



The eSkimmer

Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, Inc. Summer Email Issue Vol. II - No. 1 May, 2007

The Southeast Volusia Audubon Society promotes the protection of birds, other wildlife and their habitat through education and activism.

Prez Sez

An Open Letter to Edgewater's Elected Officials

It appears the city of Edgewater's council and mayor seem to be encouraging the rapid growth of the city and urban sprawl by allowing the Reflections and Restoration projects West of I-95. These developments alone will more than double the current population of the city even without considering any other developments which will be allowed more internal to the city. It is hard to imagine that the city fathers want to destroy the small town nature of Edgewater. Didn't you move here for its small town charm? If you wanted to live in a city like Daytona, why didn't you move there first instead of moving here to help it "grow "into a Daytona Beach?

Are there plans in the works to be able to provide the necessary services to these developments such as water and waste water treatment and recycled water? Has the cost been established for constructing the infrastructure for these services? Who will bear these costs? Will the current residents bear them or will the developers be required to pay for them in advance? If growth is supposedly good for current residents, we should not be forced to pay increased taxes in advance to support this growth. I noticed an article in last week's Daytona Beach News-Journal that the city of New Smyrna Beach is negotiating with developers to charge them in advance for providing the infrastructure for the new developments far 'out of town'. Will Edgewater do this as well?

Since the Reflections project is in the vicinity of the new Edgewater well fields, has it been determined that the runoff from herbicides, pesticides and petroleum products from cars and roads will not damage the quality of the water supply?

Looking at the trend of developments in the area, it is obvious that the developers remove all of the ground cover before starting construction. There is nothing left that will impede their earth moving vehicles. We decry the fact that the developing countries are destroying rain forests but we seem to allow the same thing to occur in our developments regardless of size. The trees and plants that convert carbon dioxide and replenish oxygen to the air are totally removed and replaced by houses and pavements. Does it have to be that way? Can't you require the developers to leave trees in areas in which they are going to build houses? I have to pay for a permit to take down an oak tree in my yard. Shouldn't developers have to do the same?

—Don Picard

Meetings

Meetings are held once monthly
Oct. thru March

Please watch this space for the time and location of
October's meeting.

Next meeting is October, 2007

Officers & Chairs



President: Don Picard	321-206-4658	sevas@cfl.rr.com
VP: Roger Cutler	386-427-7282	rcutler@ucnsb.net
Secretary: Vacant		
Treasurer: Richard Domroski	386-428-0447	r_domroski@bellsouth.net
Newsletter: Gil Miller	386-423-4124	the.skimmer@yahoo.com
Programs: Ken Gunn	386-423-2334	gunnsatbeach@cfl.rr.com
Field Trips: Gail Domroski	386-428-0447	r_domroski@bellsouth.net
Conservation: Kathy Booth	386-409-3091	mprademacher@msn.com
Membership: Richard Domroski	386-428-0447	r_domroski@bellsouth.net
Publicity: Vacant		
Ways & Means: Vacant		
Education/Outreach: Vacant		
Hospitality: Vacant		

**We need YOU to fill one
of these vacant spaces!**

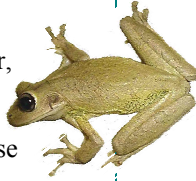
New Members

Lois Boyd, Sandra Distretti, Richard Felone, Sandra L. Fisher, John R. Franks, Bill Franz, Marjorie Matusick, Daniel Pohlar, Miriam Schifter, Katherine Shepard, Bernard Valsin, Frances Webber, Peter Bonafide.

Conservation Notes

Energy Efficiency

According to Dave Johnson, EPA Administrator, the Bush Administration's policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions voluntarily is working. On April 16, Johnson reported that US greenhouse gas emissions rose only 0.8 percent in 2005, the latest figure available.



Of course Johnson failed to mention that greenhouse emissions rose an average of 1.2 percent each year since 1990. The slightly lower rise in 2005 occurred when gasoline prices rose above \$3.00 per gallon, and hurricanes disrupted supplies of both oil and natural gas.

This administration has repeated dogmatically that regulating greenhouse gas emissions or energy efficiency would cripple the US economy. President Bush and his advisors conveniently ignore the examples of California or Denmark.

The average citizen of Denmark uses 6,600 kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity per year vs. 13,300 kWh used by the average American. Thousands of Danish homes are heated with waste heat from power plants, according to an April 16 Wall Street Journal report. Developers in chilly Denmark construct buildings with thick walls and generous insulation. Denmark has doubled its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over the last 30 years without increasing energy consumption.

Here in Florida, our 1916 square foot ranch house was net metered (billed) for 5,346 kWh of electricity from the grid in 2006 – well below the Danish average. We actually used 7,953 kWh in our home, but a third of that power came from the sun. Thus our system supplied 2,607 kWh of zero emissions electricity to the local grid last year. Our home has fairly good insulation, double-pane windows and compact fluorescent bulbs. We try not to waste electricity.

I hope the Florida Legislature this year will strengthen and extend solar power rebates and mandate net metering for all utilities.

- **The Cost of Nuclear Power Fuel**

Nuclear power is costly and its cost is rising. The price of yellowcake (uranium oxide), the stuff that got a CIA agent "outed", is rising steeply. According to UxC, the British firm that keeps track of nuclear fuel and processing costs, the price of yellowcake was \$7.10 in Nov.-Dec. 2000 and as of April 16, 2007 had zoomed to \$113.00 per pound. Fuel constitutes about 13 percent of a nuclear power plant's operating costs. That doesn't include costs of handling used fuel rods that will be lethal for at least 250,000 years.

Nuclear plants are most dangerous when brand new or near the end of their life cycle when parts become too radioactive and brittle.

Maybe rising fuel costs will discourage new nukes, which require enormous taxpayer subsidies. We have enough dangerous old nukes and don't need risky new ones.

—Lee Bidgood, Conservation Chair, Emeritus

Verses

Sometimes when I'm happy or discouraged about our environment and what we are doing, my feelings come out in verses. I wrote this in 1994. The horror at Virginia Tech makes it timely.

Eye of the Watcher

Smartly fixing the Hubble was
reason enough to rejoice.
Now this cleared eye toward heaven
peers beyond old limits, probing to see
what began at the beginning, or even before then,
filling some lives with wonder,
posing answers to unformed questions
deep in our minds.
Yet my child asks,
"Is there another eye, somewhere out there
looking at us?
Perhaps God or a strange mortal
watches
as we blight the green lushness
of a bountiful globe,
riding thirty million species in a race
to oblivion.
Who counts?
Does that eye weep for *our* fate,
or dismiss us as another curiosity,
an oddly violent kind,
in the cosmos?"

—L.B.

Links

News on the internet

A big advantage of the eSkimmer is that we can link you up instantly to sites of interest.

We'll try to include those we feel are pertinent to our members and readers. Feel free to send us your suggestions.

Birds as Barometers/Indicators

<http://www.birdlife.org/action/science/sowb/6.html>

Planet Ark

<http://www.planetark.com/>

Our email address is the.skimmer@yahoo.com

North American Migration Count

Spring 2007 In Florida

The North American Migration Count in Florida is sponsored by Florida Ornithological Society, and is supported by local Audubon Societies, local bird clubs, and other interested organizations.

PURPOSE: The mission of the North American Migration Count (NAMC) is to:

- ♦ Obtain a “snapshot”? of the progress and “shape” of spring and fall Migration.
- ♦ Obtain information on the abundance & distribution of each species.
- ♦ Initiate more participation among birders within a state and between states.
- ♦ Create challenges and goals among birders while collecting useful information.
- ♦ Aid in organization and centralization of date.
- ♦ HAVE FUN.

AREA OF COUNT: The area of a count is not a circle, but the boundaries of a County. The idea is to have a contiguous interlocking set of non-overlapping counts across North America. It is desirable to get as much of each county surveyed as resources permit.

TIMING OF THE COUNT: Each spring and fall another picture will be acquired of the migration pattern. From these we may discover the shape of migration particular to each species. The date of NAMC has been chosen to capture as many migrants as possible before they reach the final destination. It will not be peak migration everywhere. The Southern areas will have the lingerers and the northern areas will still await many of the breeding species when the spring count takes place.

COUNT DATES: The NAMC takes place across North America on the third Saturday of September and the second Saturday of May each year. The near-term counts are **May 12, 2007**, September 15, 2007, and May 10, 2008.

Help Wanted

And, May We Add, Needed

Both the North American Migration Count and the Scrub Jay Habitat project are areas of concern to birders and environmentalists—remember birds are barometers of our planet's health, what affects them eventually affects us!

If you'd like to help work on the Scrub Jay committee, contact Kathy Booth 386-409-3091 ♦ e-mail mprademacher@msn.com for details.

To help with the Migration Bird Count May 12, contact Gail Domroski 386-428-0447 ♦ email r_domroski@bellsouth.net

Native & Nice

Lonicera sempervirens

Most everyone is familiar with the common Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*) that grows freely in the wild, to the point of invasion in some areas.



Like its non-native relative, Florida native coral honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*) is a climbing, twining vine, but less invasive. Its flowers are showy red to red-orange shaped like small tubular trumpets that appear throughout spring and summer. Butterflies and hummingbirds find them irresistible. The coral honeysuckle also bears red berries in the fall, which attract birds and small animals.

Coral honeysuckle grows well in most soils and sun exposures, although full sun usually produces more blooms. It will tolerate poor soil subject to drought, but has poor salt tolerance. Occasional pruning will keep the vines in bounds.

—Donnadine Miller

Wandering Members

Maza Brigade Army Base

I had an interesting birding experience, by accident, earlier this year.

I was in the city of Cucutá, Colombia on my way to the production sites of a company that I consult for. While the field itself is relatively secure, parts of the road to it are still regularly patrolled by one or other of two guerilla groups. I do not drive over those sections.

On this occasion, we were hitching a helicopter ride with a Colonel to his base at La Gabarra, only a few miles south of our field. We were to meet him at the helicopter pad in the Maza Brigade Army Base near the edge of town at 8:00 A.M.

When we arrived at the camp, shortly before 8:00, we were advised that the Colonel would be a half hour late. We were invited to the officer's mess while we waited. At 8:30 we walked over to the heli-pad and were told that the Colonel was still in a meeting but would be along soon. “Soon” turned out to be another hour.

Waiting wasn't all that bad however. The bird watching was spectacular. It would have been even better but binoculars are forbidden inside the base and I was traveling light so did not have my Colombian Guide. The large grassy approach area to the pads and the scrub brush around it were alive with Cattle Tyrants, Smooth-billed Ani, Tropical Mockingbirds, a few Tropical or Gray Kingbirds, a couple of Lesser Kiskadees, one very brightly colored Vermilion Flycatcher plus two or three other species which I couldn't identify.

The treat, however, was a fifty foot flowering tree which attracted a multitude of hummingbirds. There were a least ten different species and maybe as many as twenty for all I could tell. Viewing wasn't easy as the tree was very leafy and very

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WANDERING MEMBERS

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tall and the birds were very fast. I tried to describe/sketch several of the more numerous species but was only marginally successful in matching these with my guidebook when I got back to Bogotá. My sketches are never good but I found here that the quality diminished even further the higher in the tree that the birds fed. The few larger (robin-sized) species that came into the top of the tree from time to time were a dead loss. I did identify a Collared Inca, which I had seen previously and I was able to also confirm the Shining Green Hummingbird and the White-chinned Sapphire, both lifers for me.

I can see that I'm going to have to buy a set of small opera glasses which I can use inconspicuously in such circumstances in the future.

—Ken Gunn

Expect to see Ken Gunn reporting from almost anywhere this summer.

Special Project

Scrub Jay Habitat in Edgewater

Based on my interest in the mitigated scrub jay habitat at the YMCA, I have been asked to take over the Conservation activities of our chapter.

Restoration of the scrub jay habitat will be my priority, since it is a local opportunity for us. My thought is, if our chapter can't persuade the City of Edgewater to meet its contractual obligations to maintain this habitat, how can we expect to have a positive impact on the overwhelming number of environmental issues facing us on the state and federal level? So, let's start by winning this one small battle.

Following is the history so you can understand why immediate action is necessary. November 2005, I went with Katrina Locke, the scrub jay "specialist" from the County Environmental Management Dept. to visit the mitigated scrub jay habitat at the YMCA. Ms. Locke commented to me that the habitat was overgrown and the trails were too wide. In March of 2006, another County Environmental officer, Casey Lyon, and Paula Sisson from the US Fish and Wildlife visited the habitat. Ms. Lyon told me that Ms. Sisson said that the City of Edgewater, who is the caretaker of the property and is responsible for monitoring and maintaining the habitat since 1998, was not in compliance and she was going to investigate what had been done and not done in regards to monitoring and compliance with the mitigation contract. Ms. Sisson said the habitat needed a controlled burn due to overgrowth, particularly on the front side; the back side was in better shape. (as you will see below, there was no follow up by the US Fish and Wildlife).

In the summer of 2006, Audubon obtained a copy of a biological survey completed November 1999 by biologist Joe Young of Biological Consulting Services from the City that found a family of 3-4 scrub jays on the ~ 8 acres and advised

mechanical removal of tall trees, which was done (?), followed with a prescribed burn expected before nesting began in 2000. When the Domroski's and I met with Mr. Jack Corder, Director of Parks and Leisure for the City of Edgewater and Mr. Young in September 2006, both parties conceded that the management plan has not been followed. No burn has ever taken place. The Edgewater Fire Dept. says they are ready to do a burn as soon as the US Fish and Wildlife approves it. According to Mr. Young, since 7+ years have past, the habitat is in need of mechanical removal of tall trees again. He also said, and I quote, "This project will not be stalled again". Ironically, the City has budgeted for the maintenance of this property every year since 1998. Subsequent to the meeting 9/06, chapter members have been monitoring the habitat almost weekly. We have found one lone banded female jay remaining of her family. Mr. Young was to have done another survey in October, but because Mr. Corder will not return our calls or e-mail requests for a copy of the updated survey, we remain ignorant of the City's future plans for restoring and maintaining the habitat. Without suitable habitat this bird has no chance of being joined by other scrub jays and propagating. The lack of communication and cooperation by the City implies that the City may have no intention of maintaining the habitat, hastening the demise of this last bird by neglect or predation, and then the City can sell the property. Paula Sisson of the US Fish and Wildlife is the enforcer of the contract, and although she has been aware of the breach of contract by the City for over a year (see above), she has done nothing. She was reminded of her responsibility in a recent e-mail from me.

I'm guessing by your membership in the Audubon chapter, that you not only enjoy watching and identifying birds, but you want to prevent the disappearance of those same beautiful creatures, especially our very own FL scrub jay. Right now, we need volunteers to help monitor the condition of the scrub jay and its habitat at the YMCA, once a month for two hours. But that is not all we are going to do. An action plan will follow. If you have any ideas, I welcome them. Send right away! Please call me at 409-3091 or e-mail mprademacher@msn.com.

—Kathy Booth

Field Trip

Monday, May 14 a Possibility

There has been some interest in a field trip to the Alligator Farm in St. Augustine on Monday, May 14. So far this date is free of school trips to the Farm, which are many this time of year.

Entrance fee is \$13.97.

Call or email Gail Domroski if you're interested in this trip.

386-428-0447 ♦ email r_domroski@bellsouth.net

Please forward this  to friends.