



# Habi-Chat

Newsletter of the Merritt Island Wildlife Association

Volume 17 Number 4

Winter 2011

## Retirement Means a New Beginning



Dorn Whitmore, USFWS Retiree  
Photo by Sandee Larsen

For more than 33 years, I have been fortunate to be in a job that I truly love, but the time has come for me to move on and I will retire at the end of December. It has been a wonderful career and I would not change one minute of it, but we must choose to either expand our experience or grow stale. It is time for me to move on to the next chapter of my life and allow others to grow the program. Retirement will mean a new beginning for me and the Refuge.

I certainly will miss my job, my personnel connections with staff, working with the many dedicated volunteers, and the great relationship I have with many MIWA members and the hard working MIWA Board. You all have been a very special part of my life and our shared experiences have enriched my life beyond measure. It is these special relationships I will miss the most. I wish each of you that support the Refuge through your membership, time, and talents, nothing but the best.

*Dorn Whitmore, Supervisory Ranger*

### Much has changed over the years since Dorn arrived:

- 1978 The headquarters was located in an abandon residence just east of Oak Hammock Trail. The Refuge had a staff of 12 and the visitor program consisted of two facilities: Black Point Wildlife Drive and Oak Hammock Trail.
- 1979 Palm Hammock Trail opens.
- 1981 On June 12, a wildfire claimed the lives of two refuge employees. As tragic as this event was to the Refuge, the deaths profoundly changed the course of the agencies' fire program and provided an infusion of funds that established the Beau Sauselien and Scott Mannes Visitor Center and lead to the establishment of the Cruickshank Trail.  
A 9 projector, computer operated slide show introduced KSC's visitors to the Refuge.
- 1983 Volunteer Program begins and Mendel Stewart is hired to assist running the VIC.
- 1984 The Visitor Center opens and is dedicated.
- 1985 Cruickshank Trail and tower dedicated. Exhibits are installed in Visitor Center.
- 1986 A major new exhibit established at KSC's Visitor Center and is attended by 100,672 visitors the first year.
- 1988 Orchid Island Polo Club threatens Pelican Island and exposes vulnerability of Pelican Island NWR, the nation's first refuge, to development. Dorn is assigned to develop expansion plan and guide acquisition.
- 1989 Congress approves \$1.9 million for acquisition of a buffer for Pelican Island.
- 1990 No Motor Zone is established in the Banana River.
- 1991 Archie Carr NWR established, followed by the establishment of the Archie Carr working Group. Over \$120,000,000 is spent on acquiring the most significant sea turtle nesting site in North America. Dorn is assigned to oversee the expansion.
- 1992 Refuge enters into an agreement with Eastern National Monument and Parks Association to establish a sales area in the Visitor Center. Archie Carr Friends group is formed. Barbara Bolt is hired to work in VIC and supervise volunteers.
- 1993 First annual event to celebrate the establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> National Wildlife Refuge at Pelican Island.
- 1994 Lake Wales Ridge NWR established and Dorn assigned to guide acquisition and work with partners through the Lake Wales Ridge Working Group. Agreement with Eastern National Monument and Parks Association terminated and MIWA was established. The Pelican Island Preservation Society established.

*Continued on page 7.....*

## President's Message

Greetings from the Refuge, where our wintering birds have begun to arrive in force! The annual Christmas Bird Count was held Monday, December 19th. Participants are always welcome for the Count, and for the many other MIWA-sponsored tours and events planned for the coming year.

I am excited to begin my term as your president, and hope to continue the success the Association has enjoyed throughout its existence. I appreciate the leadership we've had from my predecessor, Jim Pedersen, and retiring Board members General Forrest McCartney, Dan LeBlanc and Warren Camp. Jim remains on board – we've simply switched jobs – but Warren, Dan and the General have earned some time off after many years of distinguished service to MIWA. We also welcome two new Board members, long time Refuge Volunteer Kathy Eichinger and Delaware North Executive Craig George.

We must also note the imminent retirement of Dorn Whitmore, our USFWS liaison and staunch friend, who has provided extraordinary support and assistance to MIWA from the day it was founded. We wish him all the best in the future.

The Merritt Island NWR and the entire National Wildlife Refuge system are facing significant challenges, as always seems to be the case, and our mission is to support them both locally and at the national level on occasion. We will continue funding a myriad of programs here at the Refuge, working to involve the Refuge in tourism-based economic rebound in the North Brevard area, and supporting efforts to maintain NWR budgets from Congress.

As final note, remember to include the MIWA Bookery in your shopping plans. It's a great place to pick up unique gifts. Happy 2012!

*Dan Click, MIWA President*



Dan Click, MIWA President  
File Photo



*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 Click
<b>Vice President</b>	Jim Pedersen
<b>Treasurer</b>	Diane Stees
<b>Secretary</b>	John Tribe
<b>President Emeritus</b>	George English

### Board Members

Sam Beddingfield, James Butts, James Clark, Kathy Eichinger, Chris Fairey, Craig George, Darleen Hunt, Robert Hutchison, Truman Scarborough, Lee Solid, Ned Steel, Laurilee Thompson, Jim Tully, John Turcot and Charlie Venuto

**Refuge Manager** Layne Hamilton **NASA Liaison** John Shaffer

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 our direct line: **321-861-2377**.

**Newsletter Editor** Carol Pedersen

**Technical Consultant** Cheri Ehrhardt

*Habi-Chat* **Committee** Cheri Ehrhardt, Sandee Larsen and Carol Pedersen

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## MIWA Member's Canaveral Air Force Station/ Lighthouse Tour

On Wednesday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011, thirteen eager MIWA Members attended a tour of the Canaveral Air Force Station (CAFS) and Cape Canaveral Lighthouse. Lead by Missile History Center Volunteer Andy Anderson, the day was a full one. The group arrived via the new Refuge Tour Bus and met Andy at the history center. Then it was off to view several historic launch complexes.



MIWA Group at Lighthouse  
Photo by Sandee Larsen

Andy was a wonderful source of launch history, having worked at CAFS since 1957. Other stops included: the Air Force Space & Missile Museum and the Cape Canaveral Lighthouse where members climbed to the interior fourth level, exiting via the outside spiral staircase.

Thank you, Andy Anderson, for a great tour. Your knowledge of the missile sites and launches is amazing. And, thanks to drivers Jim Pedersen and Ed Larsen and to our members for attending the tour.

**Sandee Larsen, MIWA Bookery Manager**

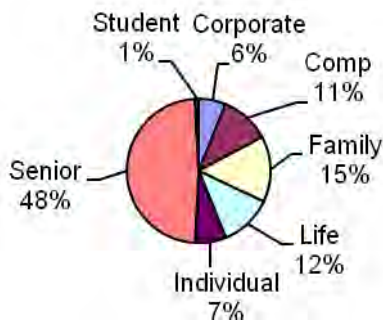
**Note: Tours are available to the general public (with some restrictions) on Wed. & Thurs. There is no charge but reservations are required. Bus and most facilities are NOT handicap accessible. For reservations, send an e-mail to [ccafstours@patrick.af.mil](mailto:ccafstours@patrick.af.mil) or call 321-494-5945 for information.**



Leader Andy Anderson with Group at Memorial Site  
Photo by Sandee Larsen

## Membership Concerns

### 2010 MIWA Membership Categories



The good news- our membership numbers continue to grow. The bad news- 48% of our membership are seniors. It probably isn't fair to suggest that this is bad; our seniors are an enthusiastic and vital part of our organization. Without them, we would have little or no volunteer support for the various programs and benefits that are offered at the Refuge. I do believe, however, that it would be a great thing for our future if we could bring more young people into our family of friends. Students comprise only 1% of our membership, and younger individuals just 7%.

I grew up in Titusville, and cannot remember a time in my life when the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) and Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge (MINWR) was not my "recreational playground". I have always been an "outdoor lover", and the MINWR and IRL were a nature lover's paradise. I am now a senior-one of the 48%. I still love and enjoy the Refuge and the river, but I recognize that, with

regard to my time there, I have more of a past than a future. Thankfully however, I have grandchildren. What a blessing! My two grandsons, along with their father, are my hunting, fishing, and recreational partners. They share my love of nature and the outdoors, and of the MINWR and IRL. So, when my older grandson Nick became a teenager, it was natural to give him a membership in the Merritt Island Wildlife Association. He is now a proud member of MIWA. When his younger brother Brett is a little older, we will be sure that he becomes a member. They and others like them are the future of MIWA. Imagine what our organization would be like if our seniors put "memberships to MIWA" in birthday cards for their grandchildren this year! It would be a great way to pass on our love of the outdoors and of MINWR in particular- and the membership pie chart would be a lot healthier for years to come. We took Nick to the annual meeting last year, and he loved it! He took home lots of great stuff from the silent auction. Something for you to consider?

**Dr. Jim Clark, MIWA Board Member**

## MIWA 2011 Annual Meeting

Approximately 150 MIWA Members attended this year's annual meeting at the Debus Convention Center. Held Wed, October 12, the event included a MIWA Annual Report, Refuge Update, Silent Auction, dinner and cash bar, Brevard Zoo live animal encounter, and speakers: Evan Hirsche of the NWRA and renowned photographer and author Richard Crossley. Supervisory Ranger, Dorn Whitmore, acted as the event's M.C.

The evening was a busy one. Nomination Chair, Darleen Hunt, announced this year's nominees for the MIWA Board: Board Members for Re-Election are *Dan Click, George English, Chris Fairey, Jim*

*Pedersen, John Tribe, and Charlie Venuto.* New Board members Nominees are *Kathy Eichinger and Craig George.*

Darleen called for nominations from the floor. None were offered. A vote was taken and all nominees were approved.

MIWA Officers were elected by board members at the December Board Meeting. Nominated Members are: President- Dan Click, Vice-President- Jim Pedersen, Secretary- John Tribe (till Jan. 2012) then fulfilled by Kathy Eichinger, and Treasurer- Diane Stees.

The night was a success. Members mingled and bid on silent auction items and enjoyed the informative and lighthearted programs. Funds of over \$5,000 were donated via the auction!

Thanks to event volunteers, Kathy Eichinger, Joanne Dykes, Ed Larsen, Jim Pedersen, Ned Steel, Sandy Walters and Cheryl Girard. A big "Thank You" to Bill Moore of Delaware North Parks and Resorts for sponsoring the event venue. And last but not least, thanks to all the silent auction donators and bidders (too many to print). Please spread the word and make the 2012 meeting even larger!

***Sandee Larsen, MIWA Bookery Manager***



Event Speakers-Evan Hirsche, Richard Crossley and Dorn Whitmore

Photo by Diane Stees, MIWA Treasurer



Brevard Zoo Animal Encounter Staff  
Photo by Sandee Larsen, MIWA Staff

## SILENT AUCTION DONATORS

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Lori Hoban  
Darleen Hunt  
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Judd & Jill Spitzer  
Beth Timmons  
Charlie & Barbara Venuto  
Diane Walsh  
Sandy Walters  
Yvette Whitmore  
Dan Witmer  
Susan Wooldridge  
Ken Wyant

## MIWA MINUTE

Cooler weather is back, but unfortunately, visitors at the center are not! Visitation is down for the season, most likely due to area layoffs and the nationwide financial recession. We are hoping birders will get the word out, encouraging fellow feather watchers to visit the area and get a few life list birds.

Here is some good news. Thanks to MIWA Member, **Eric Gardez**, MIWA received funds of \$350 from the United Technologies Matching Gift/Grant Program. Eric has been good friend to MIWA and the Refuge, annually promoting our association through his company's program. Thank you, Eric! Also, MIWA Member, **Dustin Martin** graciously donated \$82 to MIWA via JustGive, an online nonprofit charitable giving organization. Thanks Dustin! If your company has a similar program, please consider MIWA as a recipient. All funds are deductible and go directly into Refuge programs.

MIWA has also received numerous memorial donations from the friends and families of **Pauline Brock**, **Jackie Brown**, and **James Allen**. Thank you so much for thinking of the Refuge during your time of loss. I encourage you to visit the Refuge and remember your loved ones in the natural areas they frequented and loved so much.

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, retail information, or would like to make a donation.

I'll see you at the Refuge!

**Sandee Larsen, Bookery Manager**



## Adopt-an-Area Update

The Adopt-an-Area program continues to be a huge success. Since its inception in April of 2009, Adopt-an-Area volunteers have removed 1,007 bags of litter and numerous other items from the Refuge and contributed over 1300 hours of service. Adopt an Area participants are making an important contribution to the quality of habitat and visitor experiences. Additionally the program promotes stewardship in the community. Adopt an Area has grown to twenty six active volunteer groups or individuals. Participants include three businesses, three school groups, eight clubs, six families, five individuals, and one professional association. A recognition event will be held in the spring to thank participants for their contribution.

Areas still needing adoption include portions of Gator Creek, Peacocks Pocket, and Bio Lab Road, Pump House Road, Shiloh Marsh Road, and others.

If you would like to participate in Adopt an Area please contact Nancy Corona, Public Use Ranger at 821.861.0668 or [nancy\\_corona@fws.gov](mailto:nancy_corona@fws.gov). Participants are required to clean their areas three times per year. Seasonal residents are welcome.

**Kathy Eichinger, MIWA Board member**

*Welcome to...*

.....**Sam Heindel** - our new Environmental Education Intern. Originally from Wisconsin, he attended the University of Chicago and NYU.

Sam will assist the rangers and volunteers at the VIC and hopes to pursue a career as an educator and interpreter with the USFWS or National Park Service. He will be with us through October 2012. Welcome Sam!

.....**Patrick Barnes**- our new Biology Intern from Horseheads, NY. Patrick has a bachelor degree in Physics from Hamilton College NY. His internship involves exotic plant removal and water level management. He will be with us through the spring of 2012. He is hoping for employment with USFWS or National Park Service. Welcome Patrick!



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## President's Parting Message

Greetings! As of this date, I will occupy a new executive position on our board. As your new vice president, I would like to thank all of your support and dedication to MIWA. Dan Click will be the incoming president. I know our organization is in good leadership hands and wish him the best.

Three of our most dedicated board members are retiring. I would like to address their accomplishments individually.

**General Forrest McCartney**, an Air Force retiree, was the Kennedy Space Center Director for a number of years and eventually retired from that position. He has served as a board member since 1994 and has been a valuable asset in terms of the MIWA/NASA connection. As president, Forrest spearheaded the design, development and construction of our Sandler Education Outpost at Dummit Cove. It is used to provide environmental education to local students of all ages but many foreign country groups as well. We all wish him the best in future endeavors.



Gen. Forrest McCartney  
Photo by Ruth McCartney



Warren Camp  
File Photo

**Warren Camp** has been a board member since 1997 and has served as treasurer and president. Warren was very concerned with the role of Friends groups from MIWA to all national organizations. He made many trips to Washington as an advocate and supporter of the National Wildlife System and expressed his concerns to as many legislators as possible. You may have noticed the many improvements to Black Point Wildlife Drive over the past few years. This is because of Warren's leadership. He actually initiated the Black Point Wildlife Drive Enhancement Project. As project leader, he monitored costs, material donations, grant applications and volunteers. As any true leader, Warren "got his hands dirty" by helping with the actual construction. Whatever needed to be done he was there. I will miss my scrub jay survey buddy and MIWA wishes him all the best in the future.

**Dan LeBlanc** came to MIWA from Delaware North as director of the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Center. He has been a board member since 2000 and has since moved away. Dan served as treasurer and president. As an exceptional businessman, Dan felt the need not only to grow the membership, but also to ensure that we have a clear mission and vision statement. With his superior leadership skills, these goals were accomplished. Dan also initiated an annual meeting where refuge staff met with the MIWA board in order to fund and prioritize needed refuge projects for the coming fiscal year. Dan organized this meeting which we affectionately call "Blue Sky" and is held in August. He was also instrumental in the design, development, funding, and distribution of our refuge brochure. This process has allowed the refuge and MIWA to be more visible to our Central Florida tourists. With all his business qualities, Dan will be sorely missed.



Dan LeBlanc  
File Photo



Dorn Whitmore  
Photo by Sandee Larsen

**Dorn Whitmore**, last but certainly not least, our board would like to send out a big "thank you" to him. Dorn was the Operations Specialist for the Refuge. He retired from the system after 30+ years at the end of December. Most importantly to MIWA, he was our refuge liaison for the board since 1998 and rarely missed a meeting. Dorn was instrumental in keeping us updated on refuge projects. The projects initiated by MIWA have always been completed because Dorn ensured that permits and other paperwork were in order. A calming voice at the visitor center, Dorn will be missed by not only by the refuge staff, but MIWA as well. In addition, he has delighted scores of MIWA members by providing historical, wildlife and offsite tours on his own time. Thanks so much Dorn. Now, let's go fishing!

Again, thanks to all of our 1300+ members for everything you do for MIWA. Stop by the Refuge anytime for a visit and maybe even a bird tour. Winter critters are back and are waiting for you to view them. Remember MIWA members are free for the tours. Stay well and a Happy New Year to all!

**Jim Pedersen, MIWA Vice President**

*Continued from page 1.....*

- 1995 VIC Board Walk established.
- 1998 Joanna Taylor hired to work VIC and supervise volunteers.
- 1999 Quota Hunts established though a call in system.
- 2001 Designed the Centennial Trail at Pelican Island for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pelican Island.
- 2002 Sandler Education Outpost established, the first major facility funded through MIWA. Nancy Corona hired to work the VIC.
- 2003 Centennial Celebration at Pelican Island. Major road improvements at Black Point WLD
- 2004 Scrub Ridge Trail established. Paved the parking lot at Bair's Cove.
- 2005 Quota Hunt Permits begin to be issued by FWC
- 2006 Pole and Troll Zone established to reduce impacts to shallow water flats and improve fishing. Pine Flatwoods Trail established.
- 2007 Improvements completed at Black Point Wildlife Drive (Wild Bird Trail, restrooms, viewing blinds, and Handicapped tower) funded through MIWA.
- 2009 Manatee Deck upgraded.
- 2010 200' dock at Bair's Cove installed.
- 2011 Fee Program implemented.



## ***MINWR Wildlife Sightings***



**Pintail pair on BPWD. Photo by Joel Reynolds**



**That nest has ears! Photo by Joyce Stefancic**



**Gregg Bailey, Seasonal MINWR Ranger spotted at CNS.  
Photo by area paparazzi.**



**Diamondback Rattlesnake on VIC boardwalk.  
Photo by Wally Steinbach**

*Here comes the 15th Annual*  
*Space Coast*  
*Birding and Wildlife Festival!*  
*January 25-30, 2012*

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*Bring Family and Friends and Enjoy the Outdoor*  
*Adventures on Florida's Space Coast!*

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- Classroom Presentations and Forums
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- Silent Auction
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- Workshops - Birding, Wildlife, Feeders, Nest Boxes, Photography, Digiscoping, Species Monitoring
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***\*The Raptor Project\****

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## Brevard Watercolor Society Exhibit of "Images at the Refuge"

Another fabulous exhibit of 27 watercolor paintings inspired by the Refuge, is wowing visitors in the Visitor Center Conference room. This 9th annual exhibit of Brevard Watercolor (BWS) artists' work will be on display in the auditorium until the end of January. Dorn Whitmore thanked all the artists for their participation through the years and said "this BWS show is near and dear to me because it was the Refuge's first venture into art exhibitions. I've said it before, and I really mean it...it just gets better every year." Most years, Dorn has escorted the artists on a tour of the refuge for photo opportunities, which they use as reference material for the paintings.

An opening reception for the artists was sponsored by MIWA on Sunday afternoon, December 4<sup>th</sup>. Attendees were greeted by MIWA volunteers.



First Prize Winner, Artist Jeanette Drake  
Photo by Photographer Betty Salter



BWS Artists: Kathy Barnard, Darleen Hunt, Therese Ferguson, and Lolly Walton  
Photo by Sandee Larsen, MIWA Staff

expressed his appreciation to BWS artists for their years of helping to communicate the importance of the Refuge through their artistic expressions. Members of BWS then paid tribute to Dorn by recalling some of his comments while on tour and then sang a light hearted song crafted to pay homage to him for his years of support.

Thank you to event volunteers: Kathy Eichinger, Connie Foreman, Jo Ann Heenan, and Betty Salter for setting and manning the event. You ladies did an excellent job!

Don't miss the opportunity to visit the "Images of the Refuge" exhibition when you drive out to the Refuge this winter.

***Darleen Hunt, MIWA Board Member and BWS Member***

Artists enjoyed refreshments arranged by Sandee Larsen, complete with wine poured by MIWA volunteers. Approximately 50 attended the event which was open to all MIWA members.

While guests enjoyed the refreshments, Laura Covell-Clark of the Indian River Flute Circle entertained guests with her exotic flute melodies under the covered deck overlooking the pond. The magical flute tones seem to ripple across the water and float lightly in the breeze.

Dorn Whitmore, senior ranger, presented the Refuge Award to Ruth Foreman for her painting, "Wading Ibis."

Other awards were presented by Darleen Hunt and Therese Ferguson, co-chairs, to the following individuals: First Place: "First Flight" by Jeanette Drake; Second Place: "Wading Ibis" by Ruth Foreman; Third Place: "Otterly Adorable" by Cindy McKee; and Awards of Merit to Therese Ferguson for "Sitting on Dock"; Darleen Hunt for "Habitat"; Cynthia Perry for "The Hitch Hiker"; Christianne Kopp for "Enjoying the Sun"; and Anne Stelzer for "Black-Necked Stilt".

The artwork is offered for sale and matted prints are available in the Bookery. A percentage of the art proceeds are donated to MIWA.

Dorn shared that he is retiring at the end of December and



Dorn Whitmore with Refuge Award Winner, Artist Ruth Foreman  
Photo by Therese Ferguson, BWS Member

## Refuge Water Resources Management Update

Here's a good trivia question for a group of folks interested in our Refuge: How many square MILES of managed wetlands are on Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge? Answer: We have 35 square miles, or more accurately, 22,795 acres. Want a follow up question for that same group of friends? How many water control structures does our Refuge use to manage these wetlands? (Hint, the water control structures are the pipes under the levees that have boards or gates to control water flow, and there are 165 miles of levee.) Answer: We have 345 water control structures. That's 345 pipes with gates that have to be cleaned, adjusted, repaired, and monitored across 165 miles of earth levee roads. One last trivia question: What small army of people do we use to maintain these water control structures on an as-needed basis? Answer: Stan, an army of one. Stan Howarter is the biologist responsible for maintaining the water levels, and the control structures.

Ok Mike, you say, but why are you telling us this now? Well, last month at MIWA's board meeting I asked for some help from the Association. Help for managing these wetland acres and help maintaining the water control structures. I asked and your Board responded with "yes, tell us what you need and we'll help". The Board approved \$5,000 to fund an annual stipend for an intern that will help Stan Howarter with water management on the Refuge. That was in November 16<sup>th</sup>. On November 17<sup>th</sup>, Patrick Barnes responded to the call and has been helping us since. Who says the government is slow?

Thank you the Board, thank you to MIWA, thank you, Patrick. With all your continued help, we'll continue to keep this Refuge a haven for wildlife.

**Mike Legare, Wildlife Biologist, Merritt Island NWR**



## Refuge Christmas Bird Count 2011



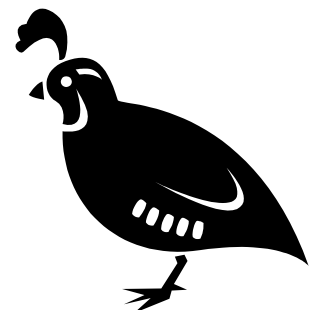
The annual Christmas Bird Count was held at the Refuge on Monday, Dec. 19th. After a healthy breakfast of coffee and donuts, about 40 intrepid Birders braved the bitter cold (temps in the low 70's!) for 12+ hours, scouring the Refuge-looking for birds. We all gathered at the Visitor Center in the evening to count up all the species we had observed. Our numbers were down a little this year-only 141 species observed, but some really great people spent the day on your Refuge adding to the body of knowledge about birds.

Here are some notable observations on our Count this year: We saw several hundred American White Pelicans (a nearly 10-foot wingspan on these guys!), a few Bufflehead Ducks (really uncommon here recently), some Bobwhite Quail (fire ants and disease have decimated their population in FL),

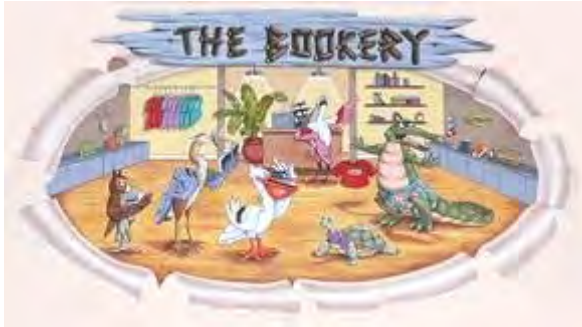
Virginia Rail (never common here), a Solitary Sandpiper (RARE this time of year), Red Knots (endangered), a Pomarine Jaeger (WAY out in the ocean), lots of Eastern Screech Owls (these guys are SO cute), several Painted Buntings (always at the feeders at the Visitor Center), and 5 American Crows (usually we only see Fish Crows).

Thank you to Dorn and to Refuge Staff for all their help on our Count and thank you to all the Birders who spent the day with us beating the bushes and slogging through the ice and the snow!

**Ned Steel & Jim Pedersen, MIWA Board Members**



## New Items in



**American Alligator of the Southern United States**  
**Photos & Text by George Heinrich & Timothy Walsh**  
 .....\$7.95

A waterproof guide to its natural history; their habitat, diet and behavior with easy field identification.



**Alligator Snapping Turtle**  
**By Safari**

**Ltd.....\$13.99**

Extra large, soft, playful, true-to-life vinyl replica of an amazing creature. Excellent learning tool and fun way to spark innate curiosity of a child. Product is phthalate-fee and safety tested.



**Soft Shell Turtle**

**By Safari**

**Ltd.....\$13.99**

This intriguing turtle is the largest freshwater turtle in North America. Lightweight and soft, it will provide hours of creative play for children. Hand-painted, phthalate and lead free to ensure safety.



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

### 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.

Habi-Chat has email! If you would like to be on our mailing list to receive MIWA announcements, please add us to your safe senders list and send a request to **HabiChat@MerrittIslandWildlifeAssociation.org**



*Donations in remembrance of loved ones and friends were received by.....*

.....the Gerindons, the Vandermeys, and the Larsons –

***In memory of Pauline Brock***

.... V.L. Ebrahim, John & Roberta Sue Address, Carol & Ron McCracken, and Patricia Buchanan-

***In memory of Beachcomber, Jackie Brown***

....Nancy & Richard Routon, James & Sheila Koshewa, Gregory Harty, and Juliet Sisk-

***In memory of James Allen***



### 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 2683, Titusville, FL 32781

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.**



## MIWA Eco Tours

### Texas: Rio Grande Rarities

A special tour for MIWA operated by Field Guides Inc.

When: February 10-15, 2012

For cost contact **Field Guides Incorporated - Birding Tours Worldwide** - 800-728-4953

The subtropical habitats along the lower Rio Grande are like a part of Mexico north of the border. Biogeographically, this region represents the northernmost extension of the Tamaulipan Biotic Province. The bird life of South Texas is thus characteristic of northeastern Mexico; within the United States, many resident species and Mexican vagrants are known only from South Texas. For this reason, South Texas has become a "must" for every North American birder

### Costa Rica

When: April 21-27, 2012 Leader: Dorn Whitmore

Cost: \$1,417 + Airfare

Go to [www.holbrooktravel.com](http://www.holbrooktravel.com) or call 800-451-7111 for itinerary or trip info!

- Explore the trails of the Selva Verde rainforest under the guidance of a regional bird expert
- Check out the avian visitors to the Selva Verde Botanical Gardens.
- Take a boat ride on the Puerto Viejo River for bird and wildlife observation at close range.
- Spot nocturnal mammals and birds, including owls, on a guided night hike.
- Take a day trip to the Bosque de Paz cloud forest.
- Enjoy your choice of optional recreational activities, from river rafting to horseback riding.
- Visit Braulio Carrillo National Park to sight the Black crowned Antpitta, Snowcap Hummingbird, and others.
- Visit a shade grown coffee plantation and learn the importance of the bean to the Costa Rican economy.

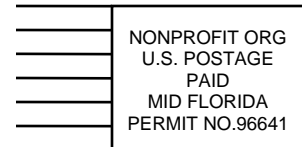


Merritt Island Wildlife Association

P.O. Box 2683

Titusville, FL 32781

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



Refuge Bird Tours are held weekly on Tues, Thurs., Sat. and Sundays at 9am. Cost is \$3 per person, MIWA Members free- Call 321-861-5601 to reserve a space.

