



# Laughing Gull

*The Newsletter of the St. Lucie Audubon Society*

VOLUME 33, ISSUE IV

JANUARY 2009

## President's Message

At the November general meeting of SLAS, Ruth Neese entertained and informed those in attendance with a Northern Crested Caracara. Ruth has a great depth of knowledge of the bird, mine is very shallow.---we kind of balance each other out. I have only seen the black Northern Crested Caracara in Florida and Mexico and the dark brown Southern Crested Caracara in Southern Argentina (Patagonia).

I turned to the internet for help and found an excellent website. Go to Google and type caracara in the search box. Choose Caracara-Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia from the drop down list. You now have a choice of eleven species. Using a quote from Ruth, "The Carunculated Caracara is a really ugly bird." Check for yourself, click on each species and view all the videos.

At our December general meeting, we were privileged to have Bud Adams as our speaker. Next month we have Marty Folk, his topic THE WHOOPING CRANE. Our next scheduled field trips are two of the best birding sites in Florida,

Merritt Island NWR on January 10 and Green Cay Wetlands on February 7. They will be led by world class birders---Hart and Jewel Rufe

You do not want to miss the meetings or field trips.

Join our local chapter

Thank you for your support

## Meeting Place

### Oxbow Eco-Center

5400 NE St. James Drive  
Port St. Lucie, FL 34983

Located 1.5 miles south of Midway Road  
/ 1.5 miles north of Airoso Blvd.

## Calendar of Events

### Meetings

Thursday, January @ 7 pm, speaker  
Thursday, February @ 7 pm, speaker

### Field Trips

Saturday, January

Saturday, February

(See back cover for more details.)

## Upcoming Events

### "Birdwatching Basics"

Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> 10:00 am. to 12:00 Noon  
March 7<sup>th</sup> 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

### Classes will be held at:

Savannahs State Preserve,  
Walton Road, Port St. Lucie

**NEED INFO ON HOW TO SIGN UP**

### Wake-up Call Lecture Series

Oxbow Eco Center presents

January 3<sup>rd</sup> \* 11 am

This is a FREE event, just bring your coffee cup to enjoy  
some shade grown coffee for the birds.

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

## AUDUBON AT HEATHCOTE



There's a chill in the air ..... it must be time to shop! This was our 2nd year participating in Heathcote Botanical Garden's Holiday Market. The weather was great - cool enough to inspire thoughts of the holidays, but not too cold to enjoy the day. Visitors to our booth were able to make a donation and take home a tote bag or T-Shirt. The Gopher Tortoise tote bags were especially popular this year. Passers-by enjoy chatting about their own experiences with birds or gopher tortoises, so we are building relationships with the community as well. This year's booth was run by Liz Dunleavy, Terri Brown and Dan Walma; maybe you can join in the fun next year.

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

### Bud Adams Breakfast February 8<sup>th</sup>

The annual Bud Adams breakfast will be held on February 8. A full hot breakfast will be served and a bus tour of the ranch will be included. We will meet at 7:30 a.m. and caravan to the ranch. Cost is \$25 per person in advance. This is a very special trip so reserve early as it fills up quickly.

### Painted Bunting Trip February 21

Reserve now for a special trip to a beautiful private residence to view colorful Painted and Indigo Buntings. There is a charge of \$15 for this special trip that has a limit of 20 people. Meet at 8:00 a.m.

**Reserve your spot for these events by calling  
Dotty Hull at 340-2226**

#### 2008 - 2009 Chapter Officers & Committees

President	Dan Walma	oculusdw1@aol.com
Vice President	Ruth Neese	eddie_ruth@msn.com
Recording Secretary	Elsa Millard	lcphoto618@bellsouth.net
Corresponding Secretary	Millie Estersohn	milliern@comcast.net
Treasurer	Liz Dunleavy	DunZippy@aol.com
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	Marti Mook	martimook@hotmail.com
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	Liz Dunleavy	DunZippy@aol.com
Field Trip Chair	Hank Hull	hankhull@hotmail.com
Membership Chair	Dotty Hull	flbird40@bellsouth.net
Conservation Chair	Ed Bowes	eddie_ruth@msn.com
Chapter Historian	Judy Gersony	jagersony@hotmail.com
Education Chair	Terri Brown	tmbrown761@bellsouth.net

## Membership Application

A one-year chapter membership extends from January to January. You may use the coupon below to begin or renew your membership.

SLAS is now offering a Chapter-only annual membership for those who want to financially support their local chapter. The following dues options apply:

- Individual: \$20 per year**
- Family: \$25 per year**  
(for 2 or more people in same household)
- Sponsor: \$50 per year**
- Patron: \$100 per year**
- Lifetime: \$500**

Each local membership includes a subscription to the monthly newsletter "The Laughing Gull". You may receive "The Laughing Gull" via standard mail or electronically via email. Please indicate your preference below.

**Please make checks payable to and send to:**

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

New membership: \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send my "Laughing Gull" by:

**Email** \_\_\_\_\_ or **Standard mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Thanks for your support.*

### Check out these websites

[www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com)  
[www.realgoods.com](http://www.realgoods.com)  
[www.floridanativeplants.com](http://www.floridanativeplants.com)



**Reduce!  
Recycle!  
Reuse!**

## Treasure Coast Wildlife Center Receives Master Site Plan Approval

Submitted by Ed Bowes and Ruth Neese

For those of you who have attended SLAS meetings in the past, you know us as the couple who bring live raptors to meetings. We are also members of the Board of Directors for the Treasure Coast Wildlife Center (TCWC) in Palm City, FL. Four years ago, our facility was evicted from a property on Bridge Road in Hobe Sound, FL. Since then, we have been waiting for Martin County to approve the master site plan for our new facility in Palm City.

We moved to our property on 76A, now called Citrus BLVD, just after Hurricane Jean in 2004. This was supposed to be a temporary location; we did not expect temporary to mean 4 years! The approval process moved our application through the Army Corps of Engineers, South Florida Water Management District, and Martin County Growth Management, Health Department and other agencies! It has been a long, tedious, and often frustrating road to approval, but the processes exist for a reason and we were not exempt. Finally, on November 3, 2008, our executive director, Dan Martinelli, announced we had received master site plan approval! What does this mean?

First, it means we can actually start moving dirt on our property in Palm City. We could not even build caging until this plan was approved. Second, it means we can erect buildings and permanent caging, which will allow us to open to the public again! Third, we can resume efforts to expand our mission of rehabilitating ill, injured, and orphaned wildlife while educating the public about this rich Florida resource.

We want to thank the St. Lucie Audubon Society for all the support its members have provided to TCWC in the past, and we hope this support will continue. For more information about this topic and our plans for the future, you can visit our Web site, [www.tcwh.org](http://www.tcwh.org). Please watch the local papers and our Web site for announcements related to our grand re-opening.

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

Check it out regularly to see links to stories of importance to St. Lucie Audubon. When available the results of the 2008 Christmas Count will be posted. What are the areas? Go to [stlucieaudubon.org](http://stlucieaudubon.org), click the "Field trips & Events" link. There is a link to the map from the paragraph about the count. Or, enter <http://stlucieaudubon.org/images/CBCmap07.jpg>

## Calling All Florida Bird Watchers

*More eyes needed to tally state birds*

Ithaca, NY-- Bird watchers in Florida are fortunate to have an amazing diversity of birds to observe, from the stunningly beautiful, rainbow-colored Painted Bunting to exotic parrots from South America. Many of these species readily visit bird feeders, and may be attracted to your own backyard. Scientists are asking Florida bird watchers to report what they see through **Project FeederWatch**.

"We need to hear from more bird watchers in Florida to get an accurate picture of what's happening with bird populations from year to year," says project leader David Bonter from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. "Scientists learn something new from the project each year, whether it's about the movements of common backyard birds or unusual sightings of rarely seen species."

For example, Florida is at the epicenter of the recent colonization of the United States by a dove originally from India. The Eurasian Collared-Dove can now be found throughout the state, and researchers are examining FeederWatch data from Florida to better understand how this species will spread and affect native species.

The 2008-09 season of Project FeederWatch is underway and runs through April 3. Participants can sign up at any time. FeederWatchers track the numbers and kinds of birds at feeders each week and then send the information to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The information they provide helps generate the world's **largest database on feeder-bird populations**.

"Participating in Feeder Watch has helped me pay more attention to the birds at my feeders. It gives me a good excuse to sit at the kitchen window and watch birds," says **FeederWatcher Alice Smith of McAlpin, Florida**. Smith has been participating in the project 20 years.

FeederWatchers across North America submitted more than 115,000 checklists during the 2007-08 season, documenting unusual bird sightings, winter movements, and shifting ranges-- information scientists use to monitor the health of the birds and of the environment.

Project FeederWatch welcomes participants of all ages and skill levels. To learn more and to sign up, visit [www.feederwatch.org](http://www.feederwatch.org) or call (800) 843-2473. In return for the \$15 fee (\$12 for Lab members) participants receive the *FeederWatcher's Handbook*, a bird-identification poster, a calendar, instructions, and the FeederWatch annual report, *Winter Bird Highlights*, which summarizes the season's findings.

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**Note:** Photos are available at [www.feederwatch.org](http://www.feederwatch.org) and on request. To find local participants for stories, contact David Bonter at (607) 254-2457 or email [dnb23@cornell.edu](mailto:dnb23@cornell.edu). Visit the "Explore Data" section of the web site to find the top 25 birds reported in your state, rare bird sightings, and bird summaries by state.

*The Cornell Lab of Ornithology is a membership institution dedicated to interpreting and conserving the earth's biological diversity through research, education, and citizen science focused on birds. Visit the Lab's web site at <http://www.birds.cornell.edu>.*

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**Meeting: Thursday, January<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm**

imals..

**Field Trip: Saturday January<sup>th</sup> @ 8 am**

**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 if offline.

To sign up, send your name and email address to [newsletter@stlucieaudubon.org](mailto:newsletter@stlucieaudubon.org)



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