



Street Audubon Center
115 Lameraux Road
Winter Haven, FL 33884



Howe House

ANTARCTIC DREAMS

Linda F. and Byrum W. Cooper

Ushuaia, Argentina, southernmost city in the world, is where our Antarctic adventure began. This is where we met our small ship *Clipper Adventurer* and our 112 fellow passengers and 85 staff and crew. Ushuaia, a small town where the Andes begin (or end, at least above sea level), is nestled between the mountains and the Beagle Channel. This trip – three weeks of huge concentrations of wildlife and achingly beautiful scenery - has proved to be most difficult to summarize. It is not written chronologically but by the best way we can think of to share our experiences with you.

The Drake Passage, that stretch of southern ocean between South America and the Antarctic continent known for its treacherous waters, was relatively calm as we made our way south. Followers of ships – petrels and albatrosses – made their presence known. Both Southern and Northern Giant Petrels with wingspans almost seven feet, Cape Petrel - a pigeon-sized seabird patterned like a pinto pony, White-chinned Petrel, Black-browed Albatross, storm-petrels and prions made up the bulk of the seabirds. Uncommon were Gray-headed, Royal, Light-mantled and, later in the trip, Wandering Albatrosses.

Our captain maintained an open-bridge so anyone was welcome there day or night. Most birders spent their day at the bow or stern or on the bridge. The birdlife didn't change much on the sea crossings but birders are always on the lookout for a rarity. The ship also maintains a staff of lecturers on all aspects of the Antarctic including geology, history, sea mammals and birds with the lectures scheduled during sea crossings. The Antarctic is considered a desert with precipitation only 1-2 inches per year and it falls as a fine mist. We did encounter tiny snowflakes a few times but they melted on contact. Red parkas, issued as we boarded, kept us warm and dry but any exposed skin chilled quickly. The temperatures ranged between 32° and 56° but the wind was the big chiller.

The birders on board were looking forward to crossing the Antarctic Convergence – an area of water masses that circulates around the continent. Many Antarctic seabirds also circulate around the continent following the food supply. The water masses have different densities due to their temperature and salt contents. Current flow generally matches the surface winds but much of the water is driven by the density differences. This causes upwellings and downwellings especially at the continental shelves, which in turn leads to a combination of minerals, oxygen and sun and is the cause of enormous plankton concentrations, and in turn, concentrations of seabirds and marine mammals. This is a very simplified explanation of a very complicated area in the ocean.



Antarctic Landing

As we neared the Antarctic Peninsula, anticipation of our first Zodiac landing at a penguin colony was high. I don't think any of us were really prepared for this first 'penguin' experience. To swing your rubber boot-clad legs over the side of a Zodiac into icy water and step up onto a black sand beach where there are penguins going about their daily lives, engages all your senses. The raucous braying that greeted a returning mate or a meddlesome neighbor; the odiferous smell of krill and fish that had passed through penguins; the sight of thousands of penguins interacting with each other and other wildlife was filed away in our memory banks to be taken out when we needed a 'penguin fix.' I missed the touch and taste senses as we did not actually touch a penguin (not allowed) or taste them but a 19th century written description of what penguin stew tastes like made us happy they were not on our dinner menu. Our first penguins were Chinstraps but the experience was basically the same at the Gentoo and Adelie colonies. Ever present at the colonies were Brown Skuas and Snowy Sheathbills – both handle the necessary 'cleanup.'

Some of the most beautiful scenery of the trip was the seven-mile Lemaire Channel with its towering peaks, hanging glaciers and so many icebergs – each of them a different shape, size and color. As the passengers stood on deck there was almost total silence. We tried to drink in being in such a glorious place, putting it in our memory banks for retrieval later as we began to absorb our Antarctic experience.



King Penguin

King Penguin colonies were a different kind of penguin experience. Kings are masters of standing. Other penguins are constantly busy with their duties as parents – coming, going, feeding, preening, engaging in neighborhood squabbles but Kings stand – a lot – and watch. Pairs will engage in courtship or preening behavior and they are as noisy as the others but their forte is standing, reminding us of monoliths. King chicks appear to be wearing heavy brown fur coats and many were molting into their sleek adult plumage, causing many ‘bad hair’ days. They wandered up to anyone standing still and gave piteous cries for food. I just wanted to reach out and feel their soft brown feathers and to pet them just a little bit – not allowed. To stand on the wide black sand beach at Salisbury Plain and look up into the



King Penguin Chick

hillsides and see more King Penguins than you could have ever imagined is overwhelming. Kings and more Kings ranging up into the surrounding hillsides and, beyond that, towering snow-covered mountains and hanging glaciers and the bluest sky you can imagine. That was my BEST birding experience ever.

Our Antarctic continent landing was December 24 at Portal Point. Staff had gone onshore and had champagne chilling in a snow bank as we arrived. We toasted our arrival on the peninsula and then enjoyed a beautiful day in warm sunshine. A Zodiac tour around the bay was enhanced by seeing an iceberg calve and reorient itself and watching an avalanche roar down a mountainside. WOW!

We were privileged to spend a few hours in the Wandering Albatross colony at Prion Island, South Georgia. Access to this colony is highly regulated because of conservation concerns. A steep, muddy climb up a hillside with disagreeable Fur Seals hiding in the tussock grasses brought us face to face with this magnificent seabird. Adults are brilliant white with black patterned wing feathers and a pink blush on the nape. One stood and raised its 11.5-foot wings and flapped into the wind a few times, causing awe even among the non-birders. The whiteness of the albatross with its wings outspread, the dark green tussock grasses, the clear blue sky, our black and white ship in the deep blue water, the whiteness of the snow covered mountains and glaciers across the bay, the quietness of our group – an unforgettable experience that Buck counts as his BEST birding experience ever.



Wandering Albatross

One of the conservation issues facing albatrosses, giant petrels and other diving seabirds are long-line fisheries. The long-liners kill thousands of these birds each year while fishing for Chilean sea bass or Patagonian Toothfish, one and the same. Think twice before ordering this fish.

Zodiac trips in bays and harbors brought us close to seals – Weddell with their camouflage-patterned skin; Crabeater with their doglike faces; Leopard with their reptilian appearance; Antarctic Fur rebounding after near decimation due to hunting; and Southern Elephant which was our favorite.

Breeding season was over at the elephant seal colonies and all the huge males had departed to sea, leaving the beaches to females and non-breeders. These heavily built seals with huge round dark eyes are real charmers. A lot of their time is spent sleeping on the beach, sometimes in large concentrations. When one moves it disturbs the others and a lot of pushing, shoving, loud roars, barks, moans and howls follow. Their loud ‘burps’ would make any adolescent boy proud. The youngsters are called ‘weaners’ as they are no longer nursing. They have very smooth skin unlike the molting adults. One of the photos I took captures a group of ‘weaners’ laying on each other, looking at the camera with those big dark eyes. In the foreground is a clump of yellow dandelions. It is a very sweet photo. This was another animal I wanted to touch and hug – not allowed.



Elephant Seal

Fur Seals are an entirely different story. These disagreeable seals will deliver a vicious bite that has lasting consequences. We had to be on the alert anytime we were near them. The small black furry pups however are charmers especially when mothers leave them alone on the beach. The pups are like the King chicks – they wander up to red parkas and beg. Fur Seals have made an astonishing recovery, rebounding into the hundreds of thousands and the fear now is there are too many seals for the amount of resources available to them.

Katabatic winds, those glacier-generated winds that reach hurricane force very quickly, made our visit to Ernest Shackleton's gravesite at Grytviken, South Georgia a memorable experience. A perfectly calm harbor when we landed churned up quickly by the time we made our way to the gravesite. We had to sit down for fear of being blown back into the bay. An Irish whiskey toast to Shackleton's memory was drowned out by the roar of the winds. The captain reported 90 MPH winds where the ship was anchored in the harbor. Our drivers handled the Zodiac ride back to the ship masterfully. The welcoming strong hands of the platform crew grabbed us off the Zodiacs in our scariest experience of the trip. Hot chocolate warmed us quickly as we added one more Antarctic experience to our memory banks and added our own silent toast to Shackleton for his bravery under adverse conditions.

Our only Macaroni Penguin wandered up into a Gentoo colony, hung around for a few minutes, didn't see anyone he recognized, turned around and went back into the sea. Not many of us saw this encounter but we happened to be in the right place at the right time and got good photos of this penguin. Rough seas canceled a planned landing at a Macaroni colony but that is one of the risks of traveling in the Antarctic and nearby islands. Everything is weather-dependent. Great weather for more than two weeks of our trip gave way to very rough seas as we crossed the Scotia Sea headed to the Falkland Islands.

In the East Falklands at George Island we encountered Magellanic Penguins with their distinctive face patterns. These penguins nest in burrows in the ground. Chicks, peeking out from the burrows, watched us walk along the shore. The family who raise sheep here welcomed us with tea and cakes. They are also very proud and protective of their penguins. White-tufted Grebe, Upland and Kelp Geese, Falkland Steamerduck and Crested Duck, Magellanic Oystercatcher, Two-banded Plover, South American Snipe, Dolphin and Kelp Gulls, Blackish Cynclodes, Dark-faced Ground-Tyrant, Austral Thrush, Canary-winged Finch, Long-tailed Meadowlark and the endemic Cobb's Wren rounded out the birds here. Cobb's Wren, restricted to rodent-free islands in the Falklands, forages along the shoreline, turning over kelp and other debris at the high-tide line.

At Bleaker Island later that same day we had an amazing visit to a Rockhopper Penguin colony. This small penguin with its jaunty yellow 'punk' crest and bright red eye proved to be the noisiest and smelliest penguin we had seen but they were such fun to watch. Pairs gave loud braying greetings to each other accompanied by much flapping of wings and much strutting about. The chicks had already left the mud and straw nests and ran a gauntlet of adults pecking at them as they searched for their parents. A nearby Imperial Shag colony with hundreds of birds added to the cacophony. This was a very noisy, smelly place!

Disembarking in Port Stanley, capital of the Falklands, brought us another few hours of land birding. There is still a lot of debris from the war with Argentina. We were warned about landmines and were careful to stay on the road. Speckled and Silver Teal dabbled in roadside ponds. Several Rufous-chested Dotterels kept our eyes to the spotting scopes while Correndera Pipits walked through the grasslands. Here is where we caught our flight back to Santiago, Chile. Since we were on a birding tour we had a day in the Andes near Santiago. Although our bird list was short it proved an exciting day with sighting a Chilean Tinamou, several Andean Condors, endemics Crag Chilia, Chilean Mockingbird and Moustached Turca. Add Magellanic Owl, Rufous-backed and Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle to that short but impressive bird list and it was a highly successful day.



Crabeater Seal

The long flight home gave us lots of time to reflect on this trip of a lifetime. All the wonderful friends we made and the experiences we shared are tucked away in our memory banks right alongside the penguins and seabirds. Memories of the most delicious chocolate chip macadamia nut cookies we have ever eaten, delivered warm to the lounge each day at 4 p.m. are in there too. Not to mention homemade ice creams and sorbets – ever tried avocado ice cream or passion fruit sorbet? Tucked in right next to the cookies. We will end this article with some advice. Anyone even remotely thinking of going to the Antarctic – DO IT! Go while you are in good physical condition. Go on a small ship that promises as many Zodiac landings as possible. It is not necessary to book with a birding company unless you want to do land birding in South America. Be sure your small ship has lecturers to immerse you in the experience. We envied the hard-working staff and crew because they return several times during the short tourist season and some return year after year. It was hard to return home and get back to reality after being pampered for three weeks. But those memories are there and in quiet moments we pull them out and experience the Antarctic all over again. ***

Bird Club Highlights

We have gone many places and have seen some nice birds. Florida is beautiful and it is so nice to be out and about with this wonderful group of nice people. When we went on our Green Swamp trip we finally found the Eastern Bluebirds but also some Northern Bobwhites. What a treat. We haven't seen them for a couple of years. On our Trip to Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge the Roseate Spoonbills were there in abundance. Jim Barber snapped this picture of one with some Wood Storks. Brooker Creek Preserve was very nice and a Swamp Sparrow was very cooperative for some of us. The trip home across the Courtney Campbell Causeway, Hwy 60, was fantastic. Horned Grebes, American Oystercatcher, and the Common Loons were just a few feet from shore and easily seen without binoculars. On our stop at Brinson Park in the rain on our way to the Viera Wetlands we had a beautiful scope view of two Snail Kites. The long trip down to STA-5 in Clewiston was certainly worth it. We saw both Fulvous and Black-bellied Whistling Ducks just a few feet away from shore the best I have ever had, along with over 30 Black-necked Stilts. A new discovery for me this year was the Shiloh Marsh Road in Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge. It is closed from November to February 15th and what a shame. We saw so many peeps and had fun of trying to tell one from another. The Roseate Spoonbills were there also. Every trip brings some little joy to my heart and I hope it does for those who drive with me all over Central Florida to see what we can see. As I am writing this we have several great trips yet to do. Our last trip will be to Fort DeSoto on April 6. So far this year we have seen well over 130 species. Hopefully we will add to this list by April 6.



Wood Stork
Roseate Spoonbill

See you there, Marvel Loftus ***

Pizza and Film

This has been a very confusing year for some of you because of the change of nights. Last year they were on Tuesday night and this year they have been on Monday nights. After all this confusion I probably will change the night back to Tuesday next year. The people who came have enjoyed the films that I have chosen but I certainly would like to hear what you would like to watch. I am forming a committee and would like you to join me in the planning of these films. Just call me and say you will help. Even your comments would be helpful. My phone number is 863-324-9657. One of the decisions will be to show "An Inconvenient Truth" by Al Gore again. There was a large crowd and some of the people had to sit in the porch which was not a good place to watch the film. I apologize to them for this inconvenience and thank everyone for their participation. All DVDs that I purchase for the Audubon stay at the Nature Center. Please do not take them home. We do not have anyone at the Nature Center to regulate this kind of distribution. You are welcome to come to the Nature Center, plug in the TV, and watch the DVD yourself. Just call before you come to see if the Nature Center is open. Our last film will be April 23, 2007. It will be "Stellar Sea Lions". It is a documentary about their decline.

Hope I hear from you, Marvel Loftus ***

Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge Field Trip

Paul Fellers

A big group of 41 LRAS and Ridge Auduboners spent Feb. 10th on Florida's East Coast observing lots of birds, some of them keepers. In checklist order, birds of note were: 8 Common Loons (a couple fairly close at the marina), Horned Grebe (also at the marina), 500 Am. White Pelicans, 20 Northern Gannets (off Playalinda Beach with a couple showing the beginning of the yellowish color around the head found in breeding plumage, and a couple resting on the water), 2 Reddish Egrets (bi-colored bill), 25 Roseate Spoonbills (some in gorgeous partial breeding plumage), 600 Northern Pintails (big beautiful ducks), 55 Hooded Mergansers (the male having a big, white, showy patch on the head), 100 Short-billed Dowitchers, 4 Stilt Sandpipers, 40 Am. Avocets (with their long recurved bills), 1,000 Black Skimmers (in the distance at Pump House Rd.; it was quite a sight when they all rose up one time), 5 Florida Scrub Jays (right where they may often be found near the entrance gate to the beach), more than 100 Am. Robins (it's been a wonderful robin year), 30 Cedar Waxwings (they finally arrived in early Feb.), and a Blue-headed Vireo (in the oak woods near the Manatee viewing area at Haulover Canal; alas no manatees, though).

In all we observed 87 bird species. One memorable flower was an uncommon and beautiful Seaside Gentian (*Eustoma exaltatum*) found near the restrooms along Blackpoint Drive. To wind up the day, more than half of us enjoyed a delicious seafood dinner at Dixie Crossroads in Titusville. ***

Big Island Adventure

Paul Fellers



Waipo Valley Overlook
and Paul Fellers

Last Oct. 21st I flew to the Big Island of Hawaii for an 8-day trip to see the sights and of course the birds. I was not disappointed with this enchanting Island the size of CT. There were few roads and places that I missed in the 970 road miles that I logged. Six years earlier I spent time with family On Maui, Kauai, and Oahu, so this has rounded out my visiting of the 4.

Three full days were spent at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, a very special place at about 4,000' elevation, some of which is rainforest. Lava here, lava there, lava everywhere is what the Big Island is all about. Ten new bird species for the trip was more than I had hoped to see, 3 of which were endemics: 3 Hawaiian Hawks, 150 Hawaiian Amakihis (sparrow-sized, greenish-yellowish nectaring species with a slightly decurved bill), and 4 secretive thrush-like Omaos with a golden voice. Mauna Loa and

Mauna Kea, huge roundish mountains and each over 2 miles high, dominate Hawaii's landscape. On my final day, I was so fortunate to have seen Mauna Kea in all its glory when the cloud cover dissipated.

Fond memories that I took home with me include: enjoying rustic, green Hilo, a city of about 40,000 on Hawaii's east coast; Hawaii Volcanoes N. P. with its 11-mile Kilauea Crater Rim Drive with its many steam vents, Thurston Lava Tube, and nearby forest trails with tree ferns, Devastation Trail, about ½-mile long with lots of birds including endangered Nene Geese and exotic Kalij Pheasants, Southwest Rift, the ethereal experience of watching 3 White-tailed Tropicbirds floating about in Kilauea Caldera in the vicinity of the Southwest Rift, Halemaumau Crater within Kilauea Caldera and many



Halema'umna'u Crater in Kilauea Caldera
Volcanoes National Park

great views down into Kilauea Crater; at the end of Chain-of-Craters Rd., seeing molten lava entering the sea; the rugged cliffs over the ocean at South Point, the southernmost point of the U.S.; sweeping views down to the ocean from the heights often 2,000' or more in the SW and NW; views of the often rugged and wild shoreline; seeing Mt. Haleakala on Maui 30 miles across the water from the north end of the island; hiking at 6,700' a few hundred yards on the trail up 13,679' Mauna Loa; seeing religious frescoes having the quality of the great



Akaka Falls

masters in St. Benedict's "Painted Church" near the town of Captain Cook; on the NE coast the fantastic view at Waipo Valley Overlook with 2,000' cliffs; 80' Rainbow Falls and 420' Akaka Falls, both with bright greenery surrounding them and falling into huge pools; hiking trails off Saddle Rd. at over 6,000' through the fields of lava and grass among the Ohia trees, which with their red flowers attracted the nectaring bird species such as spectacular I'iwis (bright red birds with long decurved ivory-colored bills), Apapanes (red birds with white upturned tails; I saw about 200 for the trip), and Hawaiian Amakihis all making quite a chorus during the day; seeing several native Elepaios, small friendly flycatchers; meeting with many very friendly natives and tourists; enjoying the best pizza that I have ever had near Hawi in northern Hawaii; and watching Spinner Dolphins as they actually jumped out of the water spinning the entire time, off the NW coast.

All of the Hawaiian Islands have been a delight to visit. Each has its high points and you have just perused many positive impressions of my recent trip to the Big Island. I would highly recommend that you see and experience these special islands for yourself if you have not already done so. ***

Birding the Mosaic Phosphates' Mines Paul Fellers

On January 27th, 22 LRAS birders enjoyed a great day at the mines. Temperatures ranged from about 50 degrees F in the morning to a pleasant 75 degrees F in the afternoon. Our very good 86 species for the day was helped by about 10 species observed at Homeland's Peace River Park along the boardwalk. Four woodpecker species was excellent along with 2 Ruby-crowned Kinglets and 2 Blue-headed Vireos. Then it was on to the new restorations on what used to be the Estech Mine, now owned by Mosaic, off Rte. 555. A Roseate Spoonbill, 4 Black-necked Stilts and Royal Tern were the specialties there. The ponds along Agricola Rd. had many American Coots, some Ring-necked Ducks and a pair of Gadwalls. At Kingsford Mine we found several American Avocets, Long-billed Dowitchers, Dunlin, Stilt Sandpipers, 4 Hooded Mergansers, and 3 Canvasbacks. At the Bald Eagle nest just below Bradley Junction we were excited to see 2 grayish downy young with an adult nearby. A Great-horned Owl was on the nest to the entrance of Fort Green Mine. For lunch, really tasty croissant sandwiches, fruit salad, chips and iced tea were enjoyed at the Mosaic Visitor's Center.



White-tailed Kite

After lunch we toured Fort Green Mine and had a great finish. Fifty-five Fulvous Whistling-Ducks (rare county record), about 10 Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, 1,000 Green-winged Teal and 5 Gadwall were part of our whopping 13 duck species for the day. Other birds of note were an amazing 4 American Bitterns; extremely rare White-tailed Kite (first seen on Jan. 13 and probably the same bird as was logged 2 years earlier); and on some partially dry mud flats, 2 Semipalmated Plovers; 30 American Avocets; Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs; 40 Dunlin; 10 Stilt Sandpipers and 300 Long-billed Dowitchers. I'm sure that everyone was happy with the final tally. Thanks are due Mosaic Phosphates and especially Diana Youmans for working with us to allow these field trips on their property. ***

Colt Creek Bird Census

The LRAS year-long bird census of Colt Creek State Park north of Lakeland is in its third month now and we have already located 92 species with quite a few surprises so far. A nice Hairy Woodpecker and several Red-headed Woodpeckers along with a beautiful Golden-crowned Kinglet are spending winter in the park and a migrating Henslow's Sparrow has added to the quality of the list. An Emu, a native of Australia, is present on one of the cow pastures; where it came from is a mystery. Carolina Chickadee's and Brown-headed Nuthatches are everywhere. Two hundred noisy, migrating Sandhill Cranes caused a bit of a commotion one Saturday morning for a Sierra Club outing.

Contact the team Leaders, Buck and Linda Cooper 439-2704, Paul Fellers 293-0486, Roy Morris 644-3100, or Pete Timmer 956-4643, if you would like to participate on the count. They sometimes have room in their vehicles.

See you out there.

Chuck Geanangel, Co-coordinator and Team Leader, 326-5748 ***



Hermit Thrush at Colt Creek

Great Deal!!

Have we got a deal for You!! A new membership with Lake Region, Florida and National Audubon is available for only \$20 for the first year (renewals will be \$35 ... still a great deal!). In addition to all membership privileges, you also get the Audubon magazine and the Florida and Lake Region newsletters.

The \$20 initial membership would make a great gift for a niece or nephew graduating from school, a new retiree or a friend that enjoys nature. Just fill out the membership application in this newsletter, enclose a check made out to National Audubon Society for \$20 and send it to Gary McCoy, PO Box 93287, Lakeland, FL 33804.

A great byproduct of securing your Audubon membership through Lake Region Audubon Society is that National Audubon credits our chapter with the initial \$20!!! So you would be helping Lake Region provide our local programs to the community by using this first time membership method. ***

Volunteers Needed

Hours are 9 am to noon or noon to 3 pm.
Duties are to be present at the Street Audubon Center, open the center and close it.
Call Ann Pinner at 956-2374



Brooke Pottery
223 North Kentucky Avenue
Lakeland, Florida 33801
phone: 863-688-6844
www.brookepottery.com

Street Audubon Center Work Day

The first Saturday of each month is WorkDay at Street Audubon Center. There is much work to be done to keep the center operational. This work spans the range of very light to very heavy. Trail clearing, tree cutting, trash hauling, dusting, sweeping, window cleaning or providing a cool drink for those doing the heavy work. We need you!

What do you have to do? Just show up at 9:00 am on the first Saturday of each month and plan to stay til noon or one. Pizza and soft drinks will be served to all volunteers at 11:30. A free LRAS T-shirt will be available on your first volunteer workday

Estate Antique  Custom Design
Diamonds Gold Colored Gems
Tahitian, Akoya, and South Sea Pearls
Classic & Vintage Rolex Timepieces
ANDY THORNAL COMPANY
Winter Haven - Down Town Under the Water Tower
US HWY 17 863.299.9999 www.andythornal.com

RONNIE'S CARPETS, INC.

LAKELAND, FL
FREE ESTIMATES - RESIDENTIAL, BUILDER
AND COMMERCIAL INSTALLATIONS
863-859-1441
800-541-4762
WWW.RONNIESCARPETS.COM

Lake Region Web Site

The printed version of the *Eagle's View* is in black and white. For a full color version, check it out on the Lake Region web site at www.lakeregion.net. The photographs are much nicer in full color. You will also find the latest schedules and other information. Rae Bourquein is the webmaster and she does a terrific job keeping it current.

A VOLUNTEER'S STORY - A COMPANY'S GENEROSITY

In 2001 Betty Butcher started casually birding with friends. After a while she got "bitten" by the birding bug and started to take birding more seriously. In 2004 she took the Bird Identification Course at Lake Region Audubon presented by Paul Fellers. She was impressed by his enthusiasm and said it was contagious.

Betty was a long time employee at State Farm Insurance. In 2005 she retired. It was then that she learned State Farm had a Grant Program for both active employees and for retired employees. In its efforts to expand its corporate citizenship a Grant Program was set up to assist local non profit organizations. But it wanted its employees and retirees to also participate. So it created a matching grant program. If an employee / retiree donated 40 hours, or more, of community service to a non-profit organization of their own choice, State Farm would "match" that service with a cash donation of \$500.00.

With Betty's new found love of birding, and her experiences at Lake Region Audubon Center, Betty signed up with Ann Pinner, Chairperson of the Volunteers Program. It was not long before Betty had volunteered 40 hours. In fact it was not long before she accumulated far more than 40 hours. She recorded her hours and submitted them to State Farm. At the end of February, we were presented with a check from State Farm Companies Foundation for \$500 in recognition of the time and work volunteered by Betty Butcher.

Betty recently was quoted as saying, "As a native Floridian wanting to keep the State as I remember it when growing up, being a volunteer was a way I could help accomplish this. I look forward to many more 40+ hour years of volunteering."

Besides all the hours she spends at the Audubon Center, Betty can usually be found birding on Thursdays with the Bird Club lead by Marvel Loftus. Betty has also been known to bird the new County Preserve at the Circle B Bar Ranch, and she attends other functions of Lake Region Audubon as time allows.

The Board of Directors wishes to take this opportunity to thank both Betty Butcher and State Farm Insurance Company for their most generous contributions in time and in money. --Submitted by Bill Karnofsky ***

Special Thanks to Rita Mary Morris

By Bill Karnofsky

On March 8th the Bird Club, lead by **Marvel Loftus**, was invited to the home of **Rita Mary Morris**, in River Ranch. When **Rita Mary** answered the knock on the door, there stood 40 or 50 people. With elegance and grace she welcomed everyone inside to see the painted buntings that frequent her bird feeders. Not only did she see to it that everyone had a place with a clear view to one of her many feeders regularly visited by the painted buntings, but she had coffee and very delicious baked goodies that she made herself. The first few people inside were fortunate to immediately see beautiful males as well as females on the first feeder. But the commotion of all those people sent the buntings off for some peace and quiet. But it was not long before the desire for more seed, and the group getting quiet, when all of a sudden buntings were on both sides of her house in the various feeders. Everyone present got fabulous looks at these astonishingly beautiful birds.

We believe it was **Rita Mary's** warm and wonderful hospitality that set the tone for the rest of the day for the group. It turned out to be one of the best of the year in terms of great birds seen that day. Besides the Painted Buntings, the group saw a Bachman Sparrow, Whooping Cranes, a Snail Kite eating an apple snail, and some in the group got the elusive Red-cockaded Woodpecker. These were in addition to the other 56 species recorded for the day, not to mention the mother alligator with her babies all around her.

...and the members of the Bird Club wish to also thank **Marvel Loftus** for all her work and dedication in making these Thursday birding trips so successful. ***

Schedule

April 21, 2007, Sat, Fort DeSoto Warbler Migration Field Trip

Meet at the Lake Mirror Center parking lot in Lakeland at 7 am to carpool. Bring lunch; dinner at Spaghetti Warehouse in Ybor City. See up to 100 species, many migrants.
Paul Fellers, 863-293-0486

April 23, 2007, Pizza and Film Night

"Stellar Sea Lions," the mystery of their decline.
Marvel Loftus, 863-324-9657

June 2, 2007, Sat, Avon Park Air Force Range

Meet at 8 am at Street Audubon Center for carpooling. Bring lunch. Perhaps, I.D. 75 wild flower species, including at least 5 orchid species, plus possibly some very good birds.
Minimum hiking.
Paul Fellers, 863-293-0486

April 28, Native Plant Sale

Many native Florida plants will be available for purchase and demonstrations related to native plants will be available. We need home grown plants and lots of volunteers. These two things made the spring sale the best ever. We will have Florimulch for sale. Using this mulch is very good for the environment. Come out and find your favorite native plant. Many to choose from for all soil conditions from dry to wet and sun to shade.

Dr. David Shibles, horticulturist, will present a program on Conserving Water in the Landscape at 9:30.

Joe Wolfe, Mastergardner, will present a program on Propagation at 10:30.

If you can help set it up call Carrie Clair at 863-683-8094

2007 Fall Warbler Migration Walks

Start on Saturday Aug 18th through October 27th.

Photo Contest

Lake Region Audubon is sponsoring a photo contest during 2007. Photographs must be taken during the calendar year of 2007 and must have a theme relating to nature. Professional photographers and Audubon members working on the contest committee are not eligible to participate in the contest. Decisions of the judges are final and may not be contested. Start saving your best photos now and check future issues of this newsletter for more details or contact the editor at hmoul@verizon.net (put audubon photo contest in the subject line).

Details will be published in the May/June issue of The Eagles Nest. **DO NOT SEND YOUR PHOTOS IN NOW. WAIT UNTIL THE DETAILS ARE PUBLISHED IN THE NEXT ISSUE.**

CIRCLE B BAR RESERVE

Circle B Bar has seen much activity recently. The major part of the marsh restoration is complete, but some work remains to be done. Banana Creek Canal, the major drainage route, has been filled and most of the other drainage ditches have also been filled. The water entering Circle B near US 98 now spreads out to form a great marsh. Many wading birds and ducks may be found along with hawks, falcons and eagles. River Otter are often seen, mostly, along the Banana Creek Canal Trail. An observation dock is now under construction on the lakeside and on March 9th ground was broken for the new nature center. The center should be completed in the spring of 2008.



Groundbreaking

Remember the Native Plant Sale on April 28th at the Street Audubon Center

A FEW MORE PHOTOS BY LINDA COOPER



2006 - 2007 OFFICERS**Steering Committee:****Bill Karnofsky 863-324-5282****billkarnofsky@verizon.net****Chuck Geanangel 863-326-5748****hoatzin@tampabay.rr.com****Marvel Loftus - 863-324-9657****marvel.loftus@gmail.com****Paul Anderson 863-965-8241 jandr@aol.com****Gary McCoy 863-853-2643 garynfay60@aol.com**

VP/Programs: Marvel Loftus

VP/Conservation: Chuck Geanangel 863-326-5748

VP/Field Trips: Paul Fellers 863-293-0486

VP Membership: Gary McCoy 863-853-2643

VP Newsletter: Herman Moulden hmoul@verizon.net

Treasurer: Bill Karnofsky 863-324-5282

Recording Sec: Mali Rafats 863-207-2104,

malirafats@hotmail.com

Corresponding Sec: Liz Purnell 863-324-3181

Street Audubon Center Advisory Committee:

Chuck Geanangel, Bill Karnofsky and Paul Anderson

Board Members: Charles Geanangel, Mae Hartsaw, William Karnofsky, Carrie Plaire, Paul Anderson, Paul Fellers, Elizabeth Purnell, Janet Anderson, Louise Lang, Marvel Loftus, Gary McCoy, Herman Moulden, and Ann Pinner

BrdBrain

BrdBrain is a listserv hosted by the University of South Florida. It provides the birding community with a method of communication. When the Northern Wheatear and the Masked Duck were found, it was posted on BrdBrain and the entire birding community became aware of the location of these birds. Much information is posted for the benefit of all.

To subscribe to this free service go to

<http://listserv.admin.usf.edu/archives/brdbrain.html>

and click on "join or leave the list". Follow the instructions.

Mission Statement: Lake Region Audubon Society, a Chapter of National and Florida Audubon Societies, is dedicated to youth education, conservation, clean air and clean water, preservation of our native flora and fauna, and the promotion of public awareness of the remaining natural beauty of our Florida and our world.

Election Results**General Membership Meeting, March 14, 2007**

Mali Rafats was elected as Recording Secretary and Liz Purnell was elected as Corresponding Secretary. All other officers were re-elected.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

For New Audubon Members Only - Chapter E25:7XCH

Join the National Audubon Society for the special rate of US \$20. That's \$15 off the regular membership dues. This 3-way membership includes the Lake Region Audubon newsletter and magazines of Florida and National Audubon. **Make checks payable to The National Audubon Society, and mail with this form to:**

**Lake Region Audubon Society
Attn: Gary McCoy, Membership
P. O. Box 93287
Lakeland, FL 33804-3287**



Lake Region
Audubon
Chapter E 25, 7XCH
Audubon Memberships are good gifts.

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Lake Region Audubon Society
Street Audubon Center
115 Lameraux Road
Winter Haven, FL 33884
863.324.7304
www.lakeregion.net

Non-Profit Org.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Lakeland, FL
Permit No. 119

Street Audubon Center
Is Staffed By Volunteers
Monday - Saturday, 9 - 3:00.

“Eagle’s View” Newsletter,
Volume 17, Issue 4
March - April 2007
Published five times yearly by
Lake Region Audubon Society,
115 Lameraux Rd.,
Winter Haven, FL 33884.

Printed with soy ink on recycled paper

Injured Birds and Animals, Joan Waters

Call **Joan Waters, 863.967.3298** anytime for bird and animal rescue. Leave a message and she will return your call.

Visit Joan’s website: www.woodlandwonders.org.



Feature Photo

Les Twining was trying out a new kayak and got this Brown Pelican at Lake John in Lakeland.

Have your photo featured in this spot. Send it to the editor at h mou l@verizon.net

To view these photos in color visit the Lake Region web site, www.lakeregion.net