

The Warbler



The Warbler April, 2006

- Come to BCAS exciting activities, events, field trips, and programs!
- Meetings held at Fern Forest Nature Center
- The Warbler is also available online at browardaudubon.org

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT By Barry Heimlich

We need your help desperately. During the past two months, 3 members of our board of directors have resigned for various personal reasons. We desperately need new volunteers for the board in the upcoming May elections. We especially need people who want to help with programming, fund raising, membership, and to help publish our newsletter and website. We have so much good work to accomplish next year, including continuing our excellent speakers programs, field trips, special events, and our all important conservation programs. Help make a difference in the community by joining in our global warming initiative, our oversight of sustainable urban growth including airport and seaport expansion, land preservation, water management, and educational and social activities related to birding, habitat preservation, and environmental protection. We have exciting plans but we need your help. If you're interested, please call me at 954-963-2428 or email me at barrynh@browardaudubon.org.

April is another exciting month at Broward Audubon. The highlight of the month's activities is the April 20th meeting at which Dr. Hal Wanless, chair of the University of Miami's Department of Geological Sciences and one of the region's leading experts on

global warming, will address our group about the potential impacts that global warming can have on South Florida. For those of you who are not familiar with this subject, here is an excellent opportunity to find out about one of the biggest long term threats to our future quality of life. And for those who are informed on the subject, Dr. Wanless will provide you with the latest thinking on this important subject and its potential consequences on our region. We will also be presenting awards to the winners of the county's middle school and high school Science Fair winners. And Commissioner Kristin Jacobs will be recognized at *Broward's Champion for the Environment* for her leadership that lead to Broward County being named an Urban Wildlife Habitat.

This month, we will also be participating in Earth Day celebrations at Deerfield Beach. Come out and celebrate the environment with us. Also a field trip is planned at Hugh Taylor Birch State Park at the height of songbird migration season. Birch Park is always an outstanding place for migrating warblers.

We hope you will join us for these events.

Activities Calendar

Meetings (at Fern Forest Nature Center, 7pm unless stated otherwise)

Date	Subject	Speaker
Thurs., April 20, 2006	GLOBAL WARMING: EFFECTS ON SOUTH FLORIDA	Hal Wanless, PhD , Chair, Dept. of Geological Sciences, University of Mi-
Sat., May 20, 2006 Birdwalk at 8:30 a.m. Picnic and Meeting starting at noon	Birdwalk, Annual Meeting, and Picnic At Tree Tops Park SEMINOLES INDIANS-HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE	Victor Suarez , Naturalist , Broward County Parks & Recreation

BCAS Field Trips and Special Events

For info, call Ken Burgener at (954) 766-2919, email: kburgener@hotmail.com

Date	Subject	Meeting Place and Time	Notes
Sat., April 22, 2006	EARTH DAY 2006 <i>Keep the Earth "Cool"</i>	Deerfield Main Beach all day On the Beach at S. E. 21st St.	Celebrate the Earth
Sat. April 29, 2006	Hugh Taylor Birch State Park—Birdwalk	First parking lot at 8:00 a.m.	Free 2-hour walk, 2-hour workshop. Fee
Fri.-Sun. May 5-7, 2006	Fort De Soto State Park, St. Petersburg—Birding Trip	Contact Paddy for info: birdpaddy@yahoo.com	Fee includes Birding, Lodging and Meals
Sat. May 13, 2006	Green Cay and Wakodahatchee Wetlands	Parking lot at 7:30 a.m.	
Sat. May 20, 2006	Tree Tops Park	Visitors Center at 8:30 a.m.	Free 2-hours walk fol- lowed by talk on Semi-
Sat. June 10, 2006	Miami MetroZoo	MetroZoo parking lot at 7:00 a.m.	Behind Scenes Tour: Wings of Asia Aviary

Global Warming

WHY SOUTH FLORIDIANS SHOULD BE ESPECIALLY CONCERNED ABOUT GLOBAL WARMING

By Barry N. Heimlich, President, Broward County Audubon Society



There is growing international concern about Global Warming as one of the most serious problems currently facing the world. It is of special concern to South Florida because this low lying region is especially susceptible to rising sea levels and increasing tropical storm activity. That is why South Florida must play a leadership role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions locally to set an example for the rest of the country and the world to take action.

Broward County Audubon Society has set as its #1 conservation goal an initiative to urge the county government, the Broward League of Cities, and every one of the 31 city governments in the County to take the important first step of signing onto the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement already adopted by the U.S. Conference of Mayors in December, 2005, including 8 cities in Broward County. Clean transportation and construction technologies are at the very heart of the U.S. mayors' initiative on climate protection, and it is one of the most important ways local governments can contribute to reducing Global Warming. Every Broward resident can make an important contribution to this effort by advocating that state-of-the-art low emission mass transportation and construction technologies be built into the County's plans for expanding mass transit and new public facilities from the get go. And existing government buildings should be retrofitted. Also, building codes should be revised accordingly. We invite you to join with us in this important effort by volunteering to work with us on these important goals.

At Broward Audubon's upcoming meeting on April 20, 2006 at 7:30 p.m. at Fern Forest Nature Center, Hal Wanless, Ph.D., Chair of the Department of Geological Sciences, University of Miami, who is one of the region's leading experts on this subject, will speak on *Global Warming and its Potential Impacts on South Florida*. We invite everyone to attend this important and informative meeting.

U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement

In June 2005, the U.S. Conference of Mayors unanimously passed the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement started as a grass roots program by Seattle's Mayor Greg Nickels. As of March 24, 2006, it has been endorsed by 219 mayors nationwide including eight Broward cities: Hallandale Beach, Hollywood, Lauderdale, Miramar, Pembroke Pines, Pompano Beach, Sunrise, and Tamarac. We believe that the rest of Broward's 31 cities, the County Commission, and the Broward League of Cities should sign onto this Agreement. Information on the Mayors Agreement is available at:

<http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/climate/>.

Broward County Audubon Society has begun a program to raise awareness of Broward County's citizens about Global Warming as follows:

- Invited Dr. Wanless to present on Global Warming at our April 20, 2006 meeting.
- Established a website on Global Warming: <http://www.browardaudubon.org/globalwarming/>.
- Publishing articles on Global Warming in our newsletter *The Warbler* posted at: <http://www.browardaudubon.org>.
- Making presentations on Global Warming at public events such as Water Matters Day and Earth Day.
- Encouraging local government, business, and community leaders to undertake programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Planning a conference on Global Warming for the 2006-2007 activity year.
- Considering a statewide initiative on Global Warming in cooperation with Audubon of Florida.

Global Warming: Potential Effects on South Florida

Global temperatures have been steadily rising for the past 150 years in concert with the industrial age. As a result, glaciers and polar ice caps are melting at an increasing rate, ocean levels have risen at a rate of about 1" per decade during the 20th century. This rate is expected to more than double in the 21st century. Climatic changes are causing extreme weather events such as warmer winters, hotter sum-

mers, droughts, torrential rains, wild fires, increased tropical storm activity, and major shifts in ecological systems. Numerous scientific studies show that the major contributing factor is increased atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases (~50% in the last century), especially carbon dioxide from burning of fossil fuels and forests, and methane from agricultural activities, organic waste decomposition and as a consequence of production of fossil fuels.

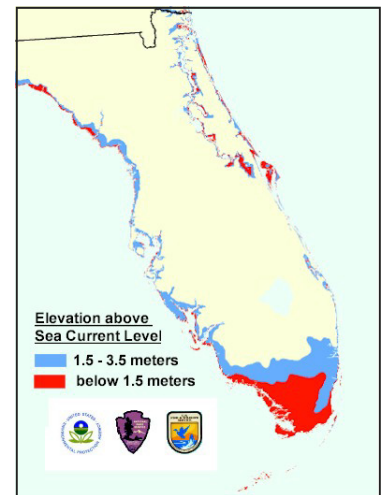
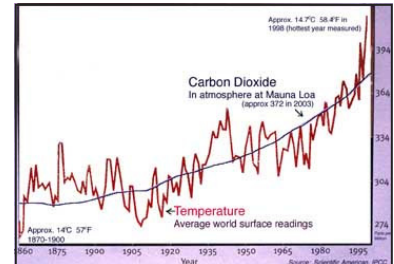
Sea levels are expected to rise by up to 3 feet or more by 2100. Since South Florida is a flat coastal lowland, this prospect is of major concern. Beaches critical to our tourist economy and quality of life would be subjected to increased erosion by rising seas and tropical storms. Coastal shorelines would encroach on oceanfront property. Coastal wetlands would be inundated. Saline water advancing on freshwater wetlands including the Everglades would dramatically change the ecological landscape. A 3' rise in sea level would engulf most of Everglades National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve to the Tamiami Trail, raise salinity in much of the southerly conservation areas and cause water levels to rise correspondingly throughout the watershed.

The region's hydrology would be adversely effected. The Biscayne Aquifer, our primary freshwater source, could be jeopardized by increased saltwater intrusion caused by rising sea levels. This would require increasing levels of inland surface waters to offset saltwater intrusion and facilitate storm water drainage. Increased inland flooding during major rainfalls would result.

South Florida is especially vulnerable to hurricanes. In 2005, Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma, which were not considered major hurricanes at the time they struck this area, nevertheless caused extensive damage throughout South Florida. A major Category 3, 4 or 5 hurricane striking South Florida with a major storm surge the way Katrina struck New Orleans could be catastrophic. Global warming causes increased ocean surface temperatures that likely contribute to increased frequency and intensity of tropical cyclones. Coupled with elevated sea levels, South Florida would be even more vulnerable to the devastating effects of storm surges.

Global reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is necessary to reduce the prospect of such calamities. Since South Florida is especially susceptible to the potential consequences of Global Warming, Broward County should set an example for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and responsible energy use. Signing onto the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement would be an excellent place to start. We ask that you contact your city council and county commission and urge them to do so. Needless to say, we must also insist that our state and federal officials make Global Warming a national and international priority. The United States must lead this global effort.

Links to additional information on Global Warming can be found at: <http://www.browardaudubon.org/globalwarming/>.



Birder's Corner

Bird of the Month

Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*)

By Ken Burgener

Now is the time to go looking for this magnificent bird that calls Florida its home in the summer. Although these birds have been found as far north as Canada, Florida is their main home. The entire population leaves the United States in the fall to winter in the Pantanal in South America, returning in early March to breeding areas, occasionally as early as February. I have seen these birds in downtown Ft. Lauderdale and at the beach.



A graceful bird of prey, it is 22-24 inches in length with a wingspread reaching 50 inches. The back, rump, wings, and deeply-forked tail are blackish in color; head and under parts, including the small feathers on the underside of the wing, are white. When you see one, you know it's a Swallow-tailed Kite as it is the only bird with such

contrasting color and the deep forked tail. Some people have described the bird as blue and white, the blue is caused by the blue sky reflecting on the white of the Swallow-tailed Kite. This kite will take lizards, frogs, snakes, large insects, and small birds. The Swallow-tail catches much of its prey on the wing, eats its catch while flying by bending its head and neck under its body to reach the prey held in its foot, and drinks by skimming the surface of ponds and marshes.

Of all the spectacular birds in South Florida, this one is my favorite. The playful way they move around on air currents is amazing. I remember watching two kites fly in circles dancing to the music of my car radio. Some day I hope to see hundreds of Swallow-tailed Kites in a kettle, soaring up into the sky and setting off in search of prey. One of the best places to see them is at Corkscrew Swamp Audubon Sanctuary and on Government Road on the way to Big Cypress Seminole Reservation.

Birds from Flamingo Gardens Make a Big Hit

By Fred Rehage

Have you ever been eyeball to eyeball with a Great Horned Owl? Well, I have along with all the attendees of the March 16, 2006 meeting. This unique experience was brought to us by Mike Ruggieri. He is the Director of Animal Care at Flamingo Gardens.

Mike's presentation started with the story of how his interest in wildlife started as a kid growing up here in Florida as the neighborhood's caretaker for baby birds. This led to his first job at Cypress Gardens as an alligator wrestler and eventually the Director of Wildlife at Cypress Gardens. But the scene-stealer of the night's presentation started with a 4-inch high screech owl. As Mike walked among the audience with the owl perch on his hand, he explained some of the interesting facts about the owl. Such as the three color variations of feathers and the fact that the feathers near the eyes trigger the closing of the set of clear protective eyelids when the feathers are touched. Next came the broad-winged hawk rescued from near starvation in a Publix parking lot. She had lost her left eye and was unable to successfully hunt. She kept her good eye on you as she came by each of us while perched on Mike's arm. She showed us that beautiful under wing pattern of white with a black border. Then came the big guy, the great horned owl, for our eyeball to eyeball experience.



Mike covered hundreds of facts about the three birds and about Flamingo Gardens. For sure I came away from the evening with the understanding that Flamingo Gardens is not "just a fruit stand". The Gardens is an award winning botanical garden and a wildlife refuge featuring over a hundred rehabilitated Florida native birds and animals. Flamingo Gardens is a true treasure hidden in our own back yard.

Science Fair Winners Recognized

by Marti Reynolds

The 32nd Annual Broward County Science Fair was held on February 16-19 at a local mall with many outstanding projects produced by 650 students for 61 area schools.

Four top projects were selected from a range of topics ranging from the sensitivity of organisms to salt stress in our ecosystems; to how physical factors to beach restoration might impact living organizations; to which hurricane shutters hold up best; to determine the effect of pH levels in our waterways on living organisms.

The 2006 first place high school winner is **Faheema Abdul Ghany**, and the first place middle school winner is **Nicholas Levy**. Broward County Audubon will recognize these outstanding young students at our April 20th meeting and receive a \$50 savings bond.

Fort DeSoto State Park and Gulf Coast Birding

With Paddy Cunningham
May 5-7, 2006



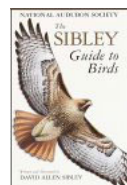
Long-billed Curlew

- Naturalist guided birding: over 100 species expected
- 2 nights lodging in St. Pete with continental breakfast
- Lunch and happy hour on Saturday
- Carpool or drive yourself from/to Fort Lauderdale
- Fee: \$205 incl. \$50 donation to BCAS
- \$30 optional upgrade: Birding on the way there and back

For Information and Reservations:

- Email: birdpaddy@yahoo.com
- Call: (954) 926-5458 evenings/weekends

Field guides, binoculars, scopes, birding supplies, birdfeeders, software and more.



Broward Audubon's
Online Nature Store

Helps Support BCAS
<http://store.browardaudubon.org>



Broward County Audubon Society expresses its sincere appreciation to the following sponsors:

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Meetings At: **Fern Forest Nature Center**
201 Lyons Rd. South
Coconut Creek 33063

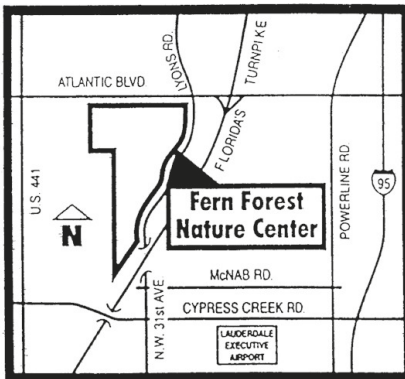
From I-95 and Atlantic Blvd: Go west to South Lyons Road, go south to entrance of Nature Center.

From US441/SR7 and W. Atlantic Blvd: Go east to South Lyons Road, go south to entrance of Nature Center.

From South by Florida Turnpike: Exit at Atlantic Blvd. Go west one light to South Lyons Road, go south to entrance of Nature Center.

From North by Florida Turnpike: Exit Pompano Beach, go right at light onto Coconut Creek Pkwy. Go West to S. Lyons Rd (NW 46th Ave). Turn left,

Celebrating
50 Years



The Warbler

The Newsletter of the Broward County Audubon Society

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April-June 2006
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Concern to South Floridians
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- **NEXT GENERAL MEETING—
THURS., April 20, 2006**

FERN FOREST NATURE CENTER:

7:15 PM—Refreshments

7:30 PM—Meeting

Visit our website:
browardaudubon.org

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Issue 7
April 2006

Conservation, Community, Commitment

FERN FOREST NATURE CENTER
Thursday, April 20, 2006 at 7:30 p.m.
Global Warming:
How will it affect South Florida?
Guest Speaker: **Hal Wanless, Ph.D.**
Chair, Dept. of Geological Sciences, University of Miami

Dr. Wanless's major fields of research include coastal and environmental geology and the effects of sea level and hurricanes on South Florida coastal environments and the Everglades. He will provide us his expert views on global warming and its potential effects on South Florida. Anyone concerned about Florida's future should not miss this event.