

# LAUGHING GULL

## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ST. LUCIE AUDUBON



Volume 32 Issue #3

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

December 2007

### President's Message

Alleluia, the cool weather has finally arrived! The first two weeks of November have just been beautiful. My list of outdoor items to be done is actually going down.

Along with the cool weather, comes the holiday season. Here are a few thoughts for energy saving and environmental considerations.

LED lights use 90% less energy than conventional lights and can burn more than 100,000 hours.

What about your Christmas tree choices, natural or artificial? A great website for viewing a total comparison is [www.christmastree.org](http://www.christmastree.org). Just a few highlights from the many positive ideas for selecting natural trees – they absorb carbon dioxide, support complex ecosystems, are 100% biodegradable, leave no chemical residue, and contribute to the soil when decomposing. That is some food for thought, isn't it?

In closing, I wish everyone a happy holiday season. Make it more green and plant a tree in your yard, or contribute one to your condo association.

*Al Parmentier, President*

### Calendar of Events

#### Meeting:

Thursday, December 6, 2007

**"Birds and the Plants that Affect Them,"**  
presented by Greg Braun, Executive Director of  
Martin County Audubon Society.

#### Field Trip:

Saturday, December 8, 2007

**Martin County Birding Hotspots**

(see back page for details).



**Christmas Bird Count**  
**December 15<sup>th</sup>**  
**Dawn to Dusk**

### Upcoming Events

#### Tracking aliens!

Oxbow Eco-Center Lecture Series  
**Saturday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at 11 am**

This year's lecture series focuses on lessening our impact on Florida's ecosystems. It's easy to do if you know how and this series is designed to show you some basics.

Retired NOAA research scientist, **Dr. Herman Kumpf**, has a new passion in life - tracking aliens! No, not little green men from Mars, but the spotted tilapia from Africa, Pacific lionfish, and the Asian eel. Florida, especially southern Florida, is a haven for plant and animal species that are not native to our area. These "invasive" species can inflict negative environmental and economic consequences. Learn about these animals, their invasive pathways, impacts on our environment and what we can do to prevent their introduction and dispersion.

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.

## Feathered Friends

By Dotty Hull

It's that time of year again for the Christmas Bird Count (CBC). This is 108<sup>th</sup> year that this annual event has been held across the nation. Records from the long history of CBCs are being used for studies on the effects of temperature changes on bird populations. As the temperature gets warmer, birds should be shifting their range, abundance and distribution in response. And yet trying to link the conflicting data of a particular species of bird to the subtle changes in temperature such as habitat alteration, reordered vegetation patterns and the number of birdfeeders we humans are hanging in our backyards is a daunting task. Many of us have noticed fewer mockingbirds and cardinals in our neighborhoods.

For the next several years Audubon's senior scientist, David Niven will be studying the data collected from past CBCs and the Breeding Bird Survey conducted at more than 4000 sites every summer across the nation.

The above information was printed in Audubon publication, American Birds. The entire article by Scott Weisenberg, is posted on the National Audubon Society website at the address below:

[http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/pdf/AB\\_107\\_01-wiedensaul.pdf](http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/pdf/AB_107_01-wiedensaul.pdf)

### The Word Bird

Submitted by Michael Chiaramonte

A bird is a bird, is a bird.  
But bird is also a noun, a noun, a noun.  
It's not a verb, a verb, a verb.  
However, today I'm going  
birding, birding, birding.

### 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:** Bini Meijer-Morel 461-4724 [gebina@comcast.net](mailto:gebina@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:**  
**EDUCATION CHAIR:** Terri Brown [tmlbrown761@bellsouth.net](mailto:tmlbrown761@bellsouth.net)  
**NEWSLETTER EDITOR:** Veronica Berrones 785-5833 [berronev@stlucieco.gov](mailto:berronev@stlucieco.gov)  
**NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTOR:** Nettie Brolman 461-3658  
**DIRECTORS AT LARGE:** Mary Lou Hughes 464-2489 [marylou.hughes@gmail.com](mailto:marylou.hughes@gmail.com)  
 Hank Hull 340-2226 [hankhull@hotmail.com](mailto:hankhull@hotmail.com)  
 Marti Mook 465-1029 [martimook@hotmail.com](mailto:martimook@hotmail.com)



## 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**

## "This Whistleblower Isn't Just Whistling Dixie"

The following is excerpted from a press release dated November 14, 2007 from Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER)

"Florida's approach to water pollution is pure science fiction," stated Florida PEER Director Jerry Phillips, a former enforcement attorney with the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). "When a state lab confirmed Lake Okeechobee water so dirty that it might as well have come directly out of the rear end of a cow, DEP fired the lab manager and compromised the data, leaving the entire South Florida TMDL (*total maximum daily load*) program in chaos."

PEER is representing that lab manager, Tom White, in pursuing a whistleblower claim and lawsuit.

"One major reason for rising Florida pollution levels is that the Corps continues to give out development permits like Halloween candy," Phillips added. "On the issue of water quality, the Corps and the State of Florida are like two targets shooting at each other."

For more info, check out [info@peer.org](http://info@peer.org)



**Please  
Remember  
to Recycle!**

### IF WHALES COULD TELL TALES

(The following is an excerpt from a blog entry written by John Holt on TCPalm October 8, 2005. It is edited and submitted by Edie Schor with his permission. John is a member of the St. Lucie County Environmental Advisory Committee representing the Conservation Alliance and a former researcher at Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute.)

An organization called Ocean Alliance, non-profit and non-partisan and recognized as a global leader in whale research that is dedicated to the conservation of whales and their environment through research and education, reported that their research vessel, the *Odyssey*, just returned from a five-year cruise to find out just how polluted the world's oceans are.

Like humans, whales have long life spans and are at the top of the food web and are therefore a good indicator of pollution. The *Odyssey's* crew took tissue samples from whales around the world so they could be analyzed for man-made toxins, contaminants that the whales acquire by living and eating in our oceans.

Dr. Roger Payne, founder of Ocean Alliance, said in every whale they have analyzed, even those that were sampled as far from land as it is possible to get, that they found significant levels of man-made toxins that are never used at sea, but only on land. Man-made toxins are defined as artificial products introduced into the environment due to human activity such as dumping of industrial wastes and use of toxic pesticides and herbicides.

Of course, WE are not guilty of any of those things!!! WE don't use pesticides and herbicides in Florida. OR DO WE???

You can learn more about this at their website [www.oceanalliance.org](http://www.oceanalliance.org).

### Christmas Bird Count

December 15<sup>th</sup>

Dawn to Dusk

Pot Luck at Oxbow at 4:30pm



We still need a few more participants. If interested, call Hank & Dotty Hull at 340-2226 for details.

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.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Webmaster Needed

\*\*\*\*\*

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 \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

President's Message  
Calendar of Events  
New Members  
Page 1

Feathered Friends  
Officers  
Page 2

Membership Renewal  
Page 3

**Meeting: Thursday, December 6th**

**"Birds and the Plants that Attract Them"** Presented by Greg Braun, Executive Director of Martin County Audubon Society.

**Field Trip: Saturday, December 8th**

This months field trip will be in 2 parts. We will first go to the interesting 10 acre property of Tom Tomlinson in Hobe Sound. For those who wish to continue birding, we will go the 300 acre Martin County Bird Sanctuary on Loop Rd. in Stuart. We will this will probably be a 3 hour field trip.

We will meet in the parking lot at the K-Mart store in the Publix plaza on St. Lucie West Blvd. The plaza is located west of Bayshore on the north side of the road. We will meet in the parking area nearest the street so we don't interfere with business there.

*New Members*

**Karen Mitola   Jill Barson   M/M John Vernalia   Joseph Primerano**  
**Aline Pepin   Alfred Neaman   V Bell   Palmer & Eleanor Epler**  
**Anita Schinde   Marge Tirino   Adela Blacka   Evelyn Jancovic**  
**Margaret Ginger   Marcia Miller   Lori Ohweiler**  
**Roberta Woodward   Mary Sink**



***Laughing Gull***

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

Non-profit Organization  
**U.S. POSTAGE**  
**PAID**  
Fort Pierce, FL.  
Permit No. 442



Get your Laughing Gull by e-mail

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.**