



Hernando Audubon NEWS

A publication of the Hernando Audubon Society

November/December 2010

Monthly meeting: location and time

The November meeting is held at the Community Activity Center, 205 E. Ft. Dade Ave., Brooksville. The center is between the public library and the U.S. Post Office in downtown Brooksville. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. See item at right for details.

If you are a member, please consider bringing a guest. If you are not a member, you are welcome to join us at all meetings and on the field trips.

.....
We are collecting nonperishable food items for donation to local food pantries. Please share if you can. Bring your donation to the Nov.18 meeting. Let's help make Thanksgiving special for *everyone!*
.....

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Membership application	
(Please pass the application along if you're already a member !)	

November 18 Our Thanksgiving Celebration: A Potluck Dinner and Members' Photo Presentation

Come share in the comradeship that makes our chapter special! Your board of directors will provide the meats and beverages for this Thanksgiving celebration. Please bring a side dish to share, and your own place setting.

November 18 is the *third* Thursday of the month (we generally meet on the fourth Thursday). There is also a change in the time: we start earlier than usual, at 6:00 p.m. instead of 6:45 p.m.

For many years our Thanksgiving dinner has been followed by a members' photo presentation. This is an opportunity for our

members to show off photographs they've taken of birds and other wildlife throughout the year. It's not just about great photos, we're also looking for shots of interesting species or behavior.



© Newphotoservice/Dreamstime.com

Please select up to 15 of your photos and put them on a CD, DVD or flash drive. Contact Bev Hansen at 686-0460 (e-mail bevalhansen@earthlink.net) to arrange

delivery. Bev must have your submissions by no later than Nov. 11, but the sooner you get your photos in, the better. That will ensure Bev has enough time to work on the PowerPoint presentation.

Take in two Christmas Bird Counts: Brooksville and Aripeka-Bayport

The Brooksville and Aripeka counts are all-day events that start just before the dawn chorus and end mid- to late-afternoon. This doesn't mean that participants have to stay for the duration: you may join or leave as your interest and schedule permit. Home feeder-watchers are also important contributors to the data gathered during the counts.

Audubon scientists put the information collected during the CBC to many uses, including to help determine bird population trends and conservation priorities. You can find data from the last count at http://cbc.audubon.org/cbcurrent/current_table.html

You don't have to be an expert "birder" to participate. This can be fun and a great learning experience for beginners.

CBC Brooksville: December 18
Contact: Clay Black - 352-592-4949

This will be the 31st annual **Brooksville** CBC for Hernando Audubon. For more information, or to sign up, contact Clay.

CBC Aripeka-Bayport: December 21
Contact: Bev Hansen - 352-686-0460

At 6:00 a.m. we leave from Denny's Restaurant on the northwest corner of the traffic light at U.S. 19 and Pepper Street in Spring Hill. This is one block south of the traffic light at Spring Hill Drive, and immediately south of Wal-Mart. Since we leave at 6:00 a.m., you must arrive earlier if you plan to have breakfast at Denny's. Call Bev Hansen to be assigned to a team.

**Hernando Audubon Society
2010-2011
Officers/Directors/Committees**

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Linda Vanderveen	352-428-2629
Vice President	
Elaine Maywalt	352-686-8195
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Eileen Riccio	352-419-5205
Secretary	
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Publicity	
Christie Anderberg	352-797-3545
Ways and Means	
Kristin Wood	352-754-6722
Website	
Lucille Lane	352-540-9746

**Audubon Adventures and
how we support
environmental education**

School is in session again, and this is our opportunity to bring *Audubon Adventures* into the classroom. Elementary school teachers who use this resource, which was developed by National Audubon Society, have a framework for teaching positive attitudes about wildlife and environmental issues. *Audubon Adventures* fits well into science and ecology lesson plans. The materials are colorful and fun to use. Many teachers use the resource for discussion groups and keeping nature journals. For some kids, this may be the first time they are really introduced to the natural world around them. For a list of the classrooms that have adopted this resource, please read the article on page 6 by our board member, Kathleen East, who coordinates the placement of *Audubon Adventures* in schools in our area.

Beyond the classroom though, education and outreach are integral to our mission and we are engaged on many fronts: our field trips are learning



experiences for adults and children; the informative monthly programs can be the basis for classroom reports; Hernando Audubon members help with some of the birding and nature studies offered at FWC's Chinsegut Nature Center; and our annual scholarship awards provide financial assistance to talented graduating high school students who want to pursue careers in the natural sciences.

All this takes money and effort, so we need your support. We have a donation jar at all our meetings. Your contributions and participation can keep these programs going. Please make a commitment to help, in any way you can.

**LINDA VANDERVEEN
CHAPTER PRESIDENT**

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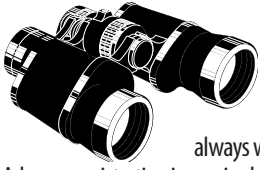
Do you have a story idea?
Call either of the editors, or e-mail hernandoaudubon@yahoo.com, with "Newsletter" in the subject line.

Welcome, new members!

Summer was in full swing in August and September and still our roles increased by another 21 members. Welcome all! We look forward to seeing you at our meetings or on a field trip. Be sure to introduce yourself to the trip leader, to me, or to one of the officers listed in the column at top left. And to our longtime members: If you know any of these individuals or see them at the next meeting, be sure to welcome them to our chapter.

Kathleen
Membership Chair

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------------|---------------|
| George Aiello | Jacqueline Costello | Terry Lonczak |
| Robyn Bloise | Dora M. Furr | Robert Orr |
| H. Brommelsick | Ann Hourin | Rick Poley |
| Roy E. Butler | Durward Hyler | George Quist |
| Wayne Clements | Ann Jaman | Gladys Simerl |
| Arlene Cole | Ivy Jones | Linda Smith |
| Mary Coombes | Beverly Labbe | Lewis Wrigh |



Field Trips and Special Events

GUIDELINES: Field trips are open to everyone, and non-members are always welcome. To participate, contact the trip leader to confirm time and meeting place.

Advance registration is required for all boat and overnight trips. Some trips require maps, which will be handed out at the monthly meeting prior to the field trip. Bring binoculars and birding guides. We suggest comfortable clothing, insect repellent, sunscreen and water or other suitable beverages. And remember: car pooling saves fuel, money and helps the environment. You can visit www.hernandoaudubon.org for updates. Please contact the organizers about third-party events which we publicize because they may be of interest to our members.

November 13 - Saturday J.B. Starkey Wilderness Park (Western Pasco County)

10500 Wilderness Park Boulevard
New Port Richey, FL 34655

Birding Walk

Start time: 8:00 a.m.

Contact: Jim Mckay - 727-207-3448

Meet in the Publix parking lot one half block southeast of Spring Hill Dr. and U.S. 19 at 7:00 a.m. and car pool, or gather at Starkey Wilderness Park Education Center at 7:45 a.m. We will be walking the trails. There is a \$2.00 per car fee (eight people to a car).

November 27 - Saturday Chinsegut Nature Center Nature and Birding Hike

North of Brooksville (Hernando County)

Start time: 8:00 a.m.

Contact: Linda Vanderveen - 352-428-2629

Meet by the kiosk in the parking lot on the Chinsegut Nature Center property at the intersection of C.R. 581 and U.S. Hwy. 41, about 6 miles north of Brooksville. We will hike a total of about 2 miles with a stop at the Nature Center. We'll be looking for birds in fields, woods, and wetland. This will be a leisurely hike.



December 4 - Saturday Brooksville Birding Hotspots Start time: 8:00 a.m.

Contact: Mary Dowdell - 352-797-7874

Gather in the parking lot on the east side of Brooksville Regional Hospital, between Cortez Blvd. and Wiscon Rd. We'll visit several public locations and private properties, finding and scouting for wetlands and ponds, as we hone our bird identification skills for the coming Christmas Bird Counts. If time allows, the trip will end at Bystre Lake, on the east side of the county.

Third-Party Event: Pelagic Birding Trip November 14 - Sunday

The Friends of the Marine Science Center in Ponce Inlet is sponsoring a pelagic birding trip on Sunday, Nov. 14. The trip will head out from the New Smyrna side of Ponce Inlet going 45 miles east to the area known as "The Steeples" – an area of sea mounts and upwellings on the western edge of the Gulf Stream. This trip holds the probability of encountering numerous pelagic species. Jaeger migration should be active. The trip will be from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The cost is \$125.

To sign up please contact:
Michael Brothers
Marine Science Center
100 Lighthouse Drive
Ponce Inlet, FL 32127
Tel.: 386-304-5543



EASTERN BLUEBIRD/L.Lane

Third-Party Event: Bluebird Blitz November 20 and 21 Saturday and Sunday

The Florida Bluebird Society will be conducting a statewide Bluebird Blitz on November 20 and 21. According to a press release issued by the society, a blitz is a concentrated effort on the specific target dates to locate as many Eastern Bluebirds as possible.

The organizers believe that the winter blitz, this November, will help them learn where Bluebirds find food and survival habitat between the end of the breeding season and migration time, until breeding activity begins again.

The society will also hold a spring blitz, on April 2 and 3 next year, which they expect will help them identify where Bluebirds are breeding and nesting.

To participate, go to the Florida Bluebird Society's website (www.floridabluebirdsociety.com), click on the Bluebird Blitz tab in the navigation bar at left, and then download and print the report form for the winter blitz. You must choose the area where you will look for Eastern Bluebirds, record your results on the form and then e-mail the form to cmckinney47@tampabay.rr.com or mail it to: Bluebird Blitz, 6411 Oakdell Dr., Tampa, FL 33634.

RCWs thrive in Citrus Tract of the Withlacoochee State Forest

BY BEV HANSEN, ORNITHOLOGY EDITOR



CLIMBING HIGH. Red-cockaded Woodpeckers build their cavities high in their chosen pine tree. It takes skill and no fear of heights to climb these tall trees to remove the chicks for banding or to monitor the nest.

Photo: Myrna Erler-Bradshaw

2010 has been an excellent year for raising Red-cockaded Woodpeckers (RCW) chicks in the 50,000-acre Citrus Tract of the Withlacoochee State Forest, located in Citrus County. For the past five years, there have been more than 50 clusters (RCW areas) where a male and female were in residence. This summer, of the 64 RCW pairs that might have bred, 54 attempted nesting, and only one RCW pair was unsuccessful in raising chicks. Ninety-nine chicks hatched – a record for Citrus – and all but two of those chicks left the nest, or fledged! An average of 1.8 chicks fledged per nest, the highest Citrus rate of reproduction in the last 13 years. In seven nests, three chicks fledged, which is another record.

The chicks are banded while they're still in the nest. When nestlings are six to nine days old, metal and colored plastic bands are attached to their legs. To reach the chicks, a bander must climb a 20- to 60-foot ladder to the nest cavity and capture the chicks with a noose. The nestlings are brought to the ground and banded before being returned to the nest cavity. With this new color-coded "jewelry," the chicks can be sexed and identified in the field, as can the previously banded adults.

Over 250 RCWs, in 74 clusters, were living in the Citrus Tract this summer. Both figures are the highest totals in recent history. Because more than 50 pairs of RCWs breed

in the Citrus Tract, this population qualifies as a donor population. That is, a few of the chicks hatched in the current year can be captured and translocated (moved) to a smaller RCW population in another part of Florida where attempts are being made to increase the number of RCWs.

Such translocations from Citrus Tract have occurred in past years. In 2006, two female chicks from the Citrus Tract were moved to the Croom Tract. The next year, five female and three male chicks were translocated from Citrus to Picayune Strand State Forest in Collier County in southwest Florida, and to St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, south of Tallahassee. In 2008, one female chick was moved to Camp Blanding near Starke, and one female chick went to St. Sebastian River Preserve State Park on the central Florida Atlantic coast. In October, 12 RCW chicks



DATA, DATA, DATA. Michele de Verteuil checks the materials in her work kit. Monitoring the endangered RCWs requires extensive and accurate record-keeping. Michelle is currently in Texas working on a Master's degree.

Photo: Myrna Erler-Bradshaw



DELICATE TOUCH. With gentle hands, Withlacoochee State Forest biologist Denise Wilde secures an identification band on a recently hatched RCW chick. The bands make it possible for the scientists and volunteers who monitor the birds to track them throughout their lifetime. Photo: Bev Hansen

(six males and six females), were translocated to J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area near West Palm Beach. A great deal of work went into preparing for this translocation. Nancy Dwyer, Mary Dowdell, and other Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) biologists and volunteers, spent many evenings in Citrus clusters, identifying family composition and watching which cavities the chicks used for their nightly roost. Then they crossed their fingers that the chicks would remain in the same cavities on the night of translocation – but in case crossing their fingers wasn't sufficient, they also had to locate the roosting sites of 12 “backup” chicks, in case the first-target chicks eluded capture. Back at the Corbett recipient site, 12 artificial cavity inserts had to be installed in living pine trees, so that the Citrus subadults would have a new home. On the big night, a team from

Corbett WMA and many assistants went to the designated clusters at dusk to watch and wait until the chosen chick entered the roost tree. Then a volunteer held a big capture net, like a fishing net on a long pole, in front of the cavity entrance, and scratched on the tree to entice the chick to fly into the net. Each in its own padded box, all the chicks were immediately driven to Corbett and placed in a prepared tree cavity. Once each chick was in its own cavity, a screen was placed on the front of the cavity entrance so that the bird could see out, but not escape. At dawn the following day, as other RCWs were emerging from their roosting cavities, the screens were removed from the cavities containing the newly arrived RCW chicks.

The researchers hope that the chicks are exploring their new home and mixing and matching with each

other, and with the RCWs already in residence in Corbett. The success rate using this technique is high – often more than 50 percent of these subadults remain to breed in their new homes. If all goes well, these chicks will be producing their own chicks in Corbett next May and June.

Cooperation among multi-agency staff and dedicated volunteers allows this conservation project to succeed. This exciting program can use your valuable help. You can assist regardless of the time of day you are available, whether it's before sunrise, at sunset, or at any time during the day in the cool of winter or during the busy breeding season.

To lend a hand, please contact:

Brooksville Ridge volunteer coordinator AnneMarie Hammond: annemarie.hammond@myfwc.com (352) 754-6722, or Citrus RCW biologist Mary Dowdell: mary.dowdell@myfwc.com



JUVENILE RCW. The hunchback posture of this bird helps to identify it as a juvenile. Adults tend to have straighter backs. Photo: Myrna Erler-Bradshaw

Your support of *Audubon Adventures* brings the natural world closer to our classrooms

Every year, when school starts in the fall, classrooms across Hernando County receive their first issue of *Audubon Adventures*, courtesy of our chapter. *Audubon Adventures* is a 4-color serial publication sent to classroom teachers who request it to supplement their science and ecology curriculum. This year, almost half of the subscriptions will be going to classrooms at J.D. Floyd K8 Environmental Science School. Other schools participating this year include Deltona, Spring Hill and Suncoast Elementary schools, Challenger K8 and West Hernando Middle schools. The Hernando County 4H program, Chinsegut Nature Center, and the Springs Coast Environmental Center also use this teaching tool to educate our next generation about conservation and the importance of preserving our natural environment.

Each subscription costs just \$45.65. If you would like to sponsor a classroom in a public or private school, contact me with the name of the classroom teacher and the school. I'll take care of the rest.

Kathleen East
Membership Chair
Tel.: 352-666-3066
E-mail: keast05@earthlink.net



BY BOB KEIM, CONSERVATION CHAIR

On Aug. 31, Lucille Lane, our public relations chair, was our representative at the final Hernando County Board of County Commissioners' hearing on the Quarry Preserve development. After she let me know that this item had passed 4-1, several thoughts occurred to me. Hernando Audubon's immediate past conservation chair, Joe Murphy, advocated consistently against the project, and even though the Commission eventually approved this mega-development, we should not be discouraged. When future challenges to our natural environment arise, we must be a strong and persistent voice throughout the review process. It is my belief that we must have the ability to be involved in development processes from the beginning, and to remain active players for as long as it takes.

And yes, it is work. And yes, it requires time, which often seems to be our most treasured resource. But, as Margaret Mead noted: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world." So consider this column a call to those who want to help preserve what environment we do have in this part of the world, and to those who want the salt marshes of our coastal zone to remain healthy. We need your help.

To put things in a broader perspective, on Sept. 25, Audubon conservation activists, 20 of us, representing chapters from

Conservation: Commitment and priorities

Clearwater to Hernando County, met with Jacqui Sulek, chapters coordinator for Audubon of Florida. Our goal was twofold: (1) To get a sense of the current conservation environment in each chapter, and (2) To set priorities for Florida's Gulf Coast ecosystem. In this latter cause, we reaffirmed an existing set of eight areas of concern for working with public decision-makers. They are:

- Promote science-based decisions regarding water resources, their use and protection;
- Strengthen "smart growth" regionally, and work with others concerned to do so;
- Advocate for wildlife corridors; oppose fragmentation of systems like the Green Swamp;
- Work with Audubon of Florida to strengthen conservation of shore-dependent birds;
- Support wildlife management programs for critical Florida animal species;
- Participate locally in national and statewide energy legislation campaigns;
- Provide outreach, education and leadership on climate issues;
- Oppose offshore drilling for oil.

**Conservation
Committee
Meeting:
November 10
6:00 p.m.
Ahhochee Hill**

Our Hernando Audubon conservation committee will be looking at these priorities as they apply specifically to our corner of the world. The first meeting of the committee will be on Nov.10, from 6:00 until 8:00 p.m. at Audubon's Ahhochee Hill Sanctuary. To join the group, e-mail me at rbkeim@gmail.com or talk with me at the next chapter meeting. I look forward to hearing from you.

Florida is host to rare hummingbird species in winter

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission recently issued a reminder to Florida residents that, in addition to being a stopoff for rare hummingbird species from out West migrating to or from their winter homes in the tropics, some of these species spend the winter in our state.

According to biologist Mark Kiser, who coordinates the FWC's Great Florida Birding Trail, at least nine migrant species have been recorded in Florida during the winter, including Rufous, Black-chinned, Calliope, Buff-bellied, Broad-billed, Broad-tailed, White-eared, Anna's and Allen's hummingbirds. Look for these birds between now and early spring.

Attract hummers by providing energy-generating food to help them during their residence here or during migration, when they make their journey over the Gulf of Mexico. An inexpensive hummingbird feeder will do the trick. Keep it clean and stocked with a fresh solution of one part white granular sugar and four parts water that has been brought to a boil and cooled. Clean the feeder regularly with a vinegar-and-water solution.

To report a winter hummer sighting, please contact ornithology editor Bev Hansen at 352-686-0460, bevalhansen@earthlink.net

Our website, www.hernandoaudubon.org, has color photos of some of our rare winter visitors.



BROAD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD.

© Danny Bales, FWC

Hernando County's Environmentally Sensitive Lands: Cypress Lakes Preserve



WORKDAY AT CYPRESS LAKES. On Sept. 25, National Public Lands Day, volunteers collected and removed trash from the preserve. Members of Brooksville Cub Scout Troop No. 71 were there in force. Photo: Jim King, Hernando County Planning Dept.

The 331-acre Cypress Lakes Preserve is located in the eastern part of Hernando County, at the intersection of State Road 50 and Ridge Manor Boulevard.

The preserve contains seven natural plant communities, including five designated by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) as imperiled. These communities include lakes, freshwater marsh, cypress swamp, bottomland hardwoods, live oak hammocks, scrub, and sandhills. The diversity in plant

communities supports many animals, including some that are threatened or endangered.

A section of the Florida National Scenic Trail winds through the preserve and provides opportunities for hiking, observing the variety of vegetative communities, and nature watching. Bird watching is most productive in the fall and winter months when migrants are present. Hernando County plans to



CYPRESS LAKES gets its name from a series of swamps where cypress trees predominate. Photo: Lucille Lane

build additional trails and trail head facilities in the near future.

(This article is based on material available on the Hernando County Planning Department website, <http://www.hernandocounty.us/plan/ESL/preserves/>)



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is to promote an
awareness and
appreciation of nature;
to preserve and protect
wildlife and natural
ecosystems; and to
encourage responsible
environmental
stewardship.



Season's
Greetings
and all good
wishes
for a great
year in
2011

Yes, I want to become a member of the Audubon Society! Enclosed is my check
for \$20, payable to the **National Audubon Society**.
(New memberships only - Please do not use for renewals)

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Address _____

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Phone _____

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Please enclose check made payable to **National Audubon Society** and mail to:
Membership, Hernando Audubon Society, P.O. Box 1678, Brooksville, FL 34605

As a member you receive:

Audubon—the award-winning publication of the National Audubon Society,
Florida Naturalist—Audubon of Florida's flagship magazine,
and our chapter newsletter, *Hernando Audubon News*.

To receive our newsletter **IN COLOR**, check the box below.

Yes, please send my copy of NEWS by e-mail as a PDF file.