



# LAUGHING GULL

The Newsletter of the St. Lucie Audubon Society

Volume 32 Issue #6

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

March 2008

## President's Message

All is not right with the world, but things do seem to be moving in a generally good direction. The gopher tortoise seems to be better protected now and I don't think we are going to have wind turbines on our public beaches.

Recently I saw a film (Tom Friedman's *Green - the New Red, White, and Blue*) which proposed the use of switch grass to produce biodiesel, a good renewable resource. The same film proposed the use of nuclear energy to produce electricity. It is the cleanest form of energy that has no environmental pollutants of the air. The French derive 75% of their electrical requirements from Nuclear Energy. They also have developed a way of dealing with the radioactive waste products. Perhaps this is something we are going to have to consider seriously in the future.

In the meantime, I urge everyone to continue switching to the compact fluorescent light bulbs and other energy efficient appliances. Your electric bill will be reduced!

There is certainly nothing more pleasant than our Florida winter days. I would hate to see our climate ruined by global warming.

*Al Parmentier*

## Calendar of Events

**Meeting: Thursday, March 6, 2008 @ 7:00pm**

**"Gardening for the Birds" presented by Amy Dahan Director of Heathcote Botanical Gardens, located in Fort Pierce, FL.** In Amy's garden world, birds, bugs and breezes are the orchestrators of botanical beauty and diversity. Come join the fun as she shows us how we can also enjoy nature's beauty.

**Field Trip: Sunday, March 9, 2008 @ 2:00 pm, Heathcote Botanical Gardens.**

See back page for more details.

## Meeting Place:

### Oxbow Eco-Center

5400 N.E. St. James Dr., Port St. Lucie, FL 34983  
1.7 miles south of Midway Rd. / 1.8 miles north of Airoso Blvd. on St. James Dr. (S. 25th St.)

## Upcoming Events

### "Sustainable Agriculture"

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

Should I buy organic? Should I buy locally grown? What about fair trade? Become an enlightened consumer when it comes to feeding your family! Join guest speaker Christine Kelly-Begazo and gain both global and local perspectives.

Ms. Kelly-Begazo's expertise is in environmental sustainability and agriculture which she was exposed to as a Peace Corps volunteer in Honduras. She holds a Masters degree in Agronomy from the University of Florida and consults internationally on sustainable agriculture.

She is currently the county extension director for Indian River County. Please join us for her informative presentation. This presentation is free. Bring a coffee mug and enjoy some delicious Fair Trade, Song-Bird coffee.

## More Upcoming Events

### Treasure Coast Photography Club Meeting

Wednesday, March 5th @ 6:30pm  
@ Oxbow Eco-Center

If you are interested in learning the art of photography or improving upon your skills, come join other shutterbugs. Everyone is welcome from the novice to the expert.

This month we are asking everyone to bring three of their favorite 8x10's for display and critiquing.

## New Members

Mrs. W.T. Spearin, Velia Bagnasco,  
John Henzler, Laurie Hart, Laurie Wade  
Albert Brooks, Jr., Michelle Duran, Michael Cotter

*Welcome!*

## 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  
[newsletter@stlucieaudubon.org](mailto:newsletter@stlucieaudubon.org) to sign up.



## *Environmentalist @ Home*

*By Diane Goldberg*

### **Compact Fluorescent Lights**

Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFL) use less energy & give off far less heat, which also saves on air conditioning. But be careful! They contain mercury. If you break one wait five minutes for the dust to settle before washing up the mess. DO NOT vacuum it up. That will only spread the mercury. Once these bulbs stop working, they should be put in the hazardous waste recycling & NOT put in our regular garbage. When disposed of incorrectly, mercury can get into the soil & ground water. The mercury can also get washed into our rivers even from our landfills. This would poison fish, turtles, birds as well as people.

I emailed our legislators. The following is part of a response from Representative Mel Martinez:

As you know, there have been questions raised about the contents of compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), which contain mercury. No later than one year after the enactment of H.R. 6, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be required to produce recommendations to reduce and prevent the release of mercury during the manufacturing, transportation, storage and disposal of CFLs. Please be assured that I will keep your views in mind as we continue developing a competitive national energy policy. I am committed to working with my colleagues in the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the full Senate to promote America's energy independence. **On December 19, 2007, President George W. Bush signed H.R. 6 into law (P.L. 110-40).**

The Senate passed bill called for a variety of energy efficiency standards for lighting and for residential and commercial appliance equipment. Specifically, the Energy Efficiency Promotion Title of the bill amended the National Energy Conservation Policy Act to require all general purpose lighting in federal buildings to be Energy Star products or products designated under the Federal Emergency Management Program by the end of fiscal year 2013. Furthermore, H.R. 6 set forth new standards for broad categories of incandescent lamps (light bulbs), incandescent reflector lamps, and fluorescent lamps.

**Please contact your representatives & let them know that you don't want our soil, water & air polluted with mercury.**

**You can reach Representative Mel Martinez at <http://martinez.senate.gov>.**

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

### **Birdwatching map now on web site**

The map and information about birdwatching sites in St. Lucie County done several years ago for a brochure has been uploaded to the St. Lucie Audubon web site ([www.stlucieaudubonsociety.org](http://www.stlucieaudubonsociety.org)). It probably needs some updating, but the main information should be valid. Check it out at <http://www.stlucieaudubonsociety.org/watch.htm>.

## *Feathered Friends*

*By Dotty Hull*

Only a small percentage of our members take advantage of the great field trips we offer each month on the Saturday after the meeting. Below we've included some of the pleasures of Birding. This explains why we spend some time each day watching the birds around our residence and go to places where we can see other species. Join us for our next field trip on March 9<sup>th</sup> when it will take place in Fort Pierce.

### **The Seven Pleasures of Birding by: Chris Cooper**

1. The beauty of the birds.
2. The beauty of a natural setting.
3. The joys of hunting--stalking elusive quarry, etc.-- without the bloodshed.
4. The joys of collecting - -keeping day lists, life lists, etc. all appeal to the same human hobbying instinct as, say, stamp collecting.
5. The fun of puzzle-solving - - piecing together the clues (field marks, voice, etc.) on a hard-to-identify bird until you nail it down.
6. The thrill of scientific discovery - - I've learned so much about our natural world through birding. For example, wandering too near an Indigo Bunting's nest site, the male flew to a nearby perch and started beating his beak against the branch. At first I thought he was cleaning it in some odd way...until I realized it was redirected aggression, and the thing he really wanted to be beating his beak against was ME.
7. The "Unicorn Effect" - - this is the most difficult to explain, and yet, for me, it's the most thrilling part of birding when it happens. After you've been birding for a while, there are birds you know are out there somewhere, even though you've never seen them; you're familiar with what they look like in every detail, having seen the species innumerable times in your field guide...but still, you've never actually seen one in real life. And then one day, you're looking through your binoculars, and - - BOOM \_\_ there it is, big as life, this thing you've only imagined until now. It's as if some mythical creature has come to life...hence, the "unicorn Effect".

There could be an Eighth Pleasure - -the social aspect, the fun of bonding with other birders - -but that's a corollary,



**Please Remember  
to Recycle!**

**"These Are the Times that Try Men's Souls"**

Submitted by Edie Schor

As I sit here conjuring up what to contribute to the *Laughing Gull*, any original thoughts I might have escape me because my mind is imprisoned by a quote I remember from the days of yore. This particular moment for me has been captured by Thomas Paine in "The Crisis" written December 23, 1776 in response to the tyranny England was exerting on the thirteen original colonies.

We, as modern-day humans, proudly picture ourselves as having progressed up the ladder of civilization. Yet, when confronted with certain issues, we find ourselves torn between the horns of a dilemma. The dilemma consuming us (or at least me) at the moment is what was alleged by FPL to be a part of the solution to the energy problem. This solution is in the guise of wind turbines. These will be put in places yet to be deemed appropriate. This is a tax write-off for the company.

There are way too many issues involved to expound on here in this venue but which are readily available if you'll just check back in the January and February *Laughing Gulls* for websites more eloquent and knowledgeable than I'll ever be.

I will instead choose phrases from "The Crisis" and alter it (well, really just one word) to suit the situation at hand. The original document can be found at <http://www.ushistory.org/paine/crisis/c-01.htm>.

"These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their community; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny like hell is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly."

"There are cases which cannot be overdone by language, and this is one. There are persons, too, who see not the full extent of the evil which threatens them; they solace themselves with hopes that the enemy, if he succeed, will be merciful. It is the madness of folly, to expect mercy from those who have refused to do justice."

These words may seem overblown to many but we owe it to the birds of the air and the lilies of the fields to protect them for future generations of unborn children. We can only hope that Abraham would have chosen to protect the earth so that we today can enjoy what is still here of nature to enjoy. Dare we do less for our progeny?

[www.stlucieaudubon.org](http://www.stlucieaudubon.org)

**\*NOTE:** For those of you who haven't heard, the Blind Creek FPL wind turbine request to the ARC has been reset to April. Do not think that we can relax. FPL is not going to give an inch. Anyone that was at the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners' meeting yesterday for the long haul now realizes the arrogance of this company -- that is, if they didn't know it before.

**Today the Indian River Lagoon, Tomorrow the World**

Submitted by: Edie Schor

I dream of the day when I can write that wind turbines will no longer threaten what is the defining attraction for our area, the beaches and the Indian River Lagoon. Notice that I didn't call them pristine. They certainly aren't. I'm reminded of the letter to the editor in the Fort Pierce Tribune of the person who remembers being able to tell what fish was being caught before it was pulled overboard or released to freedom. Nowadays you can hardly see your own hand!

How it got this way was expressed best -- in my mind -- by a gentleman who attended a meeting at Ocean Village by persons wishing to become more knowledgeable about the effects, pro and con, about this alleged "green" energy. When the audience was told it would prevent fish spawning in the lagoon and turtles nesting on the beaches, the gentleman was quite disdainful of giving consideration to such creatures. Evidently killing the goose that laid the golden egg was a concept that hadn't yet found a nesting place in his brain.

Years ago we put our money where our mouth was when we voted funds to purchase conservation lands. That we entrusted our officials to carry out our wishes goes without saying. Should they breach this trust, not only will we have to deal with the consequences of destruction to the beaches and Indian River Lagoon, but we'll have to find a way to deal with our officials. The latter of the two will be the easier chore. The former will be impossible because it will be forever.

**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

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**"Gardening for the Birds"** presented by Amy Dahan, Director of Heathcote Botanical Gardens.

**Field Trip: Sunday, March 9, 2008 @ 2:00 pm**

**(PLEASE NOTE DAY & TIME CHANGE)**

Our March 9<sup>th</sup> field trip will be held at Heathcote Botanical Gardens at 210 Savannah Rd. It is located east of U.S 1 between Virginia Ave. and Edwards Rd. in Fort Pierce. Director Amy Dahan will meet us there at **2:00 p.m.** We will walk around the gardens and Ms. Dahan will identify many of the plants she will speak about at our March meeting. This is a wonderful opportunity to see these wonderful gardens at no cost. Donations are appreciated.



## **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.



## **Great Horned Owl Nest on St. Lucie River**

Dana and Deena Wade reported seeing a pair of Great Horned Owls that have taken over an old Osprey nest on the St. Lucie River. Their three young owlets are visible in the nest from the water. The nest is located just north of the Anchorage on the west side of the river.

Wade's River Lily cruise passes by the nest area on Wednesday and Friday. It also passes by the rookery which has many nesting wading birds at this time. The boat leaves at 4:30 p.m. from Port St. Lucie Marina on Midport Rd. opposite the post office. Reservations are required and cost is \$20 person. Call:489-8344.

**CORRECTION: Birding Classes at Oxbow Tuesdays, 2/26, 3/4, 3/18 from 6:30 - 8:30 pm**



## ***Laughing Gull***

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