

Flyways

WINTER 2016-17

A PUBLICATION OF ...



Audubon
of Southwest Florida

Protecting Nature... For People Too.

2017 ASWF PHOTO CONTEST

Find those special nature photographs you've stashed away and submit them to the Audubon photo contest! Amateur photographers are invited to compete for first, second, and third place in the birds, animals, plants, and scenery categories. One outstanding picture will be selected as the "Best in Show." Entries must be received by March 11, 2017. Winners will be announced by April 10 and prizes will be awarded at the Audubon meeting on April 20. Details and contest rules are posted on the Society website at www.audubonswfl.org. Enter TODAY!!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Dan VanNorman

Thanks to the work of Yes on Conservation 20/20, Audubon of Southwest Florida and other local environmental organizations, and to Lee County voters, the Conservation 20/20 Referendum was passed by nearly 84 percent of the vote.

However, passage of the referendum is only part of the effort to ensure that Lee County purchases, preserves and maintains environmentally critical land. We need to make sure the Lee County Commissioners are aware that, although the referendum was non-binding, the level of support is a clear message that the program needs to be implemented as it was intended by the voters.

Contact each commissioner and let them know how important conservation lands are in protecting plant and wildlife habitat, and water quality, and preserving our quality of life. This message should also be sent each time conservation lands are proposed for acquisition.

You can also support the Conservation 20/20 Program by becoming a Conservation volunteer and visiting the 20/20 properties. Attending the guided field trips sponsored by Audubon of Southwest Florida and the Lee County Conservation 20/20 Program is a good way to see and learn about the 20/20 preserves and program.

Volunteer Opportunity: Our chapter is looking for volunteers to work at our information table at a few festivals in 2017. Basically, it's getting out into the fresh air, talking to festival goers, and attending the festival yourself. I hope you can volunteer! Visit the chapter website for a list of festivals and dates, and contact Carol at EcoNewk@aol.com if interested.

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.

Our 19th annual Environmental Breakfast held on October 27 at the Riverside Community Center was a success, with over 120 attendees. The topic was the 20/20 program and referendum which was overwhelmingly approved in November's election. Carl Veaux was named 2017 Conservationist of the Year. Thanks to all of our speakers and volunteers with a special thanks to our sponsors!

Boylan Environmental Consultants, Caloosahatchee River Citizens Assoc./Riverwatch, Calusa Land Trust & Nature Preserve, Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife, Brian Cotterill & Judy Ott, Daltry Family, Ding Darling Wildlife Society, Eco-Voice, Estero Bay Buddies, Hans Wilson & Assoc., Jim Green Realty, Brian Murphy & Neil Wilkinson, Passarella & Assoc., Gerri Reaves, Responsible Growth Management, Rodenfels Family, Roetzel & Andress, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation, Southwest Florida Watershed Council, Veaux Family, and Dick Workman.

Current Officers & Directors

President: Dan VanNorman
 Vice-President & Program Chair: Melinda Averhart
 Secretary & Photo Contest Chair: Cheryl Black
 2nd Vice-President & Treasurer; Budget Chair; Audit Chair; Field Trip Chair: Jim Rodenfels

Directors: Brad Cornell, Conservation Chair; Wayne Daltry; Jayne Johnston, Membership Chair; Carol Newcomb; Pete Quasius; Gerri Reaves, Newsletter Chair; Teddy Rodenfels, Education Chair; & Carl Veaux.

Past Presidents still active in chapter: John Cassani, Don Dogett, Bill Hammond, Connie Jarvis, Mary Lee Mann, Vince McGrath, & Maria Quasius.

CONSERVATION WINS -- SAVOR THESE!

On behalf of Audubon of Southwest Florida, the Board thanks all our members and friends who in the past weeks and months have voted, emailed, attended hearings, and very loudly and clearly supported the creation of good conservation policy and actions by our local and state governments! Visit the ASWF website for details on three significant conservation wins:

- **CREW Headwaters**, a proposed new Florida Forever Project, was approved by the Florida Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) on October 21 in Tallahassee.
- **Lee County's Conservation 20/20 Program** was voted to continue by almost 84% of Lee voters on November 8.
- **18 New and Revised Critical Wildlife Areas (CWAs)** were approved by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) on November 16!

The dice don't often roll this way for conservation, but certainly not because most people don't support it. What's the secret this time? Public involvement and support! Your clear voice, membership in a conservation organizations like Audubon of Southwest Florida, and financial support brought the victories. Let's move on to our next wins, like funding Florida Forever, buying 20/20 lands like the farm in the CREW Project, and restoring the greater Everglades!



Conservation 20/20 campaign PAC with ASWF board members participating

3rd Winter Shorebird Stewarding Training At The Mound House

Twenty-six people attended the training on December 4, which was organized by ASWF board member Melinda Averhart. Adam DiNuovo, the Collier County Project Manager of Florida Audubon and Brad Cornell of Audubon of the Western Everglades supervised educational activities. Following a teaching session, the group went birding across the street to the Gulf, where Adam spotted two banded Red Knots!

Our Winter Stewardship Project will focus on any beach with large flocks. All stewards will be trained, given a uniform (t-shirt!), and access to a spotting scope/optics.

If you enjoy birds and beaches, please join us for our training: **Sunday, December 4, 2016, 8-10 am, The Mound House, 451 Connecticut St., Fort Myers Beach.**

Contact Melinda at leeshorebirdsteward@gmail.com for more information.

2017 Upcoming Programs

January 19: Bird and Wildlife Viewing at Lee County Conservation 20/20 Preserves: Jason Boeckman, Lee County Parks

February 16 -- Scrub Jays: Steven Shattler, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

March 16 -- Sea and Shorebirds: Adam Dinuovo, Florida Audubon

April 20 -- Remote Island Avian Adventures: Kara Lefevre, FGCU

May 20 - Annual Dinner: Guest speaker TBA

UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, PROGRAMS BEGIN AT 7 PM AT THE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA MASONIC CENTER, 10868 METRO PKWY, FORT MYERS.

26TH SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WATER RESOURCES CONFERENCE FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY, COHEN CENTER BALLROOM, JANUARY 13, 2017

Theme: **“Cooperative Solutions: Working Together to Address Water Challenges.”** Presenters will include leading experts in water resources and top decision-makers responsible for water resource planning and management in Southwest Florida, as well as state- and nation-wide. Advance registration is recommended. Full technical program and other details are available at www.SWFWRC.org. Audubon of Southwest Florida is part of the Steering Committee and one of the hosts of the conference.

Are You a **Chapter** Member Too?

You may not be aware that 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 hope that you will consider joining our local chapter if you are not currently a member or that you will renew your current annual membership. Annual calendar-year memberships may be renewed either on-line at our website. We appreciate your support; it enables us to continue the good work our chapter does to protect our local resources.

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.” Please send us your e-mail address. That way you can be sure to 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.

2017 FIELD TRIPS & OUTINGS (EMPHASIZING 20/20 PROPERTIES)

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

Kayak with the Manatees - Saturday, January 28, 2017 - 9:00 am

One of our favorite annual outings, we launch onto the Orange River from Manatee Park and are almost immediately surrounded by manatees. Bring your own kayak, or rent from the on-site outfitter.

Backyard Bird Count - Friday, February 17 through Monday, February 20, 2017

The Great Backyard Bird Count is a free, fun, and easy event that engages bird-watchers of all ages to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations. Participants are asked to count birds for as little as 15 minutes on one or more days of the four-day event and report sightings online. Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from beginning bird watchers to experts. And, you can participate from your backyard or anywhere in the world.

Bicycle Tour of Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge - Sunday, February 26, 2017 - 8:30 am

On another annual favorite, we bicycle the 8-mile roundtrip on Wildlife Drive with incredible views of herons, egrets, ibises, storks, and spoonbills.

Urban Birding in Historic Downtown Fort Myers - Monday, March 13, 2017 - 6:30 pm

Experience birding and local history on this downtown outing. Led by chapter birders, with local-history aficionado Gerri Reaves, we'll learn about the history of the town and look for birds at sunset over the Caloosahatchee River.

Sister Vesta Newcomb Preserve (Koreshan State Park & Historic Site) -Saturday, April 8 - 9:00 am

Come explore the approximate 20 acres of unspoiled pine, palmetto, and scrub oak woodland on the Estero River.

Powell Creek Preserve - Saturday, May 13, 2017 - 8:00 am

Powell Creek Preserve offers a diversity of natural communities for visitors to enjoy, including flatwoods, mesic hammock, and Powell Creek. See old-growth pine, buttonbush, Carolina willow, as well as dwarf live oak, netted paw-paw, and October flower.

Total Solar Eclipse - Monday, August 21, 2017 - 1:00 - 2:00 pm

While not a birding adventure, there is an upcoming total solar eclipse with the path of totality passing through several nearby states - Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, and more.

Shorebirds! - multiple dates to be determined: We'll meet at Bunche Beach with our volunteers from the Florida Shorebird Alliance to check out the shorebirds.

Impromptu Kayaking - Join the Fun: In addition to our annual "Kayaking with the Manatees," we hold impromptu kayaking trips throughout the year. All are done on short notice and only those expressing an interest are notified. So, if you are interested, send us an e-mail to add to our list of kayakers.