



The Avocet

Tampa Audubon Society February 2018 Newsletter



www.tampaaudubon.org

General Meeting Thursday, February 1, 2018

Hillsborough County UF Extension Conference Center, 5339 CR 579, Seffner
6 PM Photo Club ~ 7:00 PM Potluck dinner ~ 7:30 PM Meeting and Program
Bringing a dish to pass is optional.

Beach-nesting Birds and Their Future in Florida

Speaker: Morgan Parks, FWC



There are multiple facets to creating a conservation success story. We will look at the current nesting numbers of beach nesting birds in southwest Florida, and the tools in place to help monitor their success. We will also discuss multiple opportunities to contribute to the conservation of beach nesting birds, and how individuals can make an impact.

Morgan Parks is a SW Regional Shorebird Biologist, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission. She first started working with shorebirds in 2011, and in 2016, came to Florida to work for Florida Park Service and Audubon Florida. She has been with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for over a year, first as the Wildlife Assistance Biologist, then as the southwest Regional Shorebird Biologist. As the shorebird biologist her primary responsibility include working with partners to implement shorebird and seabird conservation actions locally, regionally and statewide

Tampa Audubon Society, PO Box 320025, Tampa, FL 33679

UPCOMING 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. Everyone is welcome!

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Feb 3—Circle B Bar Preserve and Lake Gwyn.

Meet at 8 at Circle B to walk the open trails. Bring picnic lunch to eat there. Then drive to Lake Gwyn, near Bartow, where hopefully the snail kites and more will be cooperating. Contact Doug.

Feb 6—Picnic at Lettuce Lake to Thank Mike

Mullins for years of loving service as Director of Volunteers for the ARC at Lettuce Lake. Mike's party was blown away the first time by one of those hurricanes! It's now back on track. **Please come,**



Pavilion 8 or 9, bring a dish to share. We'll have burgers, dogs, buns. It's lunch, so anytime between 11 and 2. Bring any stories or thanks for Mike too!

Feb 10 — Lettuce Lake Beginners Bird Walk.

Meet at 9 am in the parking lot by the Visitor's Center at the park to walk the boardwalk with us. Our winter warblers are here, the night herons are roosting again, come see what else we can find. Done by noon. Leader is Megan.

Feb 14—HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY TO ALL!



Feb 18—Bay Care Ponds, Dunn Ponds, Wall Spring. This is a Clearwater loop. Meet at 8:30 at Bay Care, 2985 Drew St, at the middle rear pond. Short drives to the other locations. Bring lunch. Short walks only. Leader is Sandy.

Feb 25—Sweetwater Wetlands. Meet at 6 am to drive to Gainesville. We'll check the edges of the woods and walk some of the flat levee trails in these new wetlands, which have already had numerous rarities reported this winter. Lunch on your own in Gainesville. Contact Mary for more info or directions.

Lettuce Lake Beginning Birder Walks Mar 10, Apr 14, May 12

A special Note of Thanks to everyone who helped put away tables and chairs after the meeting last month: Sherry and Alan, Katie and Mike, and even our speaker Jeff!



Other February Events in the State

Fri-Sun, 2/9-11 Palm Coast Feather Fest <http://www.palmcoastgov.com/events/birding-fest>

Sat 2/17 Orlando Wetlands Festival - [Orlando Wetlands Festival](#)

Sat-Sun, 2/24-25 Burrowing Owl Festival - Cape Coral <http://www.ccfriendsofwildlife.org/>

NEXT MONTH'S TRIPS AND PROGRAMS

March 3—Brandon Birds, Twin Lakes

March 10—Lettuce Lake Bird Walk

March 17—Grape Hammock, Airboat on Lake Kissimmee

March 24—Eagles!

SCHULTZ BIOBLITZ Report

The Blitz went off without a hitch! We had 20 volunteers participate (plus 4 raccoons who came hoping for leftovers). We added one new species to the bird list for the Preserve (long billed curlew), and at least 35 new plant species. The full plant and insect lists are still being compiled, because plants are still being identified.

Many Thanks to all the **Tampa Audubon, Sun City Center Audubon, Native Plant Society** and others who helped. Thanks to TAS for supplying the coffee, donuts, and sandwiches for lunch.

We are planning to **repeat the survey** in June or September, to see what else is there in a warm, sunny month. If you'd be interested, contact Mary, or John Lampkin Conservation Chair for Sun City Center Audubon at JohnLampkin@JohnLampkin.com

And, if anyone goes birding, (or butterfly-ing) in the area, please send your list to Mic McCarty so that your sightings can be added to the growing database for this property.

The first bird survey of the Rock Ponds areas has been held on Jan 27. These will be conducted quarterly. If you'll help, contact Doug for dates.



WANT TO HELP EVEN MORE?

Tampa Audubon is in need of someone to coordinate our table display for various **events**. There are usually only 4-6 a year, mostly in the spring.



March 24th Little Manatee River State Park is holding their Spring Fling. TAS will have an information table there, and some activities for children. If you'd like to help spread the word about all we do and could share an hour or two for that, contact Mary.

Also, we'll be needing some **new members** for the **Board of Directors** at the next election. The Board meets almost monthly, usually ~10 times a year, on the second Thursday of the month. If you think you might be interested and would like to sit in on a meeting, please come! Feb 8 and March 8 are our next meetings, at 7 pm, in the north meeting room of the Extension building.

If you're interested, willing, want more details about any of these, or want to nominate someone, please contact Mary, or any member of the current Board of Directors. We're all listed on the website, under About Us in the left-hand column at www.tampaudubon.org.

LETTUCE LAKE PARK VOLUNTEERS



Roger Sheets, Director of ARC activities at Lettuce Lake, would love a few more volunteers at the ARC. Duties include: be available once every few months for a weekend afternoon to answer questions, direct visitors, keep track of numbers at the Visitor Center, and occasionally lead a walk along the boardwalk. You will need to be certified as a County volunteer, and Roger will provide orientation and training. If interested, please contact Roger.



Volunteers Prepare the Flatwoods Park Bluebird Trail for the 2018 Nesting Season



On a crisp, cool day in November, Eagle Scout candidate, Ryan Philiban, his assistant scout master father, Rob Philiban, and two assistants, met with bluebird monitor, Mary Miller, her husband, John, and volunteer Irwin Schuster to install 15 newly built bluebird boxes on the Flatwoods Park Bluebird Trail. After three hours of very efficient labor, the group had the new boxes ready for occupation for the new nesting season beginning in March. All costs associated with this project were paid for by Ryan's fund raising.

Thank you Ryan and all your helpers!

In the months prior to the Eagle Scout project, Mary and John Miller, and volunteers Irwin Schuster and Randy Rhude had also spent several days on the trail getting it ready for the 2018 nesting season by relocating

boxes, and doing some much needed repairs on others. Thanks Irwin and Randy!

Sponsor a Bluebird Box

For the past five years, Tampa Audubon has financed the maintenance of the bluebird trail through its **Bluebird Box Sponsorship Program**. For \$10 per box, anyone can sponsor one or more boxes of the 51 bluebird boxes on the Flatwoods Park Bluebird Trail. As a sponsor, you will receive a weekly report of the happenings in your box during the nesting season, March – August. Your sponsorship money provides funding for all bluebird trail maintenance, spy-cam equipment, and bluebird brochure printing costs. Since we began this program 5 years ago, we have had adequate money to keep the bluebird trail in excellent shape.



To become a sponsor, follow the directions on the sponsorship form ([click here](#)), or find the form online at tampaaudubon.org. You will receive a reply from Mary Miller once she receives your information and weekly reports will be sent beginning in March. The bluebirds thank all of our past and future sponsors!

Mary Miller, Flatwoods Park Bluebird Trail Monitor
Mary.miller@tampaaudubon.org

More Ways to Help the Birds!

Play board games for the environment? Dr. Mark Hafen, USF, is looking for people to help test board games for simulating the effects of sea level rise and coastal flooding, and how to engage all parts of our community to discuss responses to them. Dates and times will be determined, but if you'd be interested please email Mary. We might make it a pizza night! (or afternoon, if that works better.)

Eagle Watch



Love our eagles? Help keep an eye on them! Eagle Watch could use more volunteers to monitor their nests in the

county. It's usually an hour or so, twice a month, and report on-line. For details check out <http://eaglewatchflorida.org/> . Or contact Nan Murrah.

Bird Stewards for beach nesting birds March Through August

- **3 Rooker Island** - The volunteer receives a free boat ride and admission to Honeymoon Island State Park and is taken to the island. Your job is to make sure that people anchoring boats at the island do not let their dogs off the boats. You simply explain the rules to the boaters. If any of them are non-compliant, law enforcement is notified. Contact John Hood (jhood2@tampabay.rr.com) of Clearwater Audubon, or Holley Short (hshort@audubon.org) of Audubon Florida.
- **Other locations** – Bird stewards are needed to educate the public about beach-nesting shorebirds and seabirds in Pinellas County from Clearwater Beach down to Ft. De Soto Park. Stewards will especially be needed during weekends and busy holidays to assist in monitoring colonies. Colony protection efforts are organized in cooperation with Audubon Florida and local Audubon chapters. Contact Holley Short at

CONTACT LIST FOR TRIP LEADERS and BOARD

Mary Keith, Pres. Mary.keith@tampaaudubon.org
Sandy Reed, VP. Sandy.reed@tampaaudubon.org
Michelle Hoffman Wrobel, Treasurer
michelle.hoffman.wrobel@tampaaudubon.org
Sherry Keller, Secretary, trip leader
sherry.keller@tampaaudubon.org
Megan Campbell, trip leader, BoD Member
Megan.campbell@tampaaudubon.org
Doug DeNeve, Conservation Chair, trip leader
Doug.deneve@tampaaudubon.org
Roger Sheets, Lettuce Lake Volunteer Coordinator
roger.sheets@tampaaudubon.org
Mic McCarty, trip leader BoD Member
Mic.mccarty@tampaaudubon.org
Nancy Murrah, 2nd VP of Board, Raptor Rescue,
Eagle Watch Nancy.murrah@tampaaudubon.org
Pam Deneve pam.deneve@tampaaudubon.org
Connie Anderson, BoD, trip leader connie.anderson@tampaaudubon.org
Rob Yoho rob.yoho@tampaaudubon.org

hshort@audubon.org.

- **Rooftop monitors** - Visit historic rooftop sites once a month during the breeding season from March through August to determine if there is active Least Tern nesting. Volunteers report data from each visit and help return chicks to rooftops if they begin falling. Locations in Pinellas, Hillsborough, Pasco, Manatee, and Sarasota Counties. Contact Jeff Liechty, Suncoast rooftop nesting coordinator at (jliechty@audubon.org).

Colony Watch, March-June

The birds are getting ready, are you? They need some volunteers to help keep an eye on their nesting colonies. King's Point, Odessa and it seems the Harley colony are still needing a guardian angel. You only need to check the colony a couple times a month and send a short report of how many pairs, nests, nestlings you can see, or if there is some disturbance, report that. If interested, please contact Ann Paul or Mark Rachal at the Coastal Islands Sanctuary office. Thank you!!
Apaul@audubon.org, or mrachal@audubon.org.



Remember

Membership Renewals

If you renew your Audubon membership through TAS we get the funds sooner.

When you receive your notice to renew from National Audubon, just download the application form from our website, or even just cut out the address label from the Audubon magazine, and send it to us with your check. We then forward your renewal to National, but we've recorded it here first. Thank you!!

Smile!

It doesn't have to be Christmas to use Amazon Smile and choose TAS. Do your on-line shopping where it will help support our programs. Here's a link to help: [How to donate to a charity on Amazon](#). If you want Amazon to donate to Tampa Audubon Society Inc, you need to start each shopping session at the Smile URL <https://smile.amazon.com> . They donate 0.5% of the value of your purchases to TAS.





**Volunteers Needed to Assist with
Gopher Tortoise Burrow Survey
at Boyd Hill Nature Preserve
(St. Petersburg, Florida)
March-April 2018**

Boyd Hill Nature Preserve is home to the largest remaining population of gopher tortoises in the southern Pinellas Peninsula. Preserve visitors can easily watch this threatened species foraging in the uplands, as well as view their burrows. These burrows serve as important homes or refugia for at least 364 other species that occur throughout the tortoise's range.

A new gopher tortoise burrow survey will be conducted in the preserve's uplands during March-April 2018. Conducted by Heinrich Ecological Services, this survey will provide data resulting in the production of new distribution maps, an updated estimate of population size, and determination of tortoise density per management section. This information will be used by City staff to assess current habitat management strategies and guide future efforts related to this species. A large number of volunteers will be needed to complete this project. This is an opportunity for individuals to learn about the ecology of this threatened species, while participating in actual wildlife research.

Please contact george@heinrichecologicalservices.com or call (727) 599-1843 for additional information on this imperiled species, or how to become involved with this project.

Boyd Hill Nature Preserve, Lake Maggiore Environmental Education Center
(1101 Country Club Way S., St. Petersburg, Florida)

