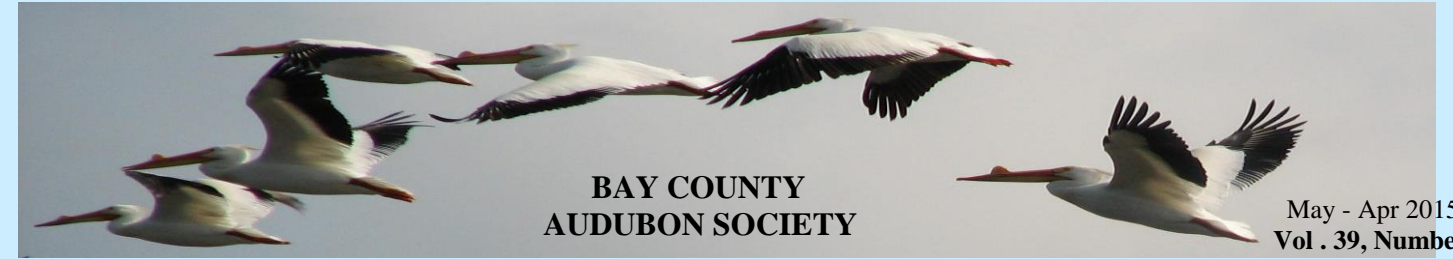




**Bay County Audubon Society**  
**P.O. Box 1182**  
**Panama City, Florida 32402**

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# CONSERVATION CHRONICLE



**BAY COUNTY  
 AUDUBON SOCIETY**

May - Apr 2015  
 Vol . 39, Number 5

## CURRENT OCCUPANT OR

This newsletter is published 5 times each year: Jan., Mar., May, Sept., and Nov. -SAVE THIS ISSUE UNTIL SEP, 2015  
 Our Motto is **"From Birding to the Total Environment"** Website Address: <http://www.baycountyaudubon.org>  
 Bay County Audubon Society's 51st year of continuous successful operation

**it out!!!** baycountyaudubon.org or follow us on Facebook.

### Chapter Contacts

President	Mary Jo Capra	233-1313
Vice President	Fred Borg	271-2674
Treasurer	Neil Lamb	265-0646
Recording Sec	Robin Shader	522-2109
Corresponding Sec	Debbie Greiner	215-3580
Bald Eagle Stamp	Candis Harbison	381-7500
Bird Records	Richard Ingram	871-1736
CBC	Raya Pruner/Marvin Friel	233-5110
Conservation	Norm Capra	233-1313
Education	Susan Llorca	249-2862
Field Trips	Ron Houser	763-7485
Rare Bird Alert	Tony Menart	234-8042
Film Series	Jeff Palgut	763-4415
Historian	Beth Miller	872-7080
Hospitality & Merchandise	Wendy Hunsicker	258-3442
Inventory	John Donlon	
Laidlaw Preserve	Dawn Barone & Neil Lamb	258-7927/265-0646
Membership	Diane Houser	763-7485
Memorials	Ann Ingram	871-1736
Newsletter Editor	Jim Miller	872-7080
Outreach Speakers	Ron Houser & Neil Lamb	763-7485/265-0646
Parker Preserve	Al Clare	872-8260
Programs	Fred Borg	271-2674
Publicity	Al Clare	872-8260
Web/Facebook Master	Susan Lamb	265-0646

## WELCOME NEW BCAS MEMBERS

**March 2015**

Leanne Williams Shell, Donna Long, Julia Thompson, Patrician Higgins, Maria McCarthy, Dian Horvatic, Joni Gilbert, Carolyn Kent, Wanda Giles, Linda Krepper, Mary Vicki Taws, Tray Frigon, Alicia Sullivan, Cherie Edwards, Duane Yusko, Mellissa Duke, Barbara Ceraukis, Robert Laplante, Nina Dameron, and Gail Sochacky-Hebert

## WELCOME BACK TO BCAS

Marla Michaels, Jacalyn N., and Maggie Mason.

**Membership renewals:** BCAS, the local chapter affiliated with National Audubon Society, does not handle renewals—**only new memberships**. Please use the form sent by the National Audubon Society for renewal. Your membership expiration date can be found on your newsletter on the top line of your address. Example: Mr. John Smith 6/30/14. Those receiving electronic newsletters please contact Diane Houser, membership chair, for that date.

### 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 (C5ZE200Z) (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  \$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

## CALENDER OF EVENTS

### PROGRAMS

All membership meetings will be held at the Science & Discovery Center of Northwest Florida, 308 Airport Road, Panama City

Hello Members. Please mark your calendars for our special May Banquet Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup> in our regular meeting room at the Science and Discovery Center 308 W. Airport Rd. At 6:30 P.M. there will be a dinner catered by Victoria's Catering in Lynn Haven; featuring both veggie and meat lasagnas, green beans, tossed salad with dressings, garlic bread and iced tea. All this for only \$10 at the door. Desserts will be provided by our members, so if you would like to contribute, please bring a little something to add to the dessert table. Looking forward to seeing all of you for this delicious dinner and fun evening with the presentation of the Conservationist of the Year Award and Installation of the New Officers. See you there!

### FIELD TRIPS

**Saturday, May 9. Work day at Laidlaw Preserve.** Meet at Porter Park in Lynn Haven, by the bridge, at 7:15 to leave at 7:30 sharp. Bring clippers, weed eaters, gloves, binoculars, a pack lunch and drinks. We might even have our new shed ready to install there to keep our equipment in. We should be finished by 1:00PM. Call Neil for more information 265-0646.

**Saturday, May 16th, 2015 Hiking/birding/plant walk at the Hinson Conservation Area** in Marianna. This is a new destination for us, so we will just have to see how it is. Come prepared to walk on mostly flat trails 1-2 miles along the Chipola River. Bring binoculars, a camera, snacks, drinks, insect repellent and a pack lunch to eat when we get back to the cars. Meet at the Panama City Mall by Starbuck's at 7:00am to leave at 7:15 sharp. If you live near Marianna, meet us at the parking area around 8:15. Call Ron for details. 763-7485(home) 381-5651 (cell)

## PRESIDENT'S CHAT

*By Mary Jo Capra*

It has been an honor to serve as president this past year. I want to thank our board and many volunteers who participated in numerous activities over this year. Our biggest project was getting petitions signed and getting out the vote for the approval of Amendment 1, The Florida Water and Land Legacy Amendment. Our Conservationist of the Year Award goes to the person in our chapter who worked relentlessly on the project, Ron Houser. He and his group of dedicated volunteers spent hours getting signatures and then getting out the word to vote for Amendment 1. Those of you who know Ron know that he didn't stop with that one activity. As we moved to our new meeting place, the Science and Discovery Center of Northwest Florida, he found money to start an exotic invasive plant removal plan from the property. He worked tirelessly with projects for the Sweet Bay Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, and the Bay County Conservancy. Please join us on May 11<sup>th</sup> for our annual banquet for the installation of our new officers and presentation of the Conservationist of the Year award.

## New BCAS Officers for 2015-2016

*By Ron Houser*

The Nominating Committee's recommendations for our elected officers for next year are:

Co-Presidents – Robin Shader and Ron Houser  
 Vice President – Susan Llorca  
 Treasurer – Neil Lamb  
 Recording Secretary – Robin Kitson  
 Corresponding Secretary – Debbie Greiner

Elected by the membership at the April 13 meeting, the new officers will be installed by our honored guest Allen N. Jelks, Jr. at the May 11 meeting, where we will have a catered dinner and presentation of Conservationist of the Year. This will be the last membership meeting until September.



## HOW TO PREVENT RAPTOR INJURIES

By Candis Harbison

At the close of 2014, Audubon Florida's busy Raptor Trauma Clinic admitted a total of **721 bird patients!** This total is slightly greater than the close of 2013 (717). The species that had the highest numbers of admits were Red-shouldered Hawks, Osprey, Eastern Screech Owls and Bald Eagles. These birds face many threats in the wild including vehicle strikes, babies falling from nests, eating poisoned rodents and entanglement in fishing line.

Make a resolution in 2015 to help protect these magnificent birds by putting up a Screech Owl nest box, trimming trees only in the fall to avoid damaging active nests, picking up improperly discarded fishing line, avoiding rat poison, and refraining from throwing food out of your car window (which attracts rodents to highways and then attracts predators to those highways).

## BIRD IDENTIFICATION QUIZ

(Answer on last page)



©WMiller Photos

I used to be seen in great numbers, and can still be seen around the Panama City area, as well as most of the eastern U.S. I like open fields and also like to sit on low fences. I feed on seeds, insects and worms. People recognize my bright yellow underparts and noticeable black breast-band just like my Western counterpart. My white outer tail feathers are easily seen when I takeoff or land.

## DAUPHIN ISLAND/FT. MORGAN TRIP

By Ron Houser

Ten of our BCAS members and one visitor participated in the 2-night trip to Dauphin Island and Fort Morgan on April 10-12. Although migration was just starting, we did see about as many birds as we usually do on this trip. We finished up with 102 species. This is one of the top 10 birding destinations in the country. Highlights of the trip include seeing a northern gannet, horned grebe in breeding plumage, lark sparrow, 7 species of herons, peregrine falcon, 4 vireos, cliff swallow, 16 species of warblers, including great views of a beautiful Cape May warbler and ovenbird, summer and scarlet tanagers, rose-breasted and blue grosbeaks, indigo buntings, and a mottled duck. Things were really picking up on Ft. Morgan on Sunday morning but we had to leave for home. Everyone had a good time and we will definitely do this again in the future.



"He's on the second limb from the top on the right side of the main trunk..."

## ARTICLES FOR THE BCAS NEWSLETTER

By Jim Miller

Many times the newsletter is in need of articles. They can be short and topics can include: some "crutches" you use to remember a bird call or visual ID, a unique way point out a bird to others, or perhaps a personal birding or conservation experience. Please consider submitting an article for future editions. See the BCAS webpage for the latest editor.

## FOCUS ON THIS

By Ron Houser

Let's talk about an often overlooked feature of every binocular made for birding: How well it focuses. You may say "Well, how hard could it be; you just turn the focus wheel don't you?" Yes, but there's more to it than that. Nothing is more annoying than trying to focus on a bird that other people are seeing and having trouble turning the focus knob because it's too stiff or isn't large enough. I used to have an otherwise excellent pair of binoculars that were rated highly for sharpness, value and field of view but they were just so slow and stiff to focus that I ended up selling them. Nowadays, with binocular reviews easily found online, this shortcoming would be noted. I think that ease of focus should be one of the qualities you look for just like sharpness, field of view, price and power. A good pair of binoculars for birding should be easy and quick to focus with just one finger. Why? Because the birds rarely sit still long enough for you to fiddle around with the focus wheel and you lose time (and the bird) trying to do that. You should also be aware of which way to turn the focus wheel to focus close or far away. Another tip: Try to pre-focus on a group of trees or shrubs where you suspect a bird is located, so that when you spot it with just your eyes, you can just bring the binoculars up to your eyes and see the bird without having to focus again. Learn how to use the diopter setting on your binoculars if your eyesight is unequal. Otherwise one lens will be in focus and the other one won't. The ability to focus closely is also a mark of a good binocular. Most modern birding binoculars will focus to at least 8-10 feet. Many older binoculars limit out around 15-20 feet. Make sure the focus knob is right at your fingertips, is large and rubberized for the best performance. Always try out binoculars before you buy. See Cindy or Jim at WBU. They carry a good selection of quality binoculars for birding.

## SEEN IN OUR AREA THIS YEAR

By Beth Miller

Here in the Panama City area we occasionally are visited by rare or seldom seen birds. Our member, Tony Menart is the rare bird coordinator for our area and does a good job of letting us know what has been reported. This year we were fortunate to have a Vermilion Flycatcher that spent most of the winter at the Lynn Haven Sports Complex as well as a Snow Goose. Three Blue-morph Phase Snow Geese joined him for several days and a Cave Swallow was photographed there by Neil Lamb as well. Spotted also in the area was a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Wood Stork, Roseate Spoonbill, and Pine Siskins. Below are some photos of our special visitors. Get out and explore, you never know what you might see.



©WMiller Photos

Vermilion Flycatcher



©WMiller Photos

Snow Goose and Blue Morph Phase of Snow Goose

## ANSWER TO BIRD ID QUIZ

I am an Eastern Meadowlark. Beth Miller snapped my photo as I was foraging the fields of the sod farm in Southport.