



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.

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Audubon of Southwest Florida, Inc. is an affiliated chapter of the National Audubon Society and Audubon of Florida. This chapter is 501c3. Donations are tax deductible.

<http://www.audubonswfl.org>
(239) 339-8046

Interested in helping with festivals?

Call 239-334-8046

or email

info@audubonswfl.org

Audubon Around Town

8th Annual Earth Day Festival at Koreshan State Historic Site



On Saturday, April 25th, 2009 almost 2,000 people celebrated the planet at Koreshan State Historic Site in Estero. Gene and Tina Csonka and Conny Spurfeld attended this event representing Audubon of Southwest Florida to spread environmental awareness and support our mission. Former ASWF president Suzanne Sutton, as well as Jerry Haberle, Jim Brock, and Gerri Reaves partook in the fun at the chapter's display.

ASWF At Green Market



Photos by Gerri Reaves

The Lee County Alliance for the Arts hosts the Green Market every Saturday from 8am—12noon. Local, fresh, organic and sustainable foods and products are available. You might also see festival chair Conny Spurfeld at the Audubon table under our brand new canopy! Stop by and say hello.

Keeping Native Habitats Habitable - Managing Natural Areas for the Florida scrub-jay

Submitted by Annisa Karim, Land Stewardship Coordinator
Hickey's Creek Mitigation Park

Many avian species rely on specific habitats for their long-term survival. Habitat loss and fragmentation are two of the main causes of species extinction worldwide. Even when habitats remain intact, natural ecosystem processes that occur within those habitats must also remain intact for them to serve the species that rely on them. Many native plant communities in Florida rely on periodic fires to thrive. Without these fires, these plant communities can change over time and as a result become difficult or impossible for some species to survive. The Florida scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) is a threatened species that lives specifically in the scrub and scrubby flatwoods habitats of Florida. In fact, this species is found nowhere else in the world. Consequently, the destruction of these habitats could lead to the extinction of the scrub-jay. Keenly aware of this fact, many agencies and organizations throughout Florida manage lands for the continued survival of the scrub-jay.

Hickey's Creek Mitigation Park is co-managed by the Lee County Department of Parks and Recreation and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC). This Park was established in 1994 as a gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) mitigation area through the FWCC Mitigation Park Program. Resource management activities primarily focus on the restoration and maintenance of critical habitats for listed species. While gopher tortoises live in a greater variety of habitats than the Florida scrub-jay, the plant communities found within Hickey's Creek Mitigation Park are well suited to both species. As such, land management activities that strive to improve habitat for gopher tortoises also improve habitat for scrub-jays.



Photographer: Conny Spurfeld

In May, 2009 mechanical vegetation removal was completed on a portion of the Hickey's Creek Mitigation Park for the resident population of Florida scrub-jays that call that area home. The mechanical removal is an alternative to prescribed burning during months where controlled burns are not an option (too dry, strong winds, etc.). The vegetation removal opens up the area to allow the scrub-jay to see predators approaching while they are storing (or caching) their food in the ground. Additionally, it removes overgrown vegetation from the ground which may act as an intense fuel source should a wildfire occur. Check out the park and bring your binoculars! The address to Hickey's Creek is 17980 Palm Beach Blvd., Alva, FL 33920.

Upcoming Programs and Events! Mark Your Calendar!

Upcoming Speaker Programs at Rutenberg's Eco Living Center:

(Come early at 6:00pm to join us for our board meeting!)

Sept. 17th, 2009, 7:00pm: Brenda Thomas—CREW's habitat, flora, and fauna

Oct. 15, 2009, 7:00pm: John Canter—Whooping Cranes

Nov. 19, 2009, 7:00pm: Conny Spurfeld—Nile Monitor Lizard (CC)

Friday, July 31, 2009, 7:00pm—Urban Birding in Downtown Fort Myers with Roger Clark

This trip led by Roger Clark will give birders and naturalists a chance to see urban birds, including grey kingbirds, chimney swifts, and hopefully large numbers of purple martins as they roost in the mahogany trees on Hendry Street. The martins put on quite a show as they zoom into the trees! Participants will also learn about the downtown trees and a little history. Meet at the "Three Friends" statue/fountain in Centennial Park. Bring binoculars, water, camera, and rain gear. Call 707-7273 for reservations .

Sunday, Oct. 18, 2009, 8:00am - 10:00am—Hawk Watch at the Sanibel Lighthouse with Vince McGrath

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 your binoculars. Space is limited, so sign up ahead of time. Meet in the beach parking lot at the lighthouse. Call Vince at 677-0082 for more information and reservations.

Visit the Audubon website at <http://www.audubonswfl.org> to view the calendar for the meetings, activities and more!

Eco Breakfast 2009

**Thursday, October 22nd at Riverside Community Center
7 – 9 a.m.**

Every year Audubon co-sponsors the popular Environmental Breakfast. Dell Jones will speaking this year and the coveted Environmentalist of the Year award will be awarded. Save the date for the area's premier event for eco-networking and socializing.

Dell Jones, Vice President of Renewable Project Development at Regenes Power, will speak about Florida Gulf Coast University's Solar Energy Farm, one of the largest university solar projects in the U.S. FGCU, in its quest to become more energy independent and meet the American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment, has turned to Florida's most abundant resource to help make that happen. The Climate Commitment was created to help make campuses more sustainable and address climate change by garnering institutional commitments to reduce and ultimately neutralize greenhouse gas emissions on campus. Dell will also give an update on the status of solar energy in the Sunshine State. Stay tuned for further details in the next *Flyways*.

Fichter's Creek Outing

Jim Brock, Gerri Reaves, Carol Newcomb-Jones, and Cheryl and Toby Clark were among the ASWF members who participated in a field trip to Fichter's Creek, led by Roger Clark (center of photo on left). Highlights were Northern Caracara, Swallow-tailed Kites, and a centuries-old cypress tree.



Photos by Carol Newcomb-Jones

Did You Know?

The Audubon of Southwest Florida chapter receives less than \$2.00 of your annual \$35.00 National Audubon renewal fee. Please consider ASWF's "chapter-only" calendar-year membership to focus your financial support on chapter activities. You do not have to be a resident of Southwest Florida or a member of National Audubon to be a chapter member. Please include our chapter code when renewing or joining: C9ZE330Z.

A Word From The President

As ASWF's new president I would like to take this opportunity to openly thank Gerri Reaves, outgoing president (but thankfully not leaving the Board!), for her hard work these past months. It is not always apparent what goes on behind the scenes to keep an organization alive and in good operating order and the hours spent to do just that! Because of Gerri, the office of president is in tip-top shape thanks to her labor of love for our chapter. Second, I look forward to continuing to serve our chapter and also to enjoying our upcoming season of programs, starting with the Purple Martin Festival & Downtown Field Trip on July 31th! As Gerri and I stood together in downtown Fort Myers the other evening, our eyes turned to the sky as the Purple Martins were congregating to settle into the mahogany trees for the night. I hope our chapter makes an extra effort this year to congregate, like the Martins, at our monthly meetings, field trips, and special events! See ya there! — Carol Newcomb-Jones

Help conserve chapter resources by receiving *Flyways* via email. Write info@audubon.org to be added to our newsletter email-delivery list. ASWF does not share or sell addresses.

Reading Recommendations

Pete Quasius recommends:

An Everglades Providence: Marjory Stoneman Douglas and the American Environmental Century by Jack E. Davis.

Conny Spurfeld recommends:

Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program's children's book, *Adventures in the Charlotte Harbor Watershed*.

Maria Quasius calls *A Land Remembered* by Patrick D. Smith "outstanding."

Mari Hanley recommends: *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit* by Al Gore and *The Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael Pollan

Scholarships Available

Calling all FGCU students, Florida Master Naturalist students, teachers and birders alike!
Audubon of Southwest Florida offers scholarships that might work for you!

Florida Gulf Coast University Tuition Scholarship

Audubon of Southwest Florida is pleased to offer a merit-based scholarship for academic year 2009/10, of up to \$5,000 for tuition, books, and fees for second year (or beyond) environmental studies major or major in one of the natural sciences at Florida Gulf Coast University.

Cornell Home Study Birding Course Scholarship Program

Audubon of Southwest Florida is offering its members who are experienced volunteer docents at important birding areas in Lee County a scholarship to Cornell Lab of Ornithology Home Study Course in Bird Biology.

Florida Master Naturalist Program Tuition Scholarship Program

Audubon of Southwest Florida, through the Charles Foster Conservation Fund, is pleased to offer \$200 tuition scholarships for teachers and volunteer docents of environmental centers in Southwest Florida, who are members of an Audubon chapter in SW Florida, to participate in the University of Florida's Master Naturalist Program (FMNP).

For more information or to apply, please visit the scholarship page of our website at
<http://www.audubonswfl.org/Scholarships.htm>

Please consider a donation towards our efforts to provide bird guides to local medical facilities for use by their patients. Recently, ASWF donated 24 bird-ID guides to Lee Memorial Cancer Center.

Synopsis of the Lee County Landscape & Fertilizer Best Management Practices Ordinance

Submitted by Marti Daltry, Regional Conservation Organizer
Sierra Club – Fort Myers Office

In September of 2007, the Lee County Board of County Commissioners directed their staff to develop an ordinance that would regulate the application of nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizers in order to better manage sources of nutrient pollution. When fertilizer containing nitrogen and phosphorus is applied to lawns excessively or at the wrong place or time, the runoff of such nutrients contributes to red tide and other harmful algal blooms. Lee County's Division of Natural Resources in conjunction with the University of Florida IFAS/FYN programs, members of the fertilizer industry and members of the environmental community as well as private citizens provided input for this fertilizer ordinance.

The Sierra Club recruited a Coalition of 30 environmental organizations, civic clubs, business owners, and homeowner associations to support a strong fertilizer ordinance and make their concerns known to our county commissioners through sign on letters, lobbying and providing comment at public hearings. Among our concerns regarding this ordinance was a need for a ban on applying fertilizer with nitrogen and phosphorus during the rainy season (June through September) and to apply this ordinance not only to professional landscapers and businesses but to homeowners as well.

Our coordinated efforts paid off when the **Board of County Commissioners adopted a strong fertilizer ordinance on May 13, 2008**. Since the ordinance pertains to residents living in unincorporated Lee County, it has been necessary to involve the incorporated cities of Lee County to adopt a similar fertilizer ordinance and to date, Ft. Myers, Ft. Myers Beach and Bonita Springs have done so. Although Cape Coral is the only municipality yet to adopt an ordinance, it has drafted a fertilizer ordinance similar to Lee County's that will be voted on in a few months.

The highlights of the Lee County fertilizer ordinance are as follows:

- Ordinance applies to homeowners and professional landscapers in unincorporated Lee County.
- Professional landscapers must register with the county and have at least one certified, trained employee on site for every fertilizer application. Homeowners are not required to take training but are encouraged to learn more about fertilizing through the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods programs.
- Fertilizers containing nitrogen and phosphorus cannot be applied during the rainy season (June 1 through September 30)
- Fertilizer used from October 1 through May 31 must be minimum 50% controlled or slow release nitrogen and the amount of fertilizer applied is limited per 1000 sq. ft. of turf.
- Fertilizer may not be applied within 10 feet of a water body, sea wall or wetland.
- Fertilizer is not allowed on impervious surfaces like sidewalks, driveways and roads.
- Grass clippings and vegetative trimmings may not be swept or blown into ditches, drains, water bodies, roads or sidewalks
- Deflector shields are required on spreaders to prevent fertilizer from being spread into water body buffers and impervious surfaces.

The Lee County Board of County Commissioners has devoted funding for the creation of bumper stickers, flyers, seed packets and public service announcements have been aired on local television stations to educate the citizenry on the subject of wise fertilizer management. One of the Lee County transit buses features the Lee County fertilizer advertisement. In the near future, a letter and educational brochure regarding the fertilizer ordinance will be sent to all residents of unincorporated Lee County.

For additional information, please check out the following website: www.FertilizeSmart.com.

Bunche Beach and Man's Best Friend

Submitted by: Christine Andrews
Sanibel-Captiva Audubon

Let Your County Commissioners Know:

Keep Bunche Beach Safe For Birds!

Bunche Beach is enormously important for shorebird foraging. There is probably no other beach in Lee County as important. Several conservation organizations, including Sanibel Captiva Audubon and Lee County Bird Patrol, worked passionately for over two years to get dogs off Bunche Beach. Their efforts were supported by data collected on the beach that reinforced the importance of this critical habitat. We understand that "SODA" (Save Our Dog Areas) is planning to approach the Lee County Board of Commissioners to ask that dogs be allowed back on Bunche Beach on leashes. SODA's request was recently rejected by the Parks and Recreation Commission but by a very close vote. Please join us in helping to protect this vital wildlife habitat. To reverse the decision and allow dogs under any conditions is an avoidable mistake for numerous threatened and some endangered species. Paul Andrews and Christine Andrews of Sanibel-Captiva Audubon and Sue Moore of Lee County Bird Patrol encourage all concerned people to send your concerns to the Lee County Commissioners.

For a list of Dog-Friendly Parks in Lee County visit: <http://www.leeparks.org/>

Bird Deaths and Communications Towers

National Audubon Society has joined the American Bird Conservancy and other environmental groups in an effort to resolve the problem of birds colliding into communication tower structure or support cables (guy wires) at night. Birds are attracted to the lights on communication towers. Many tower-related bird deaths are happening especially on nights with low cloud cover during spring or fall.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife estimates that over 50,000 birds die each year by colliding with communication towers and that around 231 species have been affected with 50 of those being imperiled species.

For more information on this topic, visit the bird conservation issues page of the American Bird Conservancy web site: abcbirds.org.

Join or renew your membership at ASWF's secure website:

Audubonswfl.org

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Festivals: Conny Spurfeld **Education:** Rebecca Austin, Tina Csonka, Gene Csonka, Kelly Williamson **Membership:** Maria Quasius **Birdathon:** Toby Clark **Conservation:** Carol Newcomb-Jones, Pete Quasius, Tony Miller, Brad Cornell – Audubon of Florida staff*
Parliamentarian: vacant **Field Trips:** vacant **Hospitality:** vacant

Join us as we discuss local conservation issues, and activities. The meetings are at 6 pm on the third Thursday of the month at the Eco Living Center in Rutenberg Park, 6490 South Pointe Drive (between Cypress Lake Drive and College Parkway). All our meetings are free and open to the public.

Regional Representative To National Audubon Elected

Audubon Chapters in the Southeast Election Region selected Joyce King to fill a vacant position on the National Audubon Board of Directors. She will serve until the next annual meeting of members in January 2010 when her name will be placed on the ballot for election by the full membership to complete the remaining one year of the term.