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# SUN CITY CENTER AUDUBON CLUB

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February 2020

## *Ponderings from your prez*

### **“Forest Bathing”**

I was going to write more scientific information about the need for seniors to get outdoors into nature. In any case, wasn't sure I could find any terms as poetic as the Japanese study that referred to it as “forest bathing”. Instead, I want to write of my own experiences this month. I have been having back issues and often in a considerable amount of pain. (So “what else is new with us seniors”, you ask.) On the field trip to Felt's Preserve, I walked back to the blind with another member so we could sit for a while rather than continue walking. When my son was here, I said no to going to the Little Manatee River State Park on our way back from the Outlet Mall but then turned in at the last moment. On both occasions, I had to take some breaks to sit...but, the bottom line is that, even though my back still hurt, I felt so much better for having been out in nature amongst the trees and bird song.

As seniors, our aches and pains seem to be part of our lives; but I urge you to still get out in nature. It is easy on our own Nature Trail as there are benches all along the trail. And one of my favorite benches is the one almost at the entrance and facing the canal. So, Just Do It.

### **Conservation**

As part of my Just Do It theme today, I want to talk more about conservation. I was unaware of the role that methane gas plays in warming our atmosphere. I did a little research after our last speaker. It does indeed have a worse effect than carbon emissions – but does dissipate more quickly than carbon so cutting down on methane production would have a timely effect. One of the major sources of methane gas in the atmosphere along with fracking and cow manure is the amount of food waste that is sent to our landfills. I hadn't even thought of that.

So, my conservation goal this month is to shop and eat wisely so that I am not throwing as much food into the garbage. This is especially true with the buy one, get one free offerings of salad. Living alone, I often don't get through the second package before it is wilting and needs to be tossed. There is no savings if food gets tossed – and apparently, we toss a lot of food in the United States. So, I'll shop more carefully and often...and consider “what do I need to eat” rather than “what do I want to eat” when I look in the refrigerator.

### **Guest Passes**

The Community Association has asked that we all have our CA membership id with us when we come to meetings. Out of town guests should have their Guest Passes as well. I have gotten Kings Point “club passes” for several of our members and they will be available to pick up at our meeting. I'm looking forward to seeing you all at our next meeting.

### **Nominations for next year's board**

I think the committee has convinced all of the present board members to run again. That doesn't mean that we wouldn't welcome competition! New faces and new ideas are always good. After the election of the new board, I will need to appoint At-Large Board members. Please let me know if you have an interest in this. It would be a great way to get to know what we do and how we do it.

*Mary*





## ***Trail Blazing***

*By John Lampkin*

How does she do that?! That is the question that comes to mind when watching a turtle excavate her nest and fill it with eggs. Once she selects a suitable site in open sandy or loose soil free from large roots, she can't see what she is doing because she does all the digging with her hind legs and feet and never turns around to assess her progress. After the eggs are laid, she covers them up, flattens the soil with her bony belly and leaves the site looking much the way she found it. Presumably, she could do it all blindfolded!

Several turtle species populate the SCC Nature Trails particularly along the central canal. Pictured above is a Peninsula Cooter, *Pseudemys peninsularis*, which is called by other similar names both common and scientific depending on who is doing the calling. She digs one deep central chamber and two or three shallower satellite chambers and fills each with leathery eggs laid one at a time. This may help deter predation by raccoons who are expert sniffers-out and diggers-up. Often, the eggs emerge without a clear unobstructed view so capturing the moment was cause for photographer joy. As she worked away, I could imagine her paraphrasing a Beatles' classic, "I am the Cooter. You are the Eggman. Goo goo plop."



*An egg exits the cloaca of a Peninsula Cooter*

The Nature Trails is an ongoing project of the SCC Audubon Club in cooperation with the SCC CA. The trailhead is located opposite North Lake on Del Webb West between Vincennes and Seton Hall. Join us for interpretive walks and the possibility of becoming an eggperson yourself on the first Tuesday of the month at 9 am.

## ***General Meeting – Florida Room Saturday 2/1/20***

### **The Communal Kite Gina Kent**

Join us at 9:30 for refreshments and socializing before the presentation. Remember to bring your own mug or cup.

#### **Florida Room - Atrium**

|         |                  |
|---------|------------------|
| 9:30am  | Refreshments     |
| 10:00am | Business Meeting |
| 10:45am | Program          |



### **Upcoming Field Trips**

#### **Tuesday 02/11/20**

Lettuce Lake Park  
Tampa, FL

#### **Monday 03/09/20**

Marie Selby Gardens  
Sarasota, FL

#### **Wednesday 04/22/20**

Honeymoon Island State Park  
Pinellas County, FL

**Full schedule of meetings & trips available at**  
<http://www.sccaudubonclub.com/meetings>

## IT'S FESTIVAL TIME



### Burrowing Owl Festival

**Organizer: Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife  
February 29, 2020**

<http://ccfriendsofwildlife.org/2019-burrowing-owl-festival/>

Burrowing Owls are surely one of the cutest birds on the planet and the **Burrowing Owl Festival** celebrates this endangered species. The City of Cape Coral has numerous platted empty lots that are home to many burrowing owls and the Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife have taken responsibility for performing surveys and promoting the protection of these owls and their burrows. This is an excellent festival with many vendors selling bird and wildlife related items, and booths hosting wildlife rehabilitators, agencies, and artists.

### Wonders of Wildlife Festival

**EG Simmons Park**

**Organizer: Raptor Center of Tampa Bay  
March 21, 2020**

<http://www.raptorcenteroftampa.org/event/wonders-of-wildlife-festival/>

Right in our backyard is the **Wonders of Wildlife Festival**. This is only the second year of the festival and it promises to be bigger and better than last year's offering. Local rehabbers, nature artists, and representatives from Hillsborough County Natural Resources will be in attendance as well as live bird demonstrations and raptor flyovers.

## SCC Audubon Club Three Day Trip

March 3, 4, 5, 2020



There is still time to sign up. We have a few places left. See me at the February meeting for more information and an itinerary for this exciting trip.

There is a meeting on Saturday, February 8 for all those going to Gainesville. We'll meet for planning, volunteering, questions and answers. Refreshments will be served at the meeting, which will be held in a meeting room at Fletchers Music Store, at 1503 Sun City Center Plaza. We will begin at 4:00 pm.

My husband, Roger and I will let you know the final payment and answer any questions you may have.

*Kathy Eckhart*



*Gainesville, FL*

## ***News from our Master Birder***

We are now on the upside! Each day is now longer than the last, and soon those of us who like warmer weather will get their wish. But for the present, we are in winter. The purple martins should be arriving any day now; I haven't seen any yet.

But what I have seen, is our great horned owl back on the nest at the corner of Pebble Beach Blvd. N. and La Jolla Ave. Remember last year, the Saga of Sonny? One owlet fledged from this nest, and we had to rescue it. Then he was released on July 5. Mrs. owl didn't learn her lesson about where she should nest, and she is right back there again. We may have to revisit that scenario!

I am seeing a roving flock of mostly pine warblers at my feeder, trying to eat black oil sunflowers from it. I am also receiving visits from bluebirds, checking out my nest box. I doubt they will use it though, but I can only hope. On the West Campus Nature Trail, I have seen a pair of wood ducks the past two weeks, on the canal near one of the nest boxes we put up. Will they use it? Stay tuned.

*Ray*



*Pine Warbler*

## ***Birding Workshop February 21, 2020***

Sun City Center Audubon Club will be hosting a Beginning Birding Workshop on Friday, February 21, 2020 in the Florida Room at 9:00 AM. At the workshop, we will discuss the selection and proper use of binoculars and field guides, and how to become a better birder - including birding etiquette. We will be showing how to identify some of our confusing species, such as the white herons and egrets. This workshop is open to all residents of Sun City Center and Kings Point and their guests.



**FREE WORKSHOP  
Beginning Birding**

**Speaker – Ray Webb**

**February 21, 2020  
Florida Room  
9:00am**

**Refreshments will be served**

## Where there are Gardens, there are Birds. Let's support our local gardening Projects!

Here is the opportunity for some gardening workshops presented by Hillsborough County Extension Office and the University of Florida. We often share information with our gardening friends, and we want to support bringing programs closer to us.

There are two days and two sessions each day.

The classes will be held from 10am until 2 pm, in rooms 201 and 202 of the multipurpose facility, the SMPF building, at HCC.

Each 2-hour class has a cost of \$5 and there will be two workshops each day. Please be prepared to pay \$10 at the door each day. Handouts, planting guides and other useful information will be provided by the workshop leaders. Feel free to bring a bag lunch if you wish. There is a kitchen attached to the meeting room with a large refrigerator in which you can store your lunch and drink, water will be available. Also please bring a notebook to take notes.

### **Ruskin Community Gardening Series, February 5-6, 2020, 10am-2pm**

Southshore Hillsborough Community College, 551  
24th St NE, Ruskin, FL 33570



### Sessions/Topics

#### **Session 1: February 5, 2020, Day 1, 10am-2pm, working lunch-bring your own lunch**

- Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Principles
- Community Garden Information
- Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide, Central Florida Planting Guide, Square Foot Gardening
- Soil composition and additives
- Raised Beds, In-ground and Container Gardening
- Mulch
- Questions and Answers

#### **Session 2: February 6, 2020, Day 2, 10am-2pm, working lunch-bring your own lunch**

- Seeds
- Micro-irrigation
- Fertilizing, Pest and Disease Management
- Trellising and Other Plant Supports, Frost Protection and Useful Tools
- Questions and Answers
- Composting
- Vermi-composting

Please rsvp to Debbie Anderson at 813-633-0015 so they will have a rough number of how

### **FOOD DRIVE – 2019**

Our thanks to all those who contributed to the Food Drive at the December 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. Six boxes of food were contributed and delivered to Our Lady of Guadalupe Food Pantry in Wimauma. Mari Claire and Al Jones made the delivery – thanks to them.

All the food was very well received, and the pantry is thankful for our contributions and generosity.

*The Clancy's  
Clara & Ed*

# *Sun City Center Audubon Club Schedule 2019-2020*

## Monthly Meeting Schedule

|          |                                       |
|----------|---------------------------------------|
| 02/01/20 | The Communal Kite<br>Gina Kent        |
| 03/07/20 | Florida Butterflies<br>Marc Minno     |
| 04/04/20 | Love is in the Air<br>Reinier Munguia |



## Officers & Committee Chairs 2019-2020

|                               |                                |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| President                     | Mary Duncan                    |
| Vice-Presidents/<br>Programs  | Patsie Ginley<br>Ann Fenimore  |
| Secretary                     | Betty Giles                    |
| Treasurer                     | Rod Rodrigues                  |
| At Large                      | Gail Mongiello<br>Linda Floyd  |
| Refreshments                  | Pat Dean                       |
| Membership                    | Loni Baxter                    |
| Name Tags                     | Jo Ann Wilkinson               |
| Conservation                  | Joe Mustion<br>Melanie Higgins |
| Historians                    | Ed & Clara Clancy              |
| Newsletter                    | Denise Rosen                   |
| Publicity                     | Susan Shuttleworth             |
| Greeter                       | Gail Mongiello                 |
| Field Trips/<br>Master Birder | Ray Webb                       |
| Three Day Trip                | Kathy Eckhart                  |