's newsletter out of Erie, Pennsylvania. A must read for all those who think that wind turbines hung the moon.

**<http://www.wind-watch.org/>**

The grande dame of websites for those seeking the very latest on wind turbines. Today is Monday and Saturday's article out of the Fort Pierce Tribune was already posted. Check it out for videos, scientific reports, and info from all over the world. No kidding!

**<http://www.stlucieaudubonsociety.org/>**

Yes, we have our own website. It kind of fell into somewhat disrepair but is being reconstructed and if it isn't up to date by the time you get this newsletter, keep checking back every few days.

With what's going on in our own back yard, we can't sit back and just say another beautiful day in paradise because if we do, we're going to have to be deaf and blind to keep on being a believer.

And with that in mind, we want to engage the members of our organization who are so inclined to volunteer to be contacted when we feel the paradise we live in threatened and where our members can make a difference with very little effort and let our officials, elected and otherwise, know our opinions. You can either email me at edieschor@comcast.net or write us at our P.O. Box address and let us know either your phone or email or both. Hopefully by the time you receive your newsletter there will be a place on our website to list your name and know that your name and email address will be kept confidential and used for only furthering what the local Audubon perceives as crucial. Sometimes we only have hours to respond to what could be impending doom. For that we really do need your phone number too if you're so inclined.

This is something new we're doing but we're going to make every effort to make it worthwhile for our members.

**<http://www.goodsearch.com/>**

If you've come this far down the list, here's something you can do absolutely effortlessly and that is to choose Goodsearch as your search engine, at least some of the time if not all of the time. Just designate one of the 45,000 charities listed and a contribution is automatically made to the charity of your choice for each web search. Check it out before you opt out. You owe it to your conscience.

Okay. I hear you. I'm getting down off my soap box. Now it's your turn. Until next month! *Edie Schor*



**Please  
Remember  
to Recycle!**

### Webmaster Needed

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St. Lucie Audubon is in need of a volunteer to maintain our website. It would require uploading the Calendar of Events in October and the monthly newsletter from October through May. Please call Dotty Hull at 340-2226 if you can fill this important volunteer job.



## *Membership Renewals*

Chapter memberships extend from October through May. Chapter members may use the coupon below to renew membership for 2008. Please mark **RENEW** on your check.

SLAS is now offering a Chapter-only annual membership option for those who want to financially support their local chapter. The annual cost is only \$15 per year, which includes a monthly subscription to our "Laughing Gull" newsletter. Please make checks payable and send to:

St. Lucie Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 12474, Ft. Pierce, FL 34979

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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*President's Message*  
*Calendar of Events*  
*New Members*

**Page 1**

*Officers*  
*Feathered Friends*

**Page 2**

*Membership Renewal*

**Page 3**

*Notes from the Burrow*  
**Page 3**

**Meeting: Thursday, January 3, 2008**

**"Treasured Waters" Indian River Lagoon, presented by Camille Yates.**

**Field Trip: Saturday, January 5th**

Our field trip this month will be to **Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge** led by Hart & Jewel Rufe. They will lead us through Black Point Drive where we should see many wintering ducks and wading birds plus many other species. If you have never been to this magnificent place, be sure to join us. The refuge viewing will be mostly by car except for a walk on the boardwalk at the visitor center and a short walk from the parking lot to the beach. Bring a bag lunch since we will be at the refuge for several hours.

We will carpool from Home Depot parking lot at 6:30 a.m. since it takes about 1 hour and 45 minutes to get to the refuge. Home Depot is located on the corner of Okeechobee Rd. and Jenkins Rd. in Fort Pierce. Meet in the parking lot nearest to the Jenkins Rd. entrance so as not to interfere with business activity. Please share the cost of gasoline with driver if you ride with someone else. **Please note the earlier than usual starting time for this trip.**

**Bud Adams Ranch Breakfast**

The Breakfast at Bud Adams Ranch will take place on **February 17<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 a.m.** This is an opportunity to enjoy a wonderful breakfast in one of the prettiest parts of the ranch and have a bus tour of other places.

Tickets are \$20 per person and must be reserved and paid for in advance. This event fills up fast so reserve early.

**Call Dotty Hull at 772-340-2226 to reserve tickets.**

**Indian River Boat Ride**

Join us for a boat ride on the "Treasured Waters" of the Indian River Lagoon with Captain Barry Lege. This will give us a chance to view the many features of the lagoon described by Camille Yates at the January 3 meeting.

The boat leaves from the Manatee Center. The boat ride is FREE and is on a first come, first serve basis with a maximum of 30 passengers.

**Call Dotty Hull at 772-340-2226 for reservations.**



***Laughing Gull***

St. Lucie Audubon  
P.O. Box 12474  
Fort Pierce, FL 34979



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Do the "**Green Thing**" and help our chapter save printing and mailing costs by getting your newsletter by email. No special program is needed to open it, and you can print it out if you prefer to read it offline.

**Send your name and email address to [flbird40@bellsouth.net](mailto:flbird40@bellsouth.net) to sign up.**

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