

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 45th Year Vol. 45 No. 1 January 2009

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

The Decline, Loss, and Extinction of Butterflies in the Florida Keys with Dr. Marc Minno

January 19, 2009 - 7:30 p.m. - Vero Beach Community Center

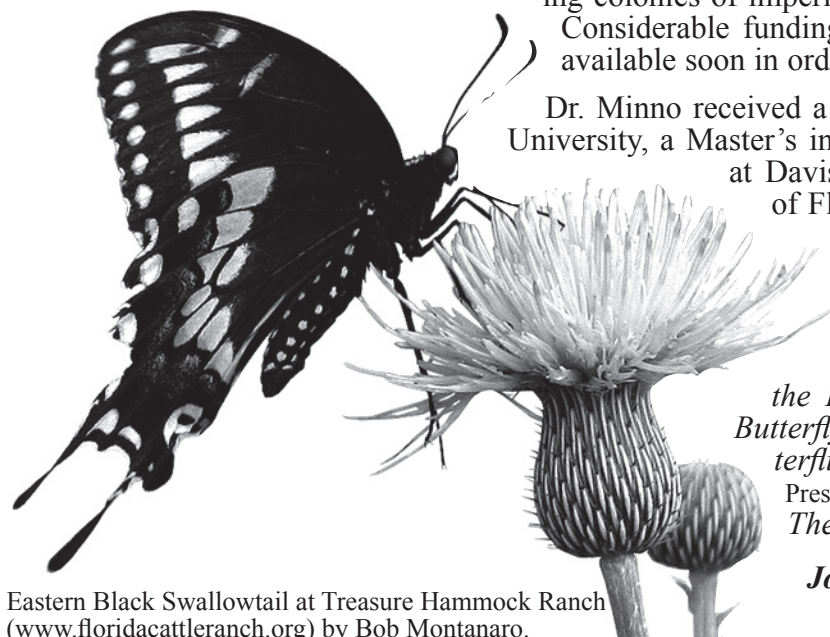
The January 19 general meeting of Pelican Island Audubon at the Vero Beach Community Center, 2266 14th Avenue, features a presentation on the butterflies of the Florida Keys by Dr. Marc Minno.

At least 13 species of formerly resident butterflies have disappeared from the Keys in recent times. Palmetto Skipper, Hayhurst's Scallopwing, and Little Metalmark were gone around 1980. Zestos Skipper and Rockland Grass Skipper (Keys race) disappeared by the end of 2004. Hurricane Wilma damaged the Keys in November 2005, and the Cuban Crescent, Tropical Buckeye, Eufala Skipper, Twin-spot Skipper, Amethyst Hairstreak, Nickerbean Blue, and Florida Leafwing were gone by the fall of 2006. Duskywing disappeared by fall 2007 and others, especially Bahaman swallowtail butterfly, Florida Purple Wing, and Palatka Skipper are barely surviving. The loss of Zestos Skipper and Rockland Grass Skipper (Keys race) is especially significant because these represent the first butterfly extinctions in Florida, and are among the few to occur in the US.

The main causes of the butterfly decline and loss in the Keys are habitat loss due to urbanization and predation by exotic species of ants. Integrated adaptive management of the remaining natural communities in the Keys, including monitoring of common as well as rare species, is crucial to conserving the region's biodiversity. The remaining colonies of imperiled butterflies must be identified and protected.

Considerable funding for research and conservation must be made available soon in order to prevent further losses of imperiled species.

Dr. Minno received a Bachelor's degree in entomology from Purdue University, a Master's in entomology from the University of California at Davis, and a Ph.D. in zoology from the University of Florida. He works as a Senior Regulatory Scientist for the St. Johns River Water Management District in Palatka. Dr. Minno has written or co-authored many scientific and popular articles on butterflies and moths as well as the following books of local interest, *Butterflies of the Florida Keys* (Scientific Publishers, 1993), *Florida Butterfly Gardening* (University Press of Florida, 1999), *Butterflies through Binoculars: Florida* (Oxford University Press, 2001), and *Florida Butterfly Caterpillars and Their Host Plants* (University Press of Florida, 2005).



Eastern Black Swallowtail at Treasure Hammock Ranch (www.floridacattleranch.org) by Bob Montanaro.

Join us for light refreshments after the program.

2009 Field Trip & Program Schedule

Below is a list of the many field trips and programs scheduled for 2009. Look for further details in upcoming Peligrans. Please join us for what should be a fun and interesting year ahead!

For more information, please visit our website at www.pelicanislandaudubon.org

Please make reservations for field trips by calling 772-567-3520.

January 10, 2009 - Merritt Island NWR in Titusville.
Leader: Rick Lucas *See details below.*

January 19, 2009 - General Meeting - 7:30 p.m. - Vero Beach Community Center - *See page one for details.*

February 7, 2009 - Treasure Hammock Ranch -
Leader Jens Tripson

February 16, 2009 - General Meeting - 7:30 p.m. -
Vero Beach Community Center

February 21, 2009 - Viera Wetlands. Leader: Rick Lucas

March 5, 2009 - T.M. Goodwin in Fellsmere.
Leader: Rick Lucas

March 16, 2009 - General Meeting - 7:30 p.m. -
Vero Beach Community Center

March 21, 2009 - West County Wastewater Treatment
Facility. Leader: Rick Lucas

April 11, 2009 - Turkey Creek Sanctuary in Palm Bay.
Leader: Rick Lucas

April 20, 2009 - General Meeting - 7:30 p.m. -
Vero Beach Community Center

May 9, 2009 - Forster's Preserve in Wabasso.
Leader: Rick Lucas

Ranch tour February 7

Tour Treasure Hammock Ranch on February 7th starting at 7:30 a.m. led by Jens & Melissa Tripson. Tour is limited to 20 people. Please call 772-567-3520 for reservations and directions.



May 18, 2009 - General Meeting - 7:30 p.m. - Vero Beach Community Center

June 6, 2009 - Viera Wetlands in Viera. Leader: Rick Lucas

September 19, 2009 - Sebastian Inlet State Park.
Leader: Rick Lucas

September 21, 2009 - General Meeting - 7:30 p.m. -
Vero Beach Community Center

October 3, 2009 - Turkey Creek Sanctuary in Palm Bay.
Leader: Rick Lucas

October 19, 2009 - General Meeting - 7:30 p.m. -
Vero Beach Community Center

November 14, 2009 - Viera Wetlands.
Leader: Rick Lucas

November 16, 2009 - General Meeting - 7:30 p.m. -
Vero Beach Community Center

December 12, 2009—Sebastian Inlet State Park.
Leader: Rick Lucas

December 14, 2009 - Annual Vegetarian Potluck -
6:00 p.m. - Vero Beach Community Center

January Field Trip *with Rick Lucas*

January 10, 2009—Merritt Island NWR in Titusville
Carpoolers meet at McDonalds located at I-95 and County Road 512 (Sebastian/Fellsmere exit). We will leave McDonalds promptly at 7:00 a.m. Directions: I-95 North to SR 406 (Garden St), East to MINWR. Leader: Rick Lucas
Call 772-567-3520 for information and reservations.

Tour the new water treatment facility Saturday, January 10, 2009

The Indian River Lagoon Coalition is planning a meeting on January 10th here in Vero Beach. At 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 10, 2009, the group will be visiting the new innovative treatment system on the Main Relief Canal near the new Indian River County Administration Building and on Vero Beach Airport Property. Keith McCulley of the the Stormwater Division of Indian River County will be showing us how the traveling screen treatment system will work to keep debris and aquatic plants from reaching the Indian River Lagoon. Come join the group for this interesting tour. Please call 772-567-3520 for reservations and directions.

12th Annual Backyard Bird Count February 13-16, 2009

Discover the birds in your backyard, school-yard or park. It's fun, it's free, and it helps the birds! All ages and skills welcome.
Learn more at www.birdcount.org

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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.



The President's Hoot

Working together for Audubon

Let's reflect together on our friendship and membership in our Audubon chapter, whose mission is.... To preserve and protect the animals, plants, and natural communities in Indian River County through advocacy, education, and public awareness.

Take a moment to acknowledge that we are all interconnected, to not only each other, but to our larger community, the people who serve us in many capacities, and our government... the local commission, public officials who look after our welfare and arrange to provide us with our basic needs of water, power, safety, and rights. We appreciate everyone's efforts to work in community, helping each other. We thank you for all your contributions and support for Audubon throughout the year.

We readily see how we are also connected to the plants around us, the animals in our forests...the alligators, the raccoons, the rabbits, the bobcats, the magnificent birds that are abundant here...the bald eagles, the osprey, the blue jays and cardinals, the great egrets, the snowy and cattle egrets, the great blue and the night herons. What we do daily, impacts these animals and habitats and every other human in our community as well as around the world...what we do to this water, our lands, our trees makes a difference to us and to all living creatures.

We have learned and may we continue to learn and share with others how we can make less impact...conserve more energy, reuse and generate natural processes without harming life around.

All of us need to participate. I guess my resolution for the next year is to find one more new person to get involved in making a difference, and hope that you each might find one too...that would be a revolution! There are so many issues out there some we do not even know about. We need advocates for preserving our water, green spaces, protecting our agriculture and food supply, becoming more energy efficient.

May you all enjoy this season and to be living in this country where democracy decides change of power, where we have amazing resources to achieve great things. I look forward to working with you in 2009 and wish you the best in the new year.

Richard Baker, President

Venturing out

Venturing out to the West County Wastewater Facility shortly after dawn on Dec. 27th, Nancy Irvin and Jens and Melissa Tripson were greeted by slightly overcast skies that actually helped with spotting birds in the early morning light. With raft upon raft of ducks on the water and flocks of ibis and egrets in the sky, the words "teeming with wildlife" came to mind and the threesome knew they were going to have a good day birding.

The Hooded mergansers were spectacular as were the ring-necked ducks. Even the coots and moor hens seemed to stand out. The chortling of the Sandhill cranes was a welcoming sound and the number of limpkins, seen both walking on the dikes and in flight, was encouraging. One of the ponds held well over a hundred Blue-winged teal and right in the center, partially hidden amongst the grasses, were twelve Green-winged teal, a beautiful sight.

Another thrill of the day was spotting an immature snail kite who gave quite a show moving from pond to pond in search of snails. He eventually landed in a cypress tree and was joined shortly thereafter by a bald eagle. All of a sudden the snail kite seemed very small!

A nice finish for the morning was seeing an otter ambling along the dike. Check out the list at right and look forward to your next trip to the WCWWF!

The West County Wastewater Facility is located at 8405 8th Street and is open daily for birding.

Birds 12/27/08 by Jens & Melissa Tripson & Nancy Irvin

- Pied-billed grebe
- Anhinga
- Double-crested Cormorant
- American bittern
- Great blue heron
- Great egret
- Snowy egret
- Little blue heron
- Tricolored heron
- Cattle egret
- Green heron
- Black-crowned night-heron
- Glossy ibis
- White ibis
- Mottled duck
- Northern pintail
- Northern shoveler
- Blue-winged teal
- Green-winged teal
- Lesser scaup
- Ring-necked duck
- Hooded merganser
- Black vulture
- Turkey vulture
- Osprey
- Snail kite

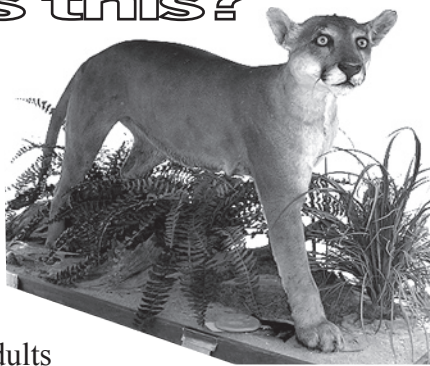
- Red-shouldered hawk
- Bald eagle
- Crested caracara
- Sora
- Common moorhen
- American coot
- Limpkin
- Sandhill crane
- Common snipe
- Herring gull
- Mourning dove
- Bluejay
- Fish crow
- Tree swallow
- Northern mockingbird
- European starling
- Palm warbler
- Savannah sparrow
- Red-winged blackbird
- Common grackle
- Boat-tailed grackle

Additional birds seen 12/26/08

- Least bittern
- Red-breasted merganser
- Royal tern
- Kingfisher
- Common yellowthroat
- Lincoln's sparrow
- Swamp sparrow

Who is this?

Once ranging throughout most of the southeastern United States, habitat destruction and human persecution has driven down the population of this species so it now consists of only 80-100 adults



Answer: Florida Panther

in south Florida. The male of the species averages between 130 and 160 lbs with an average length of 6-8 feet while the female weighs between 70-100 lbs with an average length of 5-7 feet. The average male has a home range of approximately 150 to 200 square miles, which the male will defend against other males. A female's home range is smaller, approximately 80 square miles. An adult may travel 20 miles in a single day. Diet consists of white-tailed deer. They also eat armadillo, wild hog, raccoon, and the occasional alligator! If you see this species in the wild, consider yourself very lucky. These notoriously elusive animals prefer to be as far away from humans as possible. *Species info from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Photo by Bob Montanaro.*

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE PELICAN ISLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

Membership benefits include subscriptions to Audubon magazine, Florida Naturalist, and the PIAS newsletter, The Peligram. Additionally, members have full borrowing privileges to the PIAS nature library and much more!

- \$20 one-year membership
- Donation \$ _____
- \$20 Friend (receive The Peligram only)
- Check box if a MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL.

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**

Thank you for supporting Pelican Island Audubon

Pelican Island Audubon thanks those who have donated so generously so far to our annual end-of-the-year fundraising campaign to help maintain our general operating fund and help us to reach our goal of building the Outreach Center at ORCA. If you have not done so yet, please consider helping support your local Audubon Society as we work to build a better environment for all the inhabitants of Indian River County.

OUTREACH CENTER DONORS

*Forging a New Partnership
for the Benefit of Indian River County.*



We continue to recognize the generous donations made toward building the new Audubon Outreach Center. November & December donors include:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
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Barred Owl by Bob Montanaro.

Thank you to all who contributed so far! We are still in need of an additional \$25,000. If you have not done so, please consider giving to this wonderful cause to enhance environmental education in Indian River County.