



The Sandpiper

www.westpascoaudubon.com

Winter 2007/2008

WEST PASCO AUDUBON SOCIETY

Editor: Linda Tracey

Christmas Bird Count

Once again members of the West Pasco Audubon Society are preparing for the annual Christmas Bird Count. The most important thing for chapter members to consider is turning in a backyard report if you are in the count circle. The circle encompasses Hudson Beach, south to the Pinellas line and Moon Lake, west to the Gulf of Mexico.

Backyard bird reports have been historically important. They allow access to areas our teams cannot cover. Local Ponds, wetlands, retention areas, woodlands and canals have a wealth of birds. Hard-to-locate birds such as the Brown Thrasher, Bobwhite Quail, Hummingbird, Limpkin, White-winged Dove and Goldfinch are often found in backyard neighborhoods.

So, on December 29th, take a look out your window or take a walk through your neighborhood. Count those birds! Then, call (727) 372-9640 or email kftracey@verizon.net your report on the evening of December 29th. Remember, every bird counts!

ENJOY OUR LOCAL PARKS!

Looking for something to do? Well take time to visit our local parks where you will find fresh air, peace and quiet and nature at its best.

J. B. Starkey Wilderness Park

Wilderness Drive, New Port Richey

Best for biking and hiking. Located in New Port Richey, this Pasco County park has picnic tables, shelters, playground and beautiful nature trails. A 6 mile bike trail now connects to the Suncoast Highway bike trail. Special nature related programs are offered to the public. For information call Katie @ (727) 834-3474

James E. Grey Preserve

Plathe Road, New Port Richey

West Pasco's newest park is owned by the city of New Port Richey. This preserve sports a new boardwalk that runs along the Pithlachascotee River, nature trails and picnic pavilions. There is a kayak and canoe launch that allows one to take a quiet paddle on the Cotee River. For more information call (727) 841-4560

Werner-Boyce Salt Springs State Park

Scenic Drive, Port Richey

Although only a small section of this State owned park is open to the public, there are big plans for the future. For now, you can walk the nature trail through quiet woodlands. Birds are found migrating through this area year round. Another Park entrance is planned for 2008. This area will encompass nature trails and a canoe and kayak launch. For information visit the Salt Springs Alliance web page at www.saltspingsalliance.com

Officers & Board

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Schedule

PROGRAMS

Dec. 1st @ 3 PM Starkey Ed Center
"West Pasco Conservation Issues" by
Peter Day, WPAS Conservation
Chairman. Christmas Bird Count
planning.

Jan. 5th @ 11 AM Brooker Creek Preserve
"Black Vultures of Brooker Creek" by Jim
Mcginity

Feb. 9th @ 3 PM Starkey Ed Center
"AUDUBON BIRDS OF PREY" by Lynda White
. LIVE eagle, hawks and owls.

March 2 @ 1 - 4 PM Starkey Park
"MARCH FOR PARKS" Cabin
display, bird walks and more.

April 12 @ 3 PM Starkey Park
To Be Announced

No Admission Cost - Open to the Public

FIELD TRIPS

Dec. 1st @ 8 AM Starkey Ed Center
Bird Walk thru Starkey Park led by Ken Tracey
Jan 5th @ 8 AM Brooker Creek Preserve Bird Walk
starting from the parking area. Followed by 11 AM
program

Jan. 12th @ 7:30 AM Honeymoon Island St. Park Meet in
Burger King (Moog Rd and US 19) parking lot. Causeway,
Osprey Trail, new Nature Center, option for boat to
Caladesi

Feb. 16th @ 7:30 AM Hillsborough Wildemess Park,
Flatwoods, Morris Bridge and Trout Creek. Meet at
Pasco Co. Gov't Center front parking lot.

March 8th @ 7:30 AM Weeki Wachee Preserve. Meet at
Sweet Bay parking lot at US 19 and St Rd 52
April 19th @ 7:30 AM Fort DeSoto St. Park. Meet at
Burger King (Moog Rd and US 19) parking lot.
For ALL Field Trip information contact Aggy Condon Field
Trip Chairman at aggy_condon@yahoo.com

President's Message

The attraction of birds to water is quite evident. We see all types of birds in the salt water canals and Gulf vistas. But bringing in those small birds to our back yards can involve some cost and alot of work and maintenance. Most people who go down the back yard bird feeding track overlook the most important first step. Although planting bushes that supply protective cover, planting nectar flowers for hummingbirds and putting out a very fancy bird feeder are all important, a fresh water source for drinking and bathing should be your first step. In fact, some people find that several bird baths in the yard are all they need to see the most variety of birds.

The seed eating birds like Northern Cardinal and Tufted Titmouse come to seed feeders, but so do the squirrels, raccoons and even other undesirable rodents. A water source allows you to see both common birds and some small hard to find birds like warblers. The Prairie Warbler

in the photo was busy bathing and completely ignored me at Green Key this summer. Bird baths can be any container that will hold about 2 inches of water. Putting the water source out in the open works best, especially so the birds can detect a predator in time to escape. Keep the bath clean and add fresh water every couple of days, occasionally dropping in a cap full of bleach to control fungus and algae. There are also some new elaborate bath and water units now that include misters and fountains. Birds are attracted to the sound of water flowing or dripping and misters allow hummingbirds to fly into the mist and drink and bathe in midair.

