

# Laughing Gull

The Newsletter of the St. Lucie Audubon Society



Volume 31 Issue #2

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

November 2006

## Welcome to new members!

Catherine Barnes  
James Betzhold  
Pat Christ  
Anne Defreze  
Aaron Dubrinsky  
Karen Dye  
George Hitchcock  
Lawrence Liss  
Mitchell Ross  
Adria Siraco  
Russell Weigold  
Roberta Woodward



## Get your Laughing Gull by email

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 to sign up.

## President's Message

By Al Parmentier

Welcome back to our migratory friends, both birds and humans.

Our season got off to a great start with a field trip to Oak Hammock. Although it was not a day of quantity, we were treated to sightings of American Redstarts and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. The park itself is a pleasure to walk through, with wide trails, beautiful live oaks, and large palms.

The first general meeting featured Paul Miller, the resident biological scientist at the Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park. His presentation was so interesting, we are going to schedule a field trip to the preserve in the near future.

With these very interesting beginnings, we are looking forward to a great season and hope many of you will join us.

**Please keep in mind the future of our environment when going to the polls on November 7<sup>th</sup>.**

**\*New e-mail addresses for the Parmentiers:**

Al: [alparm@comcast.net](mailto:alparm@comcast.net)

Gale: [force8gale@comcast.net](mailto:force8gale@comcast.net)

### Meeting Place Location:

Oxbow Eco-Center  
5400 NE St. James Drive  
Port St. Lucie, FL 34983  
(772) 785-5833

## Calendar of Events

### November Meeting:

Thursday, November 2nd at 7 p.m.

Ken Gioeli, Natural Resource Extension Agent with the St. Lucie County Cooperative Extension will present a program on Sea Turtles.

### November Field Trip:

Saturday, November 4th, Oak Hammock Trail. (See details on back page).

## Other events of interest

**"Wake Up Call" Lecture Series  
Saturday, November 4th;  
11 am @ Oxbow Eco-Center:  
"Bringing Home the Green"**

**Susan Cerulean**, noted writer, naturalist and activist, will be speaking about making a difference in our communities. As a founding member of the Heart of the Earth "intentional" community in north FL, she invites others to live more sustainably by taking an inventory of one's lifestyle choices. Come learn how you can make a difference! Free! Free shade-grown/bird friendly coffee if you bring your own mug!

**Birding Classes:** Tuesday evenings February 20th, Feb 27th and March 8th from 7-9 pm. Field trips Saturdays following the class by St. Lucie Audubon. Cost is only \$30.

**For more details, call the Oxbow @ 785-5833.**



# Conservation Corner

By Harold Phillips

Have you been to see the movie “An Inconvenient Truth”? The movie is a commentary on the dangers of global warming. Manufacturers of solar energy products have been seeing a big increase in demand since the movie was released. “In June most companies sold two or three times more than they sold in any month before” said a spokesperson for the American Solar Energy Society.

Lets go and see the movie and maybe it will help us decide that placing a solar panel on our roof will make a meaningful contribution to the environment. You may pay for the cost in reduced electricity bills sooner than you think. Have you noticed how much your electricity bill has gone up in these past few months?

As many of you will have now realized, when our County Commissioners voted out the Florida Power and Light proposal to build a coal burning power station in St. Lucie County many of us thought that the contamination of our waters and harm to our health had been averted, but not so. F P & L have now decided to build a “bigger and better” dirty coal power plant on the shores of Lake Okeechobee near Moore Haven. Applications will be reviewed on a newly legislated fast track approval method. That means fewer checks and balances and less regard for pollution concerns and our health.

It does not auger well for the Everglades and the Lake Okeechobee and estuaries 10.2 billion dollar clean up. All these areas including the Indian River Lagoon and the St. Lucie River will be impacted depending upon the prevailing winds of the day. The F P & L plant will shed tons of mercury across our area.

We may find that we are adding pollution at a faster rate than we can clean it up. As has been aptly stated by the Sierra Club, “Just as there are no clean cigarettes, there is no clean coal”. Coal is a dirty power source that is unwelcome in most communities, and Lake Okeechobee is no different – it is unwelcome there and in the Treasure Coast, too.

On the issue of Land Stewardship as a tool for preservation it has been proposed to try and reach an agreement that will allow 12,000 acres of natural habitat west of Fort Pierce to be placed in preservation in perpetuity. However, negotiations with Family Lands Remembered who represent developers Centex and Lennar Homes have run into some major obstacles. The Department of Community Affairs now have some very pertinent questions to be asked and answered.

It may prove in the end that the cost will be too high to carry since the proposal now involves building a new town beyond the County Urban Services Boundary. Although the “new town concept” sounds interesting and inviting the impact in the north County, on the immediate residents of the area, to be called Cloud Grove, is vast. The proposal has been escalated from what would have been only 2,400 homes to a housing development of over 13,000 homes. An estimated new population of more than 30,000 residents! Where will they work, where will they shop and where will their children go to school? Will their 20,000 extra cars and trucks damage our existing roads and what impact will they have on Ft. Pierce? It is difficult enough finding a parking spot downtown as it is! Who will guarantee water supply for the next 60 years or more as the Florida aquifer continues to show that its water resources are being tapped to the limit.

**Membership Renewals**  
Chapter memberships extend from October through May. Chapter members may use the coupon below to renew membership for 2007.  
**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 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 \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Environmentalist @ Home

by Harold Phillips

Operation Migration is a non profit conservation organization devoted to saving the endangered Whooping Cranes in America and especially in helping them to learn the passage for their first ever migration to Florida. Each year they raise fledgling Whooping Cranes, teach them how to fly and how to follow a microlight aircraft that guides them to their winter feeding habitat in Florida. Each year the number of birds increases by ten or so juvenile Whooping Cranes. At one time they became so close to extinction that only about 14 birds remained alive.

Please help to raise funds by using the search engine called "Goodsearch.com". It is so simple to help raise funds for Operation Migration every time you use Goodsearch.com.

The simple instructions are go to the web site [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com). Open the site and you will see one place to enter your search inquiry as you would normally do. Below that it says name you favorite charity - enter "Operation Migration". As you make each search one penny is donated to the Whooping Crane work.

After making a search for Operation Migration you can view the amount raised this month. Lets use it as much as we can and set a new donation record for October. It is fun to put Goodsearch on your screen as your search icon. Each time you use it you can look and see how much the donation has increased from the previous day, or even after making your last search. You will find it every bit as efficient as the one you may be using now.

### **AUDUBON HOPEFUL THAT EVIDENCE OF IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKERS IN FLORIDA WILL LEAD TO CONFIRMATION**

**New York, NY, September 26, 2006** – National Audubon Society today joins other conservationists around the globe in hoping that evidence compiled in the Florida panhandle will lead to the confirmation of an Ivory-billed Woodpecker population. The sightings have been reported by an Auburn University research team, led by Professor Geoff Hill, Ph.D.

"It would be wonderful to confirm that a viable population of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers exists, and we hope the search by the Auburn research team will lead to that," says Greg Butcher, Director of Bird Conservation for the National Audubon Society. "This announcement is a reminder of why it is so essential that we protect bottomland forests, wetlands and coastal habitats across the Southeast, and these new sightings should reinvigorate efforts to find the bird in other portions of its historic range."

## Feathered Friends

by Dotty & Hank Hull

If you have children or grandchildren in your life, there is an interesting website that encourages people who appreciate birds and nature to share their passion with others. The website's author lists ways to inspire an appreciation of birding AND minimize the risk of forcing it upon them. Below are two birding tips from the website, with permission from Dave Magpiong, the website's author.

### **Fledging Birder Tip #1:**

When out with your young birding buddy, have them describe as many details as possible for each bird they see BEFORE you ID the species.

Sometimes, they may be able to ramble off the various colors, markings, structure, or behavior of the birds. Other times, you may need to ask open ended questions like "what do you notice about the head and beak?"

By making them look at birds more critically, you are helping to build their ID skills while also letting them get more intimate with each bird.

### **Fledging Birder Tip #21:**

Give your new birder the freedom to explore other things when they're out "birding" with you.

#### **This serves several important purposes:**

- \* fosters their independence
- \* shows them that you value their interests
  - makes the trip more enjoyable for them which leads to more future trips
- \* gets them more familiar with the world around them

To read more go to

<http://www.fledgingbirders.org/>

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## **November 2 Meeting**

Ken Gioeli, Natural Resource Extension Agent with the St. Lucie County Cooperative Extension will present a program on Sea Turtles.

## **November 4 Field Trip**

This month our field trip will take us through the Oak Hammock Trail and the beach at Ft. Pierce Inlet State Park on North Hutchinson Island. Meet at the front gate of the park at 8 A.M. To reach the park from U.S. 1 take A1A NORTH (north of Seaway Dr. by Publix and Wendy's) almost to the beach and the park will be on the right.

# ***Laughing Gull***

**St. Lucie Audubon  
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