

The

HUMMER



NEWSLETTER OF WEST VOLUSIA AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.
A Chapter of Audubon of Florida and National Audubon Society
Published monthly September – April (except for December)

VOL. 40, NO. 1

September 2007

Sep 25th MEETING

The Woman's Club of DeLand
128 West Michigan Ave.

6:00 PM Pot Luck Dinner

Please bring a dish to share and your
tableware.

SWALLOWTAIL KITE UPDATE

Dr. Ken Meyer

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAKE IT, BAKE IT, GROW IT !!!!

Now is the time to plan your donations for the
November meeting and auction. Start your plantings
or crafts early. We need to make this our most
successful auction ever. Don't forget we need guests
also!!

AUDUBON ASSEMBLY GOES TO THE BEACH

The Hilton, Cocoa Beach
November, 1-3, 2007

Register by October 2nd and pay only \$115

Includes all receptions, meals, programs, workshops, and
even a movie. (\$125 after)

Rooms start at \$119.00 (up to 4 in a room)

BIRDS!!

That's what Audubon's all about – here's a
chance to build your birding skills—by
getting out and looking around, and to be
with other birders just for the fun of it—
along with helping with one of the largest
studies of birds and their habits ever taken.

It's the **Fall Migration Count**. It takes
place Saturday, September 15th. Sharpen
your skills, help others and learn from
them. All levels of expertise invited—eyes
and ears are all it takes—other team
members can help identify. Call John
Eggert at 736-6922 to get on a team.

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Jane Kalinowski
Highland Park Fish Camp
Brenda Rankin
Manny Sandino
Marcia Thompson
Gladys Marcus
Rory Moniz
Rick Jones
Janet Ahrens
Barbara Hogan
Maude Scott
Evangeline Hendricks
Joan Pegram
J B Semsy
Mark Van Fleet
Steve Barth
Helen Hunter
Karen Lucas
Robert Mather
Mr & Mrs Dan Edmonds
John Pittman
Ann Ladd
Warren VanHoose
Henry Bolwyn
Jean Miller

CONSERVATION

As Conservation Chair, I'm pleased
to be able to pen the first "President's
Message" of the year. As you may be
aware, after many years of service, Ed and
Arnette Sherman have stepped down from
the Presidency (though they still remain
very active Board members). Current
Board members are sharing the duties of
President until we can find a new President
(could it be YOU?)

Local birders were surprised this
summer to see a pair of Black Skimmers
nesting on our beach in Volusia County.
Black Skimmers are a species of special
concern and are also one of the species
featured in Audubon of Florida's newly
released report, *Common Birds in Decline:
A State of the Birds Report – Summer 2007*.
As a consequence of the lack of
undisturbed beaches to nest upon, Black
Skimmer populations have declined by
73% since 1967. Thanks to local
volunteers who protected the birds from
sunbathers and vehicles, the male chick
successfully fledged and the family has
moved on.

Also, the local population of
Swallow-Tailed Kites has gathered at their
pre-migratory spot in Volusia County and
is preparing for their journey to South
America. We appear to have a very strong
local population and numerous sightings of
Kites were reported all summer long. We
are looking forward to Dr. Ken Meyer's
presentation on Swallow-Tailed Kites. He
is from the Avian Research Conservation
Institute in Gainesville, Florida.

We are also excited at the
opportunity to have Taldi Walters, Alaska
Field Coordinator from National Audubon,
as a guest speaker in March. Taldi will be
discussing the importance of the Tongass
National Forest in Alaska. National
Geographic did a feature on the Tongass
National Forest in the July 2007 issue.

This year, West Volusia Audubon
Society will be joining forces with the
other two Volusia County Audubon
chapters to expand our offering of field
trips. It is always a pleasure to meet folks
from other chapters. Look for upcoming
field trip announcements in the each
monthly newsletter (and bring a friend!)

The conservation community has
certainly had its hands full this past
summer! Efforts have been focused on
lobbying to prevent the construction of a
500-boat Marina in DeBary on the St.
Johns River, on questioning the
SJRWMD's seemingly unrestrained
granting of consumptive use permits
(CUPs) to developers in Central Florida in
spite of concerns over sustainable water
supply, trying to protect funding for the
Volusia Soil and Water Conservation
Board, and trying to implement "green"
changes in our community.

West Volusia Audubon Society is
looking forward to providing our
membership with fun and interesting
programs and field trips. But most of all,
we look forward to seeing YOU there to
join us!

Karyn Hoffman

What I Did Last Summer By Karyn Hoffman

As you may recall, the Hammock Creek DRI just west of Edgewater has been slated for residential and commercial development. During the Charette (where the local community is invited to tour the property and ask the developers questions), a Swallow-Tailed Kite was spotted by an Audubon member. A biologist who was present said that these birds don't nest in this area, however, our organization of expert birders knew better! With the help of Charles Lee, Audubon of Florida and Lee Bidgood, former Conservation Chair of SE Volusia Audubon, we were invited by the developer, Mr. Don Mears, to visit the site and attempt to locate Swallow-Tailed Kite nesting sites. Mr. Mears said if we could identify nesting sites, he would protect these sites from development.



Swallow-tail kite in flight

The DRI has since been renamed "Restoration". This is because the land slated for development had been used as a tree-farm for at least forty years, and thus its former status as a wetlands (and headwaters for Spruce Creek) had been seriously compromised by a built-up road system and poorly maintained tree farm.

Effectively, the natural system that once existed there had been destroyed long ago by silviculture.

The developer (who represents a group of investors) has stated their intention to attempt to restore elements of these natural wetlands during the development process. They plan on removing the majority of pine trees, leaving only some thinned out strands with older trees. They will also elevate the roads and developed areas while restoring original cypress lowlands to their original wetland status.

Some of the questions we will be asking Mr. Mears are how they plan to address storm water runoff. Utilizing wetlands as a pollution filter is a proven technology, but will any systems they construct be enough to cope with rain events of varying levels? What about landscaping? Will they be using water-friendly landscaping and will this be part of the Homeowner's Association covenants? What about the inevitable mosquitoes and other pests that come with wetlands? How will this be addressed?

Directly to the south of Restoration is the Miami Corp.'s proposed Rural Land Stewardship Area. The wetlands system of the Spruce Creek headwaters continues to the south, on Miami Corporation's land. Ideally, our long-term goal is to start talking to these developers about setting aside land for a wildlife corridor. These projects will take years to develop, so time is on our side. This approach is also consistent with Audubon of Florida's Strategic Goals.

We took four trips out to Restoration to look for nesting Kites. All of our local chapters came to help in the search:

Members from Flagler, SE Volusia, W Volusia and Halifax Audubon participated. We did end up finding four nests and enjoyed multiple kite sightings. However, on the last trip in July, we saw no kites and came to the conclusion that they had left for the migratory gathering spot. They will then migrate to South America.

We have been invited to return next year and we plan on making multiple trips next June as that is the best time to see them. We are also working on access to the Miami Corp land (thanks to Clay Henderson) for next year to look for all manner of birds and wildlife.

Our volunteers enjoyed some great education and training on finding Swallow-Tailed Kites, courtesy of Gina Zimmerman from the Aviation Research and Conservation Institute in Gainesville, Florida. We are particularly pleased at having ARCI's Dr. Ken Meyer as our guest speaker for September's program. He will give a presentation on Swallow-Tailed Kites and ARCI's work. We greatly look forward to this and hope you will be able to join us!



Members of Flagler Audubon assisted us in searching.

AUDUBON ADVENTURES

In the 2006-07 school year we sponsored 53 classrooms. One of our goals is to give every fourth and fifth grade teacher in our membership area the opportunity to participate in the *Audubon Adventures* program.

The following elementary schools are in our area: Blue Lake, Freedom, Friendship, George Marks, McInnis, Orange City, Pierson, Seville, Starke, Timbercrest, Volusia Pines and Woodward Avenue. (The other eight schools in Deltona, DeBary, Enterprise and Osteen are covered by Seminole Audubon.)

You may request to sponsor a particular classroom. The cost is \$45.65 this year, and we would like to increase the number of classrooms. We are asking our members and the community for support. If \$45.65 is too much for you, send \$5 or \$10. Please help us make our goal a reality by sending a check to the West Volusia Audubon Society, marked for *Audubon Adventures*. Send it to: P.O. Box 1268, DeLand, FL 32721-1268 and feel great for making environmental education for our local children possible!

"Your enthusiasm for environmental education is what keeps this program going, so thank you for all your wonderful support!"

Donna Reynolds,
Education Chairperson

INJURED BIRD?

Contact a Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator:

Kathy Paynter	386-738-2589
Kathy's E-Mail	kep@cfl.rr.com
Elaine Wadler	386-228-0065