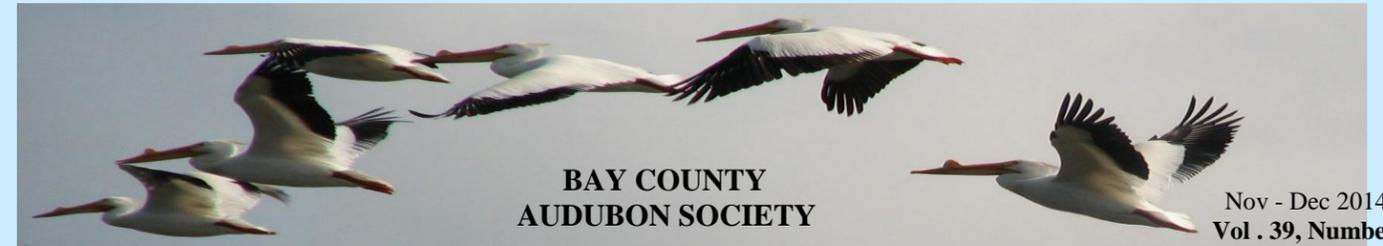




Bay County Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1182
Panama City, Florida 32402

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CONSERVATION CHRONICLE



BAY COUNTY
AUDUBON SOCIETY

Nov - Dec 2014
Vol . 39, Number 2

CURRENT OCCUPANT OR

This newsletter is published 5 times each year: Jan., Mar., May, Sept., and Nov. -SAVE THIS ISSUE UNTIL Dec, 2014
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.

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WELCOME NEW BCAS MEMBERS Aug 2014 – Sep 2014

Betty Nordlof, James Sheetz, Mary Parker, June Herring, Roger Hunter, Sharon Green, Michael Smith, Marvin Friel, George Ngo, Sara McCoy, Michelle Landis, Hudson and Elizabeth Zinsser, Louise Taylor, David and Carole Mabardy, Jerome Bechtle, L. Vane Carrol, Mark Culuris, Sandra Archer and Lorraine Raiman.

WELCOME BACK TO BCAS

Linda Carter, Donna Worthington, John Matheson, John Robert Middlemas and Rachel Vesely.

We look forward to seeing you at our **BCAS meeting on Monday, Nov 10, 2014, at 7:00 p.m. at the Science & Discovery Center of Northwest Florida, 308 Airport Road.**

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 (C4ZE200Z) (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

Monday, Nov 10, 2014. Scott Jackson, local Sea Grant Agent for the University of Florida will discuss the Florida **Master Naturalist Program.**

Monday, Dec 8, 2014. We will have our **Annual BCAS Social.** For further details, please refer to the BCAS website.

FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, Nov. 1 Ron will be leading a Choctawhatchee Audubon field trip to our **Laidlaw Preserve** in Washington County. BCAS members are invited also, so come see this beautiful preserve and the work we have done there. Wildflowers and birds are abundant right now. Bring a sack lunch, drinks, binoculars, and insect repellent. Meet at Porter Park, by the Lynn Haven Bridge, at 7:15 to leave at 7:30.

Saturday, Nov. 15 Field trip to Bay County Conservancy's **Tumble Creek Preserve** in the sand hills. A newly established hiking trail will allow us to see this nice, isolated but varied habitat. We will also drive up to nearby Falling Waters State Park, depending on the time. Meet at Lynn Haven's Porter Park by the bridge at 7:15 to leave at 7:30. Bring a sack lunch, drinks as well as insect repellent.

Saturday, Nov. 22 Grand opening of Panama City Beach Conservation Park's **John Muir Trail.** We will also be participating in helping the Girls' Club put up bird nesting boxes. A noon lunch is scheduled. Tentative start time is 7:30 but call beforehand to be sure.

Saturday, Dec. 13 Bike Trip to Blountstown Greenway, an approximately 3 mile hiking/biking trail winding around and through Blountstown, ending up a park on the Apalachicola River. Bring your bike, snacks and drinks as well as a pack lunch. We will be doing some birding along the way so bring binoculars.

PRESIDENT'S CHAT

By Mary Jo Capra

We are off to a great start with our meeting at the new location, the Science and Discovery Center of Northwest Florida. We had two informative programs that are important for understanding our environment. Mark your calendar for the second Monday of the month so you won't miss the next one.

We continued to work to get the word out to vote for the Water and Land Legacy, Amendment 1 on November 4th. Special thanks go to Ron Houser and Candis Harbison for being our public voice on the amendment.

Our field trips continue to be great opportunities for birding with the bonus of getting to know your fellow birders afterward. Be sure to join us on the next one. Our education chair, Susan Llorca has already had contact with over 100 students since September working with University Academy and the Junior Ranger program at St. Andrews State Park. We continue to look for opportunities to provide environmental enrichment.

A workday at Laidlaw proved to be a great start for a needed boardwalk bridge. A great big thank you to Neil Lamb and all who helped out.

GRAND JOHN MUIR TRAIL OPENING Further Details – November 22nd

7:30 – 9:00 am – BCAS bird walk
9:30 am – Booth setup, Audubon, FTA Florida Trail Association, Florida Forest Service, etc.
10 am – Booths open – all above + Girls Inc., R.M.A., U.S. Fish & Wildlife
10:30 am – John Muir Trail Grand Opening ribbon cutting
10:45 – 12:00 – John Muir Trail hike guided by Panhandle Chapter of FTA Florida Trail Association
10:45 am – Bay County Audubon put up bird houses on John Muir Trail
12:00 noon – Long Leaf Pioneer lunch at pavilion
1:30 pm - Cleanup

LITTLE MISSY

By Beth Miller

After a summer of heavy rains and high waters on Deer Point Lake in 2013 it was a breath of fresh air to walk to the dock and see five little Purple Gallinule chicks with their parents. They were this pair's 2nd clutch for the season. We watched over the coming weeks as the little ones grew and learned to fly. We noted one was smaller and very scruffy looking. Her feathers were not growing in like her siblings and she could not fly. We named her Little Missy. Every day we looked for her and feared that she would not make it. As the summer ended and the cool fall air settled in the adults and juvenile siblings left to migrate and our Little Missy remained behind to make her way in the world as a flightless bird. Winter came on fast and the lake was lowered in December in order for freezing temperatures to combat invasive aquatic grasses. We realized Little Missy's thick reeds were now out of the water and that exposed her to predation from other animals, so we set about building her a safe place to weather the winter under our dock which still had water under the far end. We gathered branches, aquatic grasses and palmetto leaves and made what we fondly referred to as the "Gallinule Palace". We built it thick and used plenty of vegetation to help block the bitter north winds. She took to it right away as if she realized it was built for her. Soon she was not alone in the gallinule palace, 13 American Coots, 1 Ruddy Duck and a Common Gallinule moved in and it grew to be about 10 x 17 to accommodate everyone. Food was scarce in the cold winter months and we were so thankful that Wild Birds Unlimited was stocked with both live and freeze-dried mealworms that we could use to supplement her diet. She still would swim to shore to look for whatever she could find to eat. We knew how important it was for her to continue to live wild and not totally depend on us. Her colors started to change from the green-brown of a juvenile to the beautiful coloring of an adult Purple Gallinule. Spring of 2014 brought Little Missy a mate that we promptly named Beaux. She started "flapperizing" her wings and soon was flying to join him all over the bayou. Early summer she came back to the dock area bringing three little chicks of her own. We delighted in watching her with them and needless to say I probably have more Purple Gallinule pictures than you can imagine, documenting her from a tiny black chick, her siblings, juvenile stages, with her mate and with her chicks. Little Missy was still full of surprises. In late August she brought 4 new chicks to the dock; a second clutch from a pitiful little bird that we were not sure would make it through the winter. (cont.)

LITTLE MISSY (cont.)

Beaux and the first clutch left in mid-September. Little Missy stayed with the second clutch until October 1st. Her feathers were beautiful and her wings strong. The four chicks in the second clutch left on October 15th. The bayou seems too quiet now; we miss their chatter and calls. We have learned to recognize their danger calls for hawks and alligators and the calls they make to locate each other. It has been over a year long journey with our Little Missy, one we feel blessed to have experienced. We miss them all and are in hopes they will return to their bayou on Deer Point Lake next year.



EWMiller Photos

EDUCATION HAPPENINGS

By Susan Llorca

Responding to an inquiry from our website, I was invited to give a presentation on birds on September 4 to three third-grade classes at University Academy in Panama City. I was delighted to find how knowledgeable the third-graders were; they asked interesting questions, and we covered basic habitat, feeding, identification and migration topics. Audubon (through generous sponsorship of Books Unlimited and Wild Birds Unlimited) was able to provide the classrooms with bird handouts, a bird guide with bird call CD, laminated identification guide and wall poster of Gulf Coast birds. Their teachers have now also signed up for Audubon Adventures. In September I met with Melissa Shoemaker at St Andrews State Park regarding Audubon participation at the Park. Among other planned activities, Audubon will assist in production of a Park-specific coloring and activities book for use in Park programs. On September 20th Audubon provided a Bird Table for the Junior Ranger program, and participated in a joint bird watching walk with Ranger Hannah. (cont.)

EDUCATION HAPPENINGS (cont.)

Approximately 60 children and 100 adults enjoyed a beautiful day at St Andrews. On September 27th, Audubon assisted Friends of St Andrews State Park with the National Public Lands Clean-up, signing in volunteers, signing off on schools participation sheets and, of course, picking up trash. Over the next six months, the plan is to contact the media resource person for each of the schools in Bay County to determine interest in participation in Audubon Adventures. As a follow-on to that, in May 2015 there may be an opportunity to place a table at the Bay County teachers' science materials fair. Sponsorships and contributions from Audubon members are most warmly welcomed. We could use any old-but-still-useful bird guides, binoculars or scopes, and books, magazines or other items that would supplement outdoor activities or classroom resources.

FILM SERIES

By Richard Ingram

As you know our one and only fund raiser for Bay County Audubon Society each year is our annual film series. This fund raiser pays for all projects and expenses we incur during the year and therefore it is extremely crucial to our continued success. The film series usually features films whose themes are normally travel films which are narrated by the cinematographer. These films are held at the Arnold High School Auditorium on Panama City Beach during the months of January and February. This year we will hold three films. The sponsors who graciously give their monetary support for our film series are absolutely critical to our organization. When we have finalized all of our sponsors, they will be listed on our website "baycountyaudubon.org". We will also list our sponsors in our January/February BCAS newsletter, on the individual programs for each of the films, and in our advertisements in the News Herald. You can help ensure the continued success with this venture. Please try and use the services of our sponsors whenever possible, and if you do, take the time to mention you are a member of the Bay County Audubon Society and thank them for their generous support for our film series. Also, your attendance at the films would be appreciated and very beneficial for our continued success.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

By Raya Pruner & Marvin Friel

We'd like to invite you on Saturday, December 20th, to celebrate and participate in the annual Christmas Bird Count 2014. This year, because it seemed that everyone enjoyed last year's dinner at the Blue Fig, we'll be hosting the dinner at the same location on 1031 W. 15th St. in Panama City. Everyone is welcome to attend the CBC dinner whether you participate in the count or not. A brief pre-count meeting will be held before the Annual Holiday Party held this year at the Science & Discovery Center on December 8 at 6:00 p.m. Someone from each CBC team will need to attend the Holiday party to pick up your team's packets and get instructions. The location is 308 Airport Road in Panama City. We encourage fun friendly family Birding experiences so please invite new participants to come out and enjoy beautiful Florida! The CBC is a great outdoor activity regardless of skill level. If you would like to participate or have questions, contact Raya Pruner & Marvin Friel at marvin.bojo.friel@gmail.com or 352-214-3262.



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