



The Avocet

Tampa Audubon Society February 2017 Newsletter

www.tampaudubon.org

Meeting - Thursday, February 2, 2017

Hillsborough County UF 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

General Meeting

Dr. Elizabeth Forsy
Professor, Eckerd College



Florida's **Black Skimmers** are declining in both number of breeding pairs and colony size. While some productivity and chick survival data exists, almost nothing is known about survival and moments of skimmers after fledging. During the 2015 and 2016 breeding seasons Dr. Forsy's team banded a total of 96 near-fledgling skimmer chicks from two colonies in the Tampa Bay, FL region using field readable alpha-numeric codes. They solicited band resightings through social media, web sites, and presentations. To date, they have >1,000 resightings and the results are both surprising and interesting! In this talk you will discover where our Black Skimmer spend their winters, how many return during their first year, and which colonies they visited.

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UPCOMING TRIPS

RAPTOR MIGRATION IN TEXAS!

SEPT. 24-30, 2017

Trip with WINGS, Inc. to Corpus Christi and the **great hawk migration**, then Lower Rio Grande Val-



ley for south Texas specialties such as the beautiful green jay. Registration required by March 12. Cost \$1576 to \$1770, depending on the number, MAX 10 people. See [flyer](#) on webpage or contact . **DEADLINE TO REGISTER IS MARCH 11. DO NOT WAIT!** Mary.keith@tampaudubon.org for details.



FIELD TRIPS

On most trips we have binoculars to loan, so don't hesitate to come! Unless otherwise indicated field trips do not require advance registration. Most are free. Anyone is welcome!

FEB 1— See Circle B Bar Preserve by TRAM!

Ride the trails instead of walking, to look for purple gallinules, bitterns, wintering ducks and pelicans, hawks and pelicans. This is a special trip just for TAS and MacDill AFB campers. Our own Pam DeNeve, a guide at Circle B, was able to arrange this trip for us. It's free, but is limited to 25 participants and you **MUST REGISTER WITH PAM** at Pam.DeNeve@tampaudubon.org . You must give her your name and contact phone number in case of any last-minute changes.

Feb 11 —Lettuce Lake Bird Walk. Meet at 9 am in the parking lot by the Visitor's Center at the park to walk the boardwalk with us. Both Night Herons have been plentiful recently, and orange-crowned have joined the usual winter warblers on the scene. Come see what else we can find. Lead-

ers Mary Keith or Doug DeNeve, for more info.

Mary.keith@tampaaudubon.org or
Doug.deneve@tampaaudubon.org .

MERRITT ISLAND, FEB 18-19, 2017 This is an overnight trip, starting with Blue Heron wetlands, then Black Point Wildlife Drive on Saturday, then Merritt Island or Cruickshank Preserve for Florida Scrub Jays Sunday morning, ending with Orlando Wetlands



Sunday afternoon. Blue Heron Wetlands are a small set of marshy ponds outside Titusville that we can enter by appointment. Black Point Drive on the Merritt Island NWF is always a great treat. And hopefully the Vermillion flycatcher will come back for another winter visit to Orlando wetlands! You'll make your own hotel reservation for Saturday night. Please let the leader know if you are coming so we know who to look for and where to meet. Contact leader Mary Keith for list of hotels to choose from if interested. Mary.keith@tampaaudubon.org

Feb 25, Cape Coral Burrowing Owl Festival While you can drive down to see these precious owls any time, the 25th is their special festival. If there is interest we will carpool down for the talks, demonstrations, expo, and of course look for some owls. For more info on the Festival (\$5 admission per person), <http://www.ccfriendsofwildlife.org/burrowing-owl/> . If interested in a carpool, contact Mary Keith at mary.keith@tampaaudubon.org



March Meeting—Feb 2.

Michael Brothers, Director of Marine Science Center, Ponce Inlet, will be speaking on his research on **black backed gulls** in Florida. He has been rescheduled from October, when the hurricane cancelled his visit.

COMMITTEE UPDATES Conservation Committee

As most of you already understand, 2016 did not end on a positive note for those of us who are concerned about environmental threats. With Donald Trump's

surprise victory in the presidential election, we are now facing the certainty of an administration that will be reluctant to establish or enforce policies protecting birds and other wildlife or to take assertive actions to deal with climate change issues. During his campaign, Mr. Trump repeatedly vowed that he would "...cut regulations and unleash the energy industry." While he has already backed away from a number of his campaign promises, he seems determined to keep this one. This is obvious from his nomination of Scott Pruitt, an avowed climate-change skeptic who has repeatedly sued the Environmental Protection Agency in his role as Oklahoma's Attorney General, to be the next administrator of the EPA.

Closer to home, the Florida Legislature has shown little recent interest in environmental protection. While there is a push from State Senate President Joe Negron to take actions that will benefit the Everglades, there is still no indication that Amendment 1 funds will be used as intended by voters to purchase and preserve other critical environmental lands.

It will be up to us, as concerned citizens, to do what we can to ensure that all of our elected leaders are aware of the overwhelming support for environmental protection voiced very clearly by voters across the political spectrum. **If you would like to receive periodic email updates on conservation issues, along with occasional "Action Alerts", please contact our Conservation Chair, Doug DeNeve, at doug.deneve@gmail.com or sign up at the next chapter meeting.**

OLLI Classes Begin January 24

Natural Hillsborough: An Audubon Adventure

Enjoy a series of one-hour lectures followed by a field trip walk within Lettuce Lake Park in this year's Tampa Audubon-sponsored adventure. Learn how to access and enjoy some of the unique features of the great outdoors of Hillsborough County. Classes start at 10 am. **Bring a \$25 check to the first meeting, payable to the Tampa Audubon Society.** Please bring binoculars to class.

Dates are Jan 24, 31, Feb 7, 14, 21, 28, March 7, 14. Different topic each week!

Register online at www.usfseniors.org or call 813-974-2403, option 1. For more information call 813-974-8036 or contact Sandy Reed at sandy.reed@tampaaudubon.org

Roots And Shoots UT News

The annual **Earth Day Gala will be April 22nd** at 6:00 pm, doors open at 5:30 pm. Entrance is free, but registration will be required. Dinner is catered, there will be two guest speakers. The Gala Auction and Sales serve as their main fundraiser throughout the semester. All the money raised from auction and sale items goes towards their service project, which currently is establishing a learning garden at St. Peter Claver Catholic School in downtown Tampa. It will be hosted at UT in Plant Hall. Registration details will be coming. For more details now, please contact Alana Boyles at alana.boyles@spartans.ut.edu.

Save your Pill Bottles

Roots and Shoots collects used pill bottles and recycles them to help a local clinic. Bring clean used pill bottles to the meetings and we'll get them to the Roots! If you can peel the labels off, please do.

Children's Programs at Lettuce Lake

10 am, Visitor Center, \$5 per child accompanied by adult, or adult \$5 without child. Register at

kyled@hillsboroughcounty.org

Feb 4, 5—Making Indian Music, Counting Decimals

Feb. 11, 12—Chocolate or Vanilla

Feb 18, 19—Edible Grains, Nuts, Acorns and Corn

Remember to use Smile when you shop on Amazon. For more details on how it works, check out www.smile.amazon.com/about. Register with Smile, shop, and we get 0.5% from each purchase.



Asa Wright Nature Centre Announces its 50th Anniversary with Celebrity Birders!

Come and celebrate 50 years of incomparable non-profit conservation, education and habitat protection in Trinidad where you can see 40 life birds before breakfast! Enjoy top-rate birding and learning with a famous birder/artist/naturalist.

- **March 18 – 25, 2017** Scott Weidensaul, Author & Naturalist and Amy Weidensaul, Educator & Conservationist
- **June 24 – 30, 2017** Edward Rooks, Naturalist & Trinidadian Wildlife Artist, with Janice Edgerly-Rooks, Biology Professor
- **October 6 – 15, 2017** Keith Hansen, Artist & Field Guide Illustrator, with Patricia Briceño, Fiber Artist & Cultural Interpreter
- **October 26 – November 2, 2017** David Allen Sibley, Author, Illustrator & Ornithologist



Call 800-426-7781 to book your spot today. Mention your chapter's name and earn a \$100 chapter donation from Caligo Ventures!

Photo: Copper-rumped Hummingbird, Rich Wagner/WildNaturePhotos



Hog Island Audubon Camp

SEABIRD RESTORATION PROGRAM



Register Today!

<http://hogisland.audubon.org>

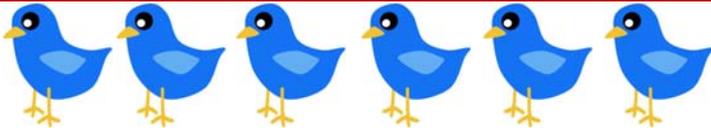
843-340-8673



Hog Island Audubon Camp works to provide educational experiences for all ages in their week-long summer camps. Many educators, adult birders, families, and teens have benefited from the programs offered at Hog Island. If you're interested in a great summer of learning, birding, working and more, check them out.

Looking for some easy Travel in 2017?

Trinidad has some *fantastic birding!* If you're interested in traveling *and* helping Tampa Audubon, this is for you. Asa Wright Nature Centre is a remarkable lodge, with dozens of hummers, an oil-bird cave, bellbirds and more. Nearby is Caroni Swamp and the scarlet ibis. Just remember to **MENTION TAMPA AUDUBON** when you register for a visit or tour, and we'll get a \$100 donation.



Sponsor a Bluebird Box

Bluebird boxes are open for adoption in 2017! Mary and John Miller and various helpers maintain a trail of over 40 bluebird boxes in Flatwoods Park. Nesting will be starting before long. The boxes will be checked and cleaned before the residents move in, and then checked weekly until all the youngsters are on their own. The Bluebird Fund allows boxes and snake shields to be repaired or replaced as needed.

Donate \$10 to the Bluebird Fund and you'll be assigned your own box. These are great gifts for a favorite child or grandchild too. Don't worry, you don't have to do anything! Mary will send you weekly updates of who is nesting in your box as they check them.

It will probably be a bluebird, but who knows! A Carolina chickadee or a tufted titmouse might take up residence too.

To sponsor a box (or 2 or 3), complete the form and mail it with a check for \$10 per box to Mary Miller, 802 Congress Ct, Tampa FL 33613. Make the check to Tampa Audubon, but be sure to write BLUEBIRD FUND on the check. If you want the weekly reports to go to someone else, please add their email address.

Tampa Audubon Society Bluebird Boxes

Name _____

Address _____

Your Email _____

Recipient emails if other than yourself:

Number of boxes sponsored _____

Amount enclosed (\$10/box)

Volunteers Needed

For Lettuce Lake Park

The Audubon Resource Center or ARC at Lettuce Lake Park has traditionally had volunteers to answer visitors' questions, direct them where they want to go, or lead walks along the boardwalk. Some volunteers have needed to resign, so Mike Mullins, the ARC Director, is looking for more help.

You will need to complete a County volunteer application. Mike will provide training. You will be able to set your hours within Mike's schedule. Mostly it is weekend hours.

If you're interested in being a volunteer at LLP (and who wouldn't love some extra time in that jewel of a park!), please contact Mike at mike.mullins@tampaudubon.org or 813-390-4696.

Bird Rescue

Nan Murrah's crew is always hoping for more volunteers to transport injured birds. If you'd have some time and a vehicle, contact her at nancy.murrah@tampaudubon.org.

Other Locations

There's a possibility that we may be able to provide volunteers for some other County Environmental Lands. At this point nothing is set, but if you'd be interested and able to help pull weeds, post signs or other work to supplement the park rangers, Fish and Wildlife Commission rangers or others, please let Mary Keith know. Mary.keith@tampaudubon.org

Or, if you are interested in volunteering directly with Hillsborough County on their Conservation and Environmental Lands (places such as Lower Green Swamp, etc), you can contact Chris Kiddy, Program Coordinator Conservation and Environmental Lands Management Department at kiddyc@hillsboroughcounty.org.

Remember to Renew

If you renew your Audubon membership through Tampa Audubon we get an extra \$5 to support our local programs, and we get it sooner. Please check your address label on your Audubon magazine. If it indicates that your membership is about to expire, please go to our website, download and print the membership form, and mail it back to us. We promise, we forward your renewal to National!

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!