

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 48th Year Vol. 48 No. 8 November 2012

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

The President's Hoot by Richard Baker

Thinking Big

PIAS has many exciting projects that make a difference in Indian River County, such as our Quality of Life initiative, Square Foot Gardening in schools, QR codes at Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge, an Audubon Community Center, JayWatch, and a PIAS/State Park Pamphlet.

Unfortunately because of illness, our Audubon speaker in Vero had to cancel on Oct. 15. As a substitute, we decided to engage those attending in a very different brainstorming effort to see how we could all work together on one BIG Project. Soon we will have a center where we can "THINK BIG" about working together for and with the whole community to bring about a major change. We could have chosen to focus on a number of different community projects. We thought no matter what project was selected in the future, we could use the brainstorming ideas towards any community effort. In addition, we hoped brainstorming might also stimulate volunteers for our current projects, have attendees feel more a part of PIAS, help us begin thinking of a bigger vision, and eventually lead to all kinds of ideas.

So we chose one idea nearly everyone can understand- **Trees.** Over the past 15 years, the number of trees in many US cities has declined by about 30 percent, while concrete and other solid surfaces has risen by 20 percent, (Gary Moll <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0416/p13s02-lihc.html>). Remember Indian River County once had big cypress stands at Blue Cypress Lake; wetlands and forests have been cleared or drained for cattle ranches, citrus, and development.

Indian River County is estimated at 139,000 people. We **decided to brainstorm on "Planting 100,000 Trees in Indian River County" or "the GREENING OF INDIAN RIVER COUNTY"** as an example of what a community can do working together. First we shared information on why Massive Tree Planting can lower our community's carbon foot print, reduce global warming, provide more habitat for birds and insects and other wildlife, save, reduce current energy costs, conserve water and reduce runoff. In addition, research shows that in cities, having trees in neighborhoods also reduces the crime rate. Similar projects have been done in other places like Chile, Kenya, Atlanta, Chicago, and Detroit.

Hoot Continued on Page Three →

November 12, 2012 ❖ 6:00 p.m.

Enjoying Life on the Indian River Lagoon with Rodney Smith

North Indian River County Library

1001 Sebastian Blvd. (CR 512), Sebastian

During his power point presentation, Rodney Smith, native Florida naturalist, and long time licensed charter captain, will reveal a few of the secrets found in his new book, *Enjoying Life on the Indian River Lagoon Coast*. Rodney is a conservation advocate, and lifetime angler with an in-depth understanding of the economical and environmental impacts of recreational fishing.

November 19, 2012 ❖ 7:30 p.m.

Panama Birding Bonanza

with Sam Fried

Vero Beach Community Center

2266 14th Avenue, Vero Beach

Noted tour guide and photographer Sam Fried will share with us a birding tour of Panama, which hosts over 1,000 bird species, far more than the entire continent of North America! Don't miss what should be a wonderful photo presentation.

Field Trips - Call 772-567-3520 for reservations and info.

November 10 - Saturday - St. Sebastian River Preserve State Park - Guide: Judy Elseroad - The group will hike up to two miles in sand to see Florida Scrub-Jays. Wear long pants and closed shoes/no sandals or shorts. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Platt parking lot on the north side of 512, west of I-95 and east of Fellsmere. Trip will end at approximately 10:00 a.m.

November 11 - Sunday - ORCA Canoe Trip - 8:00 am to noon- Meet at the FMEL Boathouse 200 9th St. SE (Oslo Rd) east of US 1. Leaders Richard Baker & Steve Goff. Fee \$5 member/\$20 non-members.

December 2 - Sunday - ORCA Canoe Trip - 8:00 am to noon- Meet at the FMEL Boathouse 200 9th St. SE (Oslo Rd) east of US 1. Leaders Richard Baker & Steve Goff. Fee \$5 member/\$20 non-members.

December 12 - Wednesday - Viera Wetlands - Guide: Jack Casselberry - A prime viewing area for numerous bird species - Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the McDonalds at SR512 & I-95 for carpool - Will stop for lunch in Viera before returning.

Masthead photo: Great Horned Owl by Bob Montanaro.

Bird of the Month by Juanita Baker

The Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*) Order CAPRIMULGIFORMES

Photo by JR Williams taken at Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park

Title: The Great Insect Hunter: the Common Nighthawk
What an opportunity! JR Williams' photograph, taken with Canon 50D, EF 100-400 mm zoom lens, has allowed us to see this Common Nighthawk close-up. Their feather coloration has evolved for camouflage. The beautiful barred pattern below and speckled feathers above disguises them in the early evening, the time of most hunting activity, when mosquitoes and other insects are active, and when sitting on eggs laid on bare ground amongst pine needles or leaf debris, on slash-burned areas, or beaches.

Nighthawk populations have declined severely over the past 30 years, coinciding with pesticide spraying and the replacement of a favorite nesting site--flat gravel rooftops. However, they most often nest in open burned areas, grasslands, or isolated beaches — which are also disappearing. They roost (sleep) on open ground such as airstrips or gravel roads, returning to the same spot nightly.

Most often, we notice Nighthawks, white wing bars flashing and making their distinctive peenting call, as they forage on insect swarms at dusk-- about 30 minutes before sunset and ending an hour afterwards. They also hunt at dawn, about an hour before sunrise until 15 minutes afterwards—the height of insect activity. With characteristic darting, erratic flight, they swoop with wide-mouth open to scoop insects.

Their diet includes moths, flies, bugs, beetles, ants and wasps. Flying attacks on insects averaged 18 per minute. We should dearly love these overlooked wonders as one study found in one Common Nighthawk's stomach 2,175 flying ants and 500 mosquitoes! Architects, developers, homeowners, mosquito control, why not use flat gravel spaces on roofs to provide nesting areas for this natural mosquito controller?

View a large color image and learn how to enter your own photos at www.pelicanislandaudubon.org



Announcements

Thank you to new sustaining members Bill & Darlene Halliday and Clare Kremer.

Thank you to Karen Schuster for the October Sebastian meeting refreshments and to Louise Faivre and Lorraine Sutherland for the October Vero meeting refreshments.

Annual potluck holiday party

Monday, Dec. 10th starting at 6PM. Members and their guests welcome. We're requesting that each person (not each couple) bring their favorite dishes enough to feed about 6 to 8 people--so that we don't run out of food, preferably from the *Pelican Bites* cookbook.

When Tropical Winds Blow by Linda Chancellor

Hurricane season for 2012 lasts until Friday, November 30th but during the months of August, September and October I pay close attention to reports of changes in the tropical weather. When I hear of a tropical depression forming off of the coast of Africa I turn to the local news and the Weather Channel. I find it amazing how quickly a tropical depression can change into a named storm and that the meteorologists' computers can calculate the possible trajectories of the storm. The minute that storm steers clear of our coast I breathe a sigh of relief. But if it is headed my way I begin to seriously consider whether to stay or evacuate. The deciding factor for me is if Jim Cantore is anywhere within 100 miles of where I live, then I will pack my bags and leave town.

But what if you couldn't leave town, what if you lived on an island and you didn't have modern technology to give you accurate information about a hurricane. I was watching the Weather Channel as Jim Cantore was reporting from Bermuda when the island was in the direct path of Leslie.



Jim was interviewing a native Bermudian about his Shark Oil barometer. The man explained that many Bermudians have used these barometers for years as a way of forecasting storms. The barometers are made using the oil from the liver of a young shark that was caught between June and September. The oil is then poured into glass vials, sealed and mounted outside. If the seal is not broken this barometer will last for years and is often passed from generation to generation. During pleasant days the oil remains clear but when a storm begins to form the oil turns cloudy in the bottom of the vial. The level of the cloudy oil increases and turns milky white based on the intensity of the approaching storm. Who knows why it works but it does. Since I don't own a shark oil barometer I will keep watching where Jim Cantore shows up next.

For more information Google "LookBermuda TV Shark Oil YouTube" and watch the video.

Fallen traffic light from Hurricane Frances by Bob Montanaro.

Hoot Continued from Page One → For about 20 minutes 42 attendees divided into eight brainstorming groups (all ideas were listed, even if impractical because they could lead to workable ideas). Major topics and the notes that capture the results of our brainstorming:

1. What kind of trees? Diversity? Which habitats? Where to plant?

- Variety, Native trees, shrubs and palms across our county according to wet/dry soil conditions; can withstand wind, do not require fertilizers. Trees/shrubs that produce food and “cavities” for wildlife especially birds and butterflies; Offer vacant lot owners replacement native trees for their exotics.
- Check city and county tree ordinances for guidelines.

2. Coalition building: Which organizations should we bring on board to work on this? How do we build a coalition? Who has those skills? Who has done it before? Who can best contribute?

- Sierra Club & environmental organizations, Women’s and Garden Clubs, Boy and Girl Scouts, Native Plant, Neighborhood & Mobile Home Parks Associations, property managers, business community, daycare centers, civic organizations, chambers of commerce, government, school campuses, hospitals, plant nurseries.

3. Planning the grand opening/first community-day tree planting

- At Riverside Park, Festive & fun, Stage with trees & flowers, prizes, and seedlings for children
- Speakers including council members, county commissioners, and Carl Hiaasen
- Tree parade-dresses in green and tree hats, music by high school bands

4. Getting funding/sponsors. What grants? How to get trees? Who else is doing this? National organizations?

- Native Plant Society has grants of about \$1,000, and the FL Exotic Pest Plant Council has grants for education
- Donations from individuals and businesses with an interest in a green community.
- The best source for money is locally, from people who know PIAS and also others connected to other local conservation NGOs, rather than going after grants and big contributions.
- Local corporations with an interest in a green county and water and energy conservation; in the carbon credit markets. In the Northeast we have a state corporation, which does this, not so sure about Florida.
- Water Conservation: St. John’s River Water Management; FPL; energy, biofuels & water utility companies
- Condo and homeowner associations, for their specific pieces of real estate.
- An array of state and federal agencies.
- Multiple seedling sources based in Florida and in neighboring states.
- Florida Forestry Association, and land owner & tree farm committees.

5. What experts are needed? What do we need to do to teach volunteers to plant trees? What cautions do we need in planting trees, deciding where to plant them, maintenance -- how long to follow up watering, when to plant?

- Native Plant Society, tree vendors, tree farmers, USDA,

US Forest Service, extension services, university’s department of horticulture, water management districts, State of Maryland and Baltimore County programs.

6. Advertising, Media contacts? Getting the word out

- Sebastian 32958, Vero Beach 32963, T.C. Palm, Hometown News, radio stations; Guest editorials
 - Cultural council, Non profits
 - School kids competitions for slogan and logo
- 7. Volunteers:** how to organize volunteers, what is needed?
- Posting signs at all county libraries, post offices, newspapers, public radio stations
 - Representatives from communities, agencies, churches and mobile parks
 - Reach out to all schools, PTA’s, ELC
 - Reminders at PIAS meetings. List jobs that volunteers can do
 - Tables at local events with printed material. Booths at farmer’s markets in county
 - PowerPoint presentations to organizations to help spread the word and get more volunteers
 - Organize volunteers for special tree planting days (possible summer camps)

8. Barriers to the project to be overcome & potential solutions: community attitudes, knowledge; lethargy; who needs to be ‘sold’ on the project?

- Location problems, Trees can be messy, Allergy problems, Grass loss, suggest ground cover
- Educating the public: Build a demonstration garden; Publicity, Distribution-how, to whom?
- City/county future planning and permitting
- Unrealistic expectations of growth- promote idea of long term maintenance

We all agreed this Tree project or another Thinking Big project would be invaluable for our community. Our immediate challenge is to form a dynamic steering committee. So, volunteers for a steering committee anyone?

Looking for a special holiday gift?

Give someone a copy of our *Pelican Bites* cookbook. It is a gift that they will use over and over again and will also help support Pelican Island Audubon. Call 772-567-3520 to purchase a copy today!

PIAS needs volunteers in the following areas

To volunteer call 772-567-3520 or e-mail

piaudubon@bellsouth.net

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| 1. Newsletter production/ mailing | 7. Field Trips - help organize or lead field trips |
| 2. Write letters to the Editor (PJ, Hometown News) | 8. Cookies & Refreshments for our general meetings |
| 3. Special Projects for community involvement | 9. Library - help with various library projects |
| 4. Quality of Life Indicator Project | 10. Square-foot Gardening Project - help school age children with vegetable gardens on school grounds |
| 5. Audubon Alert - advocacy outreach | 11. Other - share your special skills |
| 6. Fundraising - develop and help with fundraising projects | |
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Pelican Island Audubon Society Officers & Directors
Officers: President **Richard H. Baker, Ph.D.**, 1st Vice President **Bob Bruce**, 2nd Vice President **Susan Boyd**, Recording Secretary **Darlene Halliday**, Corresponding Secretary **Peter Sutherland**, Treasurer **Steve Goff** — Elected Directors: **Joe Carroll '14**, **David Cox, Ph.D. '14**, **Nancy Irvin '13**, **Bill Loftus, Ph.D. '15**, **John Orcutt, Ph.D. '15**, **Toni Robinson '13** — Appointed Board Members: **Graham Cox, Ph.D.**, **Bill Halliday**, **Tina Marchese**, **Jane Schnee**, **Neil Stalter** (*Billi Wagner - Ornithological Consultant*)

Pelican Island Audubon Society, Inc. is registered with the Florida Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Div. of Consumer Services by calling toll-free within Florida 1-800-435-7352. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the State.

Birds migrate-and member can too!
Please consider “migrating” up to one of our Sustainable Memberships- Scrub-jay (\$100) or Osprey (\$200).

Anyone who contributes \$100 or \$200 per year to the Annual Fund is automatically recognized as a Pelican Island Audubon Society Sustaining or Double Sustaining Member. Think about a \$25 or \$50 per quarter donation, which works out to only \$2 to \$4 a week to support our mission.

Sustaining Members are critical to the Society. If every Society member contributed \$100 or \$200 every year, PIAS could increase its efforts to help fulfill our mission in Indian River County and support the continued growth of our programs. This is a tax-deductible contribution to a 501(c)(3) organization and includes your membership renewal to Pelican Island Audubon and a free gift cookbook!

- \$100 Florida Scrub-Jay Level \$200 Osprey Level

Other Annual Membership Options:

- \$20 Individual \$30 Family

Is this a membership renewal? Yes No

- Join National Audubon Society for an additional \$20 a year.

- I want to make an additional tax deductible donation of \$ _____

Total \$ _____

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

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

Plant of the Month by Janice Broda

Natural Mosquito Repellent: Catnip ?

What repels mosquitoes more effectively than deet (N,N-diethyl-3-methylbenzamide), the compound used in most commercial bug repellents? And, is used for trapping bobcats and mountain lions? And, is used by humans as a tea for relief of insomnia?

Catnip (*Nepeta cataria*) is the answer. This perennial herb now is best known for its stunning fascination to about 90% of all cats, large and small, domestic and wild. Nepetalactone is the essential oil that gives catnip its unique scent and induces nearly all cats to playful friskiness, as depicted by Jet, our cat, who has happily rolled about in dry catnip.



Photo by Janice Broda.

Recent research conducted at the Center for Medical, Agricultural, and Veterinary Entomology, the U.S. Department of Agriculture laboratory located in Gainesville, Florida, showed that “catnip oil was more effective in attraction inhibition or as a spatial repellent than deet with respect to masking chemical attractant and human odors from ... mosquitoes”. In this research, nepetalactone was tested on mosquito species that can transmit malaria and on species that transmit dengue fever and was found to “merit further examination both as spatial and topical repellents for mosquitoes”.

Catnip, a member of the mint (Lamiaceae) family, is native to Europe and was brought to the New World by European settlers for its medicinal properties and has been used medicinally to treat fevers, colds, toothaches, and intestinal cramps. This non-native plants grows in disturbed areas over much of the US, where annual temperatures range between 45 to 66 degrees.

In Florida, catnip performs best as a potted plant in a sunny spot and grows to be about 3 feet tall. Catnip blooms with cluster of white or pale lavender flowers in late summer and early fall. These flowering tops yield up to 1% volatile oil, 78% of which is nepetalactone.

The plant secretes this aromatic oil to ward off insects that would otherwise eat its leaves, and which, in the future, may be a source of mosquito repellent products. Some natural repellents do include catnip, and, if you search the Internet, you will find many recipes for using catnip – fresh leaves and essential oil – as an insect repellent. Be sure to test a small patch of your skin to see how you react, as catnip, along with other repellent compounds, is a mild skin irritant for some folks.

Mosquitoes are most active at dawn and dusk, prime times for birding. West Nile encephalitis, St. Louis encephalitis, and eastern equine encephalitis cycle in mosquito and bird populations.

Please always take measures to protect yourself from the mosquito-borne disease when birdwatching or enjoying other outdoor activities.