

# The Pileated Woodpecker

The Newsletter of the Sanibel-Captiva Audubon Society

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33957

**Our Mission: Promoting Interests in Wildlife on Sanibel and Captiva Islands, and fostering the Cause of Conservation with Emphasis on Birds and their Habitat.**

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the fall edition of your Sanibel Captiva Audubon Society newsletter. Having just returned from a late afternoon walk on Sanibel, I'm feeling energized and inspired since I strolled with our most "senior" member of our local chapter. Rawson Wood recently celebrated his 101st birthday and continues to do his daily walk while looking forward to attending our 2010 lecture series starting Jan 7th. When you meet Rawson, feel free to thank him for his generosity to our chapter both financially and with his donation of personal field guides and binoculars that we hope to recycle to young birders on island and the new Hendry/Glades chapter. If you have any previously used equipment we will pass them on to our next generation of Auduboners.

Speaking of recycling, we thank Brian Mishell for his service to the board, as he steps down to make room for any new "blood". Some of your board of directors and officers are reaching the terms of their life cycle (myself included) and we will be looking for fresh ideas and new skills to share. If you would like to step up, feel free to contact any of us. I know that volunteers have helped with the Blind Pass Project and are prepping for our annual Christmas Bird Count. We thank you for your time and expertise.

As most of you may know, Audubon efforts have led to the de-listing of the brown pelican from the endangered list after 40 years of concern. While traveling through New York State this summer, I was delighted to discover a southern friend who migrated to the Adirondacks for a new view of the mountains. Many locals were surprised to see a banded brown pelican enjoying the cool summer vacation spot. After disbelief comes acceptance of the unusual...sort of like our visiting flamingo at Ding Darling on a recent New Years day visit. Let's never say never when it comes to wildlife and remember Emily Dickenson's poem... "hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul..." May we have a hopeful season ahead. Best wishes to all in the weeks ahead.

*Paul*



**WHO** Can make our voices heard **YOU!**

Give  
Florida's  
Birds a  
Voice



Audubon of Florida's online Advocacy Center keeps you up-to-date on issues facing our environment. Sign up for free monthly e-newsletters and learn how you can help birds with the click of a mouse!

<http://ga1.org/natureadvocate/home.html>

Or go to [www.audubonofflorida.com](http://www.audubonofflorida.com), click on "Take Action", then click on "sign up". Done!

# The Cornell Lab of Ornithology



Ithaca, NY—What happens in the backyard should not stay in the backyard—at least when it comes to bird feeders. By sharing information about which birds visit their feeders between November and April, backyard bird watchers can help scientists track changes in bird numbers and movements from year to year, through **Project FeederWatch**, a citizen-science program from the **Cornell Lab of Ornithology** and **Bird Studies Canada**.

Project FeederWatch began on November 14 and runs through early April. Taking part is easy. Anyone can count the numbers and kinds of birds at their feeders and enter their information on the FeederWatch website. Participants submitted nearly 117,000 checklists last season. Since 1987, more than 40,000 people from the United States and Canada have taken part in the project.

“To get the most complete picture of bird movements, we always need new sets of eyes to tell us what species are showing up at backyard feeders,” says David Bonter, leader of Project FeederWatch.

“Participants always tell us how much fun it is and how good it feels to contribute to our understanding of birds by submitting their sightings.”

Project FeederWatch is for people of all ages and skill levels. To learn more and to sign up, visit [www.feederwatch.org](http://www.feederwatch.org) or call the Cornell Lab toll-free at 866-982-2473. In return for the \$15 fee (\$12 for Cornell Lab members) participants receive the *Feeder Watcher's Handbook*, an identification poster of the most common feeder birds, a calendar, complete instructions, and *Winter Bird Highlights*, an annual summary of FeederWatch findings.



**There was a massive southern movement of pine siskins during the 2008-09 season.**

Participant Nancy Corr of Harrisburg, Oregon, sums up her Project FeederWatch experience: “Thanks for the wonderful opportunity to share our love of birding and to participate in something meaningful!”

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### Banded Shorebird Sightings

An international team of scientists have banded tens of thousands of shorebirds since the mid 1990's. The vast majority of these birds are red knots, semi-palmated sandpipers, ruddy turnstones, and sanderlings. Color-marking these birds has resulted in a growing database of sightings along the Atlantic Flyway describing their migration routes, nesting and wintering areas. Your observations will contribute greatly to this important information..

Red knots are returning and have been seen at Little Estero Lagoon, Bunche Beach, and Bowditch Point. Many of the birds that return to southwest Florida have lime green flags with lettering large enough to read at close range with binoculars, or from a distance with a scope. If you do happen to see any of the flagged knots, please use the following link to report your sightings.

[www.bandedbirds.org](http://www.bandedbirds.org)



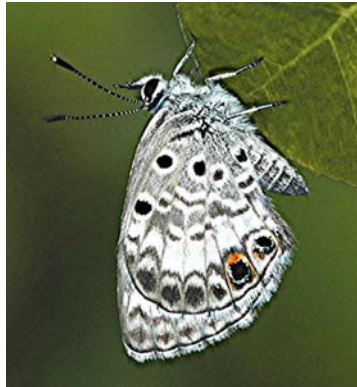
**BUTTERFLIES EVERYWHERE!**  
by Phyllis Gresham



Or are they? Dr. Mark Minno, speaking at the ninth annual Southwest Florida Butterfly Conference November 7 in Fort Myers, discussed the decline in numbers as well as varieties of butterflies such as the Miami Blue and the importance of land management, protection against habitat loss, minimizing pesticides and the effects of climate change such as hurricanes.

Butterflies have existed for 34-36 million years, fossilized in amber, colors preserved so that we can see them. Only relatives have survived.

There are at least 160 different kinds of butterflies that have breeding populations in Florida. When the glaciers melted and oceans rose, plants and animals were unable to breed outside Florida so there are at least 40 species found only in Florida.



Butterflies can be pollinators, herbivores, carnivores, and food for other animals. Small butterflies, like hairstreaks, live only 2-3 weeks but our native butterfly, the zebra longwing, can survive 3-4 months. The monarch travels 34,000 miles to over winter in the Mexican highlands. Consider that it weighs 500 milligrams and a raindrop 70 milligram.



Did you know the male butterflies have "drinking clubs"

where they puddle to replace sodium ions, control their temperature, flush wastes and prevent dehydration? Make a puddle in your yard for them with soil, a few drops of water or Gatorade in a sunny spot and watch for a puddling party.



Provide hosts and nectar plants, such as pentas, milkweed, dill, parsley, corky stem passion vine, cassia, blue porter-

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**Corner of Tarpon Bay Road and Periwinkle Way**

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weed and firebush, and tolerate some chewed leaves (caterpillar food), for the pleasure of watching these amazing creatures. Each species prefers a specific habitat containing host plants for caterpillars and flowers for nectar. Know your natural area and enjoy conserving butterflies!

A good reference is *Florida Butterfly Gardening*, by Marc C. Minno/Maria Minno. University Press of Florida 1999.

**LATE BREAKING NEWS!**  
Dr. Harold Johnstone will again conduct his popular Bird Identification Class tentative date, Jan. 27, 2010. Watch for details.



# Candice Ethridge Book Review

## Bird in the Bush: A Social History of Birdwatching

by Stephen Moss

Although several years ago Scott Weidensaul's *Of a Feather* toured the history of birding in North America, *Bird in the Bush* will convince you the history of birding in Great Britain requires a separate text, especially if you are an Anglophile. Author Stephen Moss credits the British with likely being the world's earliest, dedicated bird watchers. English medieval literature names at least 100 British birds; the first scientific bird list appeared in England by the late 1600s. And by the 1800s, popular bird books were available in Britain, while America was still counting on Audubon to find her birds so he could illustrate them.

Shakespeare wrote, "She laments...her husband goes...a-birding." Of course, he went, not with binoculars, but a gun. Gun-toting birders shot fowl for dinner, for sport--and some, in order to collect bird specimens to skin, mount, and study at home. Anglo-Saxons assumed that God created nature for man's consumption. Moss reports that an early birder suggested that spy-glasses are good for studying bird habits, but guns are better to bring them close at hand for study.

The first birders in the UK must have been quite fit. Besides being top shots without a scope, most traveled only on foot, while enduring severe weather with little food. Early 1800s birder, Alexander Wilson, born in Scotland, covered over 1000 miles of America by foot. He managed to describe in detail almost 300 birds of the current 600 birds listed in a North American bird guide. Remarkable for his era, he did little shooting and specimen collecting, preferring to observe birds in the field "without molesting them" as he wrote. Slowly the idea of man, not just consuming, but also conserving nature was emerging.

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, more and more birders traded their guns for visual aids. Most English birders then were educated, country gents, out on foot, maintaining a list of about 100 birds—and some using 4x telescopes. Opera glasses were known, of course; in fact *Birds Through an Opera Glass* appeared in the late 1800s. However, by the 20<sup>th</sup> century, practical, outdoor binoculars from Germany became available to British

birders.

*Bird in the Bush*, once into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, starts to parallel US bird-watching history. Despite Victorians' love of drawers and drawers of bird egg collections and endless glass cases of stuffed birds mounted by their nests, bird counts became widespread across the UK, after one originated in the US. Likewise, 20,000 British women signed pledges to avoid fur, fin, and feather in their millinery fashions, like a similar movement in the US. Thinking was changing to "A bird in the bush is worth two in the hand." Simultaneously, across the British Isles, bird feeders and bird houses became popular along with bird magazines, which first printed the term 'bird-watching.' Moss also attempts to explain that some UK birders call themselves "twitchers" because they feel a certain twitch, while seeking a rare bird.

After WWII, bird study became more scientific, such as migration mapping and extensive bird banding, first with colored thread. Meanwhile, the hobby birders with their bird lists began to emerge from various economic levels since the passion was no longer limited to the upper, leisure classes. Average birders had enough income to own cars to travel farther afield. Most of the western world, by the 1960s, had printed guides to birding sites, even if only mimeographed. Soon with the advent of less expensive air travel, guided bird trips became popular for flying to bird hot spots in countries, formerly remote. Guides to these far-away spots were often written by hard-core British birders.

Reading this well-documented history of British birding, though a bit dry, gives an easy refresher on British history as well. Oddly, it ends with an unconvincing explanation of why birding remains a white, male pursuit.

Benjamin Franklin railed against the eagle as our national emblem, mistakenly interpreting its protective actions as cowardice and thievery. He wrote to his daughter "...For the Truth the Turkey is in Comparison a much more respectable Bird, and withal a true original Native of America...He is besides, though a little vain & silly, a Bird of Courage, and would not hesitate to attack a Grenadier of the British Guards who should presume to invade his Farm Yard with a red Coat on."



**But would we be eating our national symbol every November???**

Whatever adorns your table, may your celebration be filled with much to be thankful for and attended by those you care about.

**SANIBEL-CAPTIVA AUDUBON  
2010 LECTURE PROGRAM SCHEDULE**

**Held at the Sanibel Community House  
2173 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel, FL  
7:30PM Start Time - Doors open at 6:30PM  
Suggested Donation - \$5.00 per person**

**January 7 - *A Marriage for Nature: Archie and Marjorie Carr and Their Fight to Save Wildlife and Wild Lands*** - Florida State University Professor **Frederick “Fritz” Davis** enlightens us on “*Florida’s First Couple for Conservation*” utilizing numerous rare photographs. Of local interest, Fritz is the son of Sanibel’s own Judy and Dan Davis.

**January 14 – *“Land of Sunshine and State of Dreams”*** – **Dr. Gary Mormino**-Professor of History at South Florida University and the author of the acclaimed book of the same name delves into the reasons for Florida’s enormous growth, past and present. Gary’s timely presentation will be replete with rare historical photos of Florida.

**January 21 - *“Wings over Water”*: *Migratory Land Bird Flights over the Western Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico***” - Ornithologist **Steven Reinert** will provide some answers and insights into why birds undertake perilous migratory journeys over countless miles of open water. The focus of his presentation will be on the flights of immature birds.

**January 28 - *“Wildlife Rehabilitation at C.R.O.W: Meeting the Challenges”*** - C.R.O.W.’s Staff Veterinarian and Clinic Director, **Dr. P.J. Deitschel** will fascinate you with stories and photos of her wildlife rehabilitation activities that will be long remembered. All proceeds from this event to be donated to C.R.O.W.

**February 4 - *“Photographing the Birds of South Florida: How, Where and the Ethical Implications to be Considered”*** - Award winning photographers, **Sara Lopez and Richard Fortune** will present an amazing program of their unique photos focused on Southwest Florida’s Wildlife. Sara and Dick will also enlighten amateur photographers on techniques and ethics as applied to wildlife photography.

**February 11 - *“James Corwin Johnson: Adventures in Imaging”*** - Renowned photographer, **James Corwin Johnson**, will focus on his experience as the Director of Photography for Yosemite National Park for 12 years as he presents a delightful array of his award winning work.

**February 18 - *“Planets of Our Solar System”*** - Sanibel’s and Canada’s own resident astronomer, **John Hicks** returns with his wonderful photography to probe the secrets of the Planets of Our Solar System. He may also help enlighten us on the “Green Flash” and “Climate Change”.

**February 25 - *“Living Sanibel: A Nature Guide to Sanibel and Captiva Islands”*** – Sanibel’s most successful resident author, **Charles Sobczak** will introduce his new book covering *everything* natural found on Sanibel and Captiva. Local history, birds, shells, fish, flora and fauna as well as a complete guide to local kayaking , biking and hiking trails will be covered.

# SANIBEL-CAPTIVA AUDUBON SOCIETY 2009-2010 BIRDWALKS

*SATURDAYS, 8:00 AM...SUGGESTED DONATION \$ 2.00 / PERSON*

Dec 5 BAILEY TRACT  
Dec 12 DING DARLING REFUGE  
Dec 19 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT  
Jan 2 BUNCHE BEACH  
Jan 9 POND APPLE TRAIL  
Jan 16 FT MYERS BEACH LAGOON  
Jan 23 BUNCHE BEACH  
Jan 30 DING DARLING REFUGE  
Feb 6 BAILEY TRACT  
Feb 13 DING DARLING REFUGE  
Feb 20 BAILEY TRACT  
Feb 27 BUNCHE BEACH  
Mar 6 BOWMAN'S BEACH  
Mar 13 DING DARLING REFUGE  
Mar 20 BAILEY TRACT  
Mar 27 DING DARLING REFUGE  
Apr 3 SANIBEL LIGHTHOUSE

## DIRECTIONS

**BAILEY TRACT:** South on Tarpon Bay Rd from Bailey' store approx ½ mile. Free Parking in lot at entrance on right.

**BOWMAN'S BEACH:** Park in the beach parking lot at the end of Bowman's Beach Road. Meet at the Wooden Bridge on the way to beach. Non-Resident parking \$2.00/hour.

**BUNCHE BEACH:** Across causeway approx. 2.5 miles. Right on John Morris Rd to beach parking lot. Free Parking. Waterproof shoes a must.

**DING DARLING REFUGE:** Meet in overflow parking lot near trolley stop. Free Parking.

**FORT MYERS BEACH LAGOON:** Meet at Villa Santini Plaza (Approximately 5 miles from the Ft Myers Bridge diagonally across from the Holiday Inn on Estero Blvd ) Free Parking.

**POND APPLE TRAIL:** Meet in the far side lot of the Sanibel-Captiva Chamber of Commerce on Causeway Blvd. Free Parking.

**SANIBEL LIGHTHOUSE:** Meet in the beach parking lot at the end of Periwinkle Way. Non-Resident parking \$ 2.00/hour.

**LEADERS:** Paul and Chris Andrews, Kevin Bowden, Phyllis Gresham Jim Griffith, Malcolm and Sue Harpham, Bill Jacobson, Dr. Harold Johnstone, Dale McGinley, Brian and Dolores Mishell, Hugh Verry

*Questions, please contact Hugh Verry, 395-3798*

# The Christmas Bird Count

December 19, 2009



This year the 110th Christmas Bird Count takes place from Alaska to Antarctica. For 109 years, tens of thousands of volunteers have endured various degrees of weather from beautiful (here) to horrible (there). This is a remarkable accomplishment and represents the longest study by citizen scientists, adding a new layer each year to the mass of data on the condition of birds.

You will of course wish to join this force, seeing that we have such relatively balmy weather and are dedicated to furthering the cause of our blessed birds. All skill levels are welcome—there is plenty to do. Please call Bill Jacobson at 395-1878.

### She said:

You don't get to choose how you're going to die. Or when. You can only decide how you're going to live.

\_Joan Baez

Wars and elections are both too big and too small to matter in the long run. The daily work - that goes on, it adds up.

\_Barbara Kingsolver

Time spent with cats is never wasted.

\_Colette



Tom Kreulen, MD

### Birds and Wildlife Need You!

Here are some suggestions for actions we can take right now:

**Spoonbills:** The Tavernier Center is conducting vital research on nesting patterns of these birds. They want your help in sighting banded birds. Get details—Go to [audubonofflorida.org](http://audubonofflorida.org), click on [Report a Spoonbill Sighting](#). (This makes fascinating reading)

Read about the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland, and how you can help—go to [audubonofflorida.org](http://audubonofflorida.org), click on [Audubon Center for Birds of Prey](#).

Read about actions you can take to make a difference in regional environmental issues—go to [audubonofflorida.org](http://audubonofflorida.org), click on [Act Now to Conserve Natural Florida](#).

### Current Advocacy Campaigns

#### [Birds and Climate Change: Ecological Disruption in Progress](#)

Tell your lawmakers where you stand on global warming by signing our petition.

#### [Help Save Our Migratory Birds!](#)

Send a letter to your U.S. Representative and Senators, asking them to co-sponsor legislation to reauthorize the Neotropical Bird Conservation Act.

#### [Keep Green Energy Green!](#)

Send a letter to your members of Congress to support efforts to protect wildlife and habitat as we develop renewable energy sources.

#### [Protect the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge](#)

Ask your U.S. Representative to cosponsor the Udall-Eisenhower Arctic Wilderness Act (HR 39) to permanently protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge..

All this and a lot more can be found on the Audubon of Florida website. Try it out today! Just browse, or join. Either way you will get vital information.

<http://ga1.org/natureadvocate/home.html>  
Or go to [www.audubonofflorida.org](http://www.audubonofflorida.org), click on "Take Action", then click on "sign up".

