



Tampa Audubon Society October 2016 Newsletter

www.tampaaudubon.org

Thursday, October 6, 2016

Hillsborough County Extension, Conference Center, 5339 CR 579, Seffner

Photo Club 6 PM

7:00 Potluck dinner ~ Bring dish to pass (optional)

7:30 Meeting and Program

The Challenge of the Gulls

Michael Brothers

Director, Marine Science Center, Ponce Inlet



All of Florida is great for watching gulls. One of the largest known concentrations of gulls on any beach in the US takes place in Daytona Beach, where 30,000 -50,000 gulls gather each evening. There are 50 species of gulls in the world, 20 of which have been recorded in Florida. Gulls often present some of the most difficult identification challenges in the bird world. This program will introduce Florida's gulls, and discuss when and where to find them as well as help you learn how to identify the species and figure out how old they are.

In addition, one of the great mysteries surrounding the birdlife of the United States is where all of the Lesser Black-backed Gulls come from. Some days in fall as many as 300 birds occur at Ponce de Leon Inlet in Volusia County and 300-500 birds winter at the Brevard landfill near Cocoa Beach.

Despite their presence throughout much of the United States and Canada, no one knows where they breed. It is possible that these birds are flying all the way from Greenland, but there may be other unknown breeding areas. To try to solve this problem, the Marine Science Center launched a long-term project to begin banding Lesser Black-backed Gulls in Volusia County, Florida in 2015. The program will touch on our efforts to solve this mystery.

Mr. Brothers has been the director of the Marine Science Center in Ponce Inlet, Florida for the last 12 years. He has extensive natural science experience including specializations in the bird life and flora of Florida, as well as leading natural history tours throughout Florida, the Galapagos Islands, Kenya, and the Amazon. He has been leading pelagic birding expeditions off Florida and Georgia shores for the last 11 years.



Upcoming Events

Florida Birding and Nature Festival

Tampa Audubon needs **volunteers** for our booth at the Festival on Oct 14 and 15. Please contact Krista (kutash@usf.edu) if you are interested in helping.

Registration is open for the festival, social events and field trips. There are 26 trips to 4 counties, and 30+ seminar topics from ants to panthers, native plants to dragonflies. Check out the full schedule of trips, seminars and activities at

<http://www.floridabirdingandnaturefestival.org/> . Special programs for children on Saturday too!

Let's Go Birding in Cuba!



Registration is now open for our trip to Cuba, **January 14-20(21), 2017**. Remember, **Tampa Audubon members get a \$100 discount if you register before Oct. 10**. Land costs for the 7 day trip are \$3,350.00 per person for double rooms. Single supplement is \$450.00. There is a maximum of 14

spaces on this trip, for some fantastic birding! See the website for full details and registration form. Or email me (keithma1@juno.com) if you have questions. I have been

to Cuba with this company, I speak Spanish, and I will be on the trip with you!



Save the Dates!

Field Trips in October

Saturday, Oct 8 Lettuce Lake Park Bird Walk especially for beginning birders, open to everyone! Meet at 9 am in the parking area by the visitor's center. We'll walk the area until about noon. Bring water, insect repellent. We have binoculars to loan if you don't have any. Park entrance fee is \$2, trip is free. Leader Mary Keith for more info: keithma1@juno.com

Florida Birding and Nature Festival, Oct 13-16. Seminars at HCC South Shore in Ruskin, field trips to surrounding areas. Register at <http://www.floridabirdingandnaturefestival.org/>. The evening social events are at the Ruskin Firehouse Community Center on Shell Point Rd.

Thursday evening opening event is dinner and a panel of **the founders of ELAPP**, including Joel Jackson, Jan Platt, Gov. Martinez and more. Our ELAPP program is known and admired across the country for what it has accomplished. Hear how it came to be and how it continues. The \$25 includes dinner, drinks and program.

Friday evening, dinner and drinks, the speaker is **David Johnson of Global Owl Project**, talking about their research and conservation efforts around the world.

Saturday evening is dinner, drinks, bluegrass music and **Carlton Ward** talking about and signing books for the **Florida Wildlife Corridor** Initiatives.

Audubon Assembly, Oct 28, 29. St Petersburg, focuses on conservation in the state. All are invited. Information at <http://fl.audubon.org/about-us/audubon-assembly>.

Future TAS Field Trips

April 10-12, 2017 we will have a field trip to **Key West and the Dry Tortugas!** Trip itinerary and registration details are attached. If you have any questions, contact Sandy Reed



September 24-30, 2017 we will be taking a field trip to **South Texas** for the raptor migration and the Lower Rio Grande Valley. More details to come on that trip!

For Your Consideration...

TAS Needs YOU! Treasurer? Webmaster? We need you!! Please contact Mary keithma1@juno.com if you would be willing to help us in either of these positions.

We need a new/interim **Treasurer**, someone familiar with both Excel and Quicken. Interim would be until next elections in May. Or longer if you are willing!!

Steve, our **webmaster**, has also said he would like to be replaced. If you are comfortable setting up a CMS webpage and converting our current HTML page to that, please say so.

Eagle Watch is recruiting! If you'd like to have your 'own' eagle nest to monitor and report on, this is for YOU! Check your nest once a week (more is up to you), and report what they're doing. Local training for this program will be Oct 8. Contact Nan Murrah, our local coordinator, for more information. nancy.murrah@tampaudubon.org [813-205-1851](tel:813-205-1851)

For Your Consideration...



Do you know about **Duck Stamps**? It's a program run by the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service. Buying a duck stamp for a year gives you access to National Wildlife Refuges across the country, such as Merritt Island and St Marks. The money goes to manage the refuges and purchase more land or conservation easements to protect habitat. Hunters are required to buy them. The rest of us can help support the refuge system. For more info or to buy a duck stamp (\$25) before you get to a refuge, go to <https://www.fws.gov/birds/get-involved/duck-stamp.php>. Some retailers (Bass Pro, Walmart, etc) and some post offices sell them.

Tampa Audubon is registered with **Amazon Smile**! If you buy on Amazon, opt for their Amazon Smile account. All your regular account information is there. You can shop and pay as usual. But click the donate button and choose Tampa Audubon, and we get a donation! It costs you nothing more, but it helps us help our birds.

COMMITTEE UPDATE

DON'T FEED THE BIRDS, DON'T CUT THE LINE

We are currently engaged in encouraging parks and piers to replace their current fish cleaning stations with stations that include carcass chutes. Carcass chutes deposit carcasses below the surface of the water, so as not to lure birds into areas where there is active fishing, or injure birds ingesting carcasses. We hope to carry this out in Hillsborough, Pinellas and other coastal counties. DEP has agreed to placement of carcass chutes on a site by site basis based on FFWCC approval.



Our Chapter continues to lead a quarterly multi-organizational committee made up of members from: DEP, FFWCC, Skyway Pier Associates, Tampa Baywatch, Audubon Florida Coastal Island Sanctuaries (AFCIS), Palma Sola Veterinary Hospital, Conservancy of Southwest Florida and attendees from Manatee County and St. Petersburg Audubon, and regional bird rehabilitators. We had financial support from TECO to print our brochure and a pledge to financially assist with development of an educational video. FFWCC has developed their website and educated their officers to include our educational program about fishing line entanglement, and includes our brochure, "What to Do if You Hook a Pelican". Skyway Pier Associates has replaced all the trashcans on the Skyway with covered receptacles, and continues to maintain an employee focused on preventing and assisting with fishing line entanglement. Tampa Baywatch has organized mono-tube clean outs and with AFCIS has organized fishing line cleanups. AFCIS has incorporated our message into their fishing clinics and has reached out to other groups organizing fishing clinics.

EXTRA POINTS....

October 11 at Boyd Hill Nature Preserve, 1101 Country Club Way South, St Pete, 7:30 pm.
"A Year's Worth of Florida's Butterflies" Ron Smith.