

Flyways

A PUBLICATION OF



WINTER, 2017

President's Message

20th Annual
Environmental Breakfast
Recap

New Afterschool Bird
Club

2018 Programs & Field
Trips

Christmas Bird Count

...and more!

As we end the 2017 portion of the Chapter's 2017-18 season, the Chapter accomplished quite a bit, even with setbacks from Hurricane Irma.

The 20th Annual Environmental Breakfast, held in October at the Riverside Community Center in Fort Myers, was a great success, thanks to Jim Rodenfels', Chapter Treasurer, hard work in organizing and setting up the breakfast, and the Chapter members and Board members who assisted. See additional information about the Breakfast in this newsletter. Jayne Johnston, Education Chair, and Melinda Lynch, Board Member, developed a bird club for 5th graders at Veterans Park Academy for the Arts in Lehigh Acres and had the first meeting on Monday, November 6, 2017. See the article about the bird club in this newsletter. Gerri Reaves, Chapter Secretary, and Carol Newcomb, Publicity Chair, are developing a project aimed at reducing bird-window collisions and other risks that structures pose. The Chapter has included promoting buildings and infrastructure that maximally reduce bird and bat strike hazards as a priority on their 2017 Conservation Policy Positions and Action Plan. Check the Chapter's website (www.audubonswfl.org) for additional information and links about this issue.

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.

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Environmental Breakfast Recap

Our 20th annual Environmental Breakfast held on October 26th was a success with over 93 attendees. Neil Wilkinson, past Chapter Board Member and co-founder of the Environmental Breakfast, made a presentation on the history of the Breakfast as well as some new initiatives he is involved in for the Center of Environmental & Sustainability Education at FGCU.

Barbara Manzo was the recipient of the Chapter's 2017 Environmental Advocate of the Year Award, as Chair of the Lee Conservation 20/20 Campaign. A leader of the successful *Yes on Conservation 20/20* campaign during last year's election, she has continued to lead the effort to keep our *eYes on Conservation 20/20*.

Courtney Kern was the recipient of the Chapter's 2017-18 scholarship at Florida Gulf Coast University. Courtney is an Environmental Studies major, a senior honors student, and the Chapter Newsletter Editor and Board Member.

Thanks to all of our speakers and volunteers with a special thanks to our sponsors

Boylan Environmental Consultants, Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife, Brian Cotterill & Judy Ott, Daltry Family, Ding Darling Wildlife Society, Eco-Voice, Estero Bay Buddies, FGCU's Center for Environmental & Sustainability Education, Hans Wilson & Assoc., Jim Green Realty, Passarella & Assoc., Gerri Reaves, Responsible Growth Management, Rodenfels Family, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Fdn., Southwest Florida Watershed Council, and Spikowski Planning Assoc.

Audubon SWFL Introduces Afterschool Bird Club for Kids

Audubon has been long known for their conservation and education principles. Beginning in October as part of a long term goal to expand our educational goals, we began a 5th grade afterschool bird club. Melinda Lynch and Dana Marcum, both teachers at Veterans Park Academy for the Arts, joined me as co-sponsors for the club. Students were nominated by their teachers then those interested wrote a 2 to 3 sentence essay why they should be chosen. We set the limit to a maximum of 10 students since this is a new venture, but were very pleased that 25 wanted to join! All the responses were great and choosing was difficult, but here are our 10 below. Responses to join ranged from, "I want to be a veterinarian and get an early start" to "birds are my happy place." Our chapter budgeted money to help fund the group, but donations of binoculars and bird guides are greatly appreciated. Monetary donations for this effort will be used for field trips for the kids. If you are interested in being a guest speaker at one of our meetings (every Monday afternoon 2:05-3:45), please let me know. Thank you for all your support and faithful memberships. We could not achieve these goals without you!

Sincerely,

Jayne Johnston, Education Chair



2018 Upcoming Programs

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

audubon.southwest.florida@gmail.com

January 18th - Amphibians and Reptiles with live specimens:
Shane Johnson, Vice President of Calusa Herpetological Society

February 15th - Climate Change: Carol Newcomb, Climate Reality
Leader

March 15th - Sea Turtles: Kelly Sloan, SCCF

April 19th - Piping Plovers: Audrey Albrecht, SCCF

June Annual Dinner TBA



27th Annual Southwest Florida Water Resources Conference February 2, 2018 | Pelican Preserve, located at 10561 Veneto Drive, Fort Myers, FL 33913

This year's theme "**The Changing Climate of Regulation and Funding**" recognizes the dramatic political transformations that have occurred in recent years at both the state and national level. Shifts in governance philosophy translate to changes in policies and budget priorities. Similarly, regulatory and enforcement rollbacks change the constraints and incentives faced by both the public and private sectors. At the same time as government changes are occurring, so are consumer demands and legal accountability.

Presentations by some of the leading experts in water resources, government policy, and funding programs will include topics on drivers of regulation, design and funding, and a special session on the performance of regional water and natural systems during and after Hurricane Irma. The conference will also include a student poster contest for water resources students statewide, with first-, second-, and third-place awards for the best research posters in two divisions, graduate students and undergraduate/high school students.

The keynote address will be given by Michael Grunwald, a senior writer for Politico Magazine, and the Editor-at-Large of POLITICO's new public policy site, The Agenda, and author of The Swamp: The Everglades, Florida, and the Politics of Paradise. He has won the George Polk Award for national reporting, the Worth Bingham Prize for investigative reporting, and many other honors.

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.

Audubon of Southwest Florida

2018 Field Trips (Emphasizing the Great Florida Birding Trail)

Members and non-members / beginner to advanced birders – all are welcome!

Events are free; but, donations are always appreciated. Depending on the nature of the outing, you may want to bring a camera, field glasses, sunscreen, water, or even a folding chair. Dress appropriately for the weather. Parking or rental fees sometimes apply.

Black Island Trail at Lover's Key State Park

Sunday, January 14, 2018 – 8:00 am

Within Lover's Key State Park, the Black Island Trail is 2.5 miles of hiking adventure through a maritime hammock along the canal banks of Black Island.

Kayak with the Manatees

Saturday, January 27, 2018 – 9:00 am

& Monday, January 29, 2018 – 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.

Bunche Beach

Saturday, February 17, 2018 – 8:00 am

Experience one of the best birding sites in Lee County. This is a natural tidal wetlands area located on San Carlos Bay. A natural area indicative of the entire area before the introduction of exotic plant species - it is "Old Florida."

Bicycle Tour of Ding Darling

Sunday, February 25, 2018 – 8:30 am

Another annual favorite, we leisurely bicycle the 8 mile round trip on Wildlife Drive with incredible views of herons, egrets, ibises, storks and spoonbills.

Matanzas Pass Preserve

Saturday, March 17, 2018 – 8:00 am

Boardwalk trails through this preserve lead through the mangroves (watch for Palm Warblers and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers) to an overlook at Estero Bay where low tide brings great views of wading birds. This site is an often overlooked jewel.

Caloosahatchee Regional Park

Saturday, April 28, 2018 – 8:00 am

The diversity of habitats in this park guarantees an impressive species list. Walk the trails on the south side of CR 78 (River Rd.), passing through dense hardwoods to the river overlooks.

Six Mile Cypress Slough

Saturday, May 12, 2018 – 8:00 am

This site offers some of the best birding around. The boardwalk invites you to walk slowly and silently through the freshwater swamp and hardwood hammocks, watching the wildlife at close range. Blinds and viewing platforms offer places to sit for long periods and observe.



Calling all birders for the 118th annual Christmas Bird Count! We need data collectors and observers for locations within the Orange River Circle. Our count is on Saturday, December 23rd. If you can join us, please contact Jayne Johnston, 239-770-8312 or jaynechristine@live.com for more details.

ASWF Board



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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”
- And, please send us your e-mail address. That way you can be sure you 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 33906-1041

ECO-VOICE.ORG

The web site for Eco-Voice, Inc. is a public service facilitating the flow of information about environmental issues and events in South Florida.

Every morning before 6 am a selection of news items, great photos, and announcements of environmental events relevant to South Florida, with links to sources and additional information, is e-mailed to subscribers. Visit us on Facebook and contribute to the discussion

Our Chapter In History... January 1963

William Mellor, president of the Lee County Conservation Association, spoke at the monthly meeting, which was held in the First National Bank auditorium in downtown Fort Myers. The topic was conservation and development in the Back Bay areas from Fort Myers Beach to Estero. His fight to save the bay from massive development resulted in the creation of Florida's first aquatic preserve in 1966, today's Estero Bay Preserve State Park.

Are you thinking of making a charitable donation?

Qualified Charitable Distributions from your IRA may be a good tax strategy if you are at least age 70½ and are considering making donations to your favorite charities.

A direct charitable distribution from your IRA may be used towards satisfying any Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), and best of all is excluded from your taxable income regardless of whether you itemize deductions. To qualify, the funds must be transferred directly by the IRA trustee to your eligible charity.

Audubon of Southwest Florida is a perfect recipient – we are a public charity under 501(c)(3) and donors may deduct contributions as provided in IRC section 170. We are also registered with the State of Florida's Division of Consumer Services under registration number CH30193.

A copy of our tax-exempt determination letter may be requested by contacting us at:

audubon.southwest.florida@gmail.com

Contributions may be mailed to:

Audubon of Southwest Florida

PO Box 61041

Fort Myers, FL 33906-1041

Our chapter can always use your help. Occasionally we need folks for tables at events – there are 3 we commit to per year. These are: hospitality – coffee, tea, and cookies - for the program meetings every 3rd Thursday, committee assistance for each of the chair positions (education, membership, newsletter, social media, conservation, etc.), Jay Watch Coordinator in summer, Eagle Watch Coordinator October through May, Shorebird Coordinator for Winter along with volunteers to resight bands, build and install nesting boxes, Christmas Bird Count, and the Great Backyard Bird Count, just to name a few. Feel free to offer your own specialty. Give a little or a lot of your time, anything is appreciated. Please contact any board member to volunteer. Thank you!

Audubon of SWFL Board of Directors

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