

Pelican Island Audubon Society

Peligrum

- founded in 1964 to serve Indian River County -



P.O. Box 1833, VERO BEACH, FL 32961 772-567-3520 www.pelicanislandaudubon.org

Our 46th Year Vol. 46 No. 2 February 2010

Our Mission: To preserve and protect the animals, plants, and natural communities in Indian River County through advocacy, education, and public awareness.

The Everglades

**February 15, 2010 ☆ 7:30 p.m.
Vero Beach Community Center**

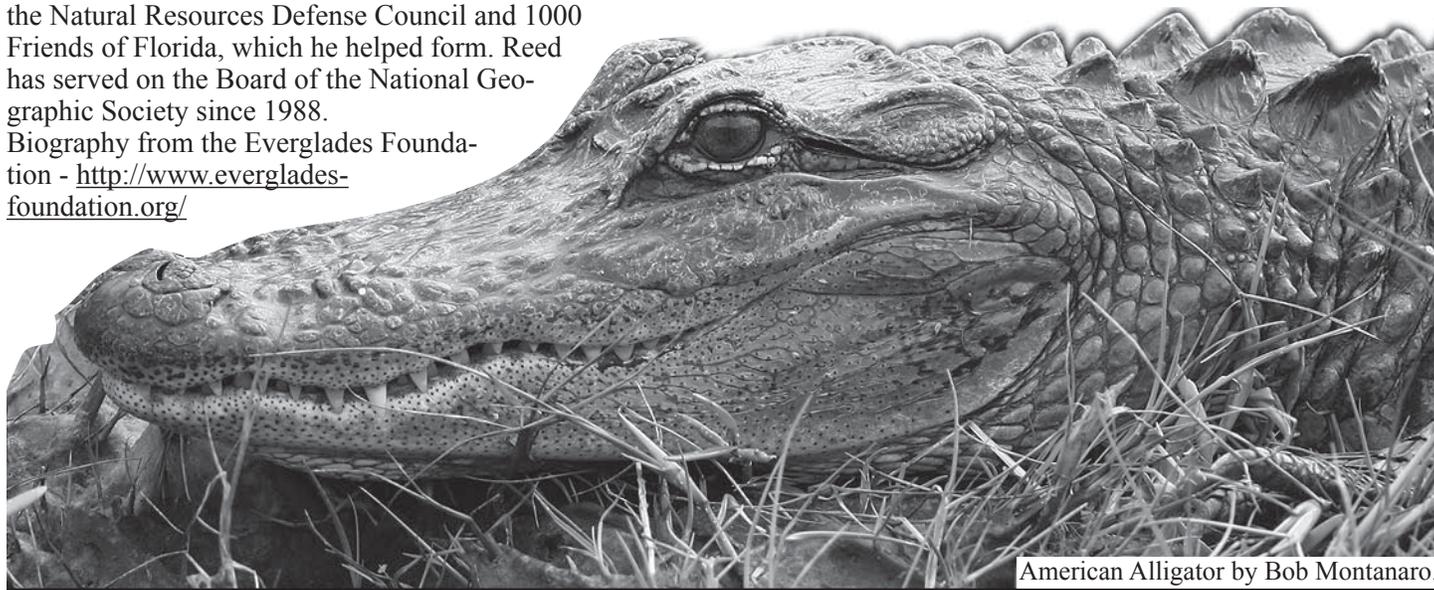
The Pelican Island Audubon Society February 18 General Meeting starting at 7:30 p.m. at the Vero Beach Community Center, 2266 14th Avenue, features a program on The Everglades by Nat Reed. The Everglades is the largest subtropical wilderness in the United States, boasting rare and endangered species. It has been designated a World Heritage Site, International Biosphere Reserve, and Wetland of International Importance, significant to all people of the world.

The Everglades covers approximately 4,500 square miles and is actually a wide, slow moving river of marsh and sawgrass. Beginning south of Orlando in the Kissimmee River Basin, continuing through Lake Okeechobee, the river flows through sawgrass marshes, cypress swamps, tropical hardwood hammocks, and pine rockland before the water eventually flows out into the sea through the mangrove estuaries in South Florida. This "River of Grass" as author Marjory Stoneman Douglas called it is home to a staggering variety of wildlife and plant species.

Do not miss this opportunity to learn more about the Everglades and the often destructive attempts to control it along with what is being done to restore this natural wonder.

Nathaniel Reed currently serves as Vice Chairman of the Everglades Foundation. He received a B.A. from Trinity College, Connecticut and served as an officer in the U.S. Air Force military intelligence throughout Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. Upon returning to Florida he became Vice President and then President of the Hobe Sound Company, a real estate and holding company, which owned the Jupiter Island Club. Mr. Reed has served seven governors. He is best known as the Chairman of the Commission on Florida's Environmental Future. He also served as Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks in the Nixon and Ford administrations. He also serves as a Member of the Board of Hope Rural School, a school for the children of migrant workers. Mr. Reed is a former Board Member and Vice Chairman of the National Audubon Society and the Nature Conservancy, Board Member of the National Parks & Conservation Association, American Rivers, and serves as emeriti on the boards of the Natural Resources Defense Council and 1000 Friends of Florida, which he helped form. Reed has served on the Board of the National Geographic Society since 1988.

Biography from the Everglades Foundation - <http://www.everglades-foundation.org/>



American Alligator by Bob Montanaro.

Cookbook Update

Our cookbook is just about ready to be sent to the printer. We want to thank all of you who have contributed recipes. We received a nice variety. Bob Montanaro is designing the cover and section dividers. We are very excited that this book is finally coming to print and will be available for all of us to enjoy.

We still need your help. We are looking for advertisers and patrons to help us with the printing expense. If you have a business or organization you would like to advertise in our cookbook please let us know.

The cost is as follows:

Full-Page (4 1/8" X 7 1/4") \$160.00 plus a free cookbook

Half-Page (4 1/8" X 3 1/2") \$90.00

Third-Page (4 1/8" X 2 1/4") \$70.00 (business card size)

Quarter-Page (4 1/8" X 1 5/8") \$60.00

Cookbooks are kept for many years so your advertisement will benefit your business for many years additional to helping us offset printing costs. If you do not have a business but would like to contribute you could add your name to our patrons page for \$10.00.

Thank you for your help!

Upcoming Events

February 8 - Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Hedrick Smith, *Poisoned Waters*, Emerson Center, 5:00 p.m., 772-778-5249, Benefit for Pelican Island Audubon, Indian River Land Trust, and the Environmental Learning Center

February 18 - Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History Director Dr. Cristian Samper, *New Waves of Ocean Science*, Pelican Yacht Club, 7:00 p.m., 772-462-6220

March 26 - 6th Annual Goby Fest, St. Sebastian River Preserve State Park, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., 772-643-4925

March 26-28 - 6th Annual Audubon Academy, *Possibilities Through Partnerships*, Gainesville, presented by Audubon of Florida and its chapters, www.audubonofflorida.org or 352-475-1999 or 850-251-1297

Recommended Reading

by Linda Chancellor

I enjoy reading non-fiction books. Two that I have read recently that I would like to recommend are *Banana: The Fate of the Fruit that Changed the World* and *To See Every Bird on Earth - A father, a son, and a lifelong obsession*. Both of these books were written by Dan Koepfel, a well known nature writer, who has been published in the New York Times Magazine, Audubon and National Geographic Adventurer where he is also a contributing editor. *Banana: The Fate of the Fruit That Changed The World* is a wonderful narrative that includes politics, intrigue, science, horticulture and the United States' obsession with this amazing fruit.

In the second book, *To See Every Bird on Earth - A father, a son, and a lifelong obsession*, Dan writes that in 1945, his father Richard, at age 12, encounters his first bird sighting in Queens, New York. Though he does not know the bird's identity it makes a very strong impression on him. One that changes his life forever. He attempts to please his parents by becoming a doctor, marrying and having children but his only happiness is in seeing birds. I found this emotional narrative also fascinating because of the anecdotes concerning many of his contemporaries and the descriptions of the exotic birding trips. This book also introduced me to the world of the "Big Listers". Many birders keep and make lists which can be fun and rewarding, but to some it becomes a serious competition. Sometimes numbers become the main goal and they lose sight of the thrill in seeing the bird. Several birders have seen over 8,000 bird species. There are estimated to be over 10,000 species in the world and counting. 485 species have been spotted in Florida and 888 species have been spotted in the entire United States. Whether you make lists or not, do not forget to enjoy the moment of discovery. Happy Birding.

Calling all photographers!

Pelican Island Audubon wants you to enter our Bird Photo of the Month Contest



Help share Florida's beautiful
birds with everyone.

Visit

www.pelicanislandaudubon.org
for rules and submission info

Padgett Ranch Field Trip

Pelican Island Audubon birding field trip to Padgett Ranch on Saturday, March 13, 2010, led by Jens & Melissa Tripson and Ralph Monticello (Indian River Land Trust). The carpool will be leaving from Vero Beach at 7:00 a.m. Space is limited. Please call 772-567-3520 for reservations and directions.

The President's Hoot

Hot and Cold

Wow, what a start to 2010! What damage a few degrees at or below 32 degrees for 8 or more days does to our Florida environment! We have had much deeper freezes, but usually for a much shorter time.

Manatees, previously wintering and calving in the Caribbean, now ignore their migrating instincts to stay near warm waters of power plants. Young manatees find difficulty surviving these temperatures. Ten died and two rescued in our county, over 77 died and 16 rescued in Florida. More are expected to die.

Ed Killer, the *Press Journal* sports fishing editor, wrote "The more places I looked, the more death (fish) I saw. Floating on the tide, lying on a shoreline or sunk to the bottom. So many fish. So many species. So many gone without any chance of rescue... millions and millions." (<http://www.tcpalm.com/news/2010/jan/24/big-chill-was-learning-experience/>). Fortunately, I did not see the amount of fish kills on the more protected St. Sebastian as were seen on the Indian River Lagoon. Snook do not survive below 54-degree water temperature.

At the county's January 18th Marine Advisory Committee meeting, Dr. Grant Gilmore, a world class ichthyologist scientist, reported that many fishing associations after seeing the large scale devastation of fish populations have contacted him about the importance of protecting as much fish habitat as we can in the future. We need to bring these populations back as soon as possible. This puts new emphasis on saving our seagrass meadows and mangrove nurseries for snook, tarpon, redfish, seatrout, and other species.

Thanks to the Environmental Learning Center and volunteers, over 91 sea turtles were saved and kept at the ELC (and over 1,100 at Merritt Island NWR). They were all tagged and treated for serious injuries and papilloma virus. Most appeared to be successfully released (<http://www.discoverelc.org/home/pages/SeaTurtleRecoveryEffort.cfm>).

At least 30% of Florida's crops were damaged by the freeze. This means higher food prices with more folks going without eating their fruits and vegetables.

Amazing effects of the freeze occurred on Florida's west coast. Considerable freshwater was used spraying our agricultural crops during that week in order to prevent the plants from freezing. At least 22 sinkholes opened up in Hillsborough County alone, with many around Plant City. Some sinkholes occurred in fields, but other sinkholes damaged houses. Two sinkholes 65 foot wide and 20 ft deep and a second 40 ft wide by 2 ft deep were found on U.S. 27. A sinkhole seems responsible for the closing of two lanes on I-4 in Plant City where a number of other roads were also closed. These sinkholes most likely were the result of the con-

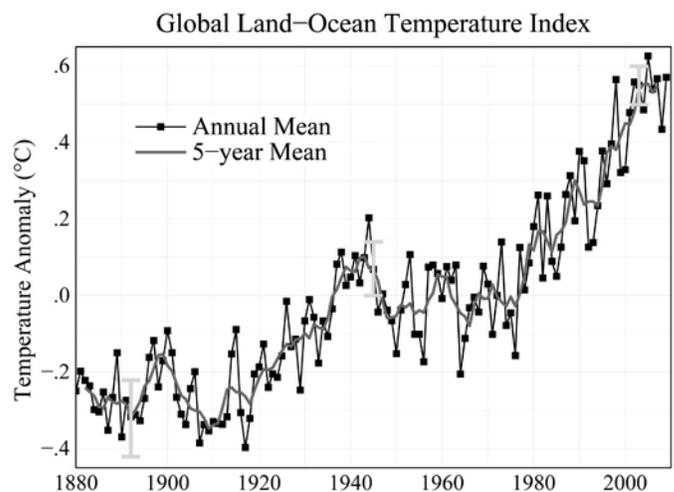
tinual withdrawal of water from shallow wells, lowering the water table by 60 feet in some areas. Without the groundwater support inside natural cavities, the limestone above these cavities collapsed, forming sinkholes.

I noticed that the water level on the St. Sebastian River was the lowest I have seen in 9 years, exposing never before-seen sandbars.

This unusual cold spell, which caused so much environmental damage, follows 2009, the second hottest year on modern record according to NASA's analysis of global surface temperatures. Since records have been kept, it was even the hottest ever recorded in the Southern Hemisphere. January 2000 to December 2009 was the hottest decade on record. Except for a leveling off between the 1940s and 1970, the Earth's surface temperatures have increased sharply since 1880. (<http://www.nasa.gov/topics/earth/features/temp-analysis-2009.html>). Most climate scientists agree that rising levels of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases trap incoming heat near the surface of the Earth and are the key factors causing the temperature rise.

Our environment is challenged worldwide by shrinking forests, eroding soils, falling water tables, collapsing fisheries, expanding deserts, deteriorating rangelands, dying coral reefs, melting glaciers, rising seas, more powerful storms, disappearing species, and shrinking oil supplies. The decline of earlier civilizations was more often environmentally caused than by wars or economies. Trees went first, then the soil, and finally the civilization itself. This pattern is familiar to archeologists and is well documented in a new book *Plan B 2.0-Rescuing a Planet Under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble* by Lester R. Brown. He is optimistic that we humans can find solutions to these problems, if we all work together. That is the mission of Audubon.

Richard H. Baker, President



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Black-bellied Plover by Bob Montanaro.

Join the Great Backyard Bird Count February 12-15, 2010

Bird watchers coast to coast are invited to take part in the 13th annual Great Backyard Bird Count, Friday, February 12, through Monday, February 15, 2010. Participants in the free event will join tens of thousands of volunteers counting birds in their own backyards, local parks or wildlife refuges.

Each checklist submitted by these "citizen scientists" helps researchers at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the National Audubon Society, and Bird Studies Canada learn more about how the birds are doing—and how to protect them. Last year, participants turned in more than 93,600 checklists online, creating the continent's largest instantaneous snapshot of bird populations ever recorded.

Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from novice bird watchers to experts. Participants count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the event and report their sightings online at www.birdcount.org. One 2009 participant said, "Thank you for the opportunity to participate in citizen science. I have had my eyes opened to a whole new interest and I love it!"

"The GBBC is a perfect first step towards the sort of intensive monitoring needed to discover how birds are responding to environmental change," said Janis Dickinson, the director of Citizen Science at the Cornell Lab. "Winter is such a vulnerable period for birds, so winter bird distributions are likely to be very sensitive to change. There is only one way—citizen science—to gather data on private lands where people live and GBBC has been doing this across the continent for many years. GBBC has enormous potential both as an early warning system and in capturing and engaging people in more intensive sampling of birds across the landscape."

Bird populations are always shifting and changing. For example, 2009 GBBC data highlighted a huge southern invasion of Pine Siskins across much of the eastern United States. Participants counted 279,469 Pine Siskins on 18,528 checklists, as compared to the previous high of 38,977 birds on 4,069 checklists in 2005. Failure of seed crops farther north caused the siskins to move south to find their favorite food.

On the www.birdcount.org website, participants can explore real-time maps and charts that show what others are reporting during the count. The site has tips to help identify birds and special materials for educators. Participants may also enter the GBBC photo contest by uploading images taken during the count. Many images will be featured in the GBBC website's photo gallery. All participants are entered in a drawing for prizes that include bird feeders, binoculars, books, CDs, and many other great birding products.

For more information about the GBBC, visit the website at www.birdcount.org. Or contact the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at (800) 843-2473, gbbc@cornell.edu, or Audubon at (202) 861-2242 ext 3050, citizenscience@audubon.org. *The Great Backyard Bird Count is made possible, in part, by generous support from Wild Birds Unlimited.*

Visit Pelican Island Audubon on the web at
www.pelicanislandaudubon.org

Thank you to Lorraine Sutherland for the cookies served at the January General Meeting!

Pelican Island Audubon Society 2010 Membership

National Audubon*	\$20
Pelican Island Audubon**	
Individual	\$20
Family	\$30
Supporting Contribution	\$50
Student***	\$5
Total	

***National Audubon membership**

This includes subscriptions to *Audubon Magazine* and *The Florida Naturalist*.

****Pelican Island Audubon membership**

Dues which PIAS will use for environmental education and advocacy and subscription to the *Peligram*

*****Student Membership** receive electronic copy of *Peligram* only - requires e-mail address

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Please send your name and address along with a check payable to the "Pelican Island Audubon Society" to:

**Pelican Island Audubon Society
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Credit card payments call (772) 567-3520 M - F 9AM-1PM
 Please email us if there is a local environmental issue which concerns you at piaudubon@bellsouth.net