



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 www.pelicanislandaudubon.org

Our 44th Year Vol. 44 No. 3 March 2008

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

Breeding Birds of the Indian River Lagoon

By Ellie Van Os

General Meeting

March 17, 2008 - 7:30 p.m.

Vero Beach Community Center

2266 14th Avenue

Breeding Birds of the Indian River Lagoon is a look at the colonies identified during the last comprehensive aerial survey of waterbird colonies conducted by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and specifically where the colonies were located at that time within the boundaries of the Indian River Lagoon. Also, the most recent updates of both Brown Pelican and Wood Stork nesting in our area will be presented. Photography will illustrate the signs of breeding of some of the waterbirds including plumage changes and courting behaviors. Finally, Ellie is in the middle of her research on Wood Storks, the study area of which is in Indian River County, so she'll give an outline of what she's up to and why.continued on page 4

Special Meeting Birds & Wildlife of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

March 21, 2008 - 7:30 p.m.

FMEL Boathouse

200 9th St. S.E. (Oslo Road)

Join Pelican Island Audubon at the Boathouse at the Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory, 200 9th St. SE (Oslo Rd) to hear our speaker, Taldi Walter, Alaska Field Coordinator, National Audubon Society, give a presentation on the birds and wildlife of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This wildlife refuge, ANWR, is receiving much attention in Washington with some wanting to start oil drilling in it. Please come for an interesting program for one of our Nation's most remote wildlife refuges. Bring a flashlight as there is a short walk from the parking lot to the Boathouse. Call 772-567-3520 if you need directions.

March

April

Field Trips

All Field Trips require reservations to be made by calling 772-567-3520.

Saturday, March 15 – Jonathan Dickinson State Park – Carpoolers meet at back of Wendy's on State Road 60 east of I-95 at 6:50am. We will leave Wendy's at 7:00am. Directions: I-95 south to Indiantown Road in Jupiter, east to US-1, north to entrance.

Saturday, April 5 – Captain Forster Hammock Preserve – Meet in Forster's parking lot at 8:00am. Directions: US-1 to CR510, east to Jungle Trail, south to Forster's Preserve.

Upcoming field trips: April 12, Turkey Creek Sanctuary; April 19, Ft. DeSoto Park, St. Petersburg. For more information, visit www.pelicansislandaudubon.org

April 4-6 – Audubon Academy 2008 in Vero Beach – details at www.pelicanislandaudubon.org

**Call
772-567-3520
to make
reservations**



Left to right: Miriam Tillman, Richard Baker, Joyce King, James Swarr, Jenny Kelly, Melissa & Jens Tripson, Nita Baker, Al Tillman, Joel Day, Sam & Linda Chancellor, Lee Day, and Elena Millie

By Linda Chancellor

Whirr! Whirr! What kind was that? Was the phrase we often heard as another variety of hummingbird flew within inches of our faces...was it a Ruby-topaz Hummingbird, Blue-chinned Sapphire, or a White-necked Jacobin? What a way to start our trip!

Our first morning our host, Gerard Ramsawak, identified for us at least 15 species of birds from the back porch of the historic PAX Guest house of the St. Benedict Monastery overlooking a valley and a forested mountain where we were staying in Tunapuna, Trinidad. Everyone in this tropical island with Indian Hindu Temples and rich resources like oil, gas, and minerals spoke English and were very friendly. Fourteen avid bird watchers spent six days in February touring 8 kinds of habitats and seeing over 140 species of birds.

The group had a local expert guide, Kenny Calderon, who I believe had eyes like a hawk, and could spot a blue and gold macaw across a field atop a Royal Palm tree a mile away. He knew all the hiding places of the birds on the island and even coaxed out the rare, only endemic for Trinidad, the Piping Guan. Our able driver Eric safely maneuvered us through *intense* local traffic to the habitats as well as navigating the steep switchbacks to and from our guesthouse each day. The days were long but were filled with sightings of a variety of species that were incredible not only in their vibrant tropical colors but also in many of the calls they made. My favorite was the bell bird which sounded like some one pounding on an anvil.

Another highlight of the trip was the boat ride through the mangrove swamps to see the evening roosting of the scarlet ibis. Hundreds of flame red birds would fly in to land on the mangrove island creating an effect much like the lights on a Christmas tree. We also were able to see several night species including the Potoo, the Pauraque and the famous Oil birds at the Asa Wright Nature Center.

Many thanks to Richard and Nita for their wonderful scope, it enabled us to really get a birds eye view of these beautiful creatures. I can't wait to see some of the pictures that our group took. A few of us who were also interested in tropical plants also saw many new species that were unknown to us. This was truly a unique trip and I am glad I didn't miss this PIAS organized tour. For an entire species list of sighted birds see www.pelicanislandaudubon.org



Oilbird
by
Richard & Nita Baker

We were intrigued as we descended towards the cave to see the large (16 inch) nocturnal reddish-brown Oilbird (*Steatornis caripensis*) with a 3 ft. wingspan, uniquely, a specialist feeder on the fruit of the Oil Palm and tropical laurels. During the day these gregarious birds rest on cave ledges but are capable of hovering and twisting flight, which enables it to navigate by echolocation and sight in sufficiently poor light conditions, using a series of sharp audible clicks for this purpose. We crept quietly only 3 at a time because if they are disturbed, they produce harsh raucous screams which can also be heard when they prepare to emerge from a cave at dusk.

The squabs become very fat before fledging, weighing up to half again as much as the adult birds do. They used to be harvested and rendered for oil, whence the name "oilbird".

The photo was taken with only a flashlight as photo flashes were not allowed.

Officers

- President, **Richard H. Baker**
- 1st Vice President, **Jens Tripson**
- 2nd Vice President, **Susan Boyd**
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- Corresponding Secretary, **Jean Catchpole**
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The President's Hoot

Florida Forever is Out of Funds

Just when we are finding out that we are running out of water, and our natural and agricultural resources are being diminished daily by development, we now learn from the Nature Conservancy that our nation's premier land conservation program, Florida Forever, is tapped out of funds and is in jeopardy of expiring. Even though Florida Forever has two years left before it "suns-ets" in 2010, the two years of remaining funds are essentially committed to land deals that are already "in the pipeline" across the state.

Florida has been one of the leading States in conserving environmental lands through two programs, Preservation 2000 and its successor program, Florida Forever. The Preservation 2000 program was initially authorized in 1990 for a 10-year period of time at a total level of \$3 billion. The Florida Forever program which followed the Preservation 2000 program was authorized in 2000 for a 10-year period of time at a total level of \$3 billion. Florida Forever was funded through the sale of bonds. Debt service on the bonds is then paid by revenue generated from Documentary Stamps which results from real estate transactions and land sales. Bonding is important because it spreads the benefits of lands protected forever to future generations of Floridians. It is tapped out of funds and will expire early due to lack of further allocation of funds.

The Indian River County and areas across the state have benefited immensely by this matching state funding for land and water protection and management. But there is a critical need to do more before the lands disappear in development and the price rises. **A Florida Forever successor program must be passed this legislative session.** A coalition of dozens of organizations including Audubon of Florida, Defenders of Wildlife, Florida Recreation and Park Association, Florida Wildlife Federation, 1,000 Friends of Florida, the Nature Conservancy, and the Trust for Public Land are strongly urging our legislators about the need for a **Florida Forever successor program.** This Coalition is seeking the creation of a successor program that would receive double the existing annual funding starting in FY 09 - \$600 million/year.

This is important as:

- Florida's special natural and recreational land is disappearing at an alarming rate — hundreds of acres a day! **Land loss is permanent. Extinction is irreversible.** The Nature Conservancy has reported that an additional 2 million acres must be acquired to

protect Florida's natural heritage, a list currently valued at \$17 billion.

- An additional \$4.3 billion is necessary for city and county park departments to acquire the 120,000 acres needed for future parks and recreational sites,
- We face issues such as building desalination plants, loss of billions in tourist income, paying for wildfire damages, to name a few.
- The current real estate slump in Florida provides historic opportunities for land conservation. Without more funding now, these places could be lost forever.

State Rep. Stan Mayfield

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Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300
850-488-0952
stan.mayfield@myfloridahouse.gov

State Rep. Ralph Poppell

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State Senator Ken Pruitt

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State Senator Mike Haridopolos

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Richard Baker, President

P.S. Even though we appear to have won the Cor-rigan/St. Johns land exchange issue, you should also ask for laws passed that do not allow a governmental agency like St. Johns River Water Management District to trade off conservation lands that have already been purchased with Preservation 2000 Florida Forever Funds



photo by Bob Montanaro

**Call and
write your
local state
officials!**

Pelican Island Audubon Society
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Vero Beach, FL 32961-1833

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Who is this?

Answer: Limpkin



An unusual bird of southern swamps and marshes, Florida is the northern limits of its breeding range.

There it feeds almost exclusively on apple snails, which it extracts from their shells with its long bill. Its screaming cry is unmistakable and evocative. The male is slightly larger than the female and, although it resembles herons and ibises, this bird is generally considered to be more closely related to rails and cranes. *Bird info from the Cornell Lab Bird Guide. Photo by Bob Montanaro.*

OUTREACH CENTER DONORS

We continue to recognize the generous donations made toward building the new Audubon Outreach Center to be located at the Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area.

February donors include:

Donna Anderson
Richard Frey
Mrs. M.A. Gibbons
Walter & Ellen Lagerquist
Helen Potter
William & Alice Rowe
William Winslow

Thank you to all who contributed so far! If you have not done so, please consider giving to this wonderful cause to enhance environmental education in Indian River County.

Breeding Birds.....continued from page 1

Ellie has lived with her husband and family in Indian River County for the better part of thirty years, working in the field for a government agency, serving on various boards, and teaching biology at Vero Beach High School. Her decision to pursue an M.S. degree at Florida Atlantic University was in part due to a desire to draw more attention to our breeding birds, their habitats, and special needs involved in coexisting with man. Her thesis examines the habitat selection of wood storks by measuring physical characteristics of the ditches used by this endangered species. Light refreshments will be served following the program.

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 \$ _____
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 Check box if a *MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL*.

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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, P.O. Box 1833, Vero Beach, FL 32961