



The Islander

May 2014

A Publication of the St. George Island Civic Club

Audubon Migratory Bird Specialist Speaks at April Civic Club Meeting

Bonnie Samuelsen, a Project Coordinator for the National Audubon Society, made a presentation at the April meeting on the protection of migratory coastal birds. Bonnie used our new digital projector and screen to discuss the plight of the migratory seabirds that use our area to propagate.



Bonnie Samuelsen

She said that the snowy plover, Wilson's plover, American oystercatcher, black skimmer and least tern lay their eggs and hatch their young on beaches and islands. Loss and degradation of habitat are major threats to the shorebirds' survival, with their nesting areas becoming fewer and more fragmented. Because of their declining numbers in Florida and habitat loss, these beach-nesting birds qualify for listing as state-threatened species. It is a violation of state and federal laws to harass or take any

endangered or threatened birds, their eggs or their young.



Brown Pelicans bring in sticks for nests on the SGI Causeway. Photo by Bonnie Samuelsen

Each nest is critical. Populations of beach-nesting birds are declining because of significant modification and disturbance of beaches due to human activities. The fate of each delicate nest is truly critical to the survival of these birds. By being a responsible beach user, you can help beach-nesting birds and their young survive.

Disturbance threatens survival. When birds are chased or disturbed, they use
(See Audubon, Page Two)

The next Club meeting is May 15.
The speaker will address the pros and cons of Special Districts.

(Audubon, From Page One)

energy they need to reserve for nesting and migration. Many shorebirds and seabirds nest on the open beach where they lay eggs in shallow scrapes in the sand. The nests are so well camouflaged that they can be accidentally trampled by unsuspecting beachgoers. When beach-nesting birds are forced to fly or run from their nests, their eggs and chicks are left vulnerable to the elements and to predators. Disturbances that cause birds to take flight or leave their young may threaten their survival.



Brown Pelican and chicks by Lou Newman

Take these simple steps to help while you enjoy the beach:

- **Keep your distance.** If birds become agitated or leave their nests, you are too close. A general rule is to stay at least 300 feet from a nest.

- **Respect posted areas.** Avoid posted nesting and nesting areas and use designated walkways.
- **Never intentionally force birds to fly.**
- **Keep pets away from nesting areas.** Even well-behaved pets can be perceived as a threat to birds and will disturb them. If you take pets to the beach, keep them leashed and away from nesting areas. Dogs are prohibited within the Critical Wildlife Areas, even in areas open to pedestrians.
- **KEEP THE BEACH CLEAN.**
- **DO NOT FEED THE WILDLIFE.**
- **Spread the word.** If you see people disturbing nesting birds, gently remind them how their actions may hurt birds' survival. If they continue to disturb nesting birds, please call and report their activities to FWC's Wildlife Alert hotline at 888/404-FWCC (3922).
- **Volunteer** with your local shorebird partnership. Visit FLShorebirdalliance.org to learn more and get involved.

This was reprinted in part from Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) material with assistance from Amy Clifton and Naomi Avissar. Information was also from the National Audubon Society.

Upcoming Events



Thursday, May 1 through Sunday, May 11

Plein Air Invitational

Plein Air Painters To Capture Forgotten Coast on Canvas

More than 20 nationally acclaimed artists will gather on Florida's Forgotten Coast to participate in the 9th annual Forgotten Coast en Plein Air Invitational, America's Great Paint-Out, May 1-11, 2014. Painters will set up their easels and pull out their brushes to document the landscape and culture of this last vestige of authentic "Old Florida" – the coastal stretch of scenic North Florida between Mexico Beach and Alligator Point.

"Plein Air", a French word, simply translated means "open air". The roots of plein air painting are found in 19th-century Europe. An Englishman, John Constable, believed that artists should forget "formulas" and trust their own vision in finding truth in nature.

About the same time in France, in a small village called Barbizon, a group of artists focused their attention on a subject matter that had never been done before: everyday life and the natural world surrounding it. These realists laid the ground work for the next development: Impressionism. Plein air forever changed how artists see the world.

A true plein air painting is done on location, capturing the atmosphere of the moment. The majority of the painting must be completed on site with little to no work to be done in the studio. Most artists agree this is the true test of skill as it requires complete confidence in placement of color and brushwork in a short amount of time. For example, a sunset may only last 30-40 minutes. That would be all the time the artist has to capture the scene.

The event includes 5 exhibits across the coast, daily artist demonstrations, 2 workshops, art sales and a series of public receptions. Art enthusiasts can visit the exhibits and attend the many free special events that occur throughout the 10 day event. "Many artists from across the region gather and paint alongside the event's invited artists; it is amazing to see the art being created" stated Joe Taylor, Event Chair. The "Wetroom", which alternates each year between the Apalachicola Center for History, Culture and Art in historic Apalachicola and a location in downtown Port St. Joe, is always stocked with fresh paintings that the artists deliver daily throughout the event.

The Forgotten Coast en Plein Air is coordinated by the Forgotten Coast Cultural Coalition, a non-profit organization established to produce regional multi-community cultural events that improve the quality of life for the coastal area. The communities of Mexico Beach, Port St. Joe, Cape San Blas, Indian Pass, Apalachicola, Eastpoint, St. George Island, Carrabelle, and Alligator Point have joined forces to produce the most impressive art event seen along the coast. Support from the Gulf and Franklin County Tourist Development Councils, Mexico Beach CDC, and Visit Florida has helped to gain the event a national following.



22nd Annual Apalachicola Home and Garden Tour

Friday, May 2 and Saturday, May 3

Starts at the square in front of Trinity Episcopal Church, 76 6th St. and US 98. The event includes touring throughout Apalachicola. There will be 8 homes and 2 gardens on the tour, plus the Chapman auditorium.

Friday May 2, 2014

Evensong Service: 5:30 pm

Reception: 6:00 pm

Saturday May 3, 2014

Tickets sales open 9:30 am

Tour 10 am-4 pm

Sealed Bid Auction 10 am -2 pm

Parrish Hall Lunch 11 am-2pm

For more information, call 908-447-7107 or visit www.apalachicolahistorichometour.org

Golf Gone Wild

The 2014 Golf Gone Wild Golf Tournament to benefit the Florida Wild Mammal

Association (FWMA) is set for Saturday, May 3 at the St. James Bay Golf Resort.

The Tournament will be an 18-hole Florida Scramble with a shotgun start at 10:00 A.M. Four person teams will compete for cash and prizes.

The Golf Gone Wild Hostesses will be on hand to spread the hospitality and insure the players enjoy their round on this beautiful Audubon-sanctioned course that's located just a few miles east of Carrabelle, Florida.

Florida Wild Mammal Association, a non-profit 510(c) (3), helps thousands of injured and orphaned wild animals each year in Wakulla and Franklin counties. They receive no government assistance and are entirely supported by private donations. Golf Gone Wild hopes to raise funds to help the staff during the critical and overwhelming spring "baby" season.

Entry is \$100 per person which covers: Continental breakfast, range (open at 8:00), golf, cart, buffet lunch, cash and prizes to win.

To enter please mail or email pro Rob Burlison: 151 Laughing Lane, Carrabelle, FL 32322. rob@stjamesbay.com.

To be a sponsor or donor please call John Spohrer (850) 899-1419.

Eastpoint The Scourge of Surge: What You Need to Know About Hurricanes and Storm Surge on Thursday, May 8, 5:30-7:00 PM at the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve, 108 Island Drive, Eastpoint.

This presentation is for homeowners and residents of Franklin County to find out how (*See Scourge of Surge, Page 5*)

(Scourge of Surge, From Page 4)

to be prepared for hurricanes and storm surges and how to use the new Storm Surge Prediction Maps.

With over 1,300 miles of coastline and over 8,426 miles of tidal shoreline, Florida is at high risk from the impacts of severe weather and sea level rise.

The presentation will discuss how to:

- Learn how hurricanes develop and sustain themselves;
- Identify risks to coastal property in Franklin County from storm surges and flooding;
- See new national weather maps that show risks and give real time predictions;
- Find out how evacuation orders and road closures are made and how it will affect home owners and residents;
- Hear about the National Flood Insurance Program and how property owners can save on flood insurance premiums through the Community Rating System; and get a free copy of the new “Florida Homeowners Handbook to Prepare for Natural Hazards.”
- Pets and Hurricanes: What you need to know.

To sign up or for more information contact Jason Garwood at 850-670-7705 or Jason.Garwood@dep.state.fl.us

Lighthouse Sunset/Full Moon Climb

The May Full Moon Climb at the Cape St. George Lighthouse on St. George Island will be held on Wednesday, May 14. The Sunset/Full Moon Climb will take place from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and will include light hors d'oeuvres and a sparkling cider toast to the full moon. Cost is \$15.00 for the general public and \$10.00 for members of the St. George Lighthouse Association. The sun will set at 8:06 p.m. and the moon will rise at 7:44 p.m. on April 14.



After sunset, people are invited to climb to the top of the lighthouse for a breathtaking view of the full moon, as space and time permit. Cost is \$10.00 for the general public and \$5.00 for SGLA members.

The Cape St. George Light is located in St. George Lighthouse Park at the center of St. George Island, where Island Drive (the road off the bridge) ends at Gulf Beach Drive. Parking is available in lots at either side of the park.

Because space is limited, reservations are recommended. For reservations or more information, please contact the Lighthouse Gift Shop at 850-927-7745.

Also at the Lighthouse on Memorial Day, Monday, May 26, there will be a Dedication of the Flagpole in Lighthouse Park. The event will start at 11:45 a.m. with music by the Franklin County School Band, and will feature a traditional Memorial Day 21-gun salute starting at noon and continuing with one shot every minute until 12:20 p.m. The flagpole will be dedicated to Jim Lambert, an island resident who passed away last year. The event is open to the public. Guests are encouraged to bring an outdoor chair.

***Forgotten Coast Paddle Jam 2014
May 16, 17 and 18th***

Paddle Jam is a festival celebrating the Forgotten Coast through paddle sports, music & food. Paddle Jam is a “fluid festival” with events happening at various locations in Apalachicola and St. George (See Paddle Jam, Page 6)

(Paddle Jam, From Page 5)

Island. If you love2paddle, we invite you to join with us and paddle2love as we help those in need!

During Paddle Jam we will attempt to set a new Guinness Book World Record for the largest floating gathering of kayaks.

The current Guinness World Record was set September 24, 2011 when 1,902 kayaks and canoes assembled on Fourth Lake in Inlet, N.Y. On Saturday May 17th, 2014 we will attempt to set a World Record on the Apalachicola River aiming to involve a "raft up" over 2100+ kayaks.

The event will take place at the confluence of the Apalachicola River and the



Apalachicola Bay (100 yards north of the Apalachicola Bridge toward the junction of Scipio Creek and Apalachicola River.) Put-in locations will be spaced out at public landing and private marinas along the Apalachicola River. 2100+ kayaks will gather and be linked by boaters arm in arm or paddle to paddle and assembled for 30 seconds.

During Paddle Jam you can also register with local outfitters and non-profit

organizations for activities such as Eco tours into the Apalachicola River system and paddling adventures in the Gulf or bay to the barrier islands.

Paddle Jam will also showcase live local music and local food. You can also attend lectures, visit local museums and parks, shop with the local vendors and stroll the historic district. Paddle Jam offers something for everyone and is for people who are passionate about life on the Forgotten Coast.

Thanks to the Franklin County Tourism Council for Upcoming events.

Time for Renewal of memberships has passed

If you did not pay your membership dues by April 1; you are no longer considered an active member and will not be eligible to vote on any issues. Dues are \$20 per person and can be mailed to SGI Civic Club, P.O. Box 451, Eastpoint, FL 32328.

2014 Board of Directors

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Please visit our website: www.sgicivicclub.org for the latest news from St. George Island and the surrounding area. Email us at sgicivicclub@gmail.com

The Islander is edited by Eric Roberts (egrob2@fairpoint.net)