



Audubon FLORIDA Naturalist

SPRING 2012

Coastal *Stewardship*

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Photo by James Ferris



*John Elting, Chairman,
Florida Audubon Society*

Audubon of Florida is now Audubon Florida. A tiny change of name helps us to better align with other state Audubon organizations around shared conservation priorities. Audubon Florida continues to be a partnership of chapters, the state's oldest and most effective wildlife conservation organization, and National Audubon Society. Audubon Florida is led by a working and giving volunteer board of directors and by capable staff managed by our Executive Director Eric Draper.

This issue of the Audubon Florida Naturalist shows the remarkable work of our coastal stewardship programs and also reports on our effective advocacy for the Everglades and water resources during the recent Florida legislative session. While Audubon Florida employs many professional staff scientists, sanctuary managers, educators and policy advocates, much of the real work gets done by volunteers.

Along with chairing the Audubon Florida Board of Directors, I volunteer with a local state preserve and take a strong interest in what is going on in my community. That spirit of contributing time and community stewardship is what makes Audubon a special organization. Audubon stewards are on the beaches, monitoring waterbird colonies, watching eagle nests, talking to legislators, leading nature walks, educating our neighbors and children and many, many other activities.

It is my hope that we are engaging you, our members, and inspiring you to give some of your time and money to support Audubon's conservation goals.

I love walking in the back country and really enjoy leading walks through Florida's special places. I challenge you to get outdoors and enjoy our beautiful state and to commit to support Audubon's conservation mission.

Sincerely,

John Elting
Chairman, Florida Audubon Society

Annual Report Corrections

The following donors were omitted from the Audubon Florida Annual Report:

Don Reid Jr.
Jens Tripson
Whole Foods

Other Correction:

Page 13: Photo of Red-headed Woodpecker was by Lorraine Margeson (not Brad Cornell) as indicated.

Coastal Stewardship: Without the Birds, It's Just a Beach

“Over the past year Audubon Florida has redoubled our efforts to inspire people to understand and care for the coastal birds and places that make Florida special.” – Eric Draper

Eric Draper leading a group tour to Bingham Island in Lake Worth.

This Spring and Summer on any given day scores of Audubon volunteers and staff will monitor shorebird and waterbird nesting sites to gather data and manage against harm. This volunteer and professional stewardship represents Audubon's greatest tradition – direct involvement with the places that birds and other wildlife need.

The Gulf oil spill reminded us that Florida's beaches are our most at risk and resilient natural assets. And the dozens of species of shorebirds and waterbirds that use our beaches and other shorelines are also among the most vulnerable of birds. A surprising fact is that more Florida coastal birds were lost to the BP cleanup activities than to the spill itself as crews disturbed, drove and dragged equipment over shorebird nests.

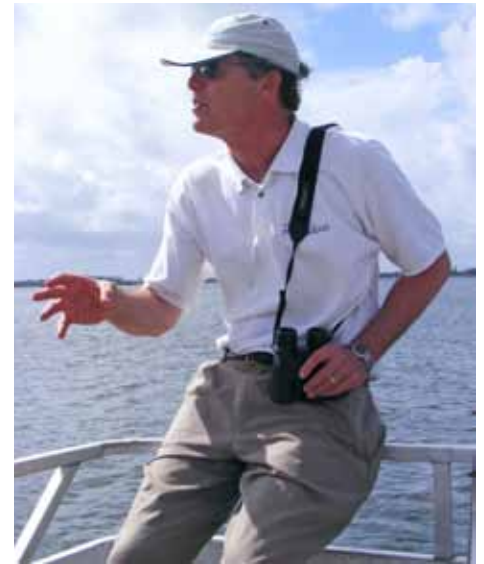
Over the past year Audubon Florida has redoubled our efforts to inspire people to understand and care for the coastal birds and places that make Florida special. Working closely with our local Audubon partners we

have organized habitat stewardship projects on dozens of coastal sites.

Science drives our conservation work. Staff biologists work with volunteers to gather data on nesting sites. Using species and nest counts we are able to track population trends from year to year. As an example we know that Roseate Spoonbills are in trouble along the Everglades coast but doing well in Tampa Bay.

The citizen scientists who collect data on coastal birds are also stewards of the habitat. These hearty volunteers help post colonies, educate beachgoers about the impact of colony disturbance, and urge land managers to enforce common sense solutions such as keeping dogs out of nesting areas.

Audubon's stewardship extends to parts of the Everglades, springs, forests and other conservation areas. Audubon owns thousands of acres of sanctuary lands, and through social media campaigns we encourage people to experience Florida's parks and other outdoor places.



We know that the best way to protect Florida's habitats is to get people out onto the land and water. By going, taking others, seeing, sharing and taking action we stand a greater chance of keeping these special places.

Eric Draper
Executive Director, Audubon Florida
President, Florida Audubon Society



Eric Draper visits the Audubon exhibit at the Epcot® Flower and Garden Show (March 7-May 20). The exhibit focuses on backyard birding. Orange County Audubon also has a booth in the main exhibit hall where you can hear on-going workshops by HGTV, Disney staff and others.

PS – We changed our name by dropping the word “of.” In Florida we are working more closely with other Audubon programs and state offices. As part of a strategic alignment toward better conservation results, you will see Florida's program featured more prominently in Audubon Magazine and on Audubon web sites. Take a minute to visit our new site fl.audubon.org and let me know what you think – edraper@audubon.org.



2012 Legislature

A Session of Priorities, Prevention and Partnerships

Photo by Marianne Korosy

Audubon's advocates were able to stop a bill proposing drilling for oil and gas in Blackwater River State Forest.

In a year when so much focus was on redistricting and key budget issues, the 2012 legislative session yielded environmental successes for Audubon that were a direct result of the vigor with which we communicated our priorities and the partnerships formed along the way.

Correcting Last Year's Mistakes

Audubon's top legislative priority and accomplishment was the passage of SB 1986 to restore spending authority for the state's five water management districts. Never have we seen a faster and more impressive response than when we asked for members to sign an online petition telling Governor Rick Scott and legislative leadership to "get to work" on this bill. In record time, 1,947 signatures were collected and delivered. Your voices were heard and what transpired after that was a partnership with the Governor's Office, the Department of Environmental Protection and our conservation allies that resulted in the passage of a good bill. With funding caps now removed, the water management districts can take on the serious environmental work of Everglades restoration and managing wetlands and water resources.

Preventing Bad Bills Based on Bad Ideas

With the help of Audubon's network of grassroots advocates we were able to stop many bad bills: proposals to change the ordinary high water line to take submerged lands away from public ownership and access; drilling for oil and gas in Blackwater River State Forest; and giving away conservation lands in the Everglades for a fairground are the worst examples of bad proposals. Audubon members were tireless in sending emails and making phone calls to legislators voicing their concerns. Did you know that 20,267 emails were sent to elected officials this session using Audubon's online advocacy system? Now that's teamwork! And let us not forget the dedicated professionals in the conservation community with whom we stood shoulder to shoulder at the Capitol speaking out against bad bills and forever on the lookout for bad amendments to good bills!

Savoring the Victories

Other partnerships bloomed this year as well. Rep. Dana Young (R-Tampa) responded to Audubon's early objections about the risk of private control of public water supplies and removed a section from her reclaimed water bill that would redefine "waters of the state." Likewise, Rep. Jimmy Patronis (R-Panama City) and Senator Mike Bennett (R-Bradenton)

agreed with Audubon's position that individual permitting projects should not be addressed in the state law. At our request, a section was removed from an environmental regulation bill that would have made it easier to site development projects in the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve.

Looking Forward

Hundreds of Audubon advocates from all over Florida sent letters to support of Everglades and the Florida Forever program and helped deliver \$30 million for restoration and \$8.4 million for land conservation. Thank you for standing up for Florida and allowing us to move forward with valuable conservation and restoration projects.

The Ultimate Team

Florida Audubon Society was started 112 years ago when a few dedicated citizens started speaking up for birds and natural resources. Our ranks have grown over the years and our tools now enable us to have our voices heard in so many different, yet effective, ways. To the chapter leaders and members and state board members and all of the Florida Conservation Network online advocates: Thank you for continuing this proud tradition!

Coastal Stewardship: People, Places & Peeps

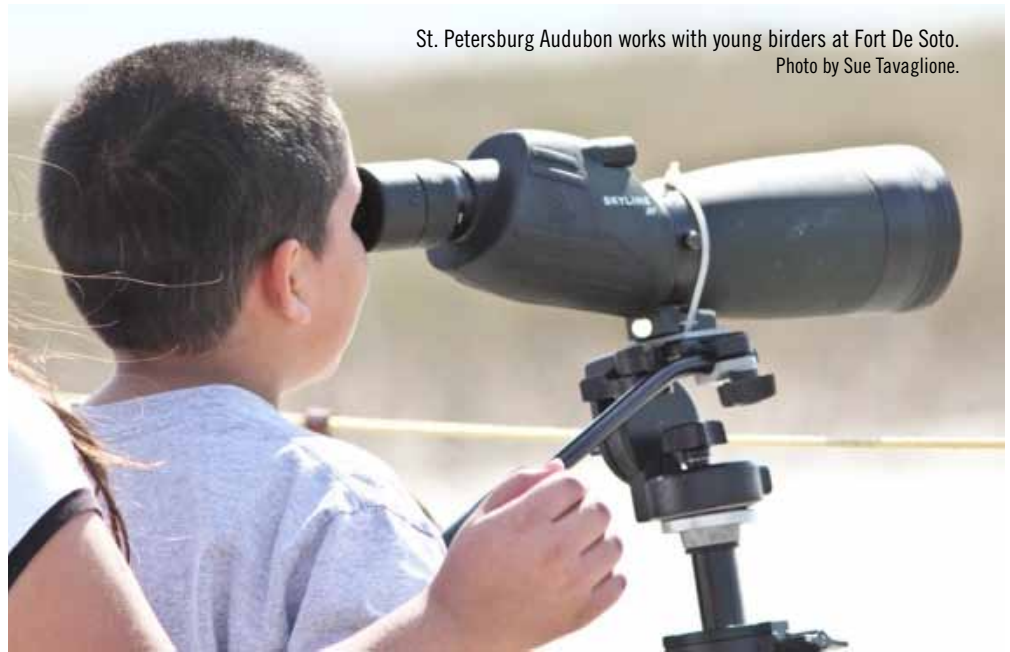
People

Bird Stewards:

Research Validates Their Work is Making a Difference

Sure, bird stewards—volunteer chaperones for beach birds at vulnerable times in their life histories—are effective during nesting, but what about migration or winter? For many wintering birds, if they do not gain enough weight—by feeding and resting during the winter—they will not successfully complete their migrations or breed in the spring.

Audubon's long-time partner in bird stewardship, Eckerd College's Dr. Beth Forsys, completed research on the effectiveness of bird stewards and protected areas in reducing disturbance of wintering Red Knots. The result? Red Knots not only prefer protected beaches, but bird stewards—volunteers with a passion for our feathered friends—increase the effectiveness of these areas to the benefit of all birds. Almost a thousand more Red Knots were counted in the protected area during the study than those found on the three other surveyed shorelines combined. The birds were probably attracted to the area's relative privacy. Along with signs and posts, volunteers deterred human visitors from disturbing Red Knots on the protected beach. But without these bird stewards, Forsys' survey also found that more intruders ventured into the bird's protected domain. "I think it shows that it's worth it. Being a bird steward can be fun, but it's hard. This is good data to show people what they're doing does work," Forsys says.



St. Petersburg Audubon works with young birders at Fort De Soto.
Photo by Sue Tavaglione.

Audubon Florida funded this research through a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant to convince other land managers to implement these protections at new sites.

Audubon Advocates Two Years Post-Deepwater Horizon: Policy Win at Federal Level

Just shy of the two year anniversary of the Deepwater Horizon disaster, good news for the Gulf is coming from Washington, D.C. Audubon and our partners are celebrating the recent passage of RESTORE Act language on the Senate transportation bill, which will ensure that BP's Clean Water Act fines are

reinvested in Gulf Restoration. Without this important legislation, sponsored in part by Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Florida), fines for the Gulf Disaster would simply be deposited in the federal treasury for use in any number of ways: bridges in Alaska, battleships in Virginia, or simply paying down the federal deficit. Audubon Florida staff worked closely with Audubon's DC Policy office and our partner organizations to keep media and public attention on this important issue. All 44 Audubon chapters in Florida sent a joint letter to Congress calling for the passage of this important funding—an example of chapter solidarity and activism that continues to make Florida the envy of the nation.

Dedicated Audubon Leaders:

Coastal Spotlight on George Willson

Audubon's expanding shorebird stewardship work is supported by talented leaders from coast to coast – energizing local chapter leaders, committed elected and appointed officials, and Audubon Florida's talented state board members. An example of one of those board members is George Willson.

With professional experiences spanning decades of water policy in Florida's Department of Environmental Protection, land acquisition at The Nature Conservancy and a term on the governing board of the Northwest Florida Water Management District, George Willson has left his mark on many of Florida's conservation successes. He now lends that experience to Audubon through his service on our Florida board. Currently an acquisition agent for the national Conservation Fund, he has been invaluable to Audubon for his expertise in water permitting, ecosystem assessment, and most recently the acquisition of special places. The Panhandle's Lanark Reef is one of Florida's most important sites for wintering shorebirds, and provides essential nesting habitat for Brown Pelicans, American Oystercatchers and more. In private ownership for decades, George learned it might be available for acquisition, just as the oil spill was reaching its peak. Audubon staff secured a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to acquire this important and vulnerable group of islands, and in his volunteer capacity, George has led the negotiations for the sale. "George's expertise and connections are the reason this acquisition was even possible," said Julie Wraithmell, Audubon Florida's Director of Wildlife Conservation. "We are hopeful the acquisition negotiations will be successful. And when Lanark is finally safe, it will be yet another example of George's legacy of wild places protected for future generations of Floridians." Stay tuned to Audubon's coastal e-newsletter, Coastal Strand, for announcements of progress on this exciting project!



Photo by Christina Evans

Audubon Funders:

Jessie Ball duPont Award Special Grant to Engage Underserved Communities

Thanks to the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, Audubon Florida now has the opportunity to address a glaring conservation gap: the absence of underserved communities, especially minorities, as participants and leaders in our work. At the same time that the country's demographics are shifting, conservation's demographics are remaining static, and from the very top of our organization, we recognize that diversifying our constituents is not only the right thing to do, it

is essential to the future of conservation.

With this new funding, our coastal team will be engaging volunteers to provide coastal experiences and volunteer opportunities for minority children and their families in Bradenton, St. Petersburg, Jacksonville, Pensacola and Port St. Joe. It is our hope that with this outreach, we will begin to build connections with these groups and cultivate the next, more diverse generation of coastal conservationists. If you'd like to get involved, as a volunteer beach docent or other participant in this project, please contact Monique Borboen at mborboen@audubon.org.

Places

Photo by John Landon
of Landon, Moree and Associates

A 930-foot breakwater was constructed on the west end of Audubon's Alafia Bank Bird Sanctuary to slow waves, halt erosion, and create a quiet water shoreline. Funding was provided from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Mosaic Foundation.

Florida's Coasts are Special Places

Florida's coasts have always defined us—in terms of geology, ecology, economy, and culture. For more than 75 years, our wardens out of Tampa Bay have stewarded the large island colonies of that region—helping wading birds, brown pelicans and shorebirds and seabirds successfully fledge their next generations. In the last decade, chapters and staff have worked to forge a beach-bird stewardship model that has spread statewide, and is now considered an example nationally. We have our eye on these special birds because we know that as go these species, so go Florida's coasts. And without the birds, it's just a beach.

Ft. Myers Beach:

Little Estero Critical Wildlife Area

At the South end of Fort Myers Beach, Little Estero Critical Wildlife Area has long been a safe haven for some of Florida's most iconic coastal birds. Nesting Least Terns and Snowy Plovers, as well as dancing Reddish Egrets, made this place one of Roger Tory Peterson's favorites in the state. Today, Audubon works with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conserva-

tion Commission, Fort Myers Beach staffer (and 2011 Guy Bradley Award winner) Keith Laakkonen, and a cadre of bird stewards to help keep this popular recreational beach safe for birds. Volunteers eager to respond to the Deepwater Horizon spill formed the first bird stewards for this area and with training from Audubon's Important Bird Areas Coordinator Marianne Korosy and Brad Cornell, are now working closely with agency staff and adjacent condo owners to find innovative solutions for birds and people. "What Keith and these volunteers have accomplished in such a short time is a testament to their passionate commitment," said Korosy, "as well as to the ability of the birds in this special place to inspire conservation action."

Hillsborough Bay's Alafia Banks:

Taking Extraordinary Measures to Save this Bird Sanctuary

The first Audubon Sanctuary in Tampa Bay was established in 1934 to stop the shooting and harvest of nesting herons and ibis at Green Key in Hillsborough Bay. Today, the staff and volunteers of Audubon's Florida Coastal Is-

land Sanctuaries manage and monitor 30 colonial waterbird sites in the greater Tampa Bay region using the information gathered to inform the conservation of these signature Florida species. Yet sometimes, it takes more than surveys and traditional management to keep these places healthy.

Audubon has protected the Richard T. Paul Alafia Bank Bird Sanctuary for over 70 years. In 2011, it received a major upgrade with the installation of a 425-foot reef system to protect the sanctuary's Bird Island from erosion. Alafia is home to over 10,000 pairs of nesting birds ranging from White Ibis and Brown Pelicans to American Oystercatchers. However, nests and nest trees are in danger of toppling into the water as a result of erosion by ship wakes from the adjacent shipping channel. Installation of a more technological-sophisticated wave attenuation system for the sanctuary's Sunken Island began last fall, and already, sediment is accreting landward of the structures. Audubon has partnered on this work with the University of South Florida's Dr. Ping Wang, to plan and help evaluate this new, sophisticated technology and its benefits for this special place.



Photo by David Macri

Peeps

(noun, plural):

1. Common slang for the five smallest North American sandpipers.
2. The short weak cries of young birds.

This time of year the word “peeps” may call to mind tasty, sticky marshmallow delights in the shape of baby chickens and rabbits. However, at Audubon, staff and volunteers are relishing the sounds of new baby birds hatching along Florida’s coasts. The fragile nesting areas on our beaches and islands are the focus for hundreds of coastal bird stewards trying to insure a productive nesting season.



Photo by Keith Laakkonen

Northeast Florida

In March and April, our wintering shorebirds are leaving us. In Fort George Inlet, lime-green flagged - Florida wintering - Red Knots are stopping by on their way north. By May’s second week, the South America wintering knots, orange flagged, will arrive, mid-way through their 9000 mile migration. For many knots, their next stopover site is the Delaware Bay, where they will look for nutritious horseshoe crab eggs to refuel on. Will they find enough to sustain their long migration and to be fit for a successful nesting season?

Toward the end of May, Least Tern chicks should be running around the beach, fiercely protected by dive-bombing parents who will poop on you if you get too close to their babies: be warned! Mind the minute, fast running Wilson’s Plover chicks: they need to get to the water’s edge to feed themselves. At the end of June, do not miss the spectacle of the thousands of Royal Tern chicks cooling off by the ocean at Huguenot Memorial Park; located on a peninsula, it is the most accessible Royal Tern and Laughing Gull nesting site in the state. Be sure to thank the bird stewards who direct beach goers to prevent fatal disturbances to the chicks; it is a 7 days a week protection effort!

Monique Borboen
Northeast Florida Policy Associate



Photo by Alan Knothe



Photo by Rod Wiley

Northwest Florida

It's that time of year again, when the stork drops off hundreds of babies on our beaches. Actually it is the terns, skimmers and shorebirds that are dropping off babies, their very own chicks. Our local beaches are where these birds nest and raise their young. Snowy Plovers often already have eggs and possibly even chicks in mid March. They will nest on most any beach in the area that offers enough privacy and food-rich wrack. Oystercatchers are the most abundant around Apalachicola Bay where there are plenty of oysters to eat. Their chicks first arrive in the latter part of April. Gulf Islands National Seashore has the largest numbers of Black Skimmers and Least Terns, but these two species nest in other locations along the panhandle coast. These and other colonial nesters (Royal, Caspian, Sandwich and Gull-billed terns) hatch their first chicks in late May. These beach nesting birds often raise more than one brood in a season, and nesting and raising of young for all the birds mentioned goes on through the middle of August.

Alan Knothe
NW Florida Coastal Bird Conservation
Coordinator

Southwest Florida

Our beach baby season is just unfolding at productive nesting areas such as Anclote Key Preserve, Fort De Soto County Park and Fort Myers Beach. The first beach babies to arrive are the Snowy Plovers, in mid-March to mid-April. Oystercatchers and Wilson's Plover chicks are out and about in mid to late April just as the Least Terns have returned to Florida from their winter homes in South America. The Least Tern chicks are scampering about by the end of May while the Laughing Gulls and the Royal, Sandwich, and Caspian Terns are busy incubating their eggs. The large tern and gull chicks hatch around the first week of June while Black Skimmers are just starting to incubate their eggs. The skimmers are the last to hatch chicks each year and have a house full of downy chicks by the 4th of July. Their chicks are the last to take flight each year from Florida's beaches. Most chicks fledge in August but a few sometimes remain through Labor Day weekend!

Marianne Korosy
Florida Important Bird Area (IBA) Coordinator

Florida Gulf Coast Island Sanctuaries

At the many island (and a few inland) sanctuaries along the Gulf Coast of Florida, Great Blue Herons and Double-crested Cormorants began nesting early as December and are already tending to large chicks that are just weeks away from fledging. Brown Pelicans are not far behind as they have been incubating eggs and we expect baby pelicans hatching at the end of March on the mangrove shorelines of several island sanctuaries. Roseate Spoonbills, Great and Reddish Egrets and (at a select number of colonies) Wood Storks have completed their courtship and nest building and will be taking care of their chicks from hatching in mid-April through the time they fledge in mid-June and into July. White and Glossy Ibis and the smaller herons (Tricolored and Little Blue Herons, Snowy and Cattle Egrets and the Night Herons) are the last to arrive and we expect to see chicks in the nest in April and those same chicks will fledge from their natal colonies by July. All the birds that use these islands to raise their families need to focus their energy on finding food to feed all those rapidly growing chicks. Please give these islands a wide berth if you are lucky enough to make it out on the water to witness one of Florida's great natural spectacles.

Mark Rachal and Ann Paul
Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries

Help Protect Florida's Fragile Coastal Bird Nesting Areas:

Become an Audubon bird steward. Email flconservation@audubon.org for information about sites and opportunities near you. Donate to Audubon's coastal conservation programs at <http://ow.ly/7xaiB>

Coastal Conservation *Getaways*



Palm Island Resort June 1-2, 2012

Audubon Florida has scouted a perfect location to share a weekend focused on coastal shorebird stewardship in luxury accommodations.

Visiting Florida's Special Places can be a lot more fun with informed tour guides to point out must-see treasures along the way. Audubon Florida has secured a Coastal Getaway adventure to the beautiful Palm Island Resort in Charlotte County. This getaway is a special treat for those who love nature as well as feeling

a bit nurtured in a luxurious setting.

In the 1980s, Audubon leaders heralded the architectural design and self-imposed development limitations of the Palm Island Resort as the standard for beach development criteria and philosophy. Developers dedicated the 45-acre northern tip of the island as a preservation area to be maintained in its natural state. Diligence has been applied to protect the island's delicate ecological balance by minimizing vehicles on the resort is-

land, conserving and replanting native flora, and protecting habitat for coastal birds, sea turtles and other wildlife.

From the moment you exit the ferry arriving on Palm Island, you are mentally transported into a state of relaxation. The hectic pace of day-to-day demands and life stresses are left behind in your parked vehicle. Instead of traffic and car horns, you will be immersed in the sounds of ocean waves and seabirds. Forget the rat race of work and hurried schedules and assume the pace of marine turtles repopulating their habitats on Knight and Don Pedro Islands. Explore the shores and skies along the coasts to spot some of the most graceful and endangered bird species of Florida. The beauty and solitude of this location is available with resort accommodations that meet every desire you have for the comforts



Photography by judy b

Workshop Leader and Evening Presenter

Julie Brashears Wraithmell, Audubon Florida's Director of Wildlife Conservation, grew up birding in Central Florida. An avid birder, conservationist and published author, Julie worked for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for eight years creating the Great Florida Birding Trail, overseeing the agency's wildlife viewing programs and mediating conflicts on bird-related issues. In 2005, she joined Audubon Florida's Tallahassee office where she coordinates state wildlife policy and grassroots communications, lobbies the state legislature, and oversees Florida's coastal shorebird work and Important Bird Areas program. Julie earned her BS from Duke University (Biology), and her MS from Florida State University (Geography).



of civilization.

Audubon travelers will enjoy special treats at the resort on the Audubon Getaway Weekend June 1-2. A meet-and-greet dessert reception on Friday evening will connect you with fellow nature enthusiasts and Audubon staff and volunteers who share a passion for Florida's Special Places. The Saturday morning guided bird and beach walk will enlighten you to the different bird and plant species native to the island and the efforts underway to preserve their habitats.

The Saturday afternoon photography and bird identification workshops will help you further enjoy the beauty of Florida's Special Places as you learn tips and techniques for capturing exquisite moments through your lens and senses.

At the Saturday evening barbeque, hear a short briefing on how Audubon is protecting Florida's Special Places from the fragile coasts to the Greater Everglades Ecosystem and then relax with others to the sounds of acoustic music and stories about the day. More Audubon Getaways and other special treats will be up for grabs at a small silent auction.

Don't miss this special weekend to be relaxed and nurtured in the beauty of one of Florida's Special Places.

Palm Island Resort Audubon Getaway • June 1-2, 2012

Packages include:

- Friday Night Dessert Reception (cash bar)
- Saturday morning guided bird and beach walk
- Saturday afternoon photography and birding workshops
- Saturday evening dinner, speaker and silent auction
- Self-guided adventures on Sunday using Audubon Florida tips to nearby birding sites
- Luxury accommodations to fit any size group (Optional kayaking, boat and bicycle tours)



For more information to design and reserve your perfect Coastal Getaway package call Palm Island Resort at (800) 824-5124 or (941) 697-4800 or go to www.PalmIsland.com

Weekend Package designed and discounted especially for Audubon Florida Guests

For more information on other upcoming Coastal Getaways contact:
Margaret Hankinson Spontak, Audubon Florida Director of Development
mshontak@audubon.org • (352) 229-2887



Leaving Your Legacy

The Thoughtful Gift of Mr. Clyde Brown

During Clyde Brown's rich life he delighted in seeing White Ibises like these in Audubon-owned Culyer Lanier Sanctuary between Lake Apopka and Lake Beauclair.

Article & Photo By Charles Lee

People like Audubon for different reasons. For some it's our important scientific research into birds and their habitat. For others, it is our effective advocacy for the protection of Florida's environment in Tallahassee by working with government decision makers. Still others are moved by the special places that Audubon protects as wildlife sanctuaries.

Clyde Brown lived the last 20 years of his life right next to one of those special places. His house on Tammi Drive in the Venetian Village subdivision fronts on the canal leading from Lake Apopka to Lake Beauclair. Across the canal is the Culyer Lanier Sanctuary, donated to the Florida Audubon Society in 1959 by Mr. Lanier, the developer of Venetian Village.

The sanctuary's 39 acres are almost entirely wetlands, surrounded by canals. As the person on Audubon's staff who handles issues relating to our sanctuary properties I had been there on numerous occasions to deal with management issues. During the 1980's and 1990's my visits were more often than not occasioned by a call from Clyde Brown. From time to time it was kids in the woods building a tree fort; once he heard gunshots and suspected poachers. Another time it was a man in a jon boat with a machete who was hacking away at the base of large ferns. It turns out that the tres-

passer was there to harvest Osmunda fiber, a material used as a medium to grow orchids. Clyde watched for the guy and helped bring in law enforcement.

Clyde Brown was always interested in the birds he would see in the trees by the canal behind his house in the sanctuary. He talked about the Ibis, Woodstorks and Limpkins. Especially the Limpkins. He said he liked to sit by his pool in the back yard, close his eyes, and just listen to the birds. It is hard not to notice the call of a Limpkin.

Sometime a number of years ago, Clyde Brown stopped calling. It turns out that he had passed away. He left a trust to care for family members, and a residuary to benefit the Florida Audubon Society, payable when the last family member passed away.

Clyde Brown's bequest to the Florida Audubon Society will be about \$75,000. In today's world of philanthropy, that's not a huge sum of money.

But to the Florida Audubon Society, it is very significant. And, to Clyde Brown, it was a huge share of the assets he had in this world.

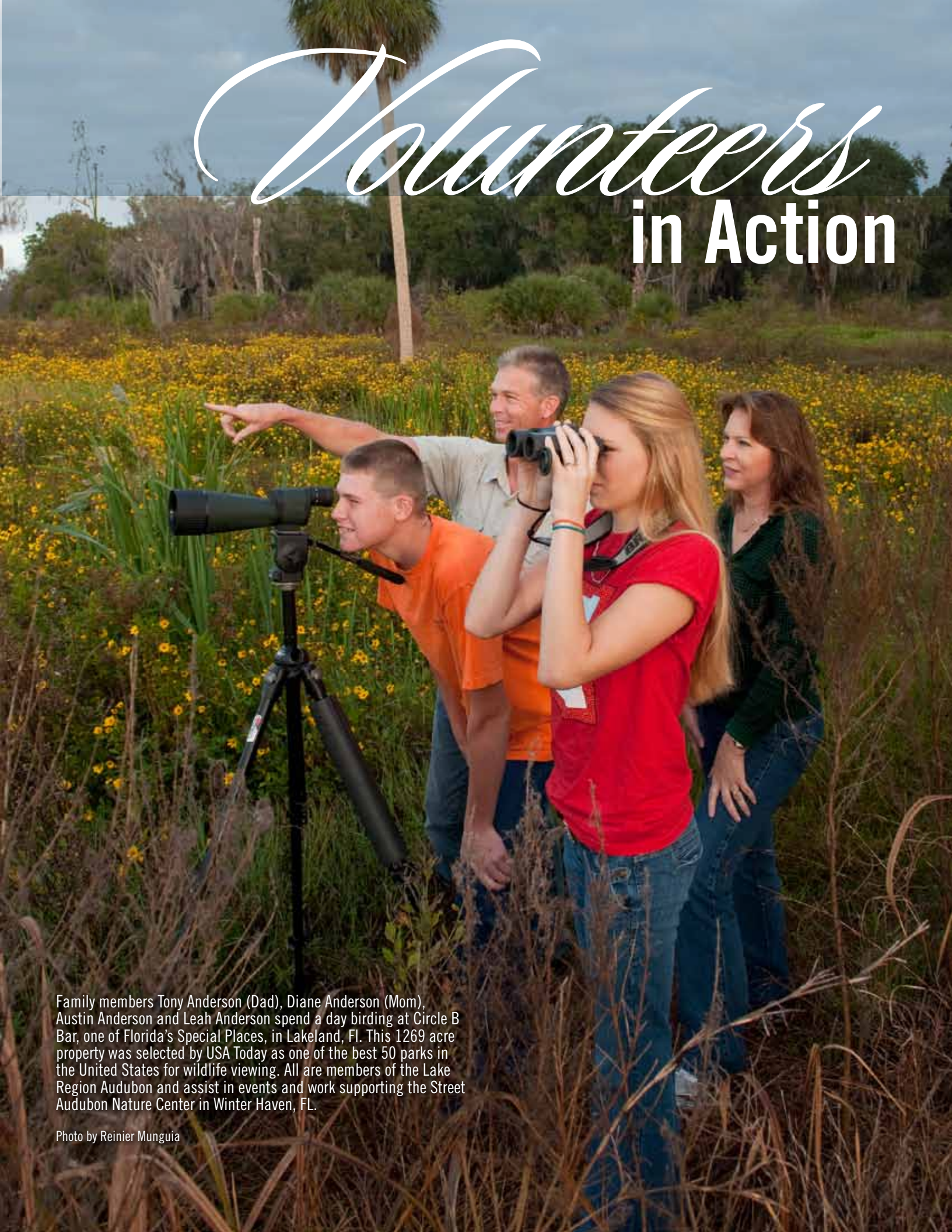
One by one, and year by year, thoughtful bequests like the one left by Clyde Brown have been among the most important sources of income to build the endowment of the Florida Audubon Society.

Now, whenever I hear a Limpkin, or paddle my kayak down the Apopka Beauclair canal to inspect the sanctuary, I think of Clyde's persistent voice on the phone. And I know that from some distant vantage point he must still be watching.

MAKING A *Difference*

Florida Audubon Society owns over 4000 acres of wildlife sanctuary land in Florida including some incredibly special places such as The Ahhochee Hill Wildlife Sanctuary in Hernando County (270 acres), the Sabal Point Wildlife Sanctuary on the Wekiva River in Seminole County (over 600 acres), the Turkey Creek Wildlife Sanctuary in Brevard County (65 acres) and the Laidlaw Sanctuary in Washington County (272 acres). If you would like to leave a gift to assist Florida Audubon Society in managing our sanctuaries like Clyde Brown did, please contact Margaret Hankinson Spontak at (352) 229-2887 or email mspontak@audubon.org.

Volunteers in Action



Family members Tony Anderson (Dad), Diane Anderson (Mom), Austin Anderson and Leah Anderson spend a day birding at Circle B Bar, one of Florida's Special Places, in Lakeland, FL. This 1269 acre property was selected by USA Today as one of the best 50 parks in the United States for wildlife viewing. All are members of the Lake Region Audubon and assist in events and work supporting the Street Audubon Nature Center in Winter Haven, FL.

Photo by Reinier Munguia



All Photos Sue Tavaglione

St. Petersburg Audubon volunteers (left to right): Sandy Harris, Alice Tenney, Charles Miller (Tampa Charter), Marianne Korosy (Audubon Florida), Lee Snyder, Saskia Janes, Dave Goodwin, Wanda Dean, Breanne Strepina, Judi Hopkins, Dave Kandz

Fort De Soto – Red Knots and the Beach Tie in Education

Tampa Charter School science teacher Charlie Miller used the Red Knot story to introduce this tale into a curriculum for his students. His search for a fieldtrip that would reinforce the classroom lessons lead to St. Petersburg Audubon and education chair Wanda Dean. Approximately 150 middle school students, teachers and parents joined 11 volunteers for a round robin at Fort De Soto County Park.

With plenty of scopes and enthusiastic volunteers they developed shorebird ID skills, learned about conservation and stewardship, enjoyed a picnic lunch and general discussion.

Sheila Thomley, Principal of the Tampa Charter School, expressed appreciation, “One parent commented to me that this was the type of event that children look back on as adults and point to as memorable and inspirational. Thank you for sharing you knowledge with us.”

The experience was replicated with students from Shorecrest Preparatory School enjoying a 4-day birding experience hosted by St. Petersburg Audubon as well.

The response to all of these programs has been overwhelming with more requests and plans for next year in sight. Using Florida’s Special Places as classrooms connects people with nature for a lifetime.

Feathers & Friends Gala 2012

On Feb 9, 2012, 400 guests gathered at the Naples Beach Hotel and Golf Club for the Feathers and Friends Gala 2012 co-hosted by Audubon’s Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary and the Collier County Audubon Society. This year’s fundraising dinner with keynote speaker Carl Hiaasen, was a celebration of Collier County Audubon Society’s 50th anniversary and over 100 years of Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary’s conservation efforts.

This is the second year Audubon’s Collier County Chapter has joined forces with Corkscrew to bring a conservation message to Southwest Florida. Eric Draper, Audubon Florida Executive Director credited the event with framing the Southwest Florida conservation story. “Audubon is made unique by our partnerships with local chapters across the state.”

The star of the evening was keynote speaker Carl Hiaasen, environmentalist, award winning author, and Miami Herald columnist. Hiaasen was invited in an effort to reach out to community members who are fans of the author but not necessarily currently engaged with Audubon. Hiaasen’s book *HOOT!* provided the theme for the event and three live owls were brought in from Audubon’s Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland, FL. Three Hoots wine from Napa, California was served. The winery donated 5% of all wine sales to National Audubon in 2011. Also in attendance was a “Skunk Ape”, formerly considered a mythical creature of the swamp, which seemed to step out from the pages of a Hiaasen book.

Feathers and Friends Gala 2012 was a great success and an exceptional evening. The event was generously sponsored by: Arthrex, In Memory of Marjorie B. Drescher, The Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, Capital Bank, Northern Trust and Naples Daily News. Douglas D. Schumann of Naples provided the sweepstakes prize.

Volunteers Advocate – Scrub-jays Soar

Chapter advocates and Audubon’s Director of Advocacy Charles Lee are celebrating a good outcome for Florida Scrub-jays at Halpata Tastanaki Preserve. This 8,146-acre preserve is one of only a few state properties where populations of the jay have increased in the last two decades. When the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) proposed to open the Preserve to hunting, advocates launched an

aggressive effort to protect this Scrub Jay habitat.

Citrus Audubon’s Nancy Kost and Marion County Audubon’s Sandra Marraffino were joined by public lands champion Lorraine Margeson to coordinate surveys on the property. They also hosted Governing Board member Doug Tharp on a field trip to Halpata Preserve where he was notably charmed by the delightful antics of the Florida Scrub-jays they encountered. Advocates from St. Petersburg to Citrus County expressed their concerns to the SWFWMD governing board at a public meeting on this proposal.

After considering all perspectives, the Governing Board decided not to open the preserve to hunting at this time. Comments made after the meeting praised Audubon’s good science, strong testimony and the respect with which the conservation community made the case.

Want to get more involved with Scrub-jay conservation? Become an Audubon Jay Watch citizen science volunteer at a preserve near you. Contact Marianne Korosy at mkorosy@audubon.org.



Middle school children from Tampa Charter School at Fort De Soto County Park.



Florida's First Lady takes reading to the parks. Photo courtesy Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection

Florida's First Lady's Favorite Special Place:

Reading with Children in Maclay Gardens State Park

Florida's First Lady Ann Scott took recognition of International Literacy Day and Florida Literacy Month to Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park. At a picnic pavilion overlooking beautiful Lake Hall, Mrs. Scott read *Llama Llama Red Pajama* by Anna Dewdney, this year's Read for the Record book, and spoke with students from local home schools and Buck Lake Elementary about the importance of reading.

"Reading is a fundamental component to help children succeed in the classroom," said Mrs. Scott. "Opportunities to read and share stories with students, especially at a Florida State Park, are great ways to encourage literacy."

Following Mrs. Scott's reading, participating students were given an interactive, educational tour of Maclay Gardens State Park by state park rangers, participated in a hands-on craft project sponsored by Michael's craft stores and enjoyed refreshments provided by Earth Fare.

Hit Us With Your Best Shot!

The Orange Audubon Society (OAS) is accepting entries in its 24th Annual Kit & Sidney Chertok Florida Nature Photography Contest. The competition has three skill level categories and a theme that allows participants to explore, photograph and learn more about the amazing native animals, plants, landscapes and habitats of Florida. There are two submission deadlines. The final deadline for all entries (received by date) is May 17, 2012. Images may be entered by the optional early deadline of April 19, 2012 (received by date) for a free pre-screening and a free do-over if they did not meet contest criteria. Entry fees per image for Audubon members are \$5 for Amateur and Advanced categories and \$2 for Youth category; for non-Audubon members, \$8 for Amateur and Advanced categories and \$4 for Youth category. For complete details and entry forms, visit www.orangeaudubonfl.org or call 407-644-0796. Teresa Williams, OASCNPC Chair

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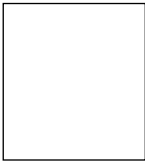
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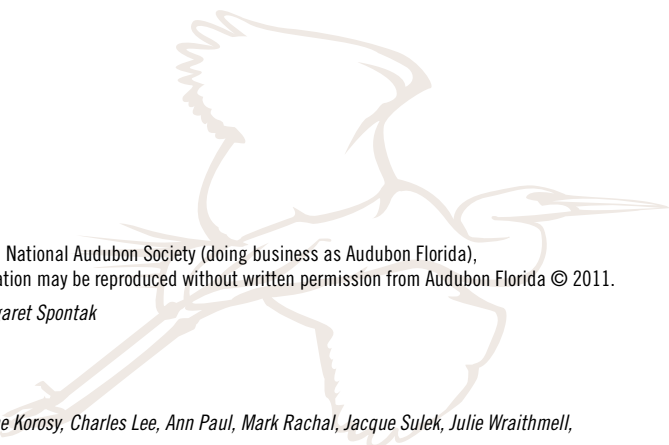
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Save the Date Audubon FLORIDA Assembly

October 25-27, 2012 • Hyatt Regency Hotel, Sarasota

Join hundreds of Audubon members and other conservation-minded people from throughout the state to recharge and interact on issues and subjects of importance to you. Engage in learning sessions, field trips, keynote presentations and networking events.

Sarasota Audubon is already busy planning some exciting walking workshops and tours to places such as Celery Fields - a 100-acre restored wetland on a stormwater site boasting more than 215 species of birds, a visit to North Lido Park - a restored mangrove/coastal habitat, and South Lido Park - a haven for migrating songbirds and nesting Reddish Egrets.

The beautiful host hotel is located on the Intracoastal just minutes from the bay and near many of Southwest Florida's special places.



Photo by Frank Van Hullenaar

Sarasota Audubon members catching a glimpse of some of the 215 species of birds at Celery Fields in Sarasota. For more information go to <http://www.sarasotaudubon.org/capital-campaign/the-celery-fields/>