



2022-23 Planning Meeting in July. TBA

Website <http://peacriveraudubon.org>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/PRASaudubon>

June 2022

WhiteBird PRAS Monthly Newsletter

PRAS Needs to Hear from You!

Your talents, keen interests & needs are important to us! Send your photos, stories, community news, suggestions and ideas for new activities for the upcoming year to PRASpresident@gmail.com Please consider contributing to our newsletter by emailing poems and stories etc. to the above email address. We love to show off our members!!!

Nectar Feeding Warbler

The Cape May Warbler's tongue is unique among warblers: it is curled and semi-tubular. This allows the bird to collect nectar from flowers. They will even drink from hummingbird feeders!



Charlotte County Shorebirds & Wetland Nesting Birds



Stump Pass by Mike Weisensee



St. Pete Beach by Shantel Swiere



Judy Rogero

Honoring Peace River

I would like to introduce a theme for next year to honor our namesake, the **Peace River**. Please send ideas on how to celebrate birds found along the Peace River or suggestions for a gathering like a Peace River Fall Festival to Bren Curtis at PRASpresident@gmail.com by July 1st.

Bird-watcher wrongfully accused in Central Park video gets a bird-watching TV show



Christian Cooper, the bird-watching Black man who was the target of false accusations during an encounter in New York City's Central Park in

2020, has a new TV show airing on National Geographic. The channel announced this week that Cooper, a lifelong bird-watcher, will host a series called Extraordinary Birder. In the series, Cooper will take viewers into the "wild, wonderful and unpredictable world of birds," according to National Geographic.

"Whether braving stormy seas in Alaska for puffins, trekking into rainforests in Puerto Rico for parrots, or scaling a bridge in Manhattan for a peregrine falcon, he does whatever it takes to learn about these extraordinary feathered creatures and show us the remarkable world in the sky above," the network said in a statement.

In an interview with The New York Times, Cooper said his love for bird-watching began at age 10, and he told the newspaper he "was all in" when National Geographic approached him about the possibility of a TV show nearly a year and a half ago.

The 59-year-old was thrust into the spotlight in May 2020 after Amy Cooper (no relation), a white woman with a dog, called the police saying he threatened her and her dog. In a video recorded by Christian Cooper, Amy Cooper is shown calling the police. Amy Cooper was charged with a third-degree misdemeanor over making the false claim, but the charge was later dropped, given her lack of a criminal background. The Manhattan District Attorney's Office says it dropped the charge after Amy Cooper completed five restorative justice sessions.

The channel has yet to announce a premier date for the show.

Wildlife Corridor - Vital to Future



Donning a hard hat and safety vest, Amber Crooks the Environmental Policy Manager of the Conservancy of Southwest Florida stepped onto the sand where bears and panthers might also leave their footprints in the future. A large wildlife crossing structure on Interstate 4, near Walt Disney World, is under construction. The crossing represents just one of limited spots where wildlife have any hope of safe passage across this major roadway barrier.

With a current population of only 120- 230, the current survival plan for the endangered Florida panther stipulates that securing additional habitat to grow the population — and the corridors to connect them to maintain genetic flow — is essential. A panther's territory is vast, as they roam to find mates and food; as an umbrella species, protecting panther habitat can also protect other wildlife that inhabit the same lands.

By the time an individual panther would reach I-4 (and there have been some roaming males, though most of the panther population is south of the Caloosahatchee River), it would need to be lucky enough to have successfully traversed past dozens of roadways and all-consuming development eliminating portions of their home ranges. Southwest Florida, where the current breeding range for the Florida panther struggles to persist, is already a hotspot for roadkills. These vehicle-panther collisions are the top documented cause of mortality. Every year 20-30 panthers are hit and killed by vehicles.

In Glades and Highlands counties, a highly imperiled subpopulation of Florida black bears, isolated from other bears, also struggles to safely traverse roadways. It was here, with the wandering of a bear known as "M34," that inspired the Florida Wildlife Corridor initiative. To find out more about M34, go to <https://floridawildlifecorridor.org/about-expeditions/bear-treks/>



The need to save wild Florida and provide a green infrastructure for people and wildlife alike, from the Everglades to the Panhandle and beyond, was even memorialized by the state legislature in 2021.

Standing at the new crossing, it was easy to see and hear (with the deafening drone of non-stop traffic) why roadways are so deadly to wildlife and can fragment populations. It's rewarding to see a positive stride towards conservation come to fruition, and to feel the momentum brought forth by the state and federal agencies acknowledging the need for wildlife corridors and connectivity for all of Florida's wildlife species.