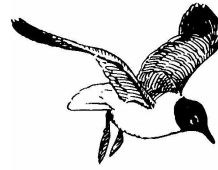


# Laughing Gull

The Newsletter of the St. Lucie Audubon Society



Volume 30 No. 8

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

May 2006

Welcome to new members!

**Costas Basdekis  
Tina Erling  
George Fernandez  
John Flanagan  
Barbara Hayslip  
Greg Heller  
John Labrake  
Elayne Mazie  
Zeta Neff  
Joseph & Roberta Richards  
Donna Smith  
Rachael Thomas  
Lee Vickstrom  
Dorothy Cowden**



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

## President's Message

by Al Parmentier

The season is about over! We have had some great field trips, special events, and interesting speakers. Thanks to everyone who contributed time and energy to making this year successful!

My only real disappointment is the small attendance at the general meetings. A few enthusiastic folks have asked for rides, but we could arrange pickup for more. The Oxbow Eco-Center is a terrific venue for our evening presentations. It is very accessible as there are no stairs!

Please mark your calendars for the first Thursday of the month beginning again in October. We begin at 7:00 pm and are usually finished by 8:30pm. Everyone who cares about birds and our environment is welcome.

If you are looking for a little something to do, you might consider helping the society next season.

Enjoy your summer!  
Al Parmentier, President

## Meeting Place Location:

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

## Calendar of Events

### May Meeting:

Thurs., May 4th @ 7 pm  
Ronald Cave will present a program on invasive insects & biological control.

### May Field Trip:

Saturday, May 6th @ 10 am at  
Oxbow Eco-Center  
Details on back page.

## Of Interest

The Treasure Coast Environmental Education Cooperative (TCEEC) is a recently formed organization made up of environmental educators, teachers, scout leaders and scientists from both the public and private sectors. The group is in its infancy but has big plans to participate in community wide environmental education projects. New members are welcome. Contact Wren Underwood for more information: [underwoe@stlucieco.gov](mailto:underwoe@stlucieco.gov).

## Help Wanted

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 info.

## Conservation Corner

by Harold Phillips

It has been estimated that the Albatross has survived in the harshest marine environment for 50 million years. However, these magnificent birds are now unable to cope with man-made threats, such as long line fishing. The albatross are facing extinction, so dire is the situation that 19 of the 21 species are in trouble. The albatross are attracted to feed on squid and other fish used to bait the hooks of long line fisherman. Just as the cardinal is attracted to feed at our garden feeder, the albatross is attracted to feed on the bait of the long line fisherman.

Broadcaster and naturalist Sir David Attenborough is giving his backing to a Birdlife International project that will train fisherman in albatross friendly fishing techniques. The fisherman, while hunting for tuna, marlin and other large fish, set trail lines that can be as long 80 miles with baited hooks every few feet. An estimated 100,000 albatross die each year on the hooks of long lines. Marine animals such as turtles are also accidentally snared on the hooks. The birds swoop down to pick up bait from the hooks, become snared, and drown. The rescue program called Operation Ocean Task Force hopes to place trained personnel aboard long line fishing boats to teach fisherman simple techniques that will weight the lines below the surface, and will have floating trailing streamers which will scare the birds away. The fisherman will also benefit as less of their bait will be wasted. You can assist and help in this project and see action pictures of albatross in flight at [www.savethealbatross.net](http://www.savethealbatross.net).

Closer to home, the Gulf Stream coral reefs near Delray Beach are dying. The cause has been found; partly treated sewage has been documented spewing from a pipe in the ocean off Delray Beach. It is now more than four years since this illegal pollution was reported. Scientists and divers have been reporting their findings but they have yet to be acted upon. Coral reefs in Florida are fast becoming a dead zone.

The Federal Clean Water Act is well written and is supposed to ensure the quality of our Waters. However, the commitment of the State and local government to enforce it is lacking.

To finish on a positive note, a large development was submitted for approval in the Miami area recently. It was denied because the applicant did not provide any information about how water would be supplied for the project. In 2005, the Florida Senate passed Bill 444 requiring plans for new major development to include plans for water re-use, water conservation, and alternative plans for water supply. Miami-Dade County requested a large water allocation from the Biscayne aquifer, over and above their present allocation. With several new towns being proposed in our part of the Treasure Coast it is time to require specific details of water needs and for the applicants to show how they plan to provide an adequate and long term water supply for each project, including water re-use and conservation.

## Environmentalist @ Home

By Gale Parmentier

### **Dryer Balls; a natural way to soften your laundry**

Here is another idea for being more green in your laundry room which I discovered hanging on the impulse buying rack near the cash register at WalMart. Dryer Max Dryer Balls are two spiked blue balls about the size of tennis balls. The package claimed softer and fluffier fabrics without chemicals. After a month of trial, I am happy to report they seem to work just fine (though I haven't really noticed a decrease of drying time as advertised). Fabrics are just a bit less soft than when using dryer sheets, but definitely much nicer than no softener at all. My neighbors were concerned the spiked balls would cause piling, but I have observed none. If you do try them out, please let me know how they worked for you. Thanks. Gale Parmentier; [force8@earthlink.net](mailto:force8@earthlink.net) or 772-489-6176.

## Feathered Friends

by Dotty & Hank Hull

The internet is a great resource for finding places to watch birds in Florida and elsewhere. One of our favorite websites is **www.birdingonthenet.com**. The site has links to many websites that would be of interest to birders. There are several Florida subscription email lists that will deliver informative notes into your mailbox about birds being seen in the state. **FLBIRDS** postings are from birders around the state with directions to where the birds reported can be seen. In addition, there are regional mail lists such as **Birdbrains, FLbirding, SWFLbirding, NFLbirds, and Eastbirders**. There is also a **Florida Rare Bird Alert** that can be delivered through email subscription. Any of the lists above can be found by doing an internet search for the name of the list. Subscribers can post their sightings to the list and it will be emailed to all subscribers. If you are signed up on one of the more popular lists, you will probably receive several email notes per day. Members of the list can post notes on these lists as long as they meet the criteria the list owner has set. Rules are given to subscribers upon joining.

**Ebird** is another internet site where bird sightings can be posted and placed in a national database. This site is used to monitor the numbers and distribution species in our country.

We are the list owners of **Eastbirders**, which is a list for posting birds seen in SE Florida. We are disappointed in the small number of postings from our area. Surely there must be other birders besides us on the Treasure Coast who are out looking at birds! Happy birding over the summer!

### 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.**

## Oxbow Happenings

For more info., call the Oxbow @ 785-5833

### Saturday "Wake Up Call" Lecture Series Saturday, May 6th, 11:00 am

Dr. Brian LaPointe from Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution (HBOI) will be speaking about the current diagnosis of health of our most local precious resource, the Indian River Lagoon. We've all heard about the problems it faces; pollution, discharges, impacts of hurricanes, wildlife diseases, sea grass decline, etc...but did you know that YOU can do something to help? Come find out more,!

### FL Native Plant Society Meeting Tuesday, May 9th General mtg. 6:00 pm; Speaker 8:00pm

Guest speaker Greg Kaufmann, Biologist for Savannas Preserve State Park, will present "Managing Natural Areas in the Wildland-Urban Interface". He will discuss some of the issues relating to managing preserves and natural areas within urban settings, and how the decisions people make within their own back yards impact adjacent natural communities. The presentation will use Savannas Preserve State Park and the North Fork of the St. Lucie River as case studies.

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 \_\_\_\_\_

## **May 4 Meeting**

**Ronald Cave  
Indian River Research & Education Center,  
University of Florida**

### **“Invasive Exotic insects and Biological control”**

Did you know that exotic insects arrive into the state at the rate of approximately 1 per month? Come learn about the non-native pest species, the damage they cause, their cost to society and efforts to manage these species with biological control agents.

## **May 6 Field Trip**

Join others for a walk on the trail at Oxbow Eco-Center. Migrating songbirds will be making their spring journey northward. Meet at Oxbow Eco-Center at 10:00 A.M. at 5400 N.W. St. James Drive in Port St. Lucie. 772-785-5833.

## ***Laughing Gull***

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



***Please Remember to  
Recycle!***

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