

Flyways

The Newsletter of Audubon of Southwest Florida

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Summer



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The mission of Audubon of Southwest Florida is to protect plants, animals, and their habitats and to promote environmental education and a greater community involvement with the natural world.

Audubon of Southwest Florida, Inc. is an affiliated chapter of the [National Audubon Society](#) and [Audubon of Florida](#).

www.AudubonSWFL.org

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Get involved...

...attend a meeting
...attend a program
...join a committee

Dr. Jerry Jackson to Kick Off 2007-08 Programs

Noted ornithologist **Dr. Jerry Jackson** will present "The Quest for the Ivory Bill Woodpecker" on October 18. A professor at Florida Gulf Coast University and the recognized world's expert on the ivory-billed woodpecker, Jackson is the author of *In Search of the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker* (Smithsonian Books, 2004), as well as numerous scientific articles in the ornithological field. (cont'd. p. 4)

President's Report: Summit On Climate Change

On July 12 and 13, I attended one of the most interesting and useful conferences/workshops seminars I've ever participated in, and I've attended lots of these affairs. The Summit on Climate Change organized by Governor Charlie Crist in Miami was outstanding!

The most impressive presentation was not the one given by Governor Crist, although it outlined how we might begin to preserve our quality of life in Florida and was a courageous call to action; not the one given by Robert Kennedy, although this well-polished political rant is not to be missed if you've never heard it; not the one given by Teddy Roosevelt's grandson who is carrying on the family tradition of eco-advocacy from the bank boardrooms rather than fields and streams; not the one given by Mayor Manny Diaz, who is leading Florida's mayors — including Ft. Myers Mayor Jim Humphrey — to think green and take the local initiative; and not even the one given by Arnold Schwarzenegger, who gave the event a little celebrity buzz and helped with the press play. The most impressive presentation was by a little known (at least here in the United States) visionary named **Vinod Khosla**. I urge you to "google" his name, look at his website, and read his articles and speeches. (cont'd. p. 4)



Vinod Khosla, venture capitalist and co-founder of Sun Microsystems, has invested heavily in renewable energy companies, including ethanol companies. His firm, Khosla Ventures, supports breakthrough scientific work in clean technology areas such as bio-refineries for energy and bioplastics, solar batteries and other environmentally friendly technologies.



SAVE THE DATE

2007 Audubon Assembly November 1 - 3, 2007

Don't miss the information-packed programs and exciting awards when Florida's conservation-minded citizens gather this November in Cocoa Beach. Join chapter leaders and members, Audubon staff and scientists, wildlife professionals, environmental advocates, agency and elected officials to network and learn about how we are making a difference for the environment. Assembly registration information and details about programs, exhibits, and field trips to nearby birding hotspots will appear in the summer *Florida Naturalist* and will also be available online at <http://www.audubonofflorida.org/> in July. The venue for the 2007 Assembly is the Hilton Cocoa Beach Oceanfront. The **Special Audubon Assembly rate available until October 2**, is \$119 per room. Reserve rooms now at 800-526-2609. Let them know you are with the Audubon group for this event.

Tired of Too Much Snail Mail? Read *Flyways* Online

Read [Flyways](#) online rather than get a snail mail copy. You'll reduce the poundage in your mailbox and save the chapter money in production and distribution costs and maybe even a tree. Send your request to be removed from the snail mail list to Members@AudubonSWFL.org. You will be notified by email when a new edition of *Flyways* is published. You'll also be added to the chapter's "Action Alert" roster and receive information on local environmental issues and chapter business via email.

Membership Perks

Audubon Centers offer a window into wild lands around the state. Explore the nation's largest remaining old-growth Bald Cypress stand at Corkscrew Swamp or learn more about our national bird at the award-winning Audubon Center for Birds of Prey. What are you waiting for? Join in an adventure at an Audubon Center near you — at a discount with your Audubon membership card!

[Audubon Center for Birds of Prey](#), Maitland, Orange Co.

[Babson Park Nature Center](#), Babson Park, Polk Co.

[Blair Center at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary](#), Naples, Collier Co.

[Hyatt Nature Center](#), Pensacola, Escambia Co.

[Street Nature Center](#), Winter Haven, Polk Co.

"A Swift Night Out"

Participate in a national swift-monitoring program. Keep your eyes to the skies at dusk and watch for areas where swifts are feeding. Look for a tall shaft, chimney or similar structure to locate where Chimney Swifts (central to east coast) or Vaux's Swift (Pacific coast) go to roost in your area. On one night over the weekend of August 10, 11, 12, and / or September 7, 8, 9 observe the roost starting about 30 minutes before dusk and estimate the number of swifts that enter. When you have your number, contact us with your results at: www.chimneyswifts.org

Membership in ASWFL

One year—\$20.00
 Two Years—\$34.95
 Three Years—\$44.95

Pay at a special event, program or meeting and receive free DVD, *Birding 101* by Paul Holmes, master birder and board member of Peace River Audubon

Special Offer: For a donation of \$10, receive the DVD *Birding 101*.

Benefits

- Chapter membership
- Membership in the National Audubon Society
- Membership in Audubon of Florida
- *Audubon Magazine*
- *Florida Naturalist* magazine
- *Flyways*, the chapter newsletter
- 50% entrance discount at Audubon facilities with presentation of your membership card or receipt

ASWFL Wish List

- TV w/DVD player/copier
- Laptop computer for membership management
- LED projector
- Computer Printer
- Raffle items for fundraising

Audubon of Southwest Florida meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Lee County Parks and Recreation office at Rutenberg Community Park on South Pointe Blvd. between Cypress Lake Dr. and College Pkwy. in south Fort Myers.

Record-breaking numbers of birders took part in Audubon's Great Backyard Bird Count last February.

Go to www.birdsource.org/gbbc/ to see what local birders reported.

2007 Board of Directors

BOD@audubonswfl.org

Contact a BOD member by using the first name and first initial of the last name plus @AudubonSWFL.org.

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[Christina Baker](#)

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*Not Current Board Members

Audubon of Southwest Florida does not share or sell addresses. But if you want to eliminate unsolicited email from National Audubon Society, email Maria at membership@AudubonSWFL and she will arrange to have your name removed from all NAS mailing lists, except for *Audubon* magazine, of course, and prevent names or addresses from being shared with other organizations.

(President's Report cont'd. from p. 1) There is far too much there for me to begin to try to summarize. He is the voice of the future. He quickly convinced me that we have the technologies and the financing to solve the problems of climate change and global warming and save the world. We can promote social justice, prosperity and improve our quality of life in the process. If, and that is a big if, we start taking action **now**. Personal and political actions for the path to success.

Visit www.myfloridaclimate.com/ for details on the conference hosted by Governor Charlie Crist in Miami, July 12 & 13.

Back at home. Take a look at the executive orders signed by Governor Crist and offer your support for implementing legislation and ordinances. More importantly, start to do your part. There are many small steps that cumulatively make a huge difference. Change those light bulbs and A/C filters, recycle, buy energy star appliances and fuel-efficient vehicles, and minimize unnecessary travel. If you are building or buying a new residence – think green. At the very least, install solar hot-water heating. The big polluter still is, and will be for quite a while, fossil fuel electric power. A kilowatt saved is still the cheapest electric power. Do your part. A little upfront investment will result in a huge payback for you, America, and the world.



Red-shouldered Hawk
(Photo by Jim Brock)

The Backyard Birdwatcher

by Jim Brock

Often when we think of birding, we believe we need to go out into the wild, or at least to the nearest national wildlife refuge, having woken up two hours before dawn, and sit in a blind to capture that newest find for our life list.

But to be “only” a birdwatcher, just one who enjoys watching birds for their own sake, your own backyard is a very good place to start. It’s especially easy to adopt this more casual perspective during a Florida summer, when it’s too dang hot to venture outside and when all you see are those other “common” year-round residents. And that’s precisely what I enjoy about being a backyard birdwatcher.

For instance, today my wife spotted a red-shouldered hawk sunning mid-day in a slash pine just beyond our lanai. For a birder, such a spotting is singularly unspectacular. Might as well as get worked up about a Northern Mockingbird. But we watched it for about five minutes, enough to notice that it was only half-heartedly looking for prey in the underbrush.

But simply noting this unremarkable raptor (though we did note its spectacular plumage at such close range), I took note of this equally unremarkable and mostly native habitat in our backyard: saw palmetto, cabbage palm, strangler fig, slash pine, mahogany, live oak, and Virginia creeper. This year-rounder resident was so much like the other permanent residents who make some use of this tiny patch of Florida hammock. Familiarity most often breeds complacency, not contempt, where we just overlook the all-too ordinary. However, this Red-shouldered Hawk, doing nothing in particular, afforded us the chance to appreciate most sharply and deeply what surrounds us.

(cont'd. from p. 1) Dr. Jackson’s presentation will be at the Support Services Facility at Rutenberg Park (the former library), 6490 South Pointe Blvd., between College Parkway and Cypress Lake Blvd. The program begins at 7:00 p.m. Come early to enjoy refreshments and socialize. Audubon of Southwest Florida meetings are open to public.

American Ground Water Institute Presents Program for Educators

by Teri Heath, Education Chair

On June 29 & 30, I was one of more than 30 people who attended the American Ground Water Trust Institute held at the SFWMD headquarters in Ft. Myers. Audubon of Southwest Florida was one of the sponsors of this program designed to increase water awareness for teachers, students, citizens, and communities.

Educators from other organizations, including the Florida DEP, Rookery Bay, FDEP Aquatic Preserves, and the Girl Scouts, participated. I left with a ton of material and resources to use in my classroom at Cypress Lake Center for the Arts. The institute began with background information on the hydrological system, geology fundamentals, concepts of water balance, competition for ground water, and an extensive discussion of the many pollutants, including pharmaceuticals, other chemicals, and arsenic. Speakers from the USGS, Audubon, SFWMD, and Hyacinth Control, and other agencies discussed water supply challenges to Southwest Florida, aquifer vulnerability, Lake Okeechobee's restoration, storm-water issues, aquatic-nuisance species, and water supply vs. flood control. Friday concluded with an afternoon field trip to the C-43 West Reservoir. All in all, it was a very interesting and worthwhile institute.

Please help to insure that these important Groundwater workshops are offered free-of-charge to teachers. Donate to the **Scholarship Fund** so ASWF can sponsor another teacher in 2008 at approximately \$400 per teacher.

Go to www.audubonswfl.org/Scholarships.htm for information on these **scholarships funded by Audubon of SW Florida**:

- [Florida Gulf Coast University Tuition Scholarship](#)
- [Cornell Home Study Birding Course Scholarship Program](#)
- [Florida Master Naturalist Program Tuition Scholarship Program](#)
- American Ground Water Trust [Institute for Teachers](#)™

John Cassani Seeks FWCC Appointment

The Board of Directors of Audubon of Southwest Florida has approved supporting John Cassani's efforts to gain an appointment to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Cassani has already filed an application with the appointments office to replace a commissioner who is not seeking reappointment when his term ends in August.

Cassani is a past president of Audubon of Southwest Florida, a former Florida Audubon Board of Directors member, and is the current chair of the Southwest Florida Watershed Council. He has already gained endorsement from the Lee County Board of County Commission members, local media, and several other groups and prominent individuals, including Karl Wickstrom, the executive editor of Florida Sportsman and Linda Young, director of the Clean Water Network. If you wish to write a letter to Governor Crist supporting John Cassani's appointment:

Governor's Appointments Office
Re: FWCC appointment
LL10 The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

If you have questions for John Cassani, contact him at 239-848-5426, 239-633-7274, or jcassani@comcast.net.

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Outings & Field Trips

Sister Vesta Newcomb Wildlife Preserve, Saturday, September 15, 2007, 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM

Sister Vesta Newcomb Wildlife Preserve, located adjacent to the Koreshan State Historic Site and the Es-tero River, is owned by Audubon of Florida and managed by Koreshan State Historic Site. Part of the Koreshan Unity settlement and primarily a slash-pine scrub area, it was donated to Audubon to be maintained and preserved in its natural state. Bring binoculars, water, and bug spray. Add park entry fee to regular cost.

Hawkwatch at the Sanibel Lighthouse Park, Sunday, October 14, 2007, 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM

The Sanibel Lighthouse Park is known as the location to see hawks and other migrant birds that are heading south during this time of year. Join Vince McGrath to search the skies for migrating raptors. Bring binoculars.

Okaloacoochee Slough, Saturday, November 10, 2007, 7:30 AM

Located in Hendry and Collier counties along CR 832, 3.5 miles east of SR 29, Okaloacoochee Slough is a state wildlife management area that includes 35,000 acres of slough, marsh, cypress, wet prairie, pine flatwoods, oak hammocks, and oak-palm hammocks. Chances are good for sightings of Marsh Hawks, Caracaras, Kestrels, Sandhill Cranes, and a variety of wading birds. Meet at the Calusa Nature Center at 7:30 a.m. for carpooling. Departure at 8:00 a.m. Bring binoculars, water, and a picnic lunch.

Caloosahatchee Creeks Preserve: Conservation 20/20 Preserve in North Fort Myers

December 2007 -- Date and time pending

For All Outings:

Space is limited and reservations are required.

Cost: \$5 for Audubon members and \$10 for nonmembers.

Contact Dan VanNorman at 337-7381.