



# Habi-Chat

Newsletter of the Merritt Island Wildlife Association

Volume 13, Number 3

Fall 2007

## Florida Butterfly Monitoring Network Comes to MINWR

Nearly 40 volunteers and members of the general public gathered July 14 in the Visitor Center Auditorium, to officially start the Florida Butterfly Monitoring Network (FBMN) program on the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, and become Citizen Scientists.

Dr. Akers Pence, Coordinator of FBMN, from the McGuire Center for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity of the University of Florida in Gainesville, spent the previous day scouting areas on the Refuge suitable for scientific monitoring activities.

Volunteers Cary and Betty Salter accompanied Dr. Pence, and serve as lead contacts for FBMN activity on the Refuge.

The program covered scientific methodology for surveys and a PowerPoint presentation of butterflies which may be found on the Refuge.

Participating volunteers become Citizen Scientists, agreeing to survey a designated area at least once each quarter. Their information is reviewed and tabulated by Betty Salter, who forwards results to Dr. Pence and Dr. Jaret Daniels at the McGuire Center.

"There's just so much that is not known about butterfly species distribution in Florida, and the health of butterfly populations, that these efforts will fill a tremendous void," Betty said.

FBMN activity in Brevard began in the spring of 2006 at the Brevard Zoo, where Michelle Smurl, Director of Animal Programs, coordinates six designated transects where butterflies are currently being monitored.

Currently, the FBMN list of butterflies that have been found or are likely to be found at MINWR has just 60 species on it. With the large diversity of habitats on the Refuge, there may be many more species out there.

Areas that have been designated for surveys are on easily accessible paths. The time required to do a survey varies from 20 minutes to 1 hour and may require walking anywhere from one tenth of a mile to half a mile.

If you would like more information, or to become involved in these scientific activities at the Refuge, contact Nancy Corona, 321-867-0668, or email [Nancy\\_Corona@fws.gov](mailto:Nancy_Corona@fws.gov).

The success of the Florida Butterfly Monitoring Network relies on trained volunteers and staff members to collect and submit data from direct observations at various sites across Florida. The data collected may also aide in measuring/validating the success of land management practices on the Refuge.

**Betty and Cary Salter, Refuge Volunteers**



**Dr. Akers Pence demonstrates proper butterfly capture.**

**Photo by Betty Salter**



**Refuge Volunteer Michele Seeley captures a Zebra Longwing butterfly.**

**Photo by Betty Salter**

## MIWA Minute



Manatee Palm Tree Art.  
By Sonia Larson

Well, we have made it through the dog days of summer and are looking forward to some cool weather to run off the mosquitoes and bring in nature lovers. I have to say, this seemed to be the hottest summer I have experienced on the Refuge!

A big “Thank You” goes to local artist, **Sonia Larson**, for donating her original “Palm Art” to MIWA. Sonia has graciously given seven pieces of her unique artwork for us to sell in the Bookery. Already, three “fine art on palm fronds” have been purchased happily by Refuge visitors. If you would like to view her artwork online, please visit [www.PalmTreeAmerica.net](http://www.PalmTreeAmerica.net). Thank you, Sonia, for your continued support of MIWA and the Refuge.

We welcome our newest Life Members, **Lee & Shirley Solid**, of Merritt Island. Lee has been an active Board Member for quite a few years and is currently our Vice President. As Life Members they will receive benefits, including discounts on field trips and educational programs, and purchases at the Bookery Gift Shop. We encourage all members to become actively involved in our programs and we ask you all to promote membership to your friends and families.

For information on volunteering at the Refuge, contact Nancy Corona at 321-861-0668. Feel free to call MIWA’s direct line, 321-861-2377 if you need membership or retail information.

I’ll see you at the Refuge!

**Sandee Larsen, Bookery Manager**



*The purpose of the Merritt Island Wildlife Association is to promote conservation, awareness, and appreciation of the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge and to provide assistance to Refuge programs.*

<b>President</b>	Dan LeBlanc
<b>Vice President</b>	Lee Solid
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<b>President Emeritus</b>	George English

### Board Members

Sam Beddingfield, Jim Butts, Warren Camp, Dan Click, Judy Dryja, Chris Fairey, Bud Ferguson, Darleen Hunt, Robert Hutchison, Forrest McCartney, Lorenz Simpkins, Ned Steel, Laurilee Thompson, John Tribe

**Refuge Manager** Ron Hight    **USFWS Liaison** Dorn Whitmore  
**NASA Liaison** Mike Sumner

The Merritt Island Wildlife Association (MIWA) is a nonprofit, cooperating association for the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. The *Habi-Chat* is published quarterly. For MIWA information, call **321-861-2377**.

**Newsletter Editor** Brad Sloan    **Technical Consultant** Cheri Ehrhardt  
**Habi-Chat Committee** Brad Sloan, Sandee Larsen,  
Dorn Whitmore, Cheri Ehrhardt  
**Official Photographer** Joel Reynolds

## Thank You to Our Corporate Sponsors

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Andy Bankert makes donations to Refuge Operations Specialist Dorn Whitmore and Sarah Linney of the Space Coast Audubon Society.  
Photo by Sandee Larsen

## Andy Bankert Goes Cuckoo Again!!

Andy Bankert and the Nikon/Space Coast & Wildlife Festival Coastal Cuckoos World Series of Birding Team participated in the 2007 World Series of Birding on May 12, in New Jersey. The team consisted of four teen birders and 2 drivers. The team won the Youth Division, spotting 204 species of birds. Species of interest include: Parasite Jaeger, Roseate Tern, Black Rail, and the Bay Breasted Warbler.

Andy raised approximately \$700 for MIWA and over \$1,100 for the Space Coast Audubon Society. Kudos to Andy Bankert and the Coastal Cuckoos for their love of birding and continued support of the Refuge and MIWA. They are truly an inspiration and a role model for local teens. Thanks, Andy!

Sandee Larsen, Bookery Manager



## MIWA Membership Makes a Great Gift

We are near the holiday season and if you are like Phyllis and me, you are trying to think of gifts that last and are remembered. The gift of a family membership will allow the whole family to enjoy the benefits of the MIWA organization. With this membership, they will be eligible for all the great programs put on by MINWR rangers and volunteers.

The programs include bird watching and identification tours, Merritt Island history, Canaveral Light House, turtle walks and many other tours and programs.

A gift on any special occasion is not only a gift to that person or family, but also a gift to this great Wildlife Refuge.

When you purchase a membership as a gift (form is in this issue of *Habi-Chat*). MIWA will send a card to that person specifying who purchased it and will include a copy of the latest *Habi-Chat*. In addition, a Refuge book will be included for their enjoyment. And don't forget, members get 10% off on all purchases in the Visitor Center Bookery.

I hope you will join Phyllis and me, in giving family memberships to each of our children's families and grand kids.

Lorenz (Lorry) Simpkins, MIWA Board Member



## MIWA & Refuge Go Green

There's been a lot of talk lately about thinking green and helping the planet. The whole community is more conscious of the environment and becoming proactive about maintaining a quality environment. Did you know MIWA has been "going green" for years?

For the past six years MIWA has:

- Recycled all cardboard boxes from the Bookery and Refuge.
- Donated all packing materials to local mail stores for reuse.
- Recycled all office paper.
- Recycled all printer ink cartridges.
- Donated aluminum can tops to local school fund raisers.
- Recycled all catalogs, magazines, etc.

The Refuge has always recycled aluminum cans and just recently has implemented the recycling of plastic water bottles and cardboard. So, be proud of your association. We were on the forefront of the green movement and will continue to practice "thinking and acting green".

Sandee Larsen, Bookery Manager





## Refuge Update

**Security Zone Lifted** - Since 9/11 Cape Canaveral Air Force Station (CCAFS) has closed the east side of the Banana River between the 528 and NASA Causeways due to security concerns. After six years, the closure was finally lifted to the relief of kayakers and fisherman. This 10,400 acre area is known as the “No Motor Zone” and was set aside by the Refuge as sanctuary for manatees in 1990. With the lack of boating pressure, the area has become a haven for kayak fishermen seeking a quiet motor boat free zone.

**Quota Hunt** - Most Refuge waterfowl hunters have been complaining for years over the antiquated procedure used for issuing quota permits. So this year the Refuge made the leap into the computer age. In the past, the Refuge used a phone-in system where hunters could call and talk to a person to obtain a quota hunting permit. Over the years, the volume of calls overloaded the system and made it difficult for hunters to get a call through... Last year United Waterfowlers, an organization representing duck hunting interests, collected signatures requesting the Refuge switch to the state’s more modern computer drawing system. We agreed and this year, on October 2 at 10 a.m. hunters can log onto the state website at <http://www.wildlifelicense.com> and communicate with a computer to obtain their permit. Progress?

**Sea Turtle Nests Down for a Third Year** - September 1 marked the end of the four-month-long sea turtle nesting season and the numbers are not encouraging. This year we had a total of 712 Loggerhead, 113 Green and 2 Leatherback turtle nests, a decrease of about 30% over our long-term average. On an average year we should have roughly a 1,000 loggerhead nest, but over the last three years, sea turtle nests state-wide have been trending downward. Could it be disease, an increase in storms, or global warming? We’re not sure.

**Hot Dry Summer** - If you think the weather is out of whack, and this summer was hotter and drier than normal, you are right. The Weather Service confirms the summer of 2007 was one of the hottest on record and our rainfall levels are well below normal. To compound the situation, in May we had a tropical storm that caused the water levels in the lagoon to reach record levels. The high lagoon waters spilled over into the Refuge impoundments filling them with saltwater. Then the summer rains, which normally fill our impoundments with freshwater, never materialized. The hot dry conditions of July and August evaporated the salt water and caused the salinity levels in the impoundments to rise. Under normal conditions the impoundments are full of freshwater this time of year and filled with submerged vegetation. This attracts ducks and provided food and cover for many wildlife species that call the Refuge home during the winter. So what does this mean? Unless we receive an above normal amount of fall rain, our impoundments will be much lower than normal and largely void of aquatic vegetation. Not optimum conditions for most wildlife. Pray for rain.

**Dorn Whitmore, Refuge Operations Specialist, USFWS**



## Fly Fishing Seminar

The Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge and the Merritt Island Wildlife Association will be hosting a Fly Fishing Seminar at the Sandler Education Outpost on November 10, 2007. The Seminar will offer the following activities: fly tying demonstrations, fly casting demonstrations (participants will be given the opportunity to try their skills at casting!), local area professional fishing guides will share local fishing techniques and tips for successful fishing, kayaking demonstrations, and a report on what MINWR has to offer the local fishermen, including local laws and regulations concerning fishing.

The Fly Fisherman of Titusville has been instrumental in helping to plan the event and will also participate in the Seminar.

The Seminar will be from 9:00 AM till about 3:00 PM. A modest fee of \$20 for each adult will collected at the Seminar. Young people 12 years old and younger will be admitted free. Those planning to attend should call 861-2377 for reservations prior to November 5, 2007 so we will know how many to expect. Food will be available at the site: hot dogs \$2.00, drinks \$1.00, chips and snacks \$.50 to \$1.00. Proceeds from the event will go towards the MINWR Education Program Fund. Space is limited so call today to make a reservation. We look forward to seeing you there!

**Warren Camp, MIWA Board Member**



## 2007 National Wildlife Refuge Week

National Wildlife Refuge Week, Oct. 7 to 13, culminates Saturday the 13th with special events at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center starting at 9 am.

Each year, the 547 National Wildlife Refuges throughout the U.S.—including at least one in each state—celebrate the week, promoting awareness and appreciation for wildlife and their habitats.

Some of this year's programs include native plants and wildlife gardening, manatee watch, and a variety of kid-oriented activities, including face paintings, make a manatee and bird feeder and free give-a-way wildlife posters and coloring books.

2007 celebrates the 100th anniversary of the birth of Rachel Carson, renowned educator, scientist and conservation author whose work led to Government policies on pesticides and banning DDT.

For more information on the event, please contact Refuge Ranger, Nancy Corona, 321-861-0668 or by email at: [Nancy\\_Corona@fws.gov](mailto:Nancy_Corona@fws.gov).

Cary Salter, Refuge Volunteer, and Nancy Corona, Public Use Ranger, USFWS



### Brevard Watercolor Society 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Art Exhibition

"Watercolor Images of the Refuge" will be the fifth annual exhibition by the Brevard Watercolor Society (BWS) at the Refuge Visitor Center. Original paintings will be exhibited in the conference room from November 3, 2007 through January 31, 2008.

Dorn Whitmore escorted several BWS artists on a tour and photo shoot in March to gather reference material for their paintings. Paintings will be juried in October. BWS members look forward to this annual show and value the opportunity



2006 First Place Fauna winner "In Search Of..."

By Lori Jenkins

to have their work at the Visitor Center during the peek visitor season which also spans the birding festival.

There are many talented and award winning artists among the 200+ members of the BWS. Paintings will be offered for sale with a portion of the proceeds donated by the artists to MIWA.

You are cordially invited to attend the opening reception on Saturday, Nov. 3 from 3 to 5 p.m. Please RSVP to the MIWA Office at 321-861-2377.

Darleen Hunt, MIWA Board Member



2006 First Place Flora winner

"Magnolia"

By Betsy Bohmer



Goodbye to...

... Jennifer Adams, who worked in the Refuge fire office. Jennifer received a promotion and is working with the fire program as a GIS Specialist at the Albuquerque Regional Office.

... Debbie Wagner, who also received a promotion. Debbie will be joining the Park Service in the Budget Department at Yosemite.



Hello to...

... Ian Edward Ehrhardt Topper, born on Sunday, July 15 at 9:55 a.m. to Refuge Planner, Cheri Ehrhardt and husband Sean Topper. He was 6lbs., 2.4 oz.

... Sophia Lynn Laurent, born to Refuge Operations Specialist, Jimmy Laurent and his wife Spring on August 19. She was 6 lbs., 10 oz.



## MIWA Park Bench Project Continues

MIWA is happy to announce the installation of two new memorial benches on the Refuge. They are both located on the Manatee Observation Deck at Haulover Canal. Funds for the recycled Barco benches were donated by the many friends and family of **Robert Nociti** and **Eugene Parkhurst**. Refuge Volunteer, **Ed Larsen** did a great job installing the benches and memorial plaques. We could not do it without you Ed!

Thank you to all who have participated in the bench program. It's a great way to give the public a place to reflect and honor a loved one. For information on sponsoring a bench, contact the MIWA office at 321-861-2377.

Article and photos by Sandee Larsen, Bookery Manager



Volunteer Ed Larsen poses with a bench on the Wild Birds Trail.



The Nociti bench at the Manatee Observation Deck.



The Parkhurst bench at the Manatee Observation Deck.

## Speak up!

Government decisions determine the fate of the Merritt Island NWR. You can help by letting key decision makers know how you feel about the Refuge and other natural resource issues.

### President

George W. Bush  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500  
(202) 456-1111  
President@WhiteHouse.gov

### U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Southeast Regional Director

Sam D. Hamilton  
1875 Century Boulevard Northeast, Suite 400  
Atlanta, GA 30345  
(404) 679-4000

### Secretary of the Interior

Dirk Kempthorne  
18<sup>th</sup> & C Streets NW, Rm. 6151  
Washington, DC 20240  
(202) 208-7351

### FL Senators

Mel Martinez  
356 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
(202) 224-3041  
Bill Nelson  
716 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
(202) 224-5274

### FL Representatives

<http://www.house.gov/writerep/>



## CALL FOR SILENT AUCTION DONATIONS!!

It's not too late! MIWA is requesting donation items for our upcoming annual meeting fundraiser. Gift certificates, artwork, handmade items, and anything with a nature theme are needed. All donations are tax deductible and will be displayed with your name or company name.

Contact Sandee Larsen at 321-861-2377 for additional information.



*A gift in remembrance of Victoria Tomlinson was donated by Mary Ellen Maccio.*

*Donations were made in honor of Refuge Volunteer Hubie Jacques's BIRTHDAY by: Mitchell & Susan Evander, Debra Amatuzzi, Janet Amatuzzi and Allen & Sara Hyman.*

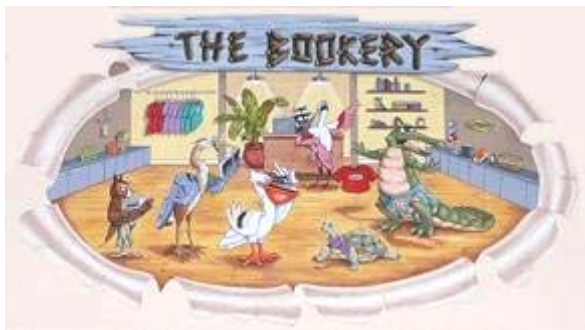
*Happy Birthday Hubie!!*

*Donations in remembrance of loved ones and friends can be sent to:*

*MIWA, P.O. Box 6504, Titusville, FL 32782*



## New Items in



### Canned Critters

Northern Gifts, Inc. ....\$9.99

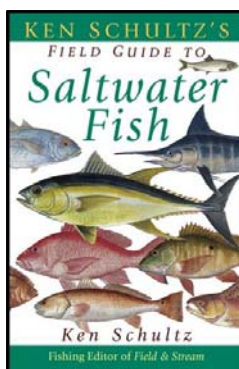
These are the terrifically popular Original Canned Critters. Each one comes with a colorful label, explaining various important facts about the animal. Available animals include: Armadillo (pictured), Eagle, Turtle, Sea Turtle, Owl, Dolphin, Stingray, and Loon.



### Ken Schultz's Field Guide to Saltwater Fish

John Wiley & Sons, Inc. ....\$17.95

The definitive field guide to North American saltwater fish – from the absolute authority on sport fishing. This book features 227 of the most common saltwater fish with large, full-color illustrations to help you identify your catch. Also available: *Ken Schultz's Field Guide to Freshwater Fish*.



Platinum Stitching Shirts.....\$29.99 - \$36.99

Women's pink polo with Spoonbill embroidery, women's putty sport polo with Scrub Jay logo, and men's cool and dry sport polo with refuge name drop.

**For retail information, call the  
MIWA Office at 321-861-2377**

### THIS MAY BE YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER!

Check the mailing label to determine your expiration date / membership status. Cut out the box to the right and mail in your payment, if due. If you would like to help us save money and resources, you can receive announcements and *Habi-Chat* newsletters by e-mail! To be on our e-mailing list, please add us to your safe senders list and send a request to...

**HabiChat@MerrittIslandWildlifeAssociation.org**



**Prairie Warbler.**

Photo by Danny Bales

### Visitor Information Center Hours

Monday through Friday

8:00 am – 4:30 pm

Saturday and Sunday\*

9:00 am – 5:00 pm

\*VIC is closed Sundays from April – October

The Refuge is open daily from sunrise – sunset, except during Shuttle Launch/Landing operations.

### Merritt Island Wildlife Association

*Supporting the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge*

Joining is simple. Just fill out this form and mail it to the Merritt Island Wildlife Association at

P.O. Box 6504, Titusville, FL 32782

or join online at

[www.MerrittIslandWildlifeAssociation.org](http://www.MerrittIslandWildlifeAssociation.org)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Membership:

☐ **Seniors and Students** – \$10

☐ **Individual** – \$15

☐ **Senior Couples** – \$15

☐ **Family Membership** – \$20

☐ **Supporting Membership** – \$50

☐ **Senior Couple Supporting** – \$75

☐ **Life Membership** – \$250

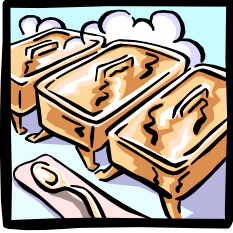
☐ **Patron** – \$1000

☐ **Optional** – Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to MIWA. For credit card payments please call the MIWA office at **321-861-2377**.

## You're Invited to the 2007 MIWA Annual Meeting



Join us for an evening of fun while helping support the Refuge!

**When:** Wednesday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007

**Time:** 6:00 p.m.



**Where:** The Debus Center at the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex

**Guest Speaker:** Refuge Biologist Mike Legare will provide an informative program on the "Wildlife of the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge"

**Fund Raising Dinner:** \$20 per person

Corporate Tables Available

Cash Bar

Silent Auction

Please RSVP by phone at 321-861-2377  
by Thursday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007



Merritt Island Wildlife Association  
P.O. Box 6504  
Titusville, FL 32782  
[www.MerrittIslandWildlifeAssociation.org](http://www.MerrittIslandWildlifeAssociation.org)

