

Flyways

A PUBLICATION OF



SPRING, 2018

President's Message

- Our final field trip of the season
- 21st Annual Environmental breakfast
- ASWF Annual Meeting

...and more!



Snowy plover (photo by Jim Convery)

As we head toward the end of the Audubon of Southwest Florida 2017-18 season, I would like to thank the Chapter members, program speakers and Board of Directors for helping make the season a success. This season we started and completed the first year of the bird club for 5th graders at Veterans Park Academy for the Arts in Lehigh Acres, and plan to expand the clubs to other grades and schools in Lee County. The Chapter also developed a project aimed at reducing bird-window collisions and other risks that structures pose and promoting buildings and infrastructure that maximally reduce bird and bat strike hazards. With the start of the 2018-2019 year, volunteers will be needed. Opportunities include, but are not limited to, serving on the Board of Directors, serving on one of the many committees, assisting with the Chapter's participation in the festivals and other events that are held in the area, and assisting with programs, field trips, or other Chapter activities. If you are interested in volunteering, please let us know. I hope that you will attend the Annual Meeting and Board of Directors Meeting of Audubon of Southwest Florida on Saturday, May 26th, from 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm at the Masonic Lodge in Fort Myers. This meeting will include dinner, followed by the business meeting for the election of Board of Directors for 2018-2020, and the program. You can see further details about the meeting in this newsletter and the Chapter's website, www.audubonswfl.org.

Have a wonderful spring and summer.

Dan VanNorman

A Valued Ecosystem Component in the Caloosahatchee River & Estuary

Background: For several reasons, the Caloosahatchee River no longer has a naturally occurring seed source for restoration of sea grass. Tape grass (*Vallisneria americana*), is native to Florida, grows from rhizomes, and often forms tall underwater meadows. Tape grass is the base of the food chain and grazed upon by turtles, waterfowl, crabs, shrimp, and manatees while providing habitat at least 44 species of fish. Tape grass also stabilizes sediments, improves water quality and clarity, and removes nutrients. The Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP) Technical Advisory Committee confirmed the need for restoration of tape grass, *Vallisneria americana* in the Caloosahatchee River based on the comparison of current and recent historic mapping of sea grass beds. Several scientific research studies between 2002-2017 also confirmed that planting tape grass is necessary to restore the lost habitat and re-establish the seed bank for the system to recover.

Project Description: This project will enhance aquatic habitat restoring 20-acres of submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) (or sea grass) in the upper estuary. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the State of Florida allocated funding for this critical habitat restoration to begin in 2018. The project is being led by the Snook and Gamefish Foundation in a public, private, and academic partnership with Sea and Shoreline, Johnson Engineering, and Florida Gulf Coast University respectively. Tape grass (*Vallisneria americana*) will be planted in shallow littoral zone habitats and grown and monitored in protective cages (Herbivore Exclusion Devices) placed in the Tidal Caloosahatchee River. Tape grass plants will grow to maturity and establish seed-source colonies for restoration throughout the 13-mile reach of the river and tributaries between downtown Fort Myers and the Franklin Lock. The exclusion cages protect the plantings from excessive grazing and they will be removed at the end of the 3-year project period.



Audrey Albrecht, Dan VanNorman, and Burrowing Owl at the 16th Annual Burrowing Owl Festival at Rotary Park in Cape Coral on February 24th, 2018



Courtney Kern is the Audubon Anchor Steward for Lee County. Shorebird Stewards play a critical role in keeping the beaches safe for nesting shorebirds.

Audubon of Southwest Florida

2018 Field Trips (Emphasizing the Great Florida Birding Trail)

Members and non-members / beginner to advanced birders – all are welcome!
Events are free; but, donations are always appreciated. Depending on the nature of the outing, you may want to bring a camera, field glasses, sunscreen, water, or even a folding chair. Dress appropriately for the weather. Parking or rental fees sometimes apply.

Our final field trip for the season -

Six Mile Cypress Slough

Saturday, May 12, 2018 – 8:00 am

This site offers some of the best birding around. The boardwalk invites you to walk slowly and silently through the freshwater swamp and hardwood hammocks, watching the wildlife at close range. Blinds and viewing platforms offer places to sit for long periods and observe.

21st Annual Environmental Breakfast

Thursday

October 25, 2018

Riverside Community Center

Fort Myers

(breakfast served at 7:30 am)

please RSVP to -

Audubon of Southwest Florida

audubon.southwest.florida@gmail.com

Our Chapter In History...

Sixty years ago, the chapter was chartered under its original name, Audubon Society of Southwest Florida. ("Society" was subsequently dropped about 15 years ago.) The charter was received at the annual meeting of the Florida Audubon Society in Winter Park in the first week of March 1958. The new chapter's second meeting was the following week at the Hill Avenue home of Mrs. A.B. Hummeland. In attendance were 35 members from five counties. Fort Myers was the headquarters. Topics of reports at that first meeting included migrating and native birds, the use and detriment of DDT, and birdfeeders. Local businesses donated birdseed for sheltered feeders in local school yards and public parks.

Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 26, 2018

You are invited to our Annual Meeting on Saturday, May 26, 2018. A spaghetti dinner will be served beginning at 5:30 p.m., followed by a short business meeting which will include nominations and election of the 2018 / 2019 board of directors.

The featured program – “*The American Crocodile in Florida*” - begins at 7 p.m. Our speaker this year is Charles LeBuff who will explore the threatened American crocodile’s historic and modern range, population fluctuations, protection, reproduction, survival hazards, and general life history. Books will be on sale at the meeting - credit cards, checks, and cash accepted. Information about his books can be found at www.amber-publishing.com.

The dinner, prepared and served by chapter volunteers, includes beverages, salad, mixed fruit, spaghetti with sauce, garlic toast, and desserts. Feel free to bring a dish to share for the dessert table, which is always a big hit at the annual meeting.

Both the dinner and program are open to the public and presented free of charge. Donations are appreciated.

Where: SW Florida Masonic Temple at 10868 Metro Parkway, Fort Myers, FL 33966 (just South of Circle-K)

Please RSVP to audubon.southwest.florida@gmail.com

The following slate of nominees has been proposed for our annual meeting which is scheduled for May 26, 2018. **Nominations from the floor are also acceptable.**

Directors

Directors are elected by the membership. Directors with two-year terms expiring May, 2018, include -
Dan VanNorman - nominated to be re-elected to a two year term
Jim Rodenfels - nominated to be re-elected to a two year term
Brad Cornell - nominated to be re-elected to a two year term
Jayne Johnston - nominated to be re-elected to a two year term

The following have chosen to not be re-elected –
Melinda Lynch

New additions to the board nominated to be elected to a two year term –
None (nominations from the floor are acceptable)

Carol, Gerri, Carl, Pete, and Wayne serve at their pleasure as past presidents.

Officers

Officers are elected by the Board of Directors. Officer positions expiring this coming May include -
President – Dan VanNorman - nominated to be re-elected to a two year term
2nd Vice President & Treasurer – Jim Rodenfels - nominated to be re-elected to a two year term

New officer nominations include -
Vice President – Jayne Johnston – nominated to be elected to a two year term

ASWF Board



Directors -

*Brad Cornell
Wayne Daltry
Jayne Johnston
Carol Newcomb
Courtney Kern
Pete Quasius
Carl Veax*

Committees -

*Conservation - Brad Cornell
Education - Jayne Johnston
Field Trips - Jim Rodenfels
Newsletter - Courtney Kern
Membership - Jayne Johnston
Programs - Gerri Reaves
Publicity - Carol Newcomb*

President – Dan VanNorman

Secretary - Gerri Reaves

Treasurer - Jim Rodenfels

How to reach us

- We invite you to stay in touch through our website - www.audubonswfl.org or on Facebook - just search under "Audubon of Southwest Florida"
- And, please send us your e-mail address. That way you can be sure you receive advance notification of any upcoming events, programs, field trips, etc., and also receive our e-newsletter. Just send a note to audubon.southwest.florida@gmail.com
- If you prefer, you may mail us at –
P.O. Box 61041
Fort Myers, FL 33906-1041

ECO-VOICE.ORG

The web site for Eco-Voice, Inc. is a public service facilitating the flow of information about environmental issues and events in South Florida.

Every morning before 6 am a selection of news items, great photos, and announcements of environmental events relevant to South Florida, with links to sources and additional information, is e-mailed to subscribers. Visit us on Facebook and contribute to the discussion

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. ASWF is an affiliated chapter (E33) of the National Audubon Society and Audubon of Florida.

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.

THE FLORIDA REGISTRATION NUMBER FOR AUDUBON OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA IS CH30193

Are you thinking of making a charitable donation?

Qualified Charitable Distributions from your IRA may be a good tax strategy if you are at least age 70½ and are considering making donations to your favorite charities.

A direct charitable distribution from your IRA may be used towards satisfying any Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), and best of all is excluded from your taxable income regardless of whether you itemize deductions. To qualify, the funds must be transferred directly by the IRA trustee to your eligible charity.

Audubon of Southwest Florida is a perfect recipient – we are a public charity under 501(c)(3) and donors may deduct contributions as provided in IRC section 170. We are also registered with the State of Florida's Division of Consumer Services under registration number CH30193.

A copy of our tax-exempt determination letter may be requested by contacting us at:

audubon.southwest.florida@gmail.com

Contributions may be mailed to:

Audubon of Southwest Florida

PO Box 61041

Fort Myers, FL 33906-1041

Our chapter can always use your help. Occasionally we need folks for tables at events – there are 3 we commit to per year. These are: hospitality – coffee, tea, and cookies - for the program meetings every 3rd Thursday, committee assistance for each of the chair positions (education, membership, newsletter, social media, conservation, etc.), Jay Watch Coordinator in summer, Eagle Watch Coordinator October through May, Shorebird Coordinator for Winter along with volunteers to resight bands, build and install nesting boxes, Christmas Bird Count, and the Great Backyard Bird Count, just to name a few. Feel free to offer your own specialty. Give a little or a lot of your time, anything is appreciated. Please contact any board member to volunteer. Thank you!

Audubon of SWFL Board of Directors

You may not be aware Audubon of Southwest Florida, while an affiliated chapter of the National Audubon Society, is, like all other local chapters, a separate organization (chapter code E33). We are including you in our annual mailing in the hope that you will consider joining our local chapter if you are not currently a member, or renewing your current annual membership. Annual calendar-year memberships may be renewed either on-line at our website, or by using the enclosed envelope. We appreciate your support; it enables us to continue the good work our chapter does to protect our local resources.