The feeders were hung, hoping beyond hope to help out the wintering hummingbirds who normally feast on tropical salvia, native petunia, and many other local winter flowering plant and tree species. But this winter was definitely different. Plants in the local gardens did not look the same as normal. Most of the seasonal winter flowers were gone. So much for our usually mild winters.

As we all struggled with the blighted look of our gardens, many species of bees, wasps, nectaring birds and butterflies were just out of luck. So on January the 21st of this very long and cool winter the unusual happened. I noticed two hummingbirds visiting my feeders.

At first, I was just happy to provide the needed nectar (1 part sugar to four parts purified water). I enjoyed trying to catch glimpses of these tiny yet powerful flyers. I noticed that they were not the same type of hummingbird, but my photos left a lot to be desired. Then after the larger bird moved on, I noticed the smaller hummer was a bit different from the normal Ruby-throated hummer plumage. After trying many times, I was able to get a fairly decent picture of this marvelous little bird. I sent it off via e-mail to my friend in Lakeland, Mary Boston. She has been feeding hummers in the winter and plants for wildlife just like I do. If anyone would know, she would. Well, not so fast.

Enter Doreen Cubie, a Master Bander from South Carolina. She travels all over the country and bands hummingbirds throughout the year, but especially in the winter months. This research allows scientists to understand the winter movements of these long distance migratory birds. Several months later, my visitor was banded and she stayed on until Wednesday, the 1st of April, 2010.

With the spring blooming of the flowering plants and the return of the insects, she was visiting the feeders less and less and eventually allowed a few passing Ruby-throated Hummers to visit her feeders without getting her feathers in an uproar. I can not wait till next winter to see if she returns.
Florida’s environmental future can be shaped by many or by just a few. Which way would you like to have it? I, for one, wish to be counted as a doer, not a viewer. I, like so many other individuals, have been looking for work. At first, not finding any in my chosen field and bored out of my gourd, I sought out opportunities to become involved in my community. I volunteered for several different facilities, some just a few times and others for several years. I have found a home here at Lake Region Audubon.

The Board invited me to volunteer for a few months in 2008 and in March of 2009 decided they wanted me to join the Board. I accepted and was elected in March of 2009. Soon after, I took on the added responsibility of Recording Secretary at monthly Board meetings. In March of 2010, I was elected President of Lake Region Audubon Society. I hope to meet each and every one of the existing Audubon members, garner new members from the folks I meet along the way, and serve you with distinction.

The healthy future of our local natural areas is in danger. That danger comes from good people who think that there is nothing they can do to effect change. I believe each of us holds the key to our own future and the future of the world around us. If we learn as much as possible about the interconnected nature of all living things, we realize that what we do and the decisions we make on an individual basis, can and will modify the future.

My background maybe interesting to all of the membership since I have had the distinct pleasure of working with children and animals for the last twenty five years of my career. I spent almost ten years in the Palm Beach Zoological Society as an Education Curator and Special Events Coordinator, and another ten years as the Education Curator and Exhibits Coordinator of the Loggerhead Marinelife Center of Juno Beach, both in south Florida. I have also worked for a Wild Animal Park and been a Charter Docent for the Central Florida Zoo back when I was in college the second time and living in Sanford. I have been a resident of Florida since I was two-weeks old, some fifty five years. My two children are grown and graduated from college, and I miss their presence in my daily life, so I have a pretty big phone bill every month. I graduated from USF Lakeland in 2008 and am now employed there.

All the members of the Society Board invite you to let us design a program, special project, or tour for your group. Education can be new and exciting in an outdoor environment where you are given the tools to become a steward of nature.

President’s thoughts...

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So do you believe the story that the threat to wildlife in the Gulf Region is over? Please think again. Where did all that oil really go? What about the toxic chemical dispersant? When will we know the total cost to our wildlife?

Migration is coming! Fall bird migrations start as early as September. As birds move down from the northern tier of states, they stop along their routes to refresh and fuel up for the next leg. Here in the Gulf Region is where many stop for refueling before making the crossing of the Gulf of Mexico into their final wintering habitat somewhere south of Florida. Will they find a healthy, safe food supply? These questions will be answered soon enough.

Our Center would like to educate a team of volunteers who will observe and report about the presence and health of migrating birds wherever they are within the State of Florida. Classes will be starting in September so volunteer now so you don’t miss the training.

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The Gulf Coast Disaster’s Migrating Victims

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Successful Non-Profits >>>

WE ONLY THRIVE WITH YOUR HELP!

What good is a facility whose mission is to conserve wild places for wildlife if no one knows they are there? Over the years, Lake Region Audubon Society has taught many local residents the finer points of bird identification and bird watching, wildflower identification, butterfly identification, and nature photography, including an appreciation of the many native conservation areas found throughout Polk and the surrounding cities and counties.

Our Nature Center located in Winter Haven is run by a special group of people. These dedicated individuals have given of themselves both time, sweat, and, of course, money. The current Gulf crisis has renewed many local peoples’ desires to help the environment. But we don’t all live on the coast, and to volunteer there may be both a monetary hardship or unachievable due to time constraints of work and family commitments.

So why not get involved locally?

Families who work on projects outdoors together gain so much from the experience. Why not help yourselves by helping us maintain and beautify our habitat for wildlife? Come join us in our quest to be good stewards of nature’s beauty. Call now!

Can you tell which birds these are just by looking at these small clues? If you think you can, send your answers to guessid@lakeregionaudubon.org to win these signed prints. The first two to answer correctly win two 8x12’s signed by the photographer. Winners will be announced on our website.

GUESSID

Photo 1

Photo 2
Where have all the butterflies gone?

Please report your sightings to our website. This past winter’s cold fronts have not only affected our gardens but also the insects that need nectar to survive. Butterflies and bees are useful pollinators and are among the most affected by a lack of blooming plants. We are gathering information to help understand...

..how this winter’s many frosty nights have affected the overall returning butterfly and pollinating insect populations. This Citizen Science program will help us become better stewards of our local environment.

The online survey will allow us to garner information from around Polk County that otherwise is reserved to organized butterfly counts done several times per year on very limited site locations.

As we collect this data, we will publish the results for local residents, city, and county administrators and researchers to see. This type of Citizen Science has always been the key to understanding on a grand scale just what wildlife is abundant or not. To make observations, please visit our online reporting site at: www.lakeregionaudubon.org and click the Butterfly Forum icon for a link to the survey.

Pollinating insects are affected by weather and pollution in the air, water, and food sources they require to survive. They allow us to benefit from their pollinating activities and without them, we would have a very reduced food supply. To honor them, all residents should make a concerted effort to reduce home pollutants and always plant with wildlife in mind.

Planting native vegetation is also key to having good nectar sources around during unusual weather like drought and overly cool winters.

Q: What is making that noise? Could it be a bird?

A: Well yes, I believe it is. Do you here that tap, tapping, or drumming noise like someone tapping on metal or wood? That, my friends, might be and most often is a Woodpecker. Woodpeckers are cavity dwelling birds, needing old dead or dying trees to build their nests in and raise their young. Polk County has a few types of woodpeckers including: Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Downy Woodpeckers, Red headed Woodpeckers, and Pileated Woodpeckers, just to mention a few. Generally it is the male bird that drums, but females have been noted to also drum while looking for a mate. Check out the gallery of woodpecker pictures on our website and learn more.
Our goal at Lake Region Audubon is to teach our community about conservation through education and advocacy, focusing on the conservation and restoration of birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. As a way to expose our chapter to the community, we needed a more attractive website with lots of information that could keep members and non-members coming back to our site. The new website will provide the general public with needed resources on bird conservation, identification and many other topics, and most importantly, a full-featured calendar with all upcoming events hosted by the LRAS.

The website features basic birding information including identification, links to the best birding places, and projects you can do to help our local wildlife. We’re also introducing a Citizen Science Program, in which people like you can help gather information to be used in research. Some projects include butterfly surveys, construction and installation of nesting boxes, and habitat improvements.

The site will be hosting our full color newsletter as well as other educational materials. New pages will be uploaded as new material becomes available; articles and trip reports will change periodically. Your support is highly appreciated. If you want to publish your nature based writings on our website or in our newsletter, feel free to submit your articles or comments to: editor@lakeregionaudubon.org.

Please feel free to explore the new resources. Your feedback is very important to us, so please send us any suggestions you may have. RM

www.lakeregionaudubon.org

Upcoming Events

For an updated list of events and detailed information, please check our calendar on our website. We currently have too many events to list on the newsletter. All events are held at the Street Audubon, Winter Haven unless specified. Here are some upcoming events:

**Fall Warbler Migration Walks**
Every Saturday until last Saturday of November. Meet at the back of Saddle Creek Park at 8:00am.
Fee: Free

**Nature For Kids (Starts Sept 11th)**
Environmental education program for kids with lots of activities including crafts and experiments. Every 2nd Sat of the month from Sept-Mar. (Two sessions 9:00am-12:00, 1:00-4:00pm)
Fee: Free; reservations required

**Costa Rica: Great Birding, Great Food. (Sept 16th, 6:00pm)**
Join us for dinner and a journey through Costa Rica’s best birding spots. There will be a raffle of two beautiful prints, tasty Costa Rican food, and much more.
Fee: $10.00

**Photography Class for Adults (Sept 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th; 9-12:00pm)**
Professional Photographer Tony Catalano will show you how to improve the quality of your photography. Fee: $50.00

**Birding 101 Workshop & Outing (Oct 5th, 7th, 6-8pm; 9th, 7:00am)**
Learn the basics of bird identification and techniques used in the field. This workshop includes two indoor classes and one outing.
Fee: Free

**Life of Birds (Nov 2nd, 7-8:30pm)**
An in-depth presentation on birds, including adaptations, reproduction, and interesting facts on behavior.
Fee: Free

**Bird Club Planning Session (Nov. 4th, 9:00am)**

**DIY Backyard Habitats (Nov 13th, 10-11am)** Enjoy a workshop full of ideas that you can use on your own backyard to attract wildlife.
Fee: Free

**Bird Photography 101 (Nov 16th, 6:30-8:00pm)** Learn techniques and tricks to capture the beauty of birds from a professional wildlife photographer.
Fee: Free

Visit our website for more details on all upcoming events. If you need to list any events, please contact: webmaster@lakeregionaudubon.org
Fifteen years ago we began counting butterflies for the North American Butterfly Association’s Fourth of July Butterfly Counts – Disney Wilderness Preserve in Polk and Osceola Counties and Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park in Okeechobee County. Lake Region Audubon sponsors these counts. The count circles are set up exactly as Audubon 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 close to the Fourth of July throughout the U.S., Canada and Mexico and are published each year by North American Butterfly Association (NABA).

Disney Wilderness Preserve, near Poinciana, is an 11,000-acre mosaic of flatwoods, swamps, oak hammocks, streams, lakefronts and restored former pastures. This count fielded three teams for a total of eleven people – two teams inside DWP and one team outside DWP to cover the far side of the circle, across Lake Tohopekaliga. Tom Palmer is the outside team and canoes across Cypress Lake – a greatly appreciated extra effort. All contribute species not seen by another team.

We wondered what this year’s very cold winter would do to butterfly numbers. We were very surprised in the abundance of swallowtails – two to three times what we usually see at DWP. Only Black Swallowtail (6) had low numbers. This butterfly depends mostly on wetlands for its host plants and there was plenty of water so some other factor must have been at work. Both Zebra (51) and Spicebush (36) Swallowtails were twice their average and Palamedes (68) Swallowtail had a fantastic year with three times its average! Hmmm, guess all that cold was good for most swallowtails. No whites were seen and sulphur numbers were low especially the small sulphurs. In fact we saw no Barred, Little or Dainty Sulphurs. Same thing with the blues – no Ceraunus at all. Cassius has been seen a few times in the past mostly in Poinciana itself but is not expected. The hairstreaks had a surprise for one team this year when Great Purple Hairstreak (1) was found in Reedy Creek Swamp. Both Phaon (3) and Pearl Crescent (1) numbers were very low. Common Buckeyes (32) were twice their average while White Peacocks (12) were half of what we normally see. It seems that for every species that did well with the cold weather an equal number of species did not do well. This was also true with most of the skippers. Silver-spotted Skipper (4) numbers were above average but no tailed skippers were seen at all. While Horace’s Duskywing (13) was below average, Zarucco Duskywing (50) was twice the normal number. Among the fold-wing skippers such as Fiery (96), Whirlabout (8) and Delaware (24) it was the same pattern – average, below average and twice the average. Our overall numbers were up and species were down. We ended the day with 46 species and 737 individuals. Thanks to team members Kevin Kane, Diana Miller, Petra Royston, Dan Speelman, Edie and Nick Banner, Ben Bindschadler, Sandi Mul-

This Great Purple Hairstreak was found in Reedy Creek Swamp. ©Kevin Kane
rooney, Tom Palmer and compiler Buck Cooper and the writer. This year the weather was sunny and hot and we didn’t have to worry about getting stuck in mud. Even after fifteen years, two species were added to the NABA count – Great Purple Hairstreak (1) and Confused Cloudywing (1) while Berry’s Skipper (1) was seen for only the second time. The combined species total for fifteen years is 81.

We thank DWP for their continued support in providing volunteers and transportation for the count and to Tom Palmer for going the extra mile in covering the outside territory. A nice meal at a local Chinese restaurant afterwards adds to the camaraderie.

Kissimmee Prairie Sanctuary (KPS) northwest of Okeechobee is 84 square miles of dry prairie, interspersed with marshes, cabbage palm and oak hammocks, wet prairie, sloughs, and riverine habitat. When this count started Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park (KPPSP) was just a gleam in the park system’s eye so the count maintains its original name – KPS – and the majority of the count takes place inside KPPSP.

KPPSP has a nationwide reputation as THE place in Florida for skippers. That is why we had participants from Venice, Bradenton, Boca Raton, Avon Park, Fellsmere, Okeechobee, Lake Wales, Winter Springs, Lake Wales, Winter Haven and Haines City. Fifteen participants were split into four teams – 3 inside the park and one team outside the park. One of the teams spent the day in the blazing sun on a swamp buggy – climbing up and down and up and down and up and down. They sat under the buggy to eat lunch…it was the only shade available. Summer rains had ‘greened’ up the park nicely with lots of wildflowers in bloom, especially in the Old Audubon section.

Once again, swallowtails had a very good year in spite of very cold weather. Zebra (97) and Black (17) were three times their average; Giant (7) and Spicebush (7) were twice their average; Palamedes (80) was five times its average while only Tiger (1) was below average. Cloudless Sulphur (18) was twice its average but the small sulphurs were very low in numbers. A big surprise from the swamp buggy team was a new species for the count – Southern Dogface (2)!

Ceraunus Blue (6), Little Metalmark (22) and Gulf Fritillary (14) were twice their average while no Zebra Heliconians were seen. Variegated Fritillary (45) was abundant especially for the swamp buggy team with four times the number usually seen. Phaon Crescent (32) was down and Pearl Crescent (49) was up. White Peacock averages 50 each count – this year 4 were seen. It was the same seesaw with skippers – Fiery (55), half the number; Whirlabout (42), average; Sachem (7) and Aaron’s (10) were way down while Delaware (145) was three times its average. Palmetto (55) and Monk (5) both had good years with twice the usual number. Thanks to the persistence of the river team a tropical species was found for only the second time on the count – Three-spotted Skipper (2). Two teams found and photographed the rare and elusive Berry’s Skipper (3). We ended the count with 52 species and 1282 individuals. The combined species total for fifteen years is 81. Dinner just west of Lorida is always an interesting experience and we are practicing up for karaoke so we aren’t left out of the festivities next year.
Thanks to KPPSP personnel for transportation, access and continuing support for butterflies. Thanks to all participants who keep the counts a lively and learning experience for all. Alana Edwards, Nancy Edmondson, Paul Miller, Jeff Palmer, Nancy Prine, Laurel Rhodes, Jane Wallace, Jim DuBois, Dave and Marga Cutler, Sue Farnsworth, David Simpson, compiler Buck Cooper and the writer spent a very hot day in one of the best places in Florida for butterflies. We greatly appreciated LRAS’ continuing support. These counts occur approximately the same time of year – around the 4th of July. Buck compiles four other counts – Avon Park Air Force Range In Polk and Osceola Counties, Okeechobee in Okeechobee County, Lake Louise State Park in Lake County, Bull Creek WMA in Osceola County and Colt Creek State Park in Polk County. We also participate in numerous other NABA counts. We welcome participation. You don’t have to be an expert. Extra eyes are a big help. To participate, you can reach Buck at 863.439.2704.

This year’s counts have showed us one thing. Butterflies are bugs… they have good years and they have bad years. Weather may or may not play a roll in their numbers but cold weather does make a difference in tropical species seen at the northern edges of their normal range. Tropical species such as White Peacock and Zebra Heliconian were hit especially hard. It took us until July 22 to see our first Zebra Heliconian in Polk and we have seen only a handful of White Peacocks. Note: As I finished this article on August 27 Buck called me outside to see our FIRST Zebra Heliconian in the yard since this past winter!

Southern Dogface
© Linda F. Cooper

To participate on future North American Butterfly Association butterfly counts, can reach Buck Cooper at: 863-439-2704

Some members of the team posing for a photo.
© Linda F. Cooper
AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

[make check payable to National Audubon Society]
This membership automatically enrolls you in the National Audubon Society, Audubon of Florida, and Lake Region Audubon Society.

You will receive these publications from each organization:
• National Audubon Society - Audubon Magazine
• Audubon of Florida - Florida Naturalist
• Lake Region Audubon Society - The Scrub Jay Times

Cost: 1st year - $20.00* Yearly Renewal: $35.00
*Lake Region will receive all of the first year’s dues. Thereafter it receives no direct portion of your annual dues.

LOCAL MEMBERSHIP ONLY [make check payable to Lake Region Audubon Society]

• This membership enrolls you in Lake Region Audubon Society.
• You will receive the local newsletter, The Scrub Jay Times, which is published 5 times a year.
• Cost: 1st year - $20.00 Yearly Renewal: $20.00*
* Your first year’s dues and each renewal due goes 100% to support all Lake Region Audubon’s programs and the publication of the newsletter, The Scrub Jay Times.

Member Name: ___________________________________________  Phone #:________________________________
Address: ________________________________________________  email: _________________________________
__________________________________________________

Please mail your check and this completed application to:
Membership Chairman
1439 Grand Cayman Cir
Winter Haven, FL 33884.

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