



LAUGHING GULL

President's Message

From Ed Bowes

WE NEED YOU



I have two points to make. First, my heartiest appreciation to all of our generous meeting sponsors! Your kind donations save the chapter over \$600 a year.

Second, a thank you to the

volunteers who help with everything! I call on every member to donate as much time to the chapter as you can. Make your volunteering plans now for next season!

IMPORTANT DATES

Bird Counts

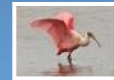


Christmas Bird Count: St. Lucie County results posted <http://stlucieaudubon.org>



Bird-A-Thon: April 6 or 7, 2013. Results are in! Winners will be announced at the May meeting.

Special Events



Winning raffle ticket for the gorgeous Roseate Spoonbill photo by Hart Rufe will be drawn at the May meeting.

May Speaker: Anita Neal – Bugs & Insects

County Extension Director and Environmental Horticulture Agent, Anita Neal, will join us May 2nd to talk about “Bugs and Insects.” Anita excels at identifying moths, spiders, and other “creepy crawlies,” especially those that affect plants. So join us for what promises to be a very informative session!



Feathered Friends by Ruth Neese

Nature lovers across the U.S. know spring has arrived when the flycatchers return. South Florida is no exception. Hearing the “whee-eep, whee-eep” calls of the Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*) means winter is over!

Great Crested Flycatchers are resident in South Florida, but call much more frequently during spring and summer. It is a bird of the treetops, spending very little time on the ground. These birds do not hop on the ground; they fly from place to place hunting for insects.

Great Crested Flycatchers are the only cavity-nesting flycatchers in North America. They cannot construct a cavity, so they

must use an existing one. This means these birds will use nest boxes. I have seen them investigating Wood Duck boxes hung near, rather than over, water.

They favor crinkly material to line their nests, such as plastic wrappers, cellophane, onionskins, and shed snakeskins. Great Crested Flycatchers will breed in a wide variety of habitats, ranging from deciduous woodlands to parks, cemeteries, and urban areas with large trees. It prefers woodland edges where insects are more common. So listen for the “whee-eep,” and look up!



Great Crested Flycatcher

Field Event Report – The 2nd Annual Bruce Bardsley Memorial Bird-A-Thon



Prairie Warbler

The weekend of April 6 and 7 proved to be great for birding! At least four teams were out canvassing St. Lucie County for birds. Participant “names” ranged from “Ed’s Bird Brains” to “Busy Bunting.” Sightings varied from Bald Eagles at the Indrio Savannahs Preserve to colorful Prairie Warblers at Bear Point Sanctuary. Winners of the individual and team categories will be announced at the May meeting.



Conservation Corner: Guest Columnist, Cameron Jaggard Speak Out Against Wasteful Fishing Gear

Thanks to concerned citizens from around the United States, more than 320,000 public comments supporting greater protections for severely depleted western Atlantic Bluefin tuna have been submitted in the past three years. These comments have pushed the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) to begin developing a new rule that could protect Bluefin and other depleted marine life from wasteful surface longline fishing gear.

Surface longlines stretch on average for 30 miles—a length equal to 528 football fields—and dangle hundreds of baited hooks. Bluefin, blue marlin, sea turtles, sharks, and more than 80 other species get caught and killed on this gear. These harmful interactions are of particular concern in the Gulf of Mexico, the only known spawning ground for western Atlantic Bluefin tuna. There are other ways to catch yellowfin tuna and swordfish, without

killing hundreds of tons of other ocean wildlife.

Now, NOAA Fisheries has the opportunity to prohibit this harmful fishing practice in the Gulf and strictly limit unwanted Bluefin mortality in the Atlantic surface longline fishery. These measures can also encourage the transition to other highly selective fishing methods, help stop the waste of Bluefin and other severely depleted ocean wildlife, and benefit those fishermen who fish responsibly. In addition, restoration funds from the Gulf oil spill can provide fishermen with the resources needed to transition to smaller, more efficient vessels, and less wasteful fishing practices.

NOAA Fisheries will release the proposed Bluefin rule for public comment during the summer. This comment period is the best opportunity for the

public to provide input on the rule. Visit

[www.PewEnvironment.org/Gulf Tuna](http://www.PewEnvironment.org/GulfTuna) or contact cjaggard@pewtrusts.org to learn how you can submit a comment.

Cameron Jaggard is the Senior Associate, Gulf of Mexico Surface Longline Campaign at the Pew Charitable Trusts.

Cameron has spoken to our chapter about this topic before. If you have not commented on this topic yet, please contact Cameron; public input is crucial!
—Ruth Neese



Sea turtles can fall victim to Gulf of Mexico surface longlines, as can Brown Pelicans.

Sponsors Wanted!

St. Lucie County has a policy of charging non-profits for the use of county facilities.

Our cost is **\$45 dollars a month**, payable in advance. We are looking for sponsors to underwrite the cost of our monthly meetings at the Oxbow Eco-Center.

In return, we will acknowledge individual or company names in our newsletter several times during the ensuing year. If you are interested in sponsoring St. Lucie Audubon's monthly programs, please send checks to:

St. Lucie Audubon Society

PO Box 12474

Ft. Pierce, FL 34979

We would like to thank our generous meeting sponsors:

Water Lilly Cruises

Hart Rufe

Liz Dunleavy

ST. LUCIE AUDUBON BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Board members may be contacted by email at stlucieaudubon@gmail.com

Web Links of Interest

I. Links to Pew Charitable Trust Infographics:

“Saving an Ocean Giant: Atlantic Bluefin Tuna”: <http://www.pewenvironment.org/news-room/data-visualizations/atlantic-bluefin-tuna-us-version-85899436515>

“Surface Longline Fishing in the Gulf of Mexico”: <http://www.pewenvironment.org/news-room/data-visualizations/surface-longline-fishing-in-the-gulf-of-mexico-85899436530>

II. Links Related to Climate Change Science:

National Audubon Society – “Birds and Climate Change: On the Move” This is evidence gathered from the annual Christmas Bird Count: <http://web4.audubon.org/bird/bacc/index.html>

Videos about climate change from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology Citizen Science Central: <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/citscitoolkit/climatechange/c3-sciencentral-videos>

Resources on Climate Change from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology: <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/citscitoolkit/climatechange/climatescience>

Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States: Southeast – For example, rainfall in South Florida has declined 10% since 1901 for every season except winter. <http://nca2009.globalchange.gov/southeast>

Climate Change Science from the EPA: <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/science/>

Carnegie Institution for Science – “Extreme Algal Blooms: The New Normal?": http://carnegiescience.edu/news/extreme_algal_blooms_new_normal

III. Animal Intelligence

From *Science News*, “A Different Kind of Smart”: http://www.sciencenews.org/view/feature/id/349767/description/A_Different_Kind_of_Smart

From *National Geographic*, “Minds of Their Own”: <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/03/animal-minds/virginia-morell-text>

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is proposing significant changes to pollution limits on carcinogenic toxins released into Florida waters. These changes would permit higher levels of these pollutants than are currently acceptable. Our Indian Riverkeeper, Marty Baum, sent a letter to the Environmental Regulations Commission; please consider sending your own letter:

"Dear Environmental Regulations Commission Members,

Floridians entrust the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to represent our collective best interests by managing and enforcing regulatory programs that protect human health and the environment.

However, DEP's new approach to setting limits for toxins in Florida's waters would diminish important protections of public health from environmental exposure to toxic, mutagenic and carcinogenic chemicals and would create a dangerous precedent for weakening protective standards for other threats to public health and environmental quality.

This radical change will put our children, pregnant women and other vulnerable populations at risk. Rather than protect, DEP's Toxics Rulemaking efforts appear aimed at subverting the goals of the Clean Water Act.

Waterkeepers are committed to those goals and will fight to reclaim our waterways to make them safe for swimming, drinking and fishing.

A stated purpose of the Toxics Rulemaking is "to eliminate unnecessary compounding conservatism."

The citizens of Florida deserve the most protective, conservative measures when it comes to our health, the health of our children and to preventing harmful toxins from being released into our waterways.

To the contrary, DEP is proposing a dramatic change in the way risk assessment is calculated. DEP's previous approach errs on the side of caution. The proposed calculation errs on the side of risk actually increasing the amount of toxins allowed in Florida waterways even after adjusting the standards to accommodate Florida's higher consumption of fish.

Your choice on April 23 is whether:

- to protect our children, or
- to increase our children's risk of harmful exposure to toxic, mutagenic and carcinogenic chemicals.

Please protect Florida's children. Please protect Florida's water. "

Contact: Environmental Regulations Commission - Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building - 3900 Commonwealth Boulevard - Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000, 850-245-2242 (phone) / 850-245-2303 (fax)

Photos from the 2nd Annual Bruce Bardsley Memorial Bird-A-Thon April 6 & 7, 2013



Immature Great Black-backed Gull
Indian River Lagoon



Herring Gull
Indian River Lagoon



Ruddy Turnstone
Indian River Lagoon



Semipalmated Sandpiper (I hope!)
Indian River Lagoon

Nesting Pair of Great Blue Herons
Photographed by Ed Bowes at the Lake Mary Boat Ramp March 17, 2013
Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area



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.

Remember!

A St. Lucie County-specific bird checklist is available on our chapter Web site. The birds are listed in taxonomic order and the list indicates when you are most likely to see a particular bird in St. Lucie Co.

Visit
<http://stlucieaudubon.org> to download the list. It's free!

The St. Lucie Audubon Society is part of a new Audubon Florida Regional Conservation Committee!

The St. Lucie Audubon Society is now part of the Indian River Lagoon Regional Conservation Committee (RCC). Regional Conservation Committees composed of chapter leaders and supported by policy staff at the state level are responsible for recommended conservation plans for their region. Our new RCC will focus on the water quality of the Indian River Lagoon and the conservation issues that flow from poor water quality. Audubon of Martin County and Pelican Island Audubon Society are our partners in this endeavor, and we hope to engage Space Coast Audubon Society in this effort.



Coming Attractions: Next Season & May Speaker

Our meetings and programs are on hiatus for the summer.

Our first meeting will be October 3, 2013.

In the meantime, enjoy your summer! Get out and bird, or take a cruise on the River Lilly. The River Lilly cruises the St. Lucie River most days until July. Call 772-489-8344 to make your reservations.

Keep your eye on our Web site for updates from Hart Rufe via “The Hart Beat” and our Conservation Chair, Ruth Neese.

Visit <http://stlucieaudubon.org> to keep updated during the off-season.

May Speaker: Thursday, May 2 at 7 PM at the Oxbow Eco-Center

Anita Neal, County Extension Director

Bugs & Insects



Mark your calendars!

Help our chapter save printing and mailing costs by signing-up for the email newsletter. The newsletter can then be printed out if you prefer to read it offline. To request the email version, send your name and email address to eddie_ruth@msn.com

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St. Lucie Audubon Society PO Box12474
Fort Pierce, FL 34979