



Sun City Center Audubon Club

December 2022

Prez Ponderings December 2022

Greetings!

We're delighted that our upcoming **Saturday, December 3rd** is our **1st Open Fundraising meeting**. **Guests from any town** may join our monthly meeting, for a requested \$3.00 donation. Scheduled 9:15-11:00 AM at Community Hall, it will feature speaker Nancy Murrah, President of **The Raptor Center of Tampa Bay**. Tell folks about this live, open event.

Residents of all towns are welcome!

Do you have a favorite painting or picture of birds or nature?

Please exhibit & share it at the "BIRD & NATURE ART FESTIVAL" at our January meeting.

IT'S EASY! At our December 3rd meeting, the info needed is:

1. Your name
- (2) Picture description (up to 10 words)
- (3) Approx. size

Then, **bring your artwork to the January 6th meeting** and you'll receive:

- A personalized printed display card
- A display location
- A listing in the Festival brochure
- A souvenir exhibitor boutonniere

Join the fun!

The funds we raise support our **Nature Trail projects**, such as a planned 2023 project to **improve signage on the Trail**.

Speaking of meetings, **the attendance in November was 92**, not 83 (as announced at the meeting). Thankfully, we added additional seating this year.

Compared to November 2021, we have **gained 47 members since last year, a 36% increase. WOW!** Thanks to each of you for joining!

AMAZING! 48 members submitted registrations at the November meeting!

REMINDER: by joining now, your **Club membership is fully paid until December 31, 2023**. Over 1/3 have already prepaid for 2023.

Our Audubon **Club exhibit table at the 2022 "Hi, Neighbor!"** on November 3rd had a steady stream of **prospective new Club members** stop by. **Several joined** at our November 5th Club meeting. **YEA!** Board members Pat Dean, Betty Giles, Denise Rosen and I staffed the table.

"Water for thought"? A member-submitted idea for cutting waste at our meetings:

"Just as we bring our coffee mug, **why not bring our water in a reusable container?**"

Hmmm. Good question!

Happy Holidays!

Looking forward to seeing you at the meeting on December 3rd!

Dennis Morris, President
SCC Audubon Club
5w3d15h80y@gmail.com
570-814-2803



Trail Blazing

John Lampkin

“Food fight!” That’s the battle cry when hot dogs and spaghetti go flying in school cafeterias. However, on the Sun City Center West Campus Nature Trails “food fight” has a different meaning. Fighting over food is a way of life for many species and for every hunter or gatherer critter, there is a pirate or two waiting to seize the booty. Sometimes the combat is intraspecies, as when two laughing gulls tussle midair over a fish or crab. Sometimes two different species wrestle in a tug-of-war, as in the photograph above. Using its hairy sticky legs, a Milkweed Assassin Bug captured a blue bottle fly and has it impaled on its long, slender, black and orange beak. The beak delivers a deadly and gruesome chemical cocktail that both paralyzes the prey and liquifies the internal organs and structures, turning the fly into a bag of goo held together by the exoskeleton. The beak does double duty as both a syringe and a soda straw and the assassin bug was no doubt waiting for the liquification process to finish, anticipating the next fun phase of slurping out the goo.



A paper wasp tries to wrestle away a blue bottle fly captured and killed by a Milkweed Assassin Bug.

The paper wasp at the bottom of the image had other plans for the fly, knowing that it would be the perfect meal for her larvae back in the paper nest. Ninety-two seconds and three dozen photographs later, the wasp wrestled loose the prey and flew off with the meal. The wasp won the battle for several reasons. It can fly, the assassin bug can’t, the main weapon of the bug was otherwise occupied and stuck in the fly, and the legs of the wasp are more muscular and powerful, adapted for carrying heavy loads, making them a strong asset in a tug-of-war. While there are no winners in a cafeteria food fight, in Nature the winner gets to eat or feed its family!

The Nature Trails trailhead is located opposite North Lake on Del Webb West between Vincennes and Seton Hall.

John Lampkin

JohnLampkin@JohnLampkin.com

John Lampkin leads walks on the first Tuesday of each month at 9 am on the Nature Trail. Join us as we marvel at the macro and micro wonders of Nature.



Field Trip Schedule 2022-2023

- 12/20/22 Captain Tom's Christmas
Palmetto, FL
- 01/12/23 Felts Audubon Preserve
Palmetto, FL
- 02/17/23 TECO Restoration Area
Sarasota County, FL
- 03/15/23 Sweet Bay Nursery
Parrish, FL
- 04/19/23 Fort Desoto County Park
Pinellas County, FL

**Happy
New Year!**

*To sign up for our field trips, please visit
our website:*

www.sccaudubonclub.com

This adventuresome group visited Alderman Ford Conservation Park in Plant City on November 16.

Their sightings on that day consisted of a pair of Cardinals, Turkey Vulture, Red Tail Hawk, Red Shouldered Hawk, half a dozen Tufted Titmouse, Brown Thrush, Palm Warbler, Boat Tail Grackle, Grey Flycatcher, Great Horned Owl, Nuthatcher, a Great Egret and finally a Cattle Egret.



Death By Poison

At our **November meeting**, Fairl Thomas from the Birds in Helping Hands gave an amazing presentation on Raptors and Rodent pesticides, along with her companion pictured below:



Fairl Thomas, Patsie Ginley & Ann Paul

She educated us in detail as to how our wildlife, especially the owl population have been killed by the rodent pesticides. Rat poison is often used in bait stations, those shoebox size black boxes you see around buildings and restaurant dumpsters.

The rats and mice do not die inside the stations. After eating the bait, they go back into the wild and can take up to a week to die. In their weakened state from internal bleeding, these poisoned rodents become a toxic ticking time bomb for our unsuspecting owls to feast on. After eating this rodent that is riddled with poison, the poison is now in the owl's digestive system. Within, weeks the owl has died an excruciating death.

Visit Raptors Are The Solution at raptorsarethesolution.org to find the best option in controlling the rodent population in your neighborhood and home.



Club to Hold 1st Open Fundraiser at December Meeting

We've had a program change for the December 3 meeting at the Community Hall. A presentation on raptors – complete with live Screech Owls and a Crested Caracara – will replace “Wonders of Nature.”

Nancy Murrah, president of The Raptor Center of Tampa Bay, will speak about birds of prey and the work of her organization. Opened in 2018, the Raptor Center rescues, rehabilitates, and releases hundreds of wild native birds annually across central Florida. Through the efforts of volunteers, sick and injured birds are transported to veterinary clinics and hospitals, reconditioned for flight, and released to the wild when possible.

This is the first open fundraiser the club has hosted, and the public is invited – so bring your friends and family. We are suggesting a \$3 donation from non-residents of Sun City Center. Funding from these donations and a 50-50 raffle will be used to help maintain the Nature Trails.

Doors will open at 9:15 a.m. for socializing and refreshments, followed by the presentation at 10:00 a.m.

For more information, call Dennis at: 570-814-2803.



“A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his father but borrowed from his children.”

— John James Audubon

Program Schedule

12/03/22	Raptor Center of Tampa Bay Nancy Murrah
1/07/23	Defend Yourself, insect Micro-photography John Lampkin
2/04/23	Woodpeckers, Nature’s Wood-worker Reinier Munguia
3/04/23 others	Mermaid, Manatees, and Marine Life De. Buddy Powell
4/01/23	Garden to Attract Bird/ Butterflies Terry Brockway
4/22/23	EARTH DAY CELEBRATION AT THE NATURE TRAILS



SCC Audubon Board Meetings

Board meetings are held in the heritage room at 7:00pm on the third Monday of every month.

All Members are invited.

Purple Martin Nesting Gourds

Purple Martin Nesting Gourds have been donated to Audubon (not the pole though). They can be hung from existing houses to entice more birds or get a pole and all 12 gourds to start your own colony. Single gourds are \$10 (\$20-40 on line) or get all 12 for \$60. As part of our fundraising efforts Mary Duncan will be manning the sales table and would be happy to answer any questions on raising Purple Martins.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

DECEMBER

Virginia Ewing
Linda Falkner
Betty Giles
Bonnie Gitersonke
Merial Graff
Melanie Higgins
Sherry Kalczyński
Judi Matelski
Linda Menier
Christine Morrison
Susan Nasrani
Susan Perusse
Barbara Pfeil
Stan Prisbe
Joan Russell
Rick Sanecki
Carol Scundder
Harriet Seckel
Janell Snape
Merrill Tawse
Paul Wilkinson



Officers & Committee Chairs 2022-2023

<i>President</i>	<i>Dennis Morris</i>
<i>Vice-President & Programs</i>	<i>Patsie Ginley</i>
<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Betty Giles</i>
<i>Co-Treasurers</i>	<i>Pam & George Viner</i>
<i>Immediate Past</i>	<i>Mary Duncan</i>
<i>Greeter</i>	<i>Linda Floyd</i>
<i>Refreshments</i>	<i>Pat Dean</i>
<i>Membership</i>	<i>Dennis Morris</i>
<i>Name Tags</i>	<i>Jo Ann Wilkinson</i>
<i>Historian</i>	<i>Clara Clancy</i>
<i>Master Birder & Field Trips</i>	<i>Ray Webb</i>
<i>Newsletter</i>	<i>Denise Rosen</i>
<i>Conservation</i>	<i>TBD</i>
<i>Publicity</i>	<i>TBD</i>

Links of Interest

Copy below link in your URL

Grass is not greener when it's artificial turf.

<https://baysoundings.com/the-grass-is-not-greener-when-its-artificial-turf/>

Focused on Protecting Eagles

[Demand Stronger Protections for Bald and Golden Eagles \(abcbirds.org\)](https://www.abcbirds.org/demand-stronger-protections-for-bald-and-golden-eagles)

Woodpeckers The Hole Story

[Woodpeckers: The Hole Story | About | Nature | PBS](https://www.pbs.org/woodpeckers-the-hole-story/)