

# The Pelican

For wildlife & people since 1923

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## Comments & Conservation Notes

On a cold December night in 1923, 16 people met at the home of Mrs. H. A. Hainsworth and formed the Halifax River Bird Club. George W. Chamberlin was elected president and R. J. Longstreet was elected secretary. We don't know a lot about Mr. Chamberlin but Rupert Longstreet cast a very long shadow for a man of reportedly short stature. Considered by many to be the father of Florida ornithology, he was doing bird counts here in 1905 at the age of 12. Birding was always an avocation for him. His real calling was in education. While serving as president of the Florida Audubon Society and editor of its newsletter, he was also a teacher and eventually Principal of Seabreeze High School, Longstreet Elementary School in Daytona Beach Shores bears his name.

On Thursday, April 20th, we'll gather at the Cici & Hyatt Brown Museum of Art to celebrate 100 years of environmental activism, bird counts, field trips and so much more. Our keynote speaker will be Clay Henderson, long time local attorney, environmental activist, politician and now writer of a history of environmental activism in Florida. You should have gotten an invitation to the event, either by email and or regular mail. Just in case, here's a link to a page on our [website](#) with all of the information. We hope to see you there.

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Our own Joan Tague was quoted in the Wall Street Journal recently. In an article about travel to out of the way destinations in Florida the author praised her field trips to Lake Woodruff NWR and Ocala National Forest. While on the trips he saw, "brilliant Yellow-throated Warblers, mischievous otters and an alligator devouring a plump, Purple Gallinule." Joan told him, "The fact is we all have to get smart about how to best accommodate everyone and still preserve the wild, wonderful places that are so precious here." Amen, Joan.

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Our numbers are growing. There are way more birders out there peering through binoculars than there were just 10 years ago. The Great Backyard Bird Count in 2013 saw 160,000 participants. This year it was up to half a million across the globe. Huge increases in the numbers of counts in Africa, South America and the Indian subcontinent testify to the increasing popularity of birding. Over the 4 days of the count in February 7,538 species of birds were identified; participants were from 202 countries; 390,652 eBird checklists were submitted; the Merlin Bird ID app was used 372,905 times and 151,479 photos, videos, and sounds added to Macaulay Library. Next year's count will probably show an increase too.

David Hartgrove

## Calendar & Events

**Our monthly meeting will be pre-empted by our 100th anniversary celebration on Thursday, April 20th at the Cici and Hyatt Brown Museum of Art.** Members should have received their invitations via email and by regular mail. We hope to see you there.

### Field Trips

**Thursday, April 6th, Bird Ramble at EDC-** Join Joan Tague at the Ormond Beach Environmental Discovery Center, 601 Division Ave. from 8:00 to 10:00 am for this easy walk around Central Park looking for early migrants and local residents. Questions? Call Joan, 386-871-6049.

**Friday, April 14th, Washington Oaks Gardens State Park-** Join Joan Tague as we wander the beautiful grounds of this state park treasure looking for Spring migrants, like warblers, tanagers, buntings and others that are only seen here twice a year. Meet at the park, 6400 N. Oceanshore Blvd. Palm Coast, FL 32137, at 8:00 am. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Joan, 386-871-6049.

### Field Trips With Others

**Tuesday, April 4th, Sugar Mill Gardens, Port Orange-** Our friends in Southeast Volusia Audubon have a bird trip scheduled to this great location. Meet them at the garden, 950 Old Sugar Mill Road, Port Orange at 8:00 am. Sign up on [Meet Up](#) for the trip.

**Thursday, April 20th, Doris Leeper Preserve-** Our friends at Volusia County Environmental Management have a guided hike from 9:00 to 11:00 am that will focus on fish, bird, and plant identification. Meet at 3251 N. Dixie Highway, NSB, FL 32168. Registration is required. Call 386-736-5927.

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## From The Quotable Birder

I know why the caged bird sings,  
ah me, When his wing is bruised and his bosom sore,—  
When he beats his bars and he would be free;  
It is not a carol of joy or glee,  
But a prayer that he sends from his heart's deep core,  
But a plea, that upward to Heaven he flings—  
I know why the caged bird sings!

Paul Lawrence Dunbar

by Ray Scory



Barred Owl w/ hat altered photo by Ray Scory

### Listening to Birds

I own a Halifax River Audubon hat. I get a lot of mileage wearing my Hat and I don't mean just when traveling. On the front of it is embroidered an outstanding image of a flying Brown Pelican in all its unusual shaped glory.

At my cardiologist's office a few mornings ago, a woman seated across from me noticed the Pelican insignia on my hat and mentioned she likes Pelicans. Her hobby was collecting Pelican memorabilia - paintings, ceramics, wood carvings, jewelry, anything of a Pelican nature. Our conversation eventually involved all the patients in the waiting room; a fisherman who liked to look at the birds and tried to identify them while out at sea on his fishing boat; the backyard female birder who liked to watch birds at her feeder and a beach walker who liked to watch Pelicans skimming over the waves in straight line formations. Everyone excitedly joined in with personal birding experiences. Our talk eventually change to nature and it's protection and value to humanity and the environment. A friendly, intelligent, in depth discussion with caring and interested people. All because of a hat with a Pelican insignia on it; in a doctor's office. Imagine!

Walking from my pickup wearing a COA (Connecticut Ornithological Association) hat a young Publix employee passed me by in the parking lot and remarked, "Connecticut Warbler." Not many birders can ID a Connecticut Warbler, especially on a hat walking by. How did he know? His reply, "I have been studying about birds the past year and find it interesting." I mentioned HRA and I later discovered he attended meetings. Today, I understand, he is a ranger at

Hontoon Island State Park in Deland. A chance encounter; a hat; a remark and an answer can impose a positive step upon a budding career path.

Just yesterday I was standing at the bird seed section in Publix. I was looking for a bag with an abundance of millet seeds, when a woman walked up to the bird seed section and said, "I could use some of those." I told her I was looking for seeds that would attract Painted Buntings. She remarked that she has three coming to her yard. I proceeded to give her a brief Painted Bunting history lesson. She was very interested and looked at my Halifax River Audubon hat. I suspect she thought I was a bird authority. I mentioned the green female. Her eyes popped wide open, "You mean the green ones are female Painted Buntings, too? We had six in the yard this morning - bathing and feeding on the ground, We didn't know what they were. Thanks for the wonderful information. I can't wait until I get home to tell my husband." I said, "Now you have just tripled your Painted Bunting yard count."

If for some reason a stranger stops to talk to you about birds; or to ask what you're looking at through your binoculars or why you're looking up into the trees; given that chance, mention that you belong to Halifax River Audubon. Let them know that this year Halifax River Audubon is celebrating its Centennial Anniversary. When I entered my doctor's examination room, I thought - it's good to be a member of Halifax River Audubon.

Ray Scory

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### Dogs On The Beach

At the Volusia County Council meeting on February 21st I spoke against the idea of opening more of the beach to dogs. Currently the only portions of the beach open to dogs are at Smyrna Dunes Park and Lighthouse Point Park. The leash law is routinely violated and seldom enforced. Birds see dogs as four-legged predators. It doesn't matter that little Fifi wouldn't hurt a fly. To a bird that animal is a danger with a capital "D" and they'll be forced to fly away in terror.

The area under consideration that night was at Bicentennial Park, on the north peninsula. This area hosts 25% of the sea turtle nests laid on Volusia County beaches. There is sufficient dune vegetation to host nesting by Willets and Wilson's Plovers. The same leash law that is so frequently violated at the current locations open to dogs would apply here. In addition, dog owners would have to cross A1A twice at a location that has already seen two pedestrian deaths in recent years. It was a recipe for disaster.

Just before the March 21st Council meeting when this new plan was to be finalized, the US Fish & Wildlife Service sent a letter saying that opening this natural area to dogs might be construed as a violation of the County's permit that allows continued beach driving. This changed everything.

Councilman, Troy Kent, a former Ormond Beach commissioner, suggested a compromise: open the stretch of beach between the Rockefeller Approach and the Milsap Approach, just north of Andy Romano Park. This area has no vegetation to speak of and minimal if any sea turtle nesting. In addition, this area is open to driving. So those with limited mobility can more easily access the beach with their dogs. We can live with this compromise, ignoring all of the health care cautions. It's not perfect but it will work.

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David Hartgrove

Here's another story from our resident plant expert, Leslie Nixon.

### Seagrape: Sensational Coastal Plant

Some plants blend into the background. Others sparkle with bright flowers. Then there are the plants that announce their presence with authority. Seagrape (*Coccoloba uvifera*) is one of those unquiet ones. A big, boisterous beauty, seagrape is recognized by its coastal location and its large, distinctively round, leathery leaves.

Seagrape, as its common name implies, produces sizable berries that grow in unique, grape-like clusters on the female plants. Florida's Native Americans ate the summer-time berries, but today we buy our fruit from the store and leave the berries for larger songbirds and other small animals. These wild creatures also use seagrape as cover, finding protected hideaways that are especially important on sand dunes where there is little shelter.

This fast-growing shrub is ideal for a seaside property, but can also be grown further inland. Fitting many roles in a landscape, it can be left as a sprawling specimen, shaped into a dense hedge or pruned into a tree-form. Seagrape will suffer in a freeze, as evidenced during our recent arctic event, but in this area it will rebound when the weather turns more Florida-like.

Seagrape is such an important native plant for our endangered coastal habitat that Florida law protects the specimens growing on sand dunes. However, when you grow one in your own yard (not on a dune), you can prune it, pick the berries, and watch the birds devour the fruit to your heart's content.



Seagrape

Photo by John Bradford

Seagrape quick facts: Large shrub to small tree, 10-30' h x 3-20' w; this evergreen likes full or part sun, well-drained soil, very drought-tolerant; it's resistant to strong winds, salt spray, and brief flooding, but sensitive to frost. Its edible fruit makes an excellent jelly and its leathery leaves are available online as post cards.

Leslie Nixon

### Scrub Jay 101

**Scrub Jay 101**  
with Kayleigh Alexander,  
Stetson University's Audubon  
Campus Co-Ambassador

**April 8, 2:00 pm**



**Lyonia  
Environmental  
Center**

Registration is  
required.  
Call (386) 789-7207,  
ext. #21028  
to register

Join our friends in West Volusia Audubon for this program about the Florida Scrub Jay, On April 8th at 2 pm at the Lyonia Environmental Center in Deltona, Kayleigh Alexander, Stetson University's Audubon Campus Co-Ambassador will do a presentation on Florida's only endemic bird species. Following her talk, attendees will search for these beautiful birds on a guided hike through Lyonia Preserve. Binoculars and cameras are suggested. Participants should bring water, be prepared to hike on unpaved, sugar sand trails, and wear closed toed shoes. Remember to register.

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Chapter member, Paula Wehr, sent a report from the New York Times by reporter, German Lopez, that clarifies a problem in reporting the effects of climate change.

### Fahrenheit, Celsius, So What ?

The U.S. is among just a few countries that still use Fahrenheit temperatures. And while Americans are a relatively small audience on a global scale, they are an important one for climate science: The U.S. has historically emitted more planet-warming greenhouse gases than any other country. Improving Americans' understanding of the issue could be crucial to any push for changes.

Why does excluding Fahrenheit matter? Most Americans lack experiences from their own lives to make sense of scientists' warnings that the Earth could warm by up to 1.5 degrees Celsius above acceptable levels. To them, it is a small, meaningless number.

By translating that figure to its Fahrenheit equivalent — 2.7 degrees — it can take on a clearer meaning. Katharine Hayhoe, a climate scientist, uses the analogy of a fever: Think about how much worse you feel when you run a fever of 101.3 degrees Fahrenheit, 2.7 degrees above normal. That fever is the equivalent of what the planet is facing.

Most Americans can grasp that analogy because it speaks to their own experiences. They can't do that with Celsius. "It is absolutely essential to communicate in terms and language that people understand," said Hayhoe, who is from Canada, which uses Celsius.

The exclusion of Fahrenheit in scientific reports is not the main obstacle to more action on climate change. Broader science denial and the world's reliance on fossil fuels are much bigger barriers. But including Fahrenheit figures is a small change — a matter of plugging some numbers into a calculator — that could help drive more action.

Despite some progress, the world is still on track to face devastating outcomes from climate change. To prevent the worst, scientists are calling for a massive effort that will require the world's most powerful and richest countries to work together. Getting so much of the world onboard requires communicating the problem in a way everyone can understand. Excluding the temperature measure used by the U.S. and some other nations hinders that mission. Offering different versions of reports with Celsius and Fahrenheit could help address that issue, or scientists and news outlets could translate Celsius-focused reports to Fahrenheit in their own work.

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### A Nature Based Scavenger Hunt ?

Florida WildQuest is sponsored by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. From April 28–May 7, 2023, FWC will host scavenger hunts on Wildlife Management Areas across the state. To participate all you need is a smart phone and a sense of adventure. You'll need to download the Goosechase App and enter a code. Use the free and easy-to-use GooseChase app to go on a wild adventure and discover some of Florida's best spots to see wildlife and enjoy the outdoors. All of the information on participation is available on the FWC [Nature Trackers website](#). WMA's near us include Relay, Lake George, Lake Monroe, Salt Lake and Tosohatchee. Here's a link to the [FWC list of brochures](#) on all of the state's WMA's.

### Time For Chapter Officers Elections

In last month's Pelican we identified the members of the Nominating Committee, Carol Roberts, Ellen Tate and me. We have a slate of candidates to announce. For president, Joan Tague; for Vice President, David Hartgrove; for Treasurer, Bob Kellogg and for Recording Secretary, Catherine Kellogg.

These are just the first round of candidates. There's still time to nominate someone to a position on the board. Our biennial elections don't have to be just a rearranging of the chairs and name tags among the same folks. We'll announce the names of candidates at our 100th Anniversary celebration on Thursday, April 20th and open the floor at that time to nominations. The election will be at our meeting on May 15th.

David Hartgrove

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### Halifax River Audubon

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Meets monthly September through May

President: David Hartgrove

Vice President: Joan Tague

Past President: Melissa Lammers

Treasurer: Ellen Tate

Recording Sec.: Catherine Goodman

Membership Sec.: Joan Tague

Corresponding Sec: Vacant

Historian: Holly Zwart-Duryea

At-Large: Bob Kellogg, Carol Roberts

### Committee Members

Conservation: David Hartgrove

Education: Holly Zwart-Duryea

Field Trips: Joan Tague

David Hartgrove

Newsletter Editor: David Hartgrove

Welcome: Vacant

Webmaster: Joan Tague

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We wish to thank our sponsors, whose contributions play a vital part of allowing us to continue our work: Florida Power & Light, Colonial Colony and the Spruce Creek Garden and Nature Club.