



The Village Birders

Volume 10 Issue 4

www.villagebirders.org

September 2010

Summer Birding

Winter Wren Overdose

Anyone who has tried to find a Winter Wren knows how difficult this tiny skulker can be to see. It is usually found in dark dense forest floor foliage where it feeds on small bugs and other stuff. I have only seen this little wren one time and then only for a few seconds. Unfortunately this sighting was in Japan so it does not count for my North American bird list.

In late June this year while doing some birding in Oregon with my daughter, we were walking trails in a small county park along a heavily forested mountain creek just off the coast. We were searching for Hermit Warblers and American Dippers, which our guidebook reported as having been seen in this park. My daughter picked up a bubbly warbler-like bird song, which we followed back into some dense trees where even I could hear the singing. I thought for sure we were going to find Hermit Warblers, but we found nothing after about ten minutes of singing by two different birds. Finally, I tried pishing and the singing stopped.

Further along the trail I noticed some movement near the ground on a weedy forest slope and soon out popped three Winter Wrens, an adult and two almost full-grown babies. They stayed nearby and seemed to be not concerned about us so we had excellent looks at this family. Then, the singing we heard before started again and guess who, Mrs. Winter Wren, not the Hermit Warbler. Now that we knew this song was a wren we found them everywhere in this small park, and a dipper too, but no Hermit Warbler.

Al Rousch

Cerulean Warbler Census

In May and June I participated in a survey for the Michigan Audubon Conservation Dept. The Cerulean Warbler has been declining in numbers for some time and has been ranked by the bird conservation organization, Partners in Flight, as a species of high priority for conservation action. The Cerulean has the most precipitous decline of any warbler species. In their breeding grounds they need large tracts of intact mature forest, particularly along floodplains. They breed in eastern and central North America and winter on the eastern slopes of the Andes Mountains in western South America at a very narrow elevation zone where deforestation is a major concern.

continued...

Backyard Birds

The Firebushes have recovered nicely from the winter freeze, and the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are very appreciative. They enjoy the honeysuckle and the shrimp plants too, but Firebush seems to be their favorite. The backyard feeder also gets a lot of attention after 5pm.... happy hour?

Kris St.Germain



Cerulean Warbler Census (cont)

Cerulean Warblers often prove difficult to identify by sight since they forage, sing, nest and roost high in the canopy of mature forest. The adult male is bright blue above and white below with a black necklace.

I was given a 2.5 mile route in Allegan State Forest and had to stop, look and listen every tenth mile (26 stops). This route had to be done twice and at least ten days apart. Any birds counted on both days would be counted as a nesting pair. I bird this area frequently but have my routine route that is off on quiet dirt roads. Previously along my route I had counted three breeding pairs of Ceruleans. When I received my route from Audubon I was disappointed as they gave me 2.5 miles of noisy paved road, a spot I had always passed by in the past. To my delight, my count came up with ten breeding pairs in this little short run all along the Kalamazoo River floodplain. I was to count several other species but the one of note is the Ovenbird of which I counted 23 birds, now that's a lot of Ovenbirds in 2.5 miles. I hope my count means good things for the little blue Cerulean Warbler!

Barb Gay

What's in a Name?

The premise of my research started with the spotting of a pretty little yellow and gray bird perched on my neighbor's garden fountain. It was a Prothonotary Warbler and much as I enjoyed watching him I was driven by his name. What, who, where - is a prothonotary? I had to know. I reverted to an almost antique form of research, the dictionary. There I discovered a prothonotary is the head clerk in a judicial system or the chief scribe in a religious convocation. The name still presented a mystery but with a bit more investigation I found the bird had been so named because his yellow color was like the robes worn by prothonotaries or papal clerks when they preside at canonization's or other important matters

Bird's names are almost as fascinating and informative as the birds themselves. There is an entire science called taxonomy that is involved with the naming of all living things. We start with the formal two word Latin name that is used by all scientists to identify an individual. This is necessary because many birds have many common names, many in several languages. For example *Passer domesticus*, the House Sparrow, is commonly called the English Sparrow, Weaver Finch, Street Gamin and appropriately hoodlum. A researcher or even a birder might have a problem sorting out these various names but the formal Latin never changes.

Many common names are descriptive and often direct translations of the Latin, e.g. Red-headed, three-toed, and chestnut-sided. One of the most descriptive is a bird of the island of Cebu in the Philippines called the Fourcolor (Cebu) Flowerpecker. He should be easy to spot. Some indicate the place a bird is commonly seen e.g. Tennessee Warbler, arctic gull or Florida Scrub Jay - some by behavior e.g. creeper, wader, or Oystercatcher. Others are named after the first person to describe them e.g. Cassin's, Audubon's, Bachman's. It is thought that 2,500 species are named for people, most of who are men. Charles Darwin has 21 species but the champion is J. Gould, a Victorian bird artist who has 23 species named for him, and even one for his wife - Mrs. Gould's Sunbird. There is even one named for a US president. The ubiquitous and oft recorded LBJ.*

Many common names come from older languages; e.g. hawk is from the Middle English *hawk*, which means "to seize". Gull is from the Cornish *gullen*, which means throat and pertains to a gull's throaty strangled cry. The flicker is from the Old Icelandic *flak*, which means "to flutter"

Having started on this path I may have to devise yet another list of birds - those I've seen and those of whose name I know the origin. Every name seems to have its own story, again the thing I most love about birding...variety.

Lyn Comans

* LBJ is the acronym for "little brown jobbie", a term for any of the large number of species of small brown passerine birds, many of which are notoriously difficult to distinguish.

The Bully and the Bird

While birding Emerald Marsh I encountered a Great Egret fishing in water that had pooled along the side of the exit road. There was a patch of water plants there and the egret had found a smorgasbord of little black fish. He would strike and come up with three little fish at a time, trying desperately not to lose any as they popped out of his beak and he caught them in mid air.

I counted 26 fish that ended up the egret's dinner before the water under his feet started to boil. The bird looked confused with all this movement and tried to outdance the unseen invader. He was rising and falling as he tried to find a sturdy place to put his feet and not lose his seat at the dinner table.

The next thing that happened was a "who'd a thunk it". The egret frantically got to the grass on the edge of the water and a giant fish swam at him almost beaching itself on the grass. Have you ever seen footage on the killer whales in Patagonia? They come up on the shore to get the seals. Well, I watched this fish beach this egret three times and that's just what it looked like.

Now who do you think won this battle? Poor Mrs. Egret gave up and flew away and the BULLY of the ditch went back to whatever fish do! Was this a mama fish protecting her young from the big bad bird? I don't know if fish do that but it would sure make for a good story!

You never know what you'll see if you just "Stop, Look and Listen!"

Barb Gay

October Events

We hope the birds will be back for our first walk to Bourlary Historic Nature Park. Meet at Belk at 7:30am on Thursday, October 7.

The first monthly meeting of the fall season will be Saturday, October 23, and will feature speaker Carol McCorkle from the Avian Reconditioning Center in Apopka. Her presentation is designed to encourage interest and concern for Florida's unique, native and migratory birds of prey. She will focus on raptors, their natural history and their importance to our environment and us and will feature live raptors.

The Calendar of Events for October 2010 to January 2011 is included in this issue on page 3 and is also available at www.villagebirders.org/TripsOct10Jan11.html Please save this calendar for future reference.

Cheep Talk

Published five times per year by

The Village Birders

The Villages, FL

www.villagebirders.org

President: Lyn Comans - lfcbirder@aol.com

Editor: Charlie Martin - CheepTalk@Xemaps.com

THE VILLAGE BIRDERS

Calendar of Events

October 2010 – January 2011

Meeting date, day, time and place for all trips and meetings are indicated in the left hand columns:

- **B** - Belk's parking lot at the lower end, close to Burger King (our traditional meeting place)
- **P** - Paradise Recreation Center
- **WM** - Walmart parking lot on CR466, garden end, close to Perkins Restaurant

SPECIAL EVENTS (members only) are announced 30 days prior to the date of the event and reservations are accepted on a first-come basis. Check the website for any last minute changes: www.villagebirders.org

<u>Date/Day</u>	<u>Meeting Time/Place</u>	<u>Trip Location</u>	<u>Walk/Drive & Estimated Time</u>
October			
7 Thursday	7:30 am - B	Bourlay Historic Nature Park	W – 3 Hours
15 Friday	7:15 am – WM	Withlacoochee (Croom/Chinsengut)	W/D – Half Day (PL)
23 Saturday	9:00 am - P	REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING Carol McCorkle – Avian Reconditioning Center – Live Raptors	2 Hours
28 Thursday	6:30 am - WM	Cedar Key	W/D – All Day
November			
5 Friday	7:30 am - B	Wood Duck Drive	W – Half day
11 Thursday	7:30 am - B	<i>Special Event – Ocklawaha Prairie</i>	<i>D – Half Day (L)</i>
19 Friday	7:30 am - B	Ponce Inlet	W/D – All Day (L)
25 Thursday		Happy Thanksgiving	
27 Saturday	9:00 am – P	REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING Jim Dinsmore – Birding the Galapagos Islands	2 Hours
December			
1 Wednesday		Happy Chanukah	
3 Friday	7:30 am - B	Carney Island	W – 3 Hours
9 Thursday	7:30 am - WM	Bear's Head and Citrus County Landfill	W/D – Half Day
14? Tuesday	TBA	Christmas Bird Count (Ocklawaha/Emeralda Marsh)	
25 Saturday		Merry Christmas	
January			
1 Saturday		Happy New Year	
4 Tuesday	TBA	SW Marion County Christmas Bird Count	
7 Friday	8:00 am - B	Bird the Villages	W/D – 3 Hours
13 Thursday	6:00 am - B	Merritt Island N.W.R.	D – All Day (PL)
22 Saturday	9:00 am – P	REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING Norm Lantz – All in the Family	2 Hours
29 Saturday	7:15 am – B	Zellwood Reclamation Area	D – All Day (PL)

NOTES:

(PL) (L) Optional stop for (Picnic) or (Lunch) at a location on or near the walk

PLEASE SAVE THIS CALENDAR FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

Birding in Italy

With magnolias, hydrangeas and roses in bloom,
And a mulberry tree with berries,
I knew I'd see birds
As I suddenly heard:
YIKES! The chip of House Sparrows.

It looks like spring in the Sunshine State
But it's really half 'round the globe
How strange it seems
To see similar scenes
With some birds I already know.

In the streams there are Mallards and Moorhens too.
How can this possibly be?
Grackles and Rock Doves
On the tile roofs above,
This is Europe, Milan, Italy.

So I listened and searched, checked all that were perched
With hopes to add to my archive.
At the end of my trip
With nine more on my list
I had twelve hundred and thirty-five.

Alice Horst

Captures at Banding Stations are Down

Mark Shieldcastle, Research Director at The Black Swamp Bird Observatory (BSBO) located at Crane Creek/Magee Marsh (Ohio) has an article in the summer issue of that organization's members newsletter where he reveals that banding station bird capture numbers were down significantly from the previous years. Banding stations from Minnesota to the East Coast report similar outcomes. The biggest declines were shown in species crossing the Gulf or coming from the Caribbean.

The BSBO banding station leads the country in numbers of bird captures, and has a major focus on warblers. The BSBO activities are worth everyone's support.

In thinking back to the Florida spring migration, I seemed to remember we had consistent northeast winds most of the time in April and early May that would have made bird flights across the Gulf waters challenging. Fort Desoto had an early April burst, but after that overall numbers seemed down, at least on my outings there. Just something to think about.

Al Roush

Cheep Talk
310 San Marino Dr.
The Villages FL 32159

FIRST CLASS MAIL