

CIZ E2507

WELCOME TO THE LAKE REGION AUDUBON'S NEWSLETTER

Lake Region Audubon Society, Inc.
115 Lameraux Road
Winter Haven, FL 33884
www.lakeregionaudubon.org
A non-profit 501(c)(3) Corporation

IN THIS ISSUE

- Eagle Watch in Progress*
- Butterfly Counts 2012*
- Stormwater Runoff Fees*
- Bird Feeders*
- Ospreys*
- Rookery Report*
- Remembering "Lewis" Wright*
- Updates & Events*



THE SCRUB JAY TIMES

A Quarterly Look Inside Lake Region Audubon Society



The Neiberline family watching their assigned nest in north Lakeland.

EagleWatch in Progress

By R. Munguia

We were pleased to see more than 50 people join us for the EagleWatch Training Session at Circle B Bar Reserve. Even more impressive was the interest many people showed in protecting our national symbol. The program started in full swing with assignments including monitoring several cellphone towers that were due for repairs.

The season promises to be full of action as our eagles are playing the shuffle game. Normally most Florida eagles move up north as soon as their babies fledge, so they spend their summer months away from the nest site. This year, however, many of our eagles stayed for the summer, and many who left were back by July. Additionally, some have decided to build new alternate nests or are taking over osprey nests. This obviously is going to produce more bird interactions that may result in injuries. During

the 2011-2012 season we recovered 8 eagles, some of which were injured during territorial fights; three were youngsters with avian pox, a viral disease transmitted by mosquitoes.

At the end of last season, we also said farewell to Lynda White as she retired from her position as the Audubon



Eagle Watch coordinator for Florida. No better way to celebrate than allowing her one more eagle release. The lucky bird was #450, a bird I rescued from

a golf course in Winter Haven. We needed to release the bird near a pair with fledglings to ensure the bird's success. In no time, we found a suitable location at the Sanlan Sanctuary where eagle nest PO046 resides. Last year we had 38 successful fledglings in Polk. Now we'll have to see what the new season brings.

Fourth Of July Butterfly Counts 2012

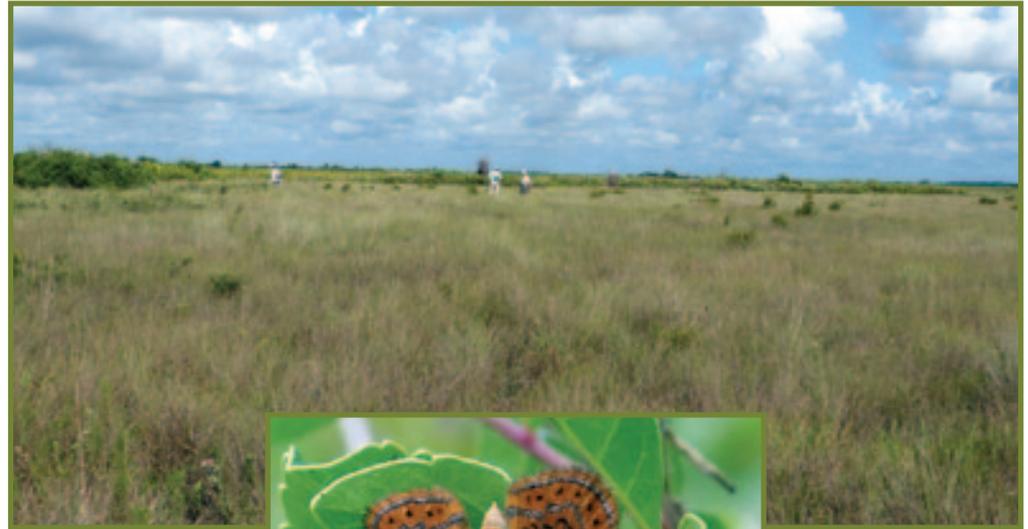
Photos & Text by Linda F. Cooper

This marks the 17th year we have been counting butterflies for the North American Butterfly Association's Fourth of July Butterfly Counts. The two counts sponsored by Lake Region Audubon are Disney Wilderness Preserve and Kissimmee Prairie Sanctuary. Count circles are set up exactly as Audubon's Christmas Bird Count circles – a 15-mile diameter circle. Teams spread out from 9 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. or so, depending on the weather, covering as much of the circle as they can. The counts are done in June and July throughout the U. S., Canada and Mexico. They are published each year by the North American Butterfly Association (NABA). Instead of giving you a summary of just these two counts as I usually do, I will give you highlights of the seven counts my husband Buck Cooper compiles.

Avon Park Air Force Range – Polk and Highlands Counties - count was held on 5 June with three teams and eight participants. This was the 4th year of the count. Gray Hairstreak was the most numerous species with 209 seen. Count totals were 44 species and 583 individuals. This is the best year we have had at APAFR. A lost cell phone and flat tire made this a count to remember.

Colt Creek State Park – Polk County - count was held on 10 June. It was the 6th year of the count. It covers inside the park and public lands outside the park inside the count circle. Three teams and seven individuals covered the properties. Fiery Skipper had almost ten times the number seen on last year's count – 226 vs 27. Twelve Gemmed Satyrs and four Appalachian Browns, two species hard to find in Polk were tallied. Count totals were 59 species and 1537 individuals.

Lake Louisa State Park – Lake County – count was held on 16 June. It was the 8th year of the count. Two teams and nine individuals covered inside the park only. This is a good park for swallowtails, fritillaries and heliconians. Fifty-seven Zebra Swal-



lowtails, 48 Tiger Swallowtails and 149 Palamedes Swallowtails were tallied. We recorded 387 Gulf Fritillaries, our highest number

even for this count. Zebra Heliconians have made a great recovery since the freezes of 2008 -10. When we recorded seven in 2009, zero in 2010 and eight in 2011 we could see directly the impact of the freeze on this subtropical species. We were thrilled to record 161 this year! They seemed to be fluttering in every shady area in the park. Count totals were 42 species (the most ever) and 1208 individuals (the most ever). Lake Louisa SP has a Citizens Support Organization (CSO) who offered to sponsor this count beginning with the 2013 count. Thanks to new park manager Scott Spaulding (formerly at Colt Creek) and Division Fire Coordinator Rosi Mulholland for helping this happen. This gives us three sponsored counts now.

Disney Wilderness Preserve – Polk and Osceola Counties – count was held on 30 June. It was the 17th year of the count. Four teams with thirteen individuals covered the count circle. Poinciana resident Eli Lopez counted his butterfly garden. You can read the article about his garden online at Eli Lopez's Poinciana Butterfly Garden. Eight Aaron's, four Palmetto and three Palatka Skippers were excellent finds inside DWP. Orange-barred and Large Orange Sulphur outside the park were good finds. Count totals were 61

species and 841 individuals. This is the highest species count since 2008 but not the highest count of individuals.

The Bull Creek WMA count was held on 5 July. This was the 7th year of the count. It consists of three properties, all in Osceola County near Holopaw: Bull Creek WMA, Triple N Ranch WMA and Forever Florida, a private working ranch with conservation easements. Three teams with seven participants covered the individual properties. A HUGE find at Triple N Ranch was Gray Ministreak, a tiny tropical hairstreak, rarely seen outside extreme south Florida. Arogos Skipper, a rare skipper with specific habitat requirements was found at Forever Florida. Berry's Skipper, another skipper with specific habitat requirements was found at Bull Creek. Count totals were 61 species and 1495 individuals, the most species and the most individuals ever for the count.

Kissimmee Prairie Sanctuary – Okeechobee County – count was held on 14 July. It was the 17th year of the count. It covers Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park and land outside the park. Four teams and fifteen individuals covered the count circle. This is the count that attracts people from out of state because of its skipper reputation. Sure enough, both Tennessee and New Jersey butterfly enthusiasts arrived to help as well as participants from around the state. One Soldier

was seen, the first one since 2009 and only the 7th individual. Skippers never disappoint here though we have had higher numbers of individuals. Aaron's, Palmetto, Palatka and Monk all had good showings. One team even found Neamathla Skipper, a very uncommon skipper. The 19 Berry's Skippers were the highest we have recorded during the counts. Missing this year was Georgia Satyr, probably due to below average rainfall and a recent burn. Count totals were 55 species and 1164 individuals. The interesting thing about this count is that you never know what will turn up here. Two weeks prior to the count an out of state butterfly enthusiast found and photographed a fresh Gray Ministreak along the main park road. Several days after the count, park biologist Paul Miller found and photographed a Julia in his yard in the park. Gray Mini was new for the park and Julia has not been seen inside the park since 2004.

Okeechobee – Okeechobee County – count was held on 15 July. This is the 8th year of the count. It includes Arnold's Wildlife Rehab Center and huge butterfly garden as well as areas around the county and Lake Okeechobee. Two teams and twelve

individuals participated. Highlights were 58 Orange-banded Sulphurs, 35 Tawny Emperors and 13 Hackberry Emperors, our highest totals for these species. Four Soldiers were seen at Arnold's. Even this far south Zebra Heliconian numbers have been greatly reduced since the freezes until this year when 105 were tallied. Count totals were 55 species and 1260 individuals. This one finishes up the counts Buck compiles. We participated in eight other counts as well. We welcome help with the counts. Even if you don't know much about butterflies, extra eyes are a big help. You can contact us at LCooper298@aol.com.

Thanks to all our participants who make the counts a very enjoyable summer experience. We could not do it without their help. Hats off to Sue Arnold, Edie and Nick Banner, Ben Bindschadler, Steve Clendinen, Dave and Marga Cutler, Stan Czaplicki, Debbie Dixon, Jim DuBois, Alana Edwards, Christina Evans, Jean Evoy, Sue Farnsworth, Bill Grow, Anne Henderson, Troy Hershberger, Bart Jones, Kevin Kane, Mike Kanyuh, Kevin Keating, Eli Lopez, Patricia Meza, Diana Miller, Paul Miller,

Kevin and Rosie Mulholland, Sandie Mulrooney, Tom Palmer, Nancy Prine, Petra Royston, Laurie Udine. We appreciate all the volunteer hours you contribute each count season. Hats off most of all to Buck who participated in all the counts despite having a new heart valve in early May. Determination plays a great role in how we handle everyday living and he was determined to do the counts. I greatly admire his zest for living each day as best he can.

Thanks also to state park and public lands managers as well as private individuals who welcome us to their properties. Thanks also to Lake Region Audubon Society for continuing to sponsor our butterfly counts. As many of you know, the Center has been very busy in the past year, offering multiple opportunities for our members to get educated, have fun and give more of their time for our well-being as Audubon chapter. It is because of this, and with a desire to make you want to wish you'd been here, that we are starting this section about what has happened, so that you see what you have been missing.

Stormwater Runoff Fees By Chuck Geanangel

Over the years, Polk County's beautiful lakes have suffered tremendously from the destructive effects of pollution. Point source pollution, such as raw sewage and industrial and city waste, has been gradually eliminated, but a more insidious problem remains. That is storm water runoff. During heavy summer storms, lawn clippings, fertilizer, and street debris flow into nearby lakes. Catchment basins, road sweepers, and fertilizer ordinances are some of the methods used to combat this threat. Today, storm water treatment is mandated by the Federal and State government so Polk County has no choice but to adopt some form of protection. All of the cities in the County already have storm water runoff fees but unincorporated Polk County does not. I have not seen a cost associated with the program but it may be as high as \$9 million. There are two ways to pay for this effort, either from the general fund where ev-

eryone in the county pays an equal share or a storm water treatment fee that only affects people who directly impact the runoff. Another advantage to this latter approach is that the fee can be collected in a fund exclusive for water treatment only. Although the county staff has wisely chosen the latter, it was killed by the BoCC on Thursday. Unfortunately, Polk County has done such a poor job of selling this plan that most people don't understand what this is all about. So they now will look at the general fund and see if they can find \$9 million there to fund the improvements. I can tell you now that they don't have that much cash floating around, so other essentials will have to be cut. There is talk of forming a Citizens Stakeholders Committee to help shape any new approach. This may buy us some time but the clock is running...

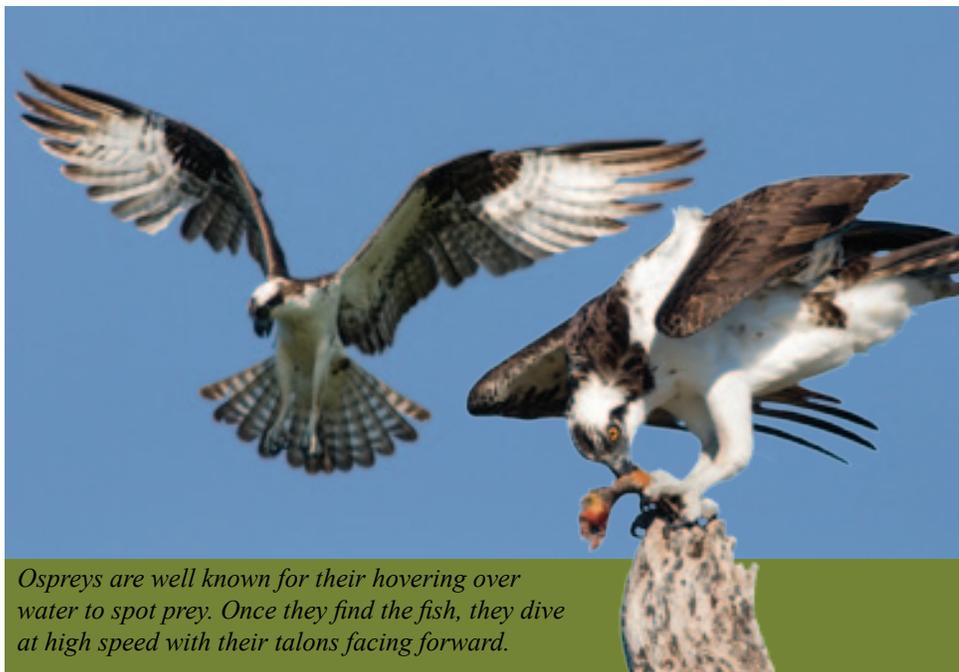
Bird Feeders

New feeders were installed around the pond at the Street Audubon Nature Center. The LRAS Bird Club provided and installed four feeding stations to attract more birds to the viewing area.



Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*)

By Steffanie Munguia



Ospreys are well known for their hovering over water to spot prey. Once they find the fish, they dive at high speed with their talons facing forward.

A commonplace sighting along our Florida waterways, ospreys are among the most easily recognized raptors. But how much do you really know about these birds?

Unique among North American hawks for their exclusive diet of fish, ospreys stand out from their fellow raptors in several ways. Ospreys are truly specialized fishing masters, capable of hovering briefly over a single spot to get a better look at their prey before plunging into the water. They get a better grip on their catch by changing their toe arrangement, from the typical three forward, one back used by most raptors for perching, to two forward and two back, which provides a more balanced grip. They are such successful fishermen that they have a success rate around 25-70% - you try to match that next time you're out on the water!

In spite of all of their distinctive qualities, they can sometimes be misidentified, so here are some helpful tips to recognize them. Seen from below while in flight, ospreys have a white breast, and light colored underwings with a distinctive dark patch at the wrists. They have characteristically amber colored eyes and bluish-gray feet.

Their backs are almost entirely brown colored, and their faces have a distinctive chocolate colored eye stripe. Ospreys also tend to look thinner and more disheveled than other raptors, and are less than two feet long with a wingspan of more than five feet. They fly with a distinctive kink in the wings, unlike other hawks, such that their wings form an "M" shape from below.

If you live in Polk County, you have indubitably seen nesting ospreys. Their breeding season can begin as early as November and end in late July. A typical clutch will consist of two or three chicks, a number which can drop to only one in years of scarcity when fish can be hard to come by. Ospreys will typically build their large stick nests on tall structures or trees with fairly easy access. Although they would naturally build on trees, there has been an overwhelming shift to manmade structures, including cell towers, power-line poles, and osprey platforms, built to discourage ospreys from nesting on nearby towers.

Though breeding is common in Polk County, ospreys are actually quite scarce in other counties and other states. Like the bald eagle,

ospreys were severely affected by DDT, and have made significant progress since its elimination, but in some areas, their comeback has not been quite as explosive.

Want to monitor these birds? You can visit the Cornell Lab of Ornithology website, www.allabout-birds.org, and watch a live nest camera. To participate in a citizen science program, visit the Osprey Watch program website, www.osprey-watch.org, to locate nest sites near you and even sign up to provide updates to researchers about nests right in your backyard.

Rookery Report

by Reinier Munguia

For the last 4 years the LRAS has been monitoring a local wading bird rookery with the purpose of collecting data on wood storks. To our surprise, the rookery's success has attracted many other species and it currently provides nesting habitat for all species of herons and egrets, ibises, limpkins, roseate spoonbills and even brown pelicans.

Due to the importance of this rookery, the LRAS, in conjunction with Lillian Blessing and the Audubon's Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries, is working on getting more protection for this fragile environment. Since the rookery is located in a lake open to the public, many watercraft users come close to the nesting islands, disturbing the birds. With the assistance of the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, new signage will be provided, and the possibility of a city ordinance to control the access to motorized vessels is in the making.



Remembering "Lewis" Wright

March 11, 1919 - October 4, 2012

On October 4th we lost a friend and a supportive individual of the Lake Region Audubon Society. Mr. Lewis Wright was 93 and had been fighting leukemia.

Mr. Wright was a very accomplished man and served his country during WWII. In 1951, he graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in Entomology and Plant Pathology. He later worked for the Florida State Board of Health as Entomologist to enforce the Florida Pest Control Act in the state.

After several years working for a nationwide pest control company, Lewis decided to venture into the business by establishing Wright Pest Control in Winter Haven.



But his legacy for conservation dates back to his teenage years, when we organized an expedition to the Dry Tortugas for the Department of the Interior. There he banded more than 3,000 sooty tern juveniles.

Lewis was a member of the LRAS board and was always willing to give advice and support when organizing special events and educational programs. Those that spent time around him know how generous he was and his love for children

and education. Multiple times while negotiating the budget for Nature Faire, he would ask: "Are

the children getting anything out of this? Then let's do it." He was quick at reaching for his pocket to help the cause.

We are deeply sorry for his departure, but will always remember him for his passion for insects and love for the natural world. The LRAS will refresh the insect collection he donated to the society and will produce an insect exhibit to honor him. Our condolences to his family and friends.



Updates & Events

Water Wings & Wild Things

November 3rd from 10am-2:00pm
Circle B Bar Reserve
Join the LRAS during this event full of outdoor fun. Bring your kids to our booth to enjoy activities and live animal encounters.

Join the Bird Club sponsored birdwatching hikes at Circle B.

Nov 10th & 24th, 2012
Dec 8th & 22nd, 2012
Jan 12th & 26th, 2013
Feb 9th & 23rd, 2013

Snakes Alive!

Saturday, Nov. 10th @ 10:00am
Circle B Bar (Workshop)
Join us for a live animal presentation on snakes. The program, which includes several native species of snakes, will also cover some invasive species and some really interesting species from around the world.

LRAS Annual Christmas Party

Sunday Dec 2nd, 2:00 pm
Street Audubon Nature Center
Come and join us for a great time among fellow members of the LRAS. The LRAS will provide the main course. Please bring something to share such as dessert or finger foods.

Breakfast With The Birds

Thursday Dec. 15th @ 9:00am
Street Audubon Nature Center
Enjoy a delicious breakfast surrounded by beautiful parrots from around the world. Meet some interesting birds such as "Sammy" the scarlet macaw, and "Sugar" the white cockatoo. Come and take your picture with them and enjoy a presentation on parrots from around the world.

LRAS Christmas Bird Count

Dec 15th, 2012
Contact Paul Fellers at 863-293-0486 to help with the

count and for more information.

Bird-A-Thon Dec 15th, 2012

For the Bird-A-Thon fundraiser, please contact Janet Anderson at (863) 965-8241

Coming Up (Jan 2013)

Dinner Presentations

Birding Puerto Rico - TBA
Birding Panama - TBA

Workshops

Painting Birds - TBA
Feather Painting - TBA

Stay tuned for the latest information on programs and events by visiting our website at: www.lakeregionaudubon.org.

If you have any suggestions on programs or events you would like to see, please send us an email at: info@lakeregionaudubon.org

