



THE SANDPIPER

Summer 2007

West Pasco Audubon
Society

**2007
WPAS Officers &
Board of Directors**

President -
Ken Tracey

Vice President -
Mike Kell

Secretary -
Peter Day

Treasurer -
Carol Spicuglia

- Jim McKay - Director
- Laurie Kell - Director
- Agnes Condon - Director
- Eileen Magana - Director
- Linda Tracey - Director
- Marie Kalahar - Director
- Sharon Weber - Director
- Martin Blauer - Director
- Marilyn Blauer - Director

2007 SPRING MIGRATION COUNT

The 2007 Spring Migration Count was very successful. Although there were only 16 participating birders, the actual species count was high. Over 3,700 birds were counted, with a species count of 131 which was the second highest compared to the last 7 years. There were several unique sightings - first time ever for a Black-billed Cuckoo and 4 Solitary Sandpipers. A disturbing count was that of the 83 Mallard Ducks (crowding out the native Mottled Ducks). The Woodstork count was the highest ever, but the dry weather further south in the Everglades drove them north. Not a good situation for the Woodstorks.

"WORLD TRAVELER, BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER"

Along the Pasco coastline, a common large sandpiper we find is the Black-bellied Plover. This bird's name is very correct if we see it during the summer breeding season. Then it has a very black belly and neck, with speckled gray and black back. As it feeds it has a habitat of walking slowly over the mud flats as it listens for the movement of large worms under the mud. It can be entertaining to watch it feed as it makes a quick peck into the mud then struggles to pull out a very long worm.

This sandpiper is very easy to identify with its short bill, plump belly with some black on it, and large size. But mid winter that easily recognized black belly trait is gone, lumping it into that harder to identify group of sandpipers that we call "little brown jobs". The Dunlin is another sandpiper that some may confuse with the Black-bellied Plover, because of the black spot on the belly, but the Dunlin is much smaller with a long curved bill.

As with most sandpipers that move along our coast, on the trip to the breeding grounds in north Canada, the migration of Black-bellied Plovers is hard to define by season. Since their nesting and fledgling time can be very short, we can see birds that are actually migrating both north and south. Small numbers are here all year, but mid winter and mid summer, may produce sightings of large flocks. Besides North America the Black-bellied Plover can be found wintering in South America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. The birds we see here in winter could have traveled the world in other winters.

KEN TRACEY



Black-bellied Plover





THE SANDPIPER

Summer 2000

page 2

FUNNEL MIGRANTS

THE GREEN KEY FUNNEL



Above - Bobolink

Below - Blackpoll



Located at Robert K. Rees County Park, the Green Key Funnel encompasses the strip of land and beach which make up the park. Here, in the spring, migrating warblers sometimes stop at night to rest on their flight north. As they take flight in the morning along the causeway, they can be easily spotted. A variety of 20 warbler species have been identified. Over the past 7 years of record keeping, 33,000 warblers have been counted. At least 3,350 other migrants have been identified passing through the funnel. The most numerous warbler species identified was the Blackpoll Warbler and the most numerous other migrant was the Bobolink. Check it out next year from April to mid May when there's a good east wind blowing!

