



Bay County Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1182
Panama City, Florida 32402

CURRENT OCCUPANT OR

This newsletter is published 5 times each year: Jan., Mar., May, Sept., and Nov. -SAVE THIS ISSUE UNTIL MARCH. 2012
Our Motto is *"From Birding to the Total Environment"* Website Address: <http://www.baycountyaudubon.org>
Celebrating Bay County Audubon Society's 50th year of continuous successful operation

it out!!! Audubonaction.org. Also, follow us on Facebook

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS
October – November, 2011

Deborah Michaud, Richard Turner, Robin Shader, Nancy Barsant, Virginia Barrett, Betty Grossman, Jessie Foster, Jerome Bechtle, Frank A. Cozadd, Margaret Todd, and Gulf Coast Library

WELCOME BACK TO BCAS

Norman Shiver and Anita Underwood

We hope to see you at our next BCAS meeting January 9, 2012 at the Panama City Garden Club at 7 p.m.

Membership Renewals: The local chapter does not handle renewals—only new memberships. Please use the form sent by National Audubon for renewal. Also, please include our chapter code, C2ZE200Z, on the "for" line. Your expiration date of membership will be located in your address by your name on your newsletter.

NEW MEMBERS FORM (Not for renewals)

Yes, please enroll me as a new member of the National Audubon Society and of the local chapter, Bay County Audubon Society (C1ZE200Z) (Be sure to put this number on your check). Please send Audubon magazine, Conservation Chronicle, and my membership card to the address below.

\$20 One-year introductory membership \$30 Two-year introductory membership \$15 Friend (*The Conservation Chronicle* only)

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

Please make your check payable to the National Audubon Society and mail this application to the local chapter:

Bay County Audubon Society, P.O. Box 1182, Panama City, Florida 32402

CONSERVATION CHRONICLE

Bay County Audubon Society

Jan. – Feb., 2012
Vol. 36, Number 3

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

7:00 p.m. at the
Panama City Garden Club
810 Garden Club Drive

Monday, Jan. 9 - "An Evening in Algonquin National Park in Canada." This 300 square mile wilderness park is 5 hours north of Toronto and for 120 years has served as a place for tourists to come and experience the beautiful tranquil surroundings of nature. Canadian Al Clare will present the program which will feature a DVD showing the park from its beginnings and how it was shaped by nature.

Monday Feb. 13 - "The Nature Photography of Paul Winterman." Paul will display his award winning photographs of birds and animals and talk about how he achieves such beautiful results.

Non-member guests are always welcome.

FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, January 7 - This will be an all day trip first to the lake in Florala, Alabama to look for water fowl and walk around the trails and boardwalk at the lake. We will then travel back to Destin to a small lake at one of the golf courses. Last year this lake hosted several types of ducks that were plentiful in number. Our meeting place will be at the theater sign at the Panama City Mall at 6:15AM for a prompt 6:30AM departure. We will eat lunch at a local restaurant in whichever area we happen to be in around lunch time. Extra binoculars will be available should you need them. Bring snacks and water. If the weather is bad, please call us to check on the status of the field trip or check BCAS Facebook page the morning of the trip.

Friday & Saturday, February 4-5- The trip in February will be a two day trip to St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. This trip is always an opportunity to see a variety of birds and appreciate the beauty of the St. Marks area. We will be staying over on Friday night, Feb. 4th at The Inn at Wildwood. They have breakfast type food and drinks in the lobby area. We will be eating lunch and dinner at local restaurants. Be sure to bring some water and snacks. We will return to Panama City late Saturday afternoon, Feb. 5th. You are responsible for making your own reservations. Currently 5 rooms have been blocked off under Bay County Audubon Society. Be sure to tell them you are with the BCAS group in order to get the group rate of \$89.00. The Inn at Wildwood phone number is 850-926-4455.

Please let us know if you have made reservations so we will know if we need to block off more rooms. There is a 48 hour cancellation policy. Once we have our list of everyone going we will contact you about the time and place we will meet Friday morning. Should you not want to spend the night you can meet us at the visitors' center at St. Marks Wildlife Refuge Saturday morning at 8:00 AM Eastern time. (Our contact numbers: Jim and Beth Miller, 850-872-7080, cell 850-832-8465)

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Laidlaw workdays are as follows: Sat.'s 1/21, 2/25, 4/21, 5/19.

Please contact Dawn Barone at 258-7927 or Neil Lamb at 265-0646 for more details

FRIENDS OF ST. JOSEPH BAY PRESERVES Photo Contest and Bay Day By Charla Boggs

The First Annual Friends of St. Joseph Bay Preserves Nature Photo Contest deadline for entry is **January 6, 2012**. The contest entry fees will benefit the Friends. Photo Categories include Landscapes, Animal Kingdom, Floral Kingdom, Macro, and At the Buffer Preserve. Prizes and ribbons will be awarded and photos will be exhibited at the Apalachicola Center for History, Culture and Art January 14-28 and at the Buffer Preserve in Port St. Joe February 4-11. The entry form and photo contest rules can be downloaded from the Friends website at www.stjosephbaypreserves.org/photocontest.

Winter Bay Day will be held at the Preserves Center Feb. 4 with photo and other exhibits, field trips and shrimp boil. Volunteers are always needed. Please call 850-229-1787 to volunteer or for more information. Complete information for Bay Day can also be viewed on the web site. You may also deliver your entry along with entry forms and fees for each entry to Wild Birds Unlimited in Panama City no later than **January 4, 2012, 2p.m.** and they will be picked up by Charla Boggs and delivered to the Buffer Preserve.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

By Lisa Keppner



The Bay County Audubon Society is a Chapter of National Audubon Society, Inc."

This year's CBC was a great success with our largest participation ever. We had 60 observers participate in the count. Our total species count for the day was 147 including (first time for Bay County) Cassin's Kingbird, an adult male Surf Scoter and a Pomarine Jaeger. We can always use more volunteers next year – you don't have to be an experienced birder to participate. It is a fun day observing, counting and socializing with all of the observers at our countdown dinner at the end of the day.

A FASCINATION FOR FEATHERS

Observations, tales and recollections about birds

By Connie Thompson

A book report by Ron Houser

Connie Thompson, a relative newcomer to the world of birding, decided to publish A Fascination for Feathers after writing a birding column. She states in her Forward: "This is not a book like most other books about birds." Written from her home in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, this 237 page paperback book is a compilation of her and others' observations, tales and anecdotes about birds and their behavior. Funny and interesting stories of individual birds are present throughout the book as well as factual information on bird biology, such as how feathers work. Although two other reviewers from our chapter felt the book lacked cohesiveness, I still found the book entertaining, easy, and enjoyable to read. It's possible that new birders would enjoy reading this book more than experienced birders, who have probably read other books about tracking down rare and elusive birds to add to their life list. This isn't that type of book, and Thompson admits she is not a bird expert or a "lister." Rather, she writes with the emotion and enthusiasm of someone who loves birds and their stories, which is the reason we all (I hope) got into the fascinating world of birding.

This book is available for check-out to Audubon members. Contact Ron

BCAS 2011 BACKYARD BIRD TALLY

By Tony Menart

We had two winners of our annual "backyard bird tally." It is a fun event to help local birders enjoy the birds that can be seen around their yard or special birding place. Neil Lamb of College Point and Beth and Jim Miller of Deer Point Lake area tied for first place with 127 species. Neil's highlights were a Barn Owl calling in his backyard, a Spotted Sandpiper feeding along the creek, flyovers by Boat-tailed Grackles and a White Ibis, and a Yellow-breasted Chat in perfect plumage around his pond. Beth and Jim had a nice flyover of a Magnificent Frigatebird when we had that big fall storm with high winds. They also had good looks at a Wilson's Snipe, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Wood Stork and Boat-tailed Grackles from their yard during the year. Our 3rd place winner was Richard Ingram who saw 113 species from his place out in the East Bay area of our county. Fourth place belongs to Fred and Gail

Casteel who saw 101 species on their daily walks at the Garden Club. Bill McCandliss came in 5th with 100 species that he saw at his place on Lake Powell. His best birds were a Golden-crowned Kinglet, Nashville and Kentucky Warblers, and Lark Sparrow. When our area was hit with that big wind storm, Bill saw Black and Sooty Terns from his deck over looking the lake. Emily Ellis also lives in the Lake Powell area and she came in 6th with 99 species on her list. Her best birds were a Pileated Woodpecker, Brown Creeper, Nelson's Sparrow, and Boat-tailed Grackle. Joe and Ginger Harbison are in the 7th spot with 65 species that they saw in their yard in the Cove Area. John Benton is in 8th place this year. He saw 64 species at his nice place on Delwood Drive over looking the bay. Tony Menart, who lives at Bay Point, comes in 9th this year with 63 species. His highlights were flyovers of Ospreys, Swallow-tailed Kites, Mississippi Kites, and Bald Eagles. He also had visits at his bird feeders by Sharp-shinned, Cooper's and Red-tailed Hawks this year. Mary Jo Capra is in the 10th spot with 58 species seen around her home in the Lake Powell area. She really enjoyed the Spotted Sandpiper on the pond near her home and an American Coot under a tree in her backyard! Lisa Keppner came in 11th place this year with 53 birds on her yard list. Best birds for her this year were American Woodcock, Barred and Great Horned Owls. Ron Houser holds down the 12th place with 48 species on his list from his home just off 23rd street in Panama City. Last but not least is Ruby Jo Faust who had 37 species on her list. Her best bird was a Great Horned Owl that she recognized by its call.

CHASING A NOISY BIRD

By Tony Menart

I hope everybody has had an opportunity to see the movie "The Big Year" at our local theaters. It was a very good look at what people call "hard core birders" in action! Now I am not into big years or big days, but I do like the opportunity and enjoyment of going after a special rare bird in our area or even on the other side of our planet. In October of this year, my two buddies from Michigan and I went off to southwest Australia for some great birding down under. The main goal for me was finding the Noisy



Scrubbird which would be a new bird family that I needed to see. There are 228 bird families in the world (104 non-passerines and 124 passerines); I had seen 222 families before this trip began and I just had to get this noisy guy. This was my 4th time birding in Australia. The scrubbirds only have two species in their family; one on the east coast (the Rufous Scrubbird) and the one I was after on the southwest coast. It took one and half days of flying from Panama City to get to Perth, Australia. We met up with an Aussie friend of ours and the four of us went off to the coast birding. On October 10, we were at Cheynes Beach area (about 68 kilometers east of Albany) which is surrounded by Waychinicup National Park. This park contains a beautiful inlet and stunning rock formations and is home to several rare and threatened species of birds including the Noisy Scrubbird. The key to seeing this bird was to be at the right place at the right time and wait for this bird to "run across a dirt road" just before sunset. Cheynes Beach was the place to be. When we got to the dirt road and took up our positions to wait, the bird started to call. The male is very loud but elusive to see. The Noisy Scrubbirds

love low, thick, coastal vegetation and do not like to fly much. They run on the ground all the time. We waited and waited. I do not count "heard birds" on my many birding lists so I had to see this bird. As I was filming the dirt road, a female Noisy Scrubbird ran across it and I got my 223rd bird family; now only 4 more to go! (One of the 228 bird families, Hawaiian Honeyeaters, is extinct). My buddies and I were jumping up for joy just like in the movie. We saw the female run across the road several more times and then the male came across right before nightfall. The next day, we went after them again and I got within 5 feet of a singing male but could not see him. Boy, he was very loud and I recorded all of his song before he took off. It was great fun; expensive but well worth the effort. I saw a total of 211 different species on this trip and 20 of them were lifers. It was great! Once you get the passion for birding, there is nothing on this earth that is better. Good-day!

TEN TIPS FOR LANDSCAPING FOR WILDLIFE

Condensed from IFAS Extension circular 1429,

University of Florida.

This is the 9th tip in a series of 10

By Ron Houser

Tip 9: MANAGE YOUR PETS.

Pets can have a big impact on wildlife. We have focused on feral and outside pet cats in the past because of what they do to birds but dogs harass and can kill a wide variety of wildlife too, including nesting shorebirds on the beach. Even a leashed dog on the beach is perceived by birds as a predator and cause them to abandon their nests. Cats are responsible for killing hundreds of millions of birds each year. There is no way to train a cat not to hunt. Even well fed and declawed cats with collars with bells will naturally hunt and kill birds. Never feed stray animals. If you see stray cats or dogs in your neighborhood, contact the Humane Society about how to remove them. There is something heartbreaking about a bird that has survived a winter in South America, flown a thousand miles across the Gulf only to be killed by a cat when it reaches land. Cats adapt well to the indoors and do not need to go outside at all. Consider building a screened-in patio for them instead. They will live longer lives without the worry of being hit by cars, injured in fights and dying from disease. Remember, house cats are not native to the U.S. and like other invasive exotic animals and plants, can cause a negative impact on our native wildlife.

2012 FILM SERIES

By Richard Ingram

All films will be held at **J.R. Arnold HighSchool at 550 Alf Coleman Road near Back Beach Road at 7:00 PM.** Door prizes will be given at each film. The 2012 films are:

Jan 17 (Tuesday)- "*Majestic Montana*" by Steve Gonser –

Montana is our fourth largest state, but cattle outnumber people three to one. Within its boundaries are two national parks, ten national forests, seven Indian reservations, and several national monuments and historic sites. Yet Montana's people define it – they are self-reliant, with personalities so expansive that so few people really do fill the state. Join Steve Gonser on his journey to explore the majestic qualities that make Montana a special place

Jan 31 ((Tuesday) - "*Big Cypress Swamp*" by Elam Stoltzfus

Follow filmmaker Elam Stoltzfus as he takes you on a journey through one of Earth's great treasures; the Big Cypress Swamp, an ancient region of the Everglades.

A visual masterpiece that tells the story of Florida's river of grass, highlighting people who share their passion for this wild place, seasons of scenery that pull you into the rhythm of the swamp, and a chorus of nature sounds scored into a symphony.

About Elam Stoltzfus

The mastermind cinematographer and producer behind Live Oak Production Group, Elam and his company creates educational documentaries on Florida's natural resources. Skillfully using his high definition video camera as a paintbrush, Elam creates stunning work.

After graduating from Florida State University with a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in communications/media, Elam utilized his talents to create Live Oak Production Group. It turned out to be a good choice, as his success is evident in the quality work he has created to date.

Feb 9 (Thursday) - "*The Road to Oberammergau*" by Stan Walsh (Note-this is a change from our previous announcement)

In this film, viewers will visit cities in Italy, including Rome, Assisi, Florence, Pisa and Venice; Lucerne, Switzerland and Munich, Germany before they arrive at Oberammergau. This city is in the hills of Bavaria. Since the Middle Ages pilgrims have traveled here to witness the now famous drama called "The Passion Play," which depicts the final days of Jesus. It was first performed in 1633 by the villagers to hopefully exempt them from the plague that was ravishing Europe. The village was only mildly infected and they vowed to present the drama every decade.

Feb 16 (Thursday) - "*Return to Sweden*" by Dale Johnson

An American of Swedish descent, Dale Johnson journeyed to Sweden hoping to see the land of his ancestors. Unexpectedly, he found much more. Thousands of Americans of European descent will connect in a personal way to the quest in this journey of discovery... this search for "roots." Sweden is a country of sheer physical beauty; the midnight sun, Lapland reindeer herders, forested mountains, the Nobel Peace Prize, farming traditions, Viking ancestry, Stockholm, Venice of the North, and much, much more.

Tickets are available at the door:

Season Pass - \$ 20.00

Individual programs - \$6.00

Students, 18 and under – free

For more information contact:

Richard Ingram, Publicity Chair
12634 Piercy Road
Panama City, FL 32404