

Laughing Gull



The Newsletter of the St. Lucie Audubon Society



Volume 30 No. 7

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

April 2006

<p>Welcome to new members!</p>	<h2>President's Message</h2> <p>by Al Parmentier</p>	<h2>Calendar of Events</h2>
<p>Daniel Echeverri</p> <p>Mrs. Lee Jacobs</p> <p>Rose Largen</p> <p>Sharon LeVan</p> <p>Jean Lenz</p> <p>Martha Welch</p> <p>Lee-Pedro Whitridge</p> <p>Jean Melby</p>	<p>A year of Audubon activity is already drawing to a close. At our April general meeting, the slate of officers will be presented and we will vote for them at the May meeting. I am happy to announce that the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer have all agreed to serve another year!</p> <p>Do you enjoy walking our beautiful beaches? If so, you could help biologists at Florida's Fish and Wildlife Research Institute identify horseshoe crab spawning beaches throughout the state. The best time to find spawning horseshoe crabs is around a high tide, right before or just after a full moon. The next full moon will be Thursday, April 13th. Time, date, and location of horseshoe crab sightings can be reported any of three ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• E-mail to: horseshoe@myfwc.com• Online survey: http://research.myfwc.com/horseshoe_crab• Phone: 1-866-252-9326	<p>April Meeting: Thurs, April 6th, 7pm Lee Hedrick of O.N.E. W.I.L.D. W.O.R.L.D. will be speaking about ways to help our local beaches.</p> <p>April Field Trip: Annual Picnic and Field Trip Saturday, April 8th Picnic and special hayride at the Savannas Preserve State Park; details on back page.</p>
 <p>Get your Laughing Gull by email</p> <p>Do the "Green Thing" and help our chapter save printing and mailing costs by getting your newsletter by email. Send your name & email address to flbird40@bellsouth.net to sign up.</p>	<p>Thanks to anyone who may be able to help with this project. Hope to see you at the April meeting & annual picnic on the 8th!</p>	<p>Oxbow Eco-Center's 6th Annual Earth Day Celebration!</p> <p>When: Sat., April 22nd, from 10-3</p> <p>What: Exhibitors, hikes, programs, live animals, food, music, crafts, "Measure your Ecological Footprint" activity</p> 
	<h3>Meeting Place Location:</h3> <p>Oxbow Eco-Center 5400 NE St. James Drive Port St. Lucie, FL 34983 (772) 785-5833</p>	<h2>Help Wanted</h2> <p>Are you looking for ways to volunteer to a worthy cause and organization, from home? Do you have basic to average computer skills? Do you have a couple extra hours each month? St. Lucie Audubon would love your help as it's Newsletter Editor! Please contact Misty at 785-5833 for more information.</p>

Conservation Corner

by Harold Phillips

Construction has just begun on the Stormwater Treatment Area Projects near Indiantown in Martin County. The project includes an above ground reservoir and stormwater treatment area (STA) that are located north of the St. Lucie River and the C-44 canal. These structures will capture, store and treat runoff from the wider drainage basin and then remove the nutrients from the water before it flows to the St. Lucie Estuary.

The project has been designed and is being managed jointly by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Army Corp of Engineers. This is the first of what is hoped to be several water storage and cleansing projects and will demonstrate how removing nutrients from water before it is released to the estuary will start to improve the health of all our waters before they reach the ocean.

Spring Migration Underway!

by Dotty & Hank Hull

This time of the year is sometimes referred to as a "rebirth" of the earth. Trees are leafing out and spring flowers are blooming. Many birds, in their fresh plumages, have started their annual northerly migration to take advantage of the bountiful supply of insects and plants. This is one of the most exciting times to be a birdwatcher!

Many of our songbirds migrate at night from Mexico, the Caribbean and South America and arrive here in the morning. They may spend a day or two here to feed and build up their fat storage before they continue their northerly flight.

This is a great month to get out to wooded areas to look for migrants!

Pale Male Update

By Thomas Lueck Published: March 10, 2006 in the New York Times (See the entire article at www.nytimes.com/2006/03/10/nyregion/10hawk.html)

It is becoming a New York rite of spring. Pale Male & Lola are back on the nest. So it came to pass yesterday, after months of aerial foreplay, that two Red-tailed Hawks who have captured the imaginations of bird lovers around the world settled into their roost 12 stories above Central Park, on the opulent facade of a Fifth Avenue co-op building. According to bird-watchers who have tracked the hawks' behavior for years, Lola has almost certainly laid eggs. If so, it will be six weeks, or perhaps until the end of April, before an unlikely wildlife saga reaches its climax & baby Red-tailed Hawks are hatched. Or, perhaps, the hawks' reproductive effort will fail, as it did last year.

Coming 11 days before spring formally arrives on March 20th, & as New Yorkers were about to be wrapped in a balmy coat of springlike warmth, the sight of Lola sitting proudly on the nest, & of Pale Male swooping down with tasty morsels of rat & pigeon from the park, could not have been more welcome. "They are as much a sign of spring in New York as the St. Patrick's Day Parade," said Adrian Benepe, the city's parks commissioner.

Pale Male has been cavorting with various female hawks over Central Park, & producing offspring, for more than a decade. He first built a nest on his cornice at 927 Fifth Avenue, at 74th Street, in 1993. But his return this year with Lola, his current mate, is remarkable because of the battle that erupted over the nest 15 months ago. Members of the co-op, who had tired of having a giant birds' nest on their facade, had it carted away. The protests that ensued spilled from City Hall to costumed demonstrators on Fifth Avenue to the most affluent living rooms of the Upper East Side. Eventually, the co-op returned the nest, & provided a steel cradle to hold it in place. "People talked to each other, they didn't shout, and we've reached an elegant solution," he said. "This is New York at its best."

Feathered Friends

by Dotty & Hank Hull

Frequently, we are asked which bird species might be found nesting in our local surroundings. Since nesting has begun for many species, it is the time of year to be looking for signs of nesting birds. According to the Florida Breeding Bird Atlas, 87 bird species have been confirmed as nesting in St. Lucie County. Some species on the list no longer nest here, such as the Red-cockaded Woodpecker and Red-headed Woodpecker. Visit www.wildflorida.org/bba/data/countyspecies.asp for more details.

Some of the most common nesting birds in our neighborhoods are Northern Cardinals, Blue Jays, Northern Mockingbirds, Mourning Doves, Common and Boat-tailed Grackles, Purple Martins, Carolina Wrens. Many cavity-nesting species have declined due to habitat destruction. With our rapid development, many trees have been lost for new housing. Installing a nest box in your yard may attract woodpeckers, owls, wrens and Great-crested Flycatchers. Check on the internet or your library for the required specifications for the species you are interested in attracting. When choosing a location for a nest box, consider protection from predators.

If you are fortunate enough to attract a pair of nesting birds to your yard, keep a comfortable distance when viewing the amazing events that take place in the process of nest-building, incubating and feeding the young birds.

Membership Renewals

Chapter memberships extend from October through December. Chapter members may use the coupon at right to renew membership for 2006. Please mark RENEW on your check.

Great Backyard Bird Count

sent by Misty Alderman

The results are in! The 9th annual Great Backyard Bird Count, which occurred Feb. 17–20, set new records. Birders tallied a record-breaking 623 bird species and 7.5 million individual birds. An effort between the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, these reports provide a snapshot in time of N. American birdlife. Florida made 2 “Top Ten” lists, including a state that submitted a high # of checklists, and one that reported a high # of species. Those counters in Ft. Pierce and Port St. Lucie reported between 70-85 different species!

Interesting & unusual results include lg. populations of Robins in the NW US, where totals jumped to 96 % above last year’s count. In contrast, Robins were down to less than 1/2 of their ‘05 numbers in TX, LA and MI. It’s thought that warm weather may have enticed some swallow and warbler species to stay farther north than usual. Tree Swallows, which feed on wax myrtle berries during winter, have broadened their range from 11 states in 2001 to 20 states in 2006.

Check out the website at www.birdsource.org/gbbc to see complete tallies, maps, photos and reports on individual bird reports, including species in states hit by hurricanes, pathways of Sandhill Cranes, and local rarities.

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 _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____

**April Meeting:
Thurs, April 6th, 7pm**

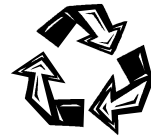
Lee Hedrick of O.N.E. W.I.L.D. W.O.R.L.D. will be speaking about ways to help our local beaches.

**April Field Trip: Annual Picnic and Field Trip
Saturday, April 8th**

Our Annual Picnic and April field trip will be held at Savannas State Park on Walton Road in Port St. Lucie. Park Biologist, Greg Kaufmann will take us on a special hayride field trip. We will have our picnic afterwards. Bring a covered dish and your own table service. Be sure to keep your food in a cooler since there is no refrigeration available. Meet at the Education Center at the park at 9 a.m. The park is located on the north side of Walton Rd. between Lennard Rd. and Indian River Drive. The phone number at the park is 398-2779. Hope to see you!

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