

The Pelican

We need to be the stewards of this world, not its destroyers

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December, 2011



Message from the President

Thoughts from on High

I don't know why, but when I searched my mind for a topic for December, the Christmas goose popped up. That led me to remember a column that I read in the Philadelphia Inquirer written by columnist Darrell Sifford shortly before he died in 1992. Titled, Lessons We Can Learn From Geese, it stated the following:

Fact 1: As each goose flaps its wings it creates an "uplift" for the birds that follow. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew alone.

Lesson: People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

Fact 2: When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. It quickly moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it. **Lesson:** If we have as much sense as a goose we stay in formation with those headed where we want to go. We are willing to accept their help and give our help to others.

Fact 3: When the lead goose tires, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies to the point position.

Lesson: It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership. As with geese, people are interdependent on each other's skills, capabilities and unique arrangements of gifts, talents or resources.

Fact 4: The geese flying in formation honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. **Lesson:** We need to make sure honking is encouraging. In groups where there is encouragement the production is much greater. The power of encouragement (to stand by one's heart or core values and encourage the heart and core of others) is the quality of honking we seek.

Fact 5: When a goose gets sick, wounded, or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it dies or is able to fly again. Then, they launch out with another formation or catch up with the flock. **Lesson:** If we have as much sense as geese, we will stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we are strong.

I can't vouch for the "facts," but this column made such an impact, that I kept the clipping for years. While searching for a digital copy online, however, I found a reference that claims it was written by Robert McNeish, former Assoc. Superintendent of Baltimore Public Schools in 1972. In order to give credit where it is due, I'm including both potential authors. Regardless of who originally wrote the article, the lessons are still worthy of learning.

Happy Holidays to All. Paula Wehr

Our December Meeting

James "Zach" Zacharias, Curator of Education and History for the Museum of Arts and Sciences, (and excavator of the recently discovered mastodon) will speak about the Museum's extensive permanent collection of authentic Audubon prints now currently on display in the MOAS Karshan Center for Graphic Arts. The presentation will also feature information about the naturalist's life and his visits to Florida from St. Augustine to the Dry Tortugas. **Join us at 6:30 p.m. for holiday cookies and beverages. Bring a plate of cookies to share. The Chapter will provide beverages.**

The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. And remember that the bridge is still out on Daytona Ave. So use 10th Street to reach Sica Hall.



Bald Eagle nest west of Williamson Blvd. & Willow Run Drive in Port Orange. Photo by chapter member, Nancy Creal.

Bald Eagles Are Nesting Now

Official Bald Eagle nesting season begins in Florida on the 15th of October. However, since the birds don't read the memos, they actually begin courtship and nest building as early as mid September. There are a number of active nests in our area. Here's a list of some that are easily viewable.

In Ormond Beach, across from 125 Live Oak Ave. is a large vacant lot. The nest is in a tall pine tree. Parking along this narrow road is tricky. So be careful.

Centennial Park, in Holly Hill- Look for the nest in a tall pine tree along the northwest side of the lake. This is the easiest nest to view.

Town Homes West, in Port Orange- This development is west of Clyde Morris Blvd, just north of Reed Canal Road. As you drive into the subdivision off Clyde Morris, look to the west for a large cypress tree behind 3540 Forest Branch Dr.

The nest pictured above is in a pasture located west of the intersection of Williamson Blvd and Willow Run Blvd. A word of caution, this is a dangerous intersection where traffic flows at 55+ miles per hour. Use extreme care when parking anywhere nearby or attempting to cross the streets.

The old "reliable", in New Smyrna Beach. The nest is located behind the Smyrna Motel, at 1050 N. Dixie Freeway, corner of Turnbull Bay Road. It's located in a large pine tree that's actually on the property of Sacred Heart Catholic School. This nest has hosted a pair of eagles every year for the past 15 or more years.

Each year the pair of eagles from the previous year (that is if they're both still alive) reclaim the nest, refurbish it with a fresh layer of branches and vegetation, and lay up to 3 eggs. Incubation takes about 5 weeks. The birds here locally have been incubating for several weeks already. So chicks should be in the nest by the 2nd week in December. Then the real work begins for the parents. The young fledge from the nest in 2.5 to 3 months and feeding those huge appetites takes a lot out of the adults. By mid January you should be able to see the youngsters perched in the nest. Fewer than 50% of fledglings survive their first year.



A Bald Eagle with a young Laughing Gull

photo by Michael Brothers

Eagle Watch, A Way To Help

Eagle Watch is headquartered at the Center for Birds of Prey, in Maitland. It consists of volunteers monitoring eagle nests all over Florida to see how many eaglets fledge each year. Eaglets can sometimes fall or be blown out of their nest, and have to be placed back in. If they sustain an injury, they are taken to Birds of Prey Center for medical attention.

I have been monitoring nests for the past fourteen years. When I was working I monitored six nests spanning from New Smyrna Beach to Palm Coast. Ironically, when I retired I found I had less free time than when I was working. I currently monitor three nests in Port Orange, South Daytona, and Daytona Beach.

Eagles are like snowbirds; they nest here from September to April. This summer, a fire at Rose Bay killed the pine tree housing a nest, and the nest fell to the ground. I wondered if the eagles would try to rebuild the nest as they had done twice before. I went by the old tree on September 4th and sure enough, the eagles had the nest about half way completed. One eagle was in the nest, and the other was on a limb above the nest. You never know what they might do, so keep your eyes on the trees and towers, as you may see an eagle. To volunteer with Eagle Watch, call Lynda White, Eagle Watch Coordinator, at 407-644-0190 or by e-mail: eaglewatch@audubon.org You can also go to the Center's web page listed below and click on the link to download a registration form.

http://www.audubonofflorida.org/who_centers_CBOP_eaglewatch.html

Tom Arbogast

Tom Arbogast has been a volunteer with Eagle Watch for 14 years. He was asked to write a short piece introducing you all to this volunteer opportunity. This is another citizen science project for which the major qualification is a desire to help. Ed.

Conservation Notes

At our November meeting, Ray Scory, who teaches our chapter's Beginning Birding class, spoke of the history of the Christmas Bird Count and its founder, Frank Chapman. In his presentation he spoke of Chapman's having seen a Bachman's Warbler. Now extinct, this gorgeous little bird once nested from Georgia to Virginia and migrated through Florida to Cuba for the winter. Watching Ray's presentation that night was the only person I can think of who might have seen a Bachman's Warbler before they disappeared into the mists of time and into specimen drawers in museums across the country.

John Carr, our Chapter Historian and jack of all trades, was born and grew up in eastern North Carolina. He began birding when he was just 10 years old. When he was 12 his grand mother took him to meet Archibald Rutledge, the Poet Laureate of South Carolina who was then living near McClellanville, SC. In addition to being a renowned man of letters, Mr. Rutledge was a birder. Young John was admiring an original Audubon print of a Wild Turkey hanging on the living room wall when Mr. Rutledge asked if he'd like to go see a Bachman's Warbler. They were already known to be disappearing then. John looked up the bird in his trusty Petersen's and accepted the offer. They drove out along the Santee River to a spot where the bird still thrived. After a few minutes Rutledge pointed into a nearby bush and there sat John's "life" Bachman's Warbler. In short order, another appeared, clinging to some dangling spanish moss. They were the only Bachman's Warblers John ever saw.

That wasn't the only brush John had with ornithological history. He also met T. Gilbert Pearson, a pioneering conservationist and one of the founders of what became the National Audubon Society. Pearson had collected specimens for Guilford College and some years later, while attending class there, John discovered some of them in a box in a basement at the school. I imagine his hands, in white cotton gloves, trembled with excitement while holding a pair of prepared Ivory-billed Woodpeckers and a pair of Passenger Pigeons. A little blob of green feathers was all that was left of what he assumed had at one time been a Carolina Parakeet.

Over the years John has participated in many Christmas Bird Counts and continues to do so. What began as an alternative to the annual slaughter known as the "Side Hunt", the Christmas Bird Count has morphed into a citizen science project whose impact is almost incalculable. As a history of the distribution and viability of bird populations across the country, the counts form the basis of a vast database that is used daily by ornithologists and biologists everywhere. There are multiple CBC's done here in Volusia and Flagler Counties and elsewhere around the state. There's no better way to get out and spend a day learning about birds and their behavior, while sharpening your birding skills, than to participate in a CBC. Look for information in our Calendar section on where and when to volunteer for counts locally. Your life will be richer for the experience. Just ask John.

David Hartgrove

Our Daytona Beach CBC will be held on Monday, 12/26/11. We'll meet at the Publix at Williamson & Granada at 7:00 am and regroup there for dinner afterward at the Royal Dynasty Chinese Restaurant. Contact me at 386-788-2630 or at birdman9@earthlink.net

Calendar and Events

Friday, 12/2: Chapter field trip to Lake Apopka. This is about as good as winter Florida birding gets. Meet at Int'l Square East, on ISB east of I-95, behind the Krystal's at 6:30am. Bring a lunch.

Friday, 12/9: Chapter field trip to Canaveral Marshes and Blue Heron Wetlands. You "might" need your "wellies" on this one. We meet at the Lowe's on Dunlawton Ave. east of I-95 at 7:00 am. Bring a lunch.

Friday, 12/16: Chapter field trip to Merritt Island NWR. Every year we do 2 trips to this excellent spot. Meet at 7:00 am at the Lowe's on Dunlawton, east of I-95. Bring a lunch.

Friday, 12/16: Flagler CBC. Those looking for some fun with our sister chapter to the north should contact Joe or Judy Dziak at jjdziak@att.net

Saturday, 12/17: Chapter field trip to Merritt Island NWR. Again, meet at Lowe's on Dunlawton, east of I-95 at 7:00 am and bring a lunch.

Saturday, 12/17: West Volusia CBC. Our sister chapter to the west will be doing their CBC and they get birds we rarely see on this side of the county. Contact David Stock dstock@stetson.edu

Monday, 12/26: Our Daytona Beach CBC. We'll meet at Publix at Granada & Williamson at 7:00 am. This is an all day event but we can work around that to fit your schedule. Contact David Hartgrove, birdman9@earthlink.net or 386-788-2630.

Monday, 1/2/12: Ponce Inlet CBC. This count, compiled by our sister chapter to the south, Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, is an excellent way to start the New Year. Contact Dick or Gail Domroski at rdomroski@cfl.rr.com or 386-428-0447

For those wishing to expand their horizons to other parts of Florida, the Florida Ornithological Society website has information on CBC's all over the state. Click on the link below <http://www.fosbirds.org/content/christmas-bird-counts-2011-2012> to see a list of CBC's statewide. Any of these counts would be happy to have you join them and lend your talents to their efforts and you'll get the added benefit of seeing new places.

Audubon Adventures

We are now soliciting sponsors for the classroom sets of Audubon Adventures. If you have been a sponsor in the past you know how important this program is to Volusia County students. For some children it's their first exposure to learning about the environment, wild birds, and other animals.

The Audubon Adventures program is aimed at third, fourth and fifth grade classrooms. Each sponsored class receives four sets of a newsletter with materials for 32 students in each set. They are filled with information and learning activities. There is also a teacher's manual with support ideas, activities, and evaluations.

Send your donation to Halifax River Audubon, P.O. Box 166, Daytona Beach FL 32115-0166. Any donation is welcome; \$45 will supply a classroom. Please specify on your check that your donation is for Audubon Adventures. And thank you for thinking of our future leaders.

HRA Welcomes our New Members

Katheryn Brother, Diane Brown, Travis Brown, Arlene Cardone, Don Cardone, Clare Giles, Linda Kozak, Pauline Kurpinsky, Judy Langston, Barbara K. Mason, Ann Maze, Ellen O'Shaughnessy, James O'Shaughnessy, Tataina Potkul, Bunny Sands, Andrea Savoldi, Kenneth Smith, Ralph T. Smith, Margaret Sneddon, Sophia K. Szyndlar, Carl E. Thornblad, Teresa Vaccarino, Walter Weber, Helen A. Wessel, and Alice Winchester. Also, there's a correction to last month's list of new members. Our apologies for giving Penelope Young-Carrasquillo the wrong first name.

We encourage you to join us at our monthly meetings, on one of our excellent field trips and to perhaps consider volunteering to serve on our board.

The Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival

One of the year's premier events is just a few months away and now is the time to make your plans to attend. This will be the 15th year of the festival and it's the biggest and best organized birding festival in the country. Online registration is open or you can print a registration form from their website. Some of the best field trip leaders in the country will be here and field trips will fill up fast. So now's the time to make your choices. And there's lots to choose from. In addition to field trips there are work shops on bird identification for beginners and more experienced birders alike, photography work shops taught by some of the best photographers in the country and other activities for history buffs and the non birders in your family. Check out the website for all of the information:

<http://www.spacecoastbirdingandwildlifefestival.org>

Experience the Magic of the Dry Tortugas

And do something good for yourself and the environmental organization of your choice. The Dry Tortugas during Spring migration is one of the best birding experiences in Florida. Florida Nature Tours is scheduling a number of trips from Key West to this birding wonderland beginning in April, 2012. FNT will donate \$100.00 to the environmental organization of your choice when you book your trip. Check their website for all of the information: <http://floridanaturetours.net>

Gulls and Terns in Edgewater

The Southeast Volusia Audubon Society will have its monthly meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 21st, at 7:00 pm, at the Edgewater Public Library. David Hartgrove will present a program on gull and tern identification. Refreshments will be served. The library is located at 103 Indian River Blvd. All are invited.

The following was first published in last month's e-Skimmer, the monthly newsletter of our sister chapter, The Southeast Volusia Audubon Society. It brought to mind an event I first witnessed when our chapter took a 10 day trip to the Canadian Maritimes in 2002. Ken and Beth Gunn spend a great deal of time in Canada and own a home in Alberta. Ed.

A Tidal Bore

Beth decided to join me for my annual pilgrimage to Prince Edward Island in mid-June, her first visit there. While I attended meetings, she explored the island. She now agrees, PEI is a jewel; plus we ate lobster every evening.

The morning after my meetings, we headed for Nova Scotia. The weather was cold, windy and rainy but did clear for us to see both shores as we crossed the eight-mile long Confederation Bridge to the mainland.

We wished to visit the Bay of Fundy to see the tides. As it was the worst possible time in the moon cycle we only expected to see a moderate buildup. We learned the most spectacular places to watch tides were in feeder rivers where the "Tidal Bore" turns the flow and actually causes the river to reverse direction. As we explored, we came to the Shubenacadie River and a sign saying that this was the site of the highest Tidal Bore ever recorded. The location and the river itself were impressive so we decided to do our watching there. We still had some time before the event so we continued on south. We crossed a wide, marshy flat and there, sitting on several posts, were Willets. One was even sitting on the power line. No self-respecting Willet would ever sit on a post on Bethune Beach, but there was no mistaking, these were real Willets. Amazing.

We drove on a few miles to where we were past the vast mud flats and could see the famous bay. We then returned to the Shubenacadie and walked to the well-built viewing platform over the river to await the big event. While waiting, I noticed several birds upriver and with my binoculars soon determined that there were upwards of a dozen eagles fishing. Apparently when the river returns to normal after a tide, pools are left where fish and other water life are trapped. The eagles have learned this is easy picking and have run all other predators off. We saw mostly Bald Eagles but there were at least two Golden Eagles in the mix and one Bald and one Golden were on nests directly across the river from our viewing platform.

Presently the Tidal Bore arrived. It appeared as a line coming around the bend downstream and quickly moved upriver toward us. As it came closer we could see it was actually a 6-inch wave-front moving over the surface of the river. At full moon this front is apparently a couple of feet high. The flow of the river did reverse and the current became very strong as the tide covered sandbars, flowed up the little tributary near us and climbed the bridge pillars. In the 45 minutes we watched, the river rose 8 to 10 feet under us. By the time we left, the tidal flow had slowed and the little tributary was flowing into the main channel again. We didn't wait to see the full return but, man, a Tidal Bore is some spectacle.

Ken Gunn

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