



Sun City Center Audubon Club

February 2023

Prez Ponderings

Greetings! I'm excited about our

Fabulous February! SCC Audubon Club Meeting

DATE: Saturday, February 4th
PLACE: **FLORIDA ROOM**
TIME: 9:15 AM Social
10 AM Meeting & Program,
"Mermaids, Manatees & More"

**Refreshment Chair Pat Dean is planning a special Valentine treat. Mmmmm.

**We're rolling out the grand piano to provide some Valentine-themed background music, featuring pianist John Lampkin at the keyboard.

**Check out the etching artwork by Tampa-based artist John Costin. If you like it, purchase a limited-number ticket to be the winner of the drawing! (*More on this below*)

**Notice the unique Purple Martin gourd-houses for sale. Donated by Mary Duncan, she'll answer your questions.

**Finally, after a short business meeting, enjoy the featured program, *Mermaids, Manatees and More!* Presented by Clearwater Aquarium's Dr. Buddy Powell (*more info below*).

WOW! Don't. Miss. This. Meeting!

SCC Audubon Club 2023 memberships are due at this time, and will be valid until

December 31, 2023. Already, 135 folks have joined or rejoined for 2023. You may copy the Membership Form attached to this newsletter. Then mail it or bring it to the February meeting. *Thank You* for being an SCC Audubon Club member!

Thanks to all who attended our January 7th Club meeting at Community Hall. It was a huge success with 145 attendees, the largest meeting in years. It far exceeded our expectations, and extra chairs and tables were rolled out to provide needed seating!

Most came to see the program provided by John Lampkin (*more below*). However, everyone also enjoyed our *Bird and Nature Art Festival*, which featured 25 artworks exhibited by our members. There was tremendous variety, making it interesting to look at! *THANK YOU* to all who participated!

Audubon Club members Pam and Colin Howgill exhibited (5) original paintings by noted British Isles artists Archibald Thorburn (1860-1935) and Alfred Marcus Hughes (1900-91). It was announced at the meeting that Alfred Hughes was Pam Howgill's father. *THANK YOU* to Pam and Colin for sharing these family heirlooms!

Looking forward to seeing *you* at our February 4th meeting.

Dennis Morris
5w3d15h80y@gmail.com
570-814-2803



Nature Trail Notice

"Small flags have temporarily been placed along the Nature Trail to provide guidance for hikers. They will be removed when permanent markers are installed later this year."

Blue Bird Monitoring Report

This past summer was the 7-year anniversary of the installation of the Audubon Club's bluebird trail. Twenty-five nesting boxes are currently installed in backyards located on the closed North Course Golf Course. The nest boxes are monitored weekly each nesting season, which extends from the beginning of March to the end of August. Please thank our intrepid monitors who faithfully check nest boxes and record data consistently. They are: Marlene Velanis and Patsy Gelsey, Ann Fenimore and Beth Dell, Ann Rodrigues and Elaine Dow, Carl Zajac, and Pat and George Viner.

This year, although plagued by non-native house sparrows, there were 40 nests built and 121 bluebirds fledged.

Over the past 7+ years, we have repaired, and selectively replaced pine boxes that were originally constructed and installed as a Boy Scout Eagle Scout project. This year, we are happy to announce that with a generous donation, we are able to replace ALL 25 boxes.

Ms. MarieClaire Jones approached the Audubon Board with a request to honor her father, Ed Clancy, with a donation to further the Club's mission of conservation. The support of the bluebird trail is so appropriate in that the Clancy's have been long time members and supporters of the Club and were instrumental in securing participation of the Eagle Scout who originally took on the project. The Clancy's have also been stewards of a bluebird nest box from the project's inception. Thank you MarieClaire!

The club partnered with the Sawdust Engineers to construct 25 new nest boxes out of cypress which should last at least another 10 years. All 25 boxes have been replaced and poles reset ready for the nesting season which starts the end of February.

If you want to know more about this project, check out the SCC Audubon website.

A dedication and naming of the trail is scheduled for Sunday, February 19, 2023 at 1:00 pm at the nest box located in the field across from the Atrium.

Melanie Higgins



Clara & Ed Clancy



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.





Manatee by Monica Ross, CMARI

Manatees to be Main Event at February Program

Manatees, those beloved aquatic mammals found in Florida springs, rivers and estuaries, will be the focus of the February 4 meeting. Our guest speaker, Dr. James “Buddy” Powell, is executive director of the Clearwater Marine Aquarium Research Institute (CMARI). Dr. Powell will present on “Mermaids, Manatees, and Other Marine Life.” He will share some of his field experiences, along with a brief history of manatee research and conservation in Florida and beyond.

Manatees are listed as a threatened species. More than 800 died in Florida in 2022, due in part to lack of food. Conservation efforts by CMARI include tagging and tracking manatees. The institute also provides technical advice and scientific information to improve the protection of marine species and habitats in the United States and internationally.

For more than 40 years, Dr. Powell has worked to conserve threatened and endangered species around the world. His efforts have resulted in coastal protected areas in Florida, West Africa, Central America and Cuba.

The meeting will be held in the Florida Room. Doors will open at 9:15 a.m. for socializing and refreshments, followed by the presentation at 10:00.

SCC Audubon Club membership and event attendance are limited by SCCCA regulations to the following groups: SCCCA members, Freedom Plaza residents, eligible Aston Gardens residents and Kings Point Gold Card holders.

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



Hover Fly, Yellowjacket Mimic



Bird Poop Butterfly



Spicebush Swallowtail caterpillar.



Photos by John Lampkin

**SCC AUDUBON CLUB HOSTS ITS JANUARY
MEETING &
NATURE ARTS FESTIVAL**
By John Perian

Bird watchers are more correctly called “Birders.” But they don't just observe and monitor land-based birds and waterfowl. They also seek out and identify the myriad species of insects, plants, and other wildlife. Bird lovers who hit the nature trails with binoculars, a bird book and notebook do so primarily for fun and excitement. More than 145 members of the Sun City Center Audubon Club and the public were treated to a slide presentation and talk by acclaimed wildlife photographer and conservationist John Lampkin on January 4th at the club's meeting and Nature Arts Festival. His discussion was about how insects and plants defend themselves from potential predators. The presentation was entitled “Defend Yourself! How bugs and Bloomers Survive.”

“The main thing is to learn and understand what you're looking at, Lampkin said. “and it doesn't matter if it's a bird, a bug or a plant. Everything alive wants to eat something else. It has to eat to survive.” In order to do that, he explained, every species of insect, bird, mammal, reptile and amphibian, as well as plants, have evolved over millions of years to elude falling prey to other wildlife.

Lampkin added that some insects mimic predators with similar coloration, body shape or behavior. Other insects employ camouflage to deter larger bugs. Some use toxic fluids they expel or display bright colors to ward off other animals looking for a meal. The larva of the Spicebush Swallowtail Butterfly looks like a tiny green snake with enormous fake black eyes. It can also raise up half of its body to look like a serpent preparing to strike.

One photo shown drew loud gasps and laughter. It was the larva of the beautiful Giant Swallowtail Butterfly. Why did the audience utter such a surprising reaction to Lampkin's photograph? It looked exactly like a bird's dropping on a leaf. “In fact,” Lampkin said, “That's why it's often referred to as the Bird Poop Butterfly.” He also showed a few slides of wasps and bees. But not all of the images were of the flying hypodermic needles. One photo he showed was of the Hover Fly. It looks uncannily like the notorious Yellow Jacket Wasp. It hovers and elicits a buzzing sound like real bees and wasps.

But it has no stinger and is harmless to people. Its larva eats harmful aphids and other insects that destroy agricultural crops.

Meanwhile, the adult Hover Fly helps fertilize flowering plants. They pollinate almost as many plants as honeybees and travel greater distances to do so. Often many butterfly and moth larvae feed on poisonous plants like the swamp milkweed. The toxins in these plants enter the insects' bodies but don't affect them. However, if a bird or other animal tries to ingest the butterfly or moth, they immediately spit it out because it tastes so bad. Sometimes, though, a bird will swallow the toxic bugs. Doing so will either make the unlucky predator extremely sick, or eventually kill it.

Florida is also home to a few plant species, that go a step beyond mimicry and will eat an unwitting insect. These carnivorous death traps include the well-known Venus Fly Trap, sundews, and pitcher plants. All three are deadly to insects unlucky enough to become captured by the Fly Trap's sensitive pads, the sticky tentacles of the Sundew or venture onto the downward facing hairs of the Pitcher Plant and fall into its pool of digestive juices at the bottom of the plant. Passion vine grows extrafloral nectaries on the stem which “reward” ants that patrol the vines. The ants drink the sweet fluid and in return, the ants attack caterpillars that eat the vine's leaves. It's a win-win situation for both vine and ants.

Lampkin and his wife Jane are originally from New York, where they became interested in butterflies and birds. They moved to Sun City Center in 2015 and continue to enjoy their avocation for birds, insects and other wildlife nearby. They have also traveled to other wildlife havens in the America's, including Costa Rica, Panama, Trinidad and other tropical locales. Lampkin has taken more than a half million nature photographs with his Nikon SLR camera bodies with a 300 mm telephoto lens for birds and a 105 mm macro lens for insect close-ups. “A good camera body is ‘disposable’ with a relative short life span.” He said. “But the various lenses a photographer uses are indispensable and long-lived.”

(cont'd next page)

(Cont'd previous page)

Lampkin has had several of his photographs published in the Field Guide to the Flower Flies of Northeastern North America. He is a retired piano teacher and a composer of nature themed classical music. He is also a well-known Crossword Puzzle Constructor for the NY Times, the LA Times and the Wall Street Journal.

Field Trip Schedule 2022-2023

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 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 |

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

www.sccaudubonclub.com

Program Schedule

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 2/04/23 | Mermaid, Manatees, and Other Marine Life Dr Buddy Powell |
| 3/04/23 | Woodpecker, Nature's Wood-worker Reiner Munguia |
| 4/01/23 | Garden to Attract Bird/ Butterflies Terry Brockway |

4/22/23 **EARTH DAY
CELEBRATION AT THE
NATURE TRAILS**

News from our Master Birder

Ray Webb

On January 12, thirteen of us met in Sun City Center to carpool over to Felts Audubon Preserve in Palmetto. This small parcel of land is noted for its wintering painted and indigo buntings. We were able to see these and more, from their observation building. We also hiked the property and saw even more! Then we gathered at Popi's Place on US 41, for good food and camaraderie. We had fabulous weather, and the birds cooperated too!

Next on our list is a trip on February 17 over to the TECO property south of their Manatee Viewing Center. We will tour the boardwalk and buildings with TECO employee Stan Kroh, an Audubon friend who has led us before. In March, our trip is to Sweet Bay Nursery in Parrish on the 15th, for some birding and to check out their Florida native plants....April 19 will find us at Fort Desoto County Park in Pinellas County, for our annual spring migration trip.

You can sign up for any of these trips at our membership meetings, or online at our website, www.sccaudubonclub.com



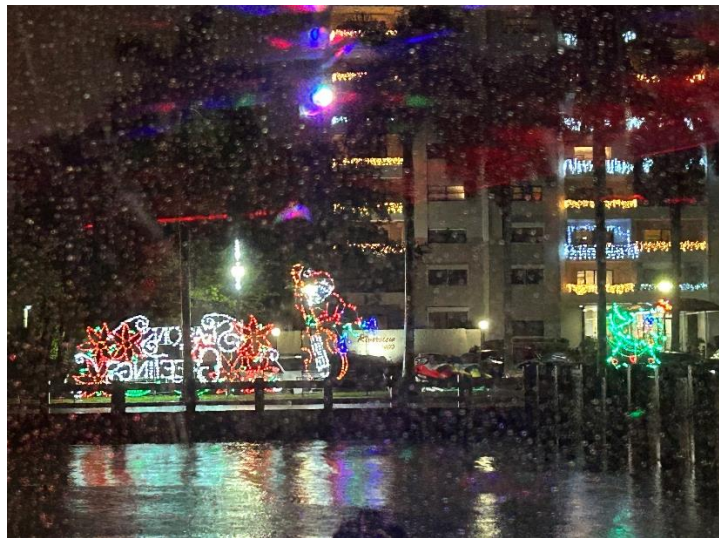
Photo from Tom Bredesen

Robin picking berries on the North Course

Memoroies of Ray's Field Trips



Captain Tom's Christmas Cruise





Observation Blind



Indigo Bunting



Observation Blind



Painted Bunting



Red breasted grosbeak



Northern Cardinal

Buy a Raffle Ticket For a Chance to Win A John Costin Etching

The John Costin artwork to be raffled is entitled *Great Blue Heron*, numbered 182/230. The etching is 9" x 12", and the framed size is 15" x 18".

This etching was exhibited at the *Bird and Nature Art Festival* on January 7th by Club member Melanie Higgins, an acquaintance of Costin. Melanie has generously donated this etching to our Audubon Club to be raffled, with the proceeds benefitting the SCCCA Nature Trails maintenance fund.

Only (30) \$10.00 tickets will be sold for this Club fundraiser. Sales will begin at the February 4th Club meeting.

A resident of Tampa, FL, John Costin has been a professional artist since 1979. His work can be found in various public and private collections throughout Florida and the country.

"I am a printmaker. The process is challenging, and I like that. 1-5 copper plates are individually hand wiped with various colors of ink to create an image on paper. Then each piece is meticulously hand colored. The plates take months to create and many weeks of proofing are done before an acceptable piece is created. It is a combination of drawing, sculpture and painting. It is the oldest printing process in the world; Rembrandt, Goya and other fine artists were printmakers. No computers or photography are ever used; each piece is handmade and hand painted and though the editions may range from 1-250, no two pieces are the same." -- John Costin

If you'd like to see and learn more, his etchings are the feature of a new exhibit entitled *Etched Feathers* at the Tampa Bay History Center. On display March 4 to October 15, it examines the work and artistic processes used by John Costin, "whose creations capture the essence of winged beauty."

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Etching artist to bring colorful Florida birds to Tampa Bay History Center exhibit

By [Lloyd Sowers](#)

Published December 30, 2022

Updated January 2, 2023

Tampa [FOX 13 News](#)

TAMPA, FL - Brilliant images of some of the birds that help make Florida such a colorful place were created using a centuries-old process. They will soon be at the center of a new exhibit at the Tampa Bay History Center.

John Costin works to fill tiny crevices in a copper plate. He rubs the plate with ink and then, with his bare hand, polishes the surrounding copper until it shines.



What Costin does with copper makes him a rare bird indeed. His art is etching, and he's done this for 40 years.

His etchings start with shades of white, gray and black. He then keeps adding color until birds like herons and egrets and pelicans seem to fly off the paper, exploding with color.

The exhibit will be called "Etched Feathers: A History of the Printed Bird." It opens March 4 at the history center on Water Street in downtown Tampa.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

**February
2023**

Mollie Allen
Elen Aluotto
Linda Cleveland
Betty Dean
Lawrence Greenfield
Cathy Meyerhoff
Dennis Morris
Joseph Mustion
Margie Norris
Lorraine Novotny
Debbra Ri
Ron Rosen
Barb Sanecki
Albert Seckel
Kathy Swayze
Carl Zajac



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>Laura Butler</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> |



BYOM

In an endeavor to support our conservation beliefs, please bring your own mug to our Saturday morning meetings. We appreciate your cooperation.

For those of you who use the recycle water bottles, the CA has installed water fountains in the atrium to conveniently refill your water bottles.