



The Pelican Island Audubon Society

Peligram

- founded in 1964 to serve Indian River County -

P.O Box 1833, VERO BEACH, FL 32961 772-567-3520 Fax 772-567-3521 www.pelicanislandaudubon.org
Our 43rd Year Vol. 43 No. 1 January 2007

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

More information on all these events may be found at www.pelicanislandaudubon.org

Mon Jan 15 – 7:30pm general meeting, Vero Beach Community Center, 2266 14th Ave. Topic: *Flora & Fauna of Cuba* with Carolann Sharkey of the Key West Botanical Society

Fri Jan 19 – 10:00am Walking tour of historic downtown Vero Beach with Joan Edwards. Call 772-567-3520 for reservations and directions.

Sun Feb 11 – 8:00am to 12:00pm ORCA canoe trip. Meet at the FMEL boathouse 200 9th St. S.E. (Oslo Rd.) east of U.S.1. Reservations are required. Call 772-567-3520 to sign-up.

Walking tour of downtown Vero Beach

Joan Edwards will once again reprise her winning walking tour of downtown Vero Beach on Friday, Jan. 19 starting at 10:00 a.m. and will share interesting stories of this often neglected but historical area along with viewing the art and architecture. Don't miss this opportunity to learn about the area you live in! Call 772-567-3520 for reservations and directions.

The Flora & Fauna of Cuba

January 15 General Meeting

The feature speaker at the January General Meeting, at the Vero Beach Community Center, will be Carolann Sharkey. Ms. Sharkey is the Chairman of the Board of the Key West Botanical Garden Society. The Botanical Garden Society is taking an active role in humanitarian efforts in Cuba in conserving that country's rare flora and fauna.

Audubon's board member Joel Day, who has visited Cuba, describes the island's unspoiled beauty and its birding as extraordinary. He calls it "One of the best trips my wife and I have ever taken, anywhere." It will be a treat for us to hear more about this country's topography and natural assets.

At the end of the meeting, there will be an opportunity to meet with Ms. Sharkey for those interested in joining the Society, and taking a special, licensed trip to Cuba that the Society will be conducting there March 24th – March 31st. The trip will include stops in areas renowned for birds and butterflies and the UNESCO biosphere preserves.

TRESPASSERS ON PELICAN ISLAND

An almost immediate, but not unexpected, consequence of the federal government's dismissal of the Pelican Island Refuge enforcement staff, was the recent sighting of unauthorized people on the island along with illegal hunting occurring in the Impoundments. A thorough investigation is needed.

Please take a few minutes today to send a letter or an email to our congressman and senators requesting the restoration of full staffing for this refuge – the first in the nation, and still an important habitat for the birds President Theodore Roosevelt wanted to protect.

Senator Bill Nelson
United States Senate
716 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
E-Mail: <http://billnelson.senate.gov/contact/email.cfm>

Senator Mel Martinez
United States Senate
Hart 317 Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
E-Mail:
<http://martinez.senate.gov/public>

Office of Congressman Dave Weldon
2347 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Phone # 202-225-3671
Fax # 202-225-3516
E-Mail: <http://www.house.gov/writerep/>

Pelican Island Audubon Society

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The Water Cycle and Sustainability

By David Cox

Reprinted from www.dailymystery.com

Water is a naturally circulating resource that is constantly recharged, unlike oil. The amount of water on our planet will not diminish on shorter than geological time scales. Therefore, even though stocks of water in natural and artificial reservoirs are helpful to meet our water resource needs, it is the flow of water that should be the main focus in water resource assessments.

For example, the amount of water stored in all the rivers in the world is only 2000 km³, which is much less than the annual water withdrawal of 3,800 km³/year. A more accurate measure of water availability is the 45,500 km³/year of annual discharge flowing through the rivers to the sea.

Water flux is the most relevant measure of water resources. Therefore, the speed of water circulation is crucial. How long water molecules stay in a given reservoir, that is, their mean residence time, can be estimated by dividing the volume of the reservoir by the mean flux into and out of it. For rivers unaffected by humans, the mean residence time of the water is about two and a half weeks. In contrast, the recharge rate of some groundwater aquifers is very slow, and the mean residence time is considered to be hundreds or even thousands of years.

When water is extracted from such an aquifer, it will take a very long time, measured on a human time scale, to return to the original volume stored; in practice, the water is exhausted once it has been used. For this reason, the groundwater in such aquifers is called fossil water.

The global population will continue to grow for at least a few decades, and water demand will thus increase. Reliance upon slowly recharging groundwater aquifers is not sustainable as a global strategy. Circulating renewable freshwater resources are essential to meeting the growing human demand for water.



FOR THE WOOD STORKS

We have a special request by a member of PIAS to be on the lookout for wood storks. Ellie Van Os, a past PIAS Board member, has the opportunity to study the use of local wetlands by wood storks, including ditches and residential ponds, to determine the

importance of these resources to this endangered species. In the next month she will be designing an experimental grid to survey their habits, and requests that sightings be sent to her e-mail address until Feb 15th: ellevanos@hotmail.com

The sightings should be in the following format:

DATE, TIME, LOCATION---street names are fine, i.e. between 20th Ave. and 27th Ave. on the south side OR If the pond is in a backyard give the address)

NUMBER of wood storks and whether they are **FEEDING** or **RESTING**

Ellie sends her thanks beforehand and promises to let you know the outcome of her research.

Osprey Encore

Ospreys of Pelican Island: An Exploration into the Life of the Fish Hawk will be presented in the beautiful theater at **Regency Park**, 910 Regency Square (corner of 41st St. & Indian River Blvd. in Vero Beach) on Sunday, January 14, 2007 at 2:30 p.m. This is an encore of the September 2006 PIAS general meeting program.

HOLIDAY APPEAL UPDATE

As of early January, over 70 PIAS members have generously donated almost \$4,000 toward covering our expenses for 2007. We wish to thank everyone who has donated so far. Every little bit helps!



Image by Ellie Van Os.

Our Iceberg Is Melting

Nita and I received a number of thoughtful holiday greetings this year. Two reminded me of our fragile environment: Former PIAS President Judy Orcutt and her husband John said, "Have a great Green 2007," and gave us a list of ten simple ways to reduce atmospheric carbon; Ellie and Andy Van Os' was Ellie's beautiful photograph (below) of a polar bear on ice and inside said, "Stay cool." Both reminded me of our future problems with the warming of our planet.

The title of this month's Hoot is also the title of a fable, recently written by John Kotter, a professor at Harvard's Business School, as a way to help corporations and organizations deal with change. The book must be well thought of as our defense department bought the first 500 copies! The fable is about how beautiful emperor penguins deal with the potential melting of their home. The title seems even more apropos as we learn on the news that major glaciers and icebergs have broken loose.



Because of the high density and thermal conductivity of seawater, most of the melting of an iceberg takes place on its submerged surface where we do not see it. We should be concerned as only three percent of our planet's water is fresh and 2 % is tied up in glaciers and icebergs, which are now melting into the oceans. We also should be noticing that deserts are expanding and our water tables are falling worldwide. In 2005 Exxon Mobil made \$36 billion in profits, the highest for any company in history, and might make more in 2006 and 2007! Is

there an opportunistic rise in gas prices? Or is this an indication of dwindling oil reserves? Or both?

There is good news: Thanks to science's observations and measurements, environmental groups' education and advocacy, and Al Gore's movie, "An Inconvenient Truth" the public is finally beginning to face the reality of global warming. Even the White House has suggested putting polar bears on the endangered list. Other positive signs from 2005 are reports that solar power production grew 45%, wind power capacity 24%, and biofuels production 22%. Even sales of large SUVs have plummeted while hybrid cars have doubled. Perhaps gas prices remaining high are also good news, as they put pressure for consumers to choose alternative energy sources.

Locally, our new county commission now seems aware that Indian River County's uncontrolled growth needs is unsustainable. Even our own county utility department at the December 6th workshop has admitted we have a water problem right here in Indian River County! At the same workshop the St. Johns River Water management District supported the view that our county's wells may show problems by 2013—only 6 years away.

In making New Year's resolutions, there is a lot our government, local, and national, can do including:

- Ratify the Kyoto Agreement
- Require more efficient vehicles and power plants
- Adapt bottle recycling and provide more comprehensive reuse-recycling opportunities
- Install bicycle paths everywhere
- Purchase land for the storage of the 50 inches of rain we receive on average every year, (fresh water now flows into the lagoon or to the St. John's River marsh
- Preserve vegetation in urban areas.

In addition, there is much we can do in 2007 as individuals, to help our environment –actions that should go onto each of our New Year's resolutions list:

To reduce global warming:

- Use compact fluorescent light bulbs, available at Wal-Mart
- Buy highly efficient and insulated refrigerators and water heaters
- Turn off unneeded electric devices
- Drive less, rely on light-rail, buses, and bicycles
- Check your tire pressure
- Use less hot water
- Reuse-recycle more- paper, bottles, cans, and compost all garbage
- Avoid products with a lot of packaging

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Pelican Island Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1833
Vero Beach, FL 32961-1833

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The President's Hoot,
continued from page three....

- Install a programmable thermostat (turning it higher/lower when away or at night)
- Install insulation where possible –hot water pipes, roof, walls, water heater
- Buy local produce
- Plant a tree

To save water:

- Landscape your yard with plants not requiring watering or water-efficient irrigation systems
- Keep showers to less than 5 minutes. Are we too compulsively clean?
- Don't let the water run while brushing your teeth, peeling vegetables, washing dishes
- Put water in the sink when washing up
- Flush the toilet only when necessary, not just to flush tissues
- Better yet, get a composting toilet
- Use a broom to clean the driveway or sidewalk
- Use a bucket instead of a running hose when washing the car
- Turn-off nozzle on the end of the hose to adjust the water flow and turn the water off and on
- Fix any slow water leaks (faucets, toilets, etc), turn water faucet off tight
- Put water in the kitchen sink to wash and rinse dishes
- Run the dishwasher only when it's full
- Install a cisterns to collect rainwater from roofs

Who would thought that Bing Crosby's "I am dreaming of a White Christmas" would be a protest song?

Have a Happy Environmental New Year!
Richard Baker, President



CAN YOU NAME THIS BIRD?

Named for the city in Georgia where it was first spotted, this generally solitary bird has a wide range, living in grassy marshes and wet meadows to grasslands and cultivated grass to

tundra. It can be identified by the yellow or whitish supercilium, with a whitish or pale median crown stripe, pinkish legs, and feet, and short notched tail.

Bob Montanaro took the photo at the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge.

**BECOME A MEMBER OF THE
PELICAN ISLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY**

Membership benefits include subscriptions to *Audubon* magazine, *Florida Naturalist*, and the PIAS newsletter *The Peligram*. Additionally, members have full borrowing privileges to the PIAS nature library and much more!

\$20 one-year membership

Donation \$ _____

\$20 Friend (receive *The Peligram* only)

Check box if a *MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL*.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

E-Mail _____

Please send your name and address along with a check payable to the "**Pelican Island Audubon Society**" to: Pelican Island Audubon Society, P.O. Box 1833, Vero Beach, FL 32961