

Pelican Island Audubon Society

Peligrum

- founded in 1964 to serve Indian River County -



P.O. Box 1833, VERO BEACH, FL 32961 772-567-3520 www.pelicanislandaudubon.org

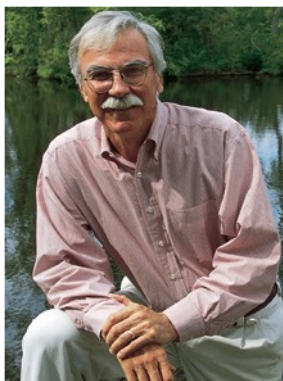
Our 47th Year Vol. 47 No. 4 April 2011

Our Mission: To preserve and protect the animals, plants, and natural communities in Indian River County through advocacy, education, and public awareness.

Birds Can Save The World

Dr. John Fitzpatrick, Director, Cornell Lab of Ornithology

April 18 ☆ 7:30 p.m. ☆ Vero Beach Community Center



The noted director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Dr. John Fitzpatrick, is the speaker for Pelican Island Audubon Society's April 18, 2011 general meeting at the Vero Beach Community Center, 2266 14th Avenue starting at 7:30pm. Stay for light refreshments following the program.

Dr. Fitzpatrick writes about Birds Can Save The World, "In this illustrated lecture I emphasize the vital roles that birds continue to play in fostering conservation of worldwide biological diversity. Most important, birds represent our most accessible and sensitive indicator of environmental health and ecological change. Today, thanks especially to the Internet, individual citizens have unprecedented opportunities to generate essential population trend data at continental scales. Indeed, humans literally can now serve as worldwide biosphere sensors. The question is, do we also have the will to self-correct? Birds present us with numerous motivations to do so, and an excellent barometer for measuring our successes and failures. Rediscovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in 2005 – in spite of the ensuing controversies -- provided a clear case in point. I will suggest

what both Florida Scrub-Jays and the "Lord God Bird" teaches us about human nature, environmental protection, and our opportunities for saving not just species but also the great natural systems on planet Earth."

John W. Fitzpatrick, Ph.D. is the Louis Agassiz Fuertes Director, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and a Professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Cornell University. Learn more at www.pelicanislandaudubon.org

Cookbook for Sale!

Pelican Bites



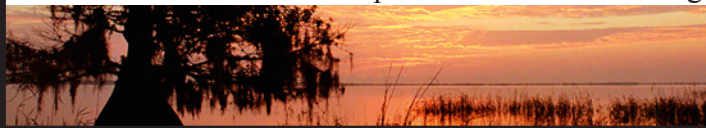
The PIAS cookbooks are here! The cost of the book is \$14.95 plus \$1.05 tax. We are very pleased with the way the cookbook turned out. We received a nice variety of recipes and the photos that Bob Montanaro provided for the book are outstanding. It will surely make a wonderful addition to your cookbook collection or make a special gift. So buy your copies today! Call 772-567-3520 for info.

Reflections of Blue Cypress

with Richard & Juanita Baker

April 11 - North County Library - 6PM - FREE

Through photographs and poems, Richard & Juanita Baker will describe the history and beauty of one of Florida's most attractive lakes found right here in Indian River County on April 11, 2011 starting at 6:00pm at the North County Library, 1001 Sebastian Blvd. (SR 512) in Sebastian, FL. Sponsored by the Pelican Island Audubon Society. Light Refreshments will be served. All are welcome. For more information call 772-567-3520 or visit www.pelicanislandaudubon.org.



Photos from recent birding trips



White Ibis with American Avocets seen on a recent trip to Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. Photograph by Bob Montanaro.

Porcelain Birds now online

The over 200 museum quality porcelain bird reproductions by Doughty and Boehm can now be viewed online. These works of art are for sale with all proceeds benefiting Pelican Island Audubon. Prices range from several hundred to several thousand dollars with birds ranging in size from several inches to over three feet in height. View the collection at www.pelicanislandaudubon.org



Yvonne Tso has been photographing the return of the Swallow-tailed Kites.



Jim Shea caught this Red-headed Woodpecker out at Padgett Ranch.

Living with Lovebugs as told to Linda Chancellor

Florida - the land of fun and sun for humans. Lather on some sunscreen, grab a hat and they are ready to go. Real nature lovers don't forget their bug spray at dusk. But being a car or truck is no fun in Florida -I speak from experience. After a few years my paint job begins showing signs of aging from the effects of that wonderful sun. Each winter I am exposed to falling acorns because my owner's garage is protecting my sibling (a pop-up camper). You have no idea how annoying acorns are in your windshield wiper well and when they find their way into your trunk.

Winter is over and Spring arrives with its oak pollen and catkins. I have to wear that stuff for weeks because my owner insists she will wait until the tree is finished shedding its pollen and catkins before she will bring out the soap and water. But what I really hate are the months of April-May and October-November. Then the dreaded Lovebugs arrive.

The bugs I love to hate. *Plecia nearctica* are insidious little black flies with a red spot on their thorax and are related to gnats and mosquitoes. They are sometimes known as double-headed bugs or honeymoon bugs because when con-



ditions are right they couple soon after emerging and fly in this position for the next couple of days. Well I have heard of humans doing crazy things for love so I guess these bugs are the same way.

Driving down the highway becomes my worst nightmare. Soon splat, splat, splat, my windshield and grill are covered with the remains of hundreds of these bugs.

Apparently they are attracted to the heat of the highway and to UV-irradiated aldehydes which is a component of my exhaust fumes thus making highways irresistible to them. Whatever, they are disgusting. They stick to my hood and may cause damage to my paint job if left to dry for several days in the hot sun. During lovebug season, I would benefit from a light coating of car wax on my grill and a bath when arriving home from a driving experience.

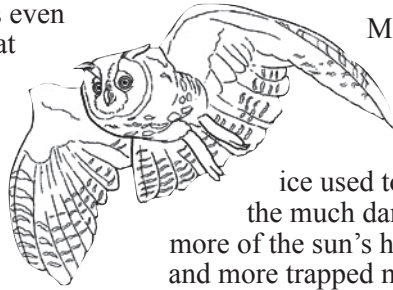
The University of Florida has published document ENY-840/IN694 - *Living with Lovebugs*. I sure wish my owner would read it.

A follow-up to last month's article about Sandhill Cranes; Billie points out that the law was passed to protect the cranes from people, not the people from cranes.



Establishing a Real Baseline

We all use a different baseline when we compare what we remember when we first came to Florida or when grew up in Florida to the present day conditions. It is even more difficult for us to compare or perceive what changes are going on worldwide? Thus each generation differently perceives falling water tables, shrinking harvests, increasing high temperatures, water quality decline, eroding soils, expanded deserts, melting ice, and food scarcity especially when they have not even experienced it yet. Some hardly notice, believe, or care that:



- There are less and less fish to be caught,
- The climate is changing from a different baseline,
- There are no clouds on top of mountains in Costa Rica,
- Ice is disappearing and methane is being released in the Arctic and Greenland.

Last month, the Florida Institute of Technology (FIT) in Melbourne held a two-day forum entitled "Sustainability 2011: Is it worth it?" Dr. Mark Bush, from FIT's Department of Biology, spoke on the shifting baselines and our changing perception of what is natural or 'normal'. Each generation does not detect that our natural systems are being degraded, especially in Florida where many of our inhabitants come to retire for a rather short period in the last years of their lives so they have a different perception of what is "natural." Our expectations now have changed. He showed vanity photos of gigantic sport fish caught in 1925 compared to now. The species, size, and number of fish have greatly changed. Even our fishing methods have changed. Early fishing was done by just dropping a line into the water and waiting for the fish to come to the bait. Now we spend lots of energy going to a fishing spot and then trolling to find the fish using sonar, GPS, and other high tech equipment to track down the fish. They don't have a chance! Similarly, in a different part of the country, huge 4-foot diameter chestnut forests were found in the Appalachian Mountains, but now these large hardwood trees are gone. We do not know of them unless we go back and look at old photographs.

Keynote speaker, Dr. Eduard Muller (Vice-Chair, World Commission on Protected Areas) was the most pessimistic as he spoke about the unexpected recent rapid increased affects of Climate Change. As a child growing up in Costa Rica, Dr. Muller had never seen the tops of the cloud forest mountains because clouds were always present. Now he seldom sees any clouds on top of the same mountains. In addition, the flora and fauna in the cloud forests are changing, confirming for him the reality of global warming.

Dr. Muller impressed me by showing a photo where a scientist with a small cigarette lighter lit a large plume of methane (CH₄) coming from beneath the permafrost ice as it was melting and receding. Methane is over 20 times more effective in trapping heat in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide (CO₂) over a 100-year period. Methane is emitted from a variety of natural and human-influenced sources, which include landfills, natural gas and petroleum systems, as well as cattle breeding, coal mining, stationary

and mobile combustion, wastewater treatment, and certain industrial process.

Methane is also naturally produced by bacteria in the permafrost under the Greenland and Arctic ice, which is causing a "snowball effect" that as the world warms more ice melts. The ice used to reflect the heat from the sun, but now the much darker ground water and peat soils absorbs more of the sun's heat. As the world warms, it releases more and more trapped methane gas from the permafrost, which makes global warming accelerate even more.

Dr. Muller said by 2050 everyone will believe in climate change. If we don't act quickly we will be past the point of no return, that is, if we haven't passed it already. Lester Brown from Earth Policy Institute (World on the Edge, 2011) suggest it could be as soon as 2020 and that it is our generation not our children's who will have to deal with it. Other scientists, based on a December, 2007 report by McKinsey & Company and The Conference Board (*Reducing U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions: How Much at What Cost*), put the point of no return as soon as 2015 – just four short years ahead.

Thus, if we care about human survival and all life on this planet, we all need to immediately work together to achieve global sustainability. Since we are the most powerful nation -- with the most wealth, the ability to lead, and causing the most pollution because we consume the most energy and other resources -- we have a responsibility to do the most and start right now, not delay action anymore.

Richard Baker, President

Guided Pontoon Boat Trip at Blue Cypress Lake

As a fundraiser, PIAS is offering guided sunrise (6:45-10:15 am) or sunset (4:00-7:30 pm) pontoon boat rides with refreshments at Blue Cypress Lake to view the many Ospreys nesting, birds, and other wildlife. We will leave Middleton's Fish Camp on April 12 to 15 or April 19 to 22 for \$75/person (\$50 cost and \$25 Donation). Space is limited to 7 persons only each day. Put a party of your friends together. Please call our office for reservations and instructions.

Richard & Juanita Baker, Tour Leaders.

In Memory of Bud Kleckner

Pelican Island Audubon mourns the passing of Claude "Bud" Kleckner on March 17, 2011. Bud was a long time supporter of Pelican Island Audubon, serving for many years on the Board, as well as helping with field trips and other activities. Having spent a good portion of his life traveling the world to view birds, Bud eventually accumulated over 700 birds on his life list. Besides birding, Bud found time to support many of the conservation issues in Indian River County, along with serving on the IRC Planning & Zoning Commission. We will miss Bud's cheerful helpfulness and generosity and pass along our condolences to his family.

Plant of the Month by Janice Broda

Throughout the year, but especially in the spring when oaks simultaneously drop their old leaves and flush with new growth, unscrupulous hucksters go door-to-door offering, for a fee, to remove those ugly “grey parasites” from oak limbs. Often, they claim that these “parasites” are “killing” the tree.

The grey colored plants that grow in long, flowing strings or balls are not parasites. These plants are epiphytes. Webster’s dictionary defines an epiphyte as a plant that derives its moisture and nutrients from the air and rain and grows usually on another plant. Epiphytes also sometimes grow on fences, rocks, or power lines. Many different types of plants grow as epiphytes, including orchids and ferns.

Spanish moss (*Tillandsia usneoides*) and ball moss (*Tillandsia recurvata*), the purported “grey parasites”, belong to

plant family, Bromeliaceae, and, hence, are sometimes referred to as bromeliads. This family of more than 3,000 primarily tropical plants includes both epiphytic and terrestrial species, including its most famous member, the pineapple.

Like the pineapple, spanish moss and ball moss are flowering monocots. But, unlike the pineapple and quite amazingly, spanish moss and ball moss do not require soil and use nutrients and moisture drawn from the air and the rain to complete photosynthesis. Look closely with magnification, and you can discover the tiny flowers and seeds that are spread by wind.

The tiny seeds stick readily to the deeply furrowed bark of live oaks (*Quercus virginiana*), the tree on which you are most likely to find these two epiphytes. Often, an extensive spread of these epiphytes is a sign that a decline in the health of an oak tree or a branch of an oak tree. These epiphytes do not take any nutrients from the tree, but, their populations do expand when more sunlight is available due a decline in the tree’s health.

Epiphytes

Spanish moss and, to a lesser extent, ball moss, are an important source of nest-building material for many birds and small mammals. Watch carefully and you will sometimes see insectivorous birds ‘hunting’ insects in the long strands of spanish moss and the tight balls of ball moss in oak trees. These miraculous plants are a unique part of our Florida flora and of great value to our birds.



Pelican Island Audubon Society Officers & Directors
Officers: President **Richard H. Baker, Ph.D.**, 1st Vice President **Bob Bruce**, 2nd Vice President **Susan Boyd**, Recording Secretary **Darlene Halliday**, Corresponding Secretary **Peter Sutherland**, Treasurer **Steve Goff** — Elected Directors: **Joe Carroll '14, Deborah Ecker '14, Nancy Irvin '13, Bill Loftus, Ph.D. '12, John Orcutt, Ph.D. '12, Toni Robinson '13** — Appointed Board Members: **Leah Blythe, Bill Halliday, Tina Marchese, Neil Stalter**
Pelican Island Audubon Society, Inc. is registered with the Florida Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Div. of Consumer Services by calling toll-free within Florida 1-800-435-7352. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the State.

Pelican Island Audubon Society 2011 Membership

National Audubon*	\$20
Pelican Island Audubon**	
Individual	\$20
Family	\$30
Supporting Contribution	\$50
Student***	\$5
Total	\$

***National Audubon membership**

This includes subscriptions to *Audubon Magazine* and *The Florida Naturalist*.

****Pelican Island Audubon membership**

Dues which PIAS will use for environmental education and advocacy and subscription to the *Peligram*

*****Student Membership** receive electronic copy of *Peligram* only - requires e-mail address

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

E-Mail

Please send your name and address along with a check payable to the “Pelican Island Audubon Society” to:

**Pelican Island Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1833, Vero Beach, FL 32961**

Credit card payments call (772) 567-3520 M - F 9AM-1PM
 Please email us if there is a local environmental issue which concerns you at piaudubon@bellsouth.net

Bird of the Month Photo Contest

Pelican Island Audubon invites you to enter our Bird of the Month Photo Contest. This monthly, juried event is a great way to learn about Florida’s birds. For more information, including how to enter, visit

www.pelicanislandaudubon.org

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