

The Pelican

For wildlife & people since 1923

Volume 69-Number 5. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
May, 2023



Comments & Conservation Notes

Our chapter's 100th anniversary celebration on Thursday, April 20th, was a huge success. Joan Tague gave a brief but inclusive history of our group. Our speaker, Clay Henderson, gave an especially entertaining talk about John James Audubon's travels through Florida back in 1832. Clay wore a seersucker suit that raised more than a few comparisons to Atticus Finch.



Entering the Museum Photo by Steve Underwood

The Cici & Hyatt Brown Museum of Art rolled out the red carpet for us and it was a beautiful venue. In addition, they had three of their newest acquisitions, original Audubon prints, on display especially for our event. And of course native flowers made up the centerpieces. More about that on page 2.

This being our April meeting, we had some business to take care of. We had to announce the names of the candidates selected by our nominating committee for board positions. We also opened the floor to nominations though none were made. As I'm term limited and unable to serve as President again, Joan Tague was the choice of the committee for President, I'll be Vice President, Bob Kellogg will be Treasurer and Catherine Kellogg will continue as Recording Secretary. This assumes this slate of candidates is elected at our meeting on May 15th. The new officers will take their positions at the close of the May meeting. One of the last things we did at the celebration was to show the new logo. Look for it soon on t-shirts, hats, etc. You can also view it at the end of a delightful fifteen minute film event photographer, Steve Underwood, made of some of his photos and set to music. Here's the [link](#). More photos inside.

David Hartgrove

Calendar & Events

Monday, May 15th, Program Meeting via Zoom- Join us when we welcome Mercedes McAllen, long time panther researcher who spent years in Fakahatchee Strand studying the elusive Florida panther. We begin gathering at 6:45 pm and the presentation will begin promptly at 7:00. Afterward we will have a brief business meeting that will include the election of officers. The candidates selected by the nominating committee are: Joan Tague, President; David Hartgrove, Vice President; Bob Kellogg, Treasurer and Catherine Kellogg, Recording Secretary. Here's a [link](#) to the meeting page on our website. This will be our last meeting until September. Over the summer the board will address the question of returning to in person meetings.

Field Trips

We're ending the year with a bang up selection of trips.

Friday, May 5th, Sweetwater Wetlands- Join us for this long trip to Alachua County's newest premier birding destination. Due to the anticipated 2 hour drive time, there are special arrangements to be made regarding car pooling. If you're going please contact [Joan Tague](#) so we can coordinate travel and safety issues. Here's a link to our [information page](#). Be sure to read this page.

Tuesday, May 9th, The St Augustine Alligator Farm- This place is bird photographer heaven. Nesting herons, egrets, spoonbills and Wood Storks are right at your elbow as you walk along the boardwalk above the alligator lagoon. Here's a link to the [information page](#). We will carpool from our Ormond meet up site in Ormond Town Square, 1464 W Granada Boulevard, Ormond Beach, behind Chick-Fil-A, at 8:00 am. Admission is \$35.00 for adults. There are discounts available (10% for AAA, seniors and military). Afterwards we'll have lunch at a local restaurant up there.

Friday, May 12th, Lake Woodruff NWR and DeLeon Springs State Park- Join Joan Tague for this trip to two of the better birding sites in our county. After looking for Red-headed Woodpeckers at the Refuge headquarters, we'll move on the end of Mud Lake Road and explore the wooded areas around the first impoundment for warblers, vireos, etc. Then we'll make the short drive to DeLeon Springs State Park to search the oaks there for warblers. If you are interested (optional), lunch is available in the Old Sugar Mill Pancake House or you can pack your own lunch and enjoy the picnic area or you can just call it a day. Here's a link to the [information page](#).

Time for another in our monthly native plant series, by Leslie Nixon.

Coral Bean



Coral Bean

Photo by Leslie Nixon

Coral Bean (*Erythrina herbacea*) is a peculiar plant, not suitable for everyone – unless you are a hummingbird. In Florida. In spring. And then it is perfect.

This large native shrub is deciduous, its branches have thorns, and its seeds are poisonous to humans, but from March through May coral bean produces striking red, tubular flowers that are perfect for hummingbirds. The flowers are arranged in a dramatic display on a long stalk reaching towards the sky, so they do attract people despite the plant's weapons. Right now, as you drive along less populated roads, you can see the red flowers poking out of the background shrubs, seeking the sun.

After a brilliant three-month show, the flowers fade and heart-shaped leaves sprout, covering the thorny branches with green. The thorns and dense leaves create welcoming shelter for birds and other small animals. As the weather cools, coral bean goes dormant, losing its leaves to conserve energy for its spectacular burst of flowers in spring.

In your landscape, coral bean can be enjoyed as a single specimen or added to a mixed native hedge. Be sure to place it where human skin won't be impaled but where you can view the floral display and the hummers feasting. Plant it for the birds, then step away.

Coral Bean Quick Facts

Form, size: Medium to large shrub, 3-10+' h x 2-8' w

Bird value: Red tubular flowers perfect for hummingbirds; good cover

Growing conditions: Full or part sun, well-drained soil; very drought-tolerant Leaves: Deciduous Flowers: Red, tubular, spring

Seed: Showy brown pods with poisonous red seeds in the fall

Maintenance: To keep it more compact, prune after flowering

Climate tolerances: Resistant to freezing temperatures, strong winds, salt spray, and brief flooding

Comments: Thorny! Seeds are poisonous!

Leslie Nixon



The Decorating Committee: Holly Zwart-Duryea, Rachel Ramsey and Peggy Yokubonus Photo by Ellen Tate

When Only Native Wildflowers Will Do

Wildflowers are everywhere. Some think of them as weeds but others recognize the beauty. Holly and I knew from the beginning that our arrangements would include native wildflowers. We started with selecting the vases and Holly found the hummingbirds, butterflies and mirrored tiles. I was to collect the flowers. I contacted Sonya Guidry, a friend in the Pawpaw Chapter of the FL Native Plant Society. I asked for her help since she has a native plant yard. Also contributing was Leslie Nixon the current President of Pawpaw chapter (and whose monthly article appears on this page) who allowed us to cut flowers from her yard. Barbara Kieran brought some natives from her yard and also helped with the arranging. My husband Chuck and I collected flowers from roadsides in DeLeon Springs and Ormond. We had a collection of flowers and some native shrubs including Coreopsis, the state wildflower; Tropical Sage, Gaura, Dune Sunflower, Fleabane, Coontie, Wild Coffee, Simpsons Stopper, Coral Honeysuckle and others. Many thanks for all of the help we received making our arrangements so perfect. See a photo on the next page.

Peggy Yokubonus

* * * *

From The Quotable Birder

Then he felt quite ashamed, and hid his head under his wings, for he did not know what to do; he was so happy and yet not at all proud. He thought how he had been persecuted and despised; and now he heard them saying that he was the most beautiful of all birds. Even the elder tree bent its branches straight down into the water before him, and the sun shown warm and mild. Then his wings rustled, he lifted his slender neck, and cried rejoicingly from the depths of his heart-

"I never dreamed of so much happiness when I was the Ugly Duckling!"

Hans Christian Anderson

"The Ugly Duckling"

One Bluebird Came

One Bluebird came. Where are the others? At the end of the day she perched on the edge of our bird bath. Another bird perched along side. They looked like they owned the place. Peacefully together. Knowingly they studied their kingdom. Looked at each other. All is well.

I called for Jane. She came quickly. I ran for my camera. When I returned to our hotspot near the window, both females, Eastern Bluebird and Painted Bunting, had departed. A fabulous photo opportunity went with them.

You've just gotta love birdwatching. But love it with a tickle of ironic humor as it courses through your excited sensibilities. Birds have their own agenda and many times we don't fit in.

When I was a US Army photographer, a well used cliché was, "Some of your best photographs are exposed on the metal slide of the film pack holder." I guess now a birdwatcher's catch phrase could be, "Your best photographs reside in your memory, not the camera's".

What were the two female birds thinking when they sat together on the edge of our birdbath? Were they happy for the chance social visit or was it planned? "Where did you get that nice green sweater; how are the kids; I found a great store to gather some tasty seeds; is that pain in your left wing still there?" They must communicate in ways we have yet to understand.

Every year Jane would relate to her incoming High School Art Students, a short story to jar loose their creative senses. "If an alien from outer space came to Earth and saw people, they might ask - what are they?" Jane would answer, "They are human beings and number 1.5 billion* on this planet. Each has two eyes, one nose, one mouth and two ears and no two of them look the alike." "Unbelievable!" That alien might say. We might consider the same reaction to bird life. After all, they were here long before Earth accommodated us. Maybe they've learned a few tricks from the ancients along the way - that have escaped us.

A nearby neighbor, Phil, told me that Eastern Bluebirds came to his feeders occasionally. He feeds them what he calls a high priced bird seed mix, laced with small pieces of fruit; like raisins and dried cranberries. Guess I'll bring back birdseed with small chunks of fruit to see if a few Eastern Bluebirds will return to frequent our backyard.

Last February 24th a lone Eastern Bluebird again perched on the edge of our birdbath - second time in 23 years. Serenely it sat there looking about as the world went around. What are you thinking, young lady, as you sit there contemplating your next move - maybe to a more favorable place to live or are you just observing the wonders around you? It would be nice to know. Maybe in some far-distant time we will develop a better understanding of how we can best communicate with you.

It will be awesome.

Ray Scory

* Earlier this year Earth's population eclipsed the 8 billion mark.

Editor



One of the beautiful native wildflower centerpieces made by the Decorating Committee *Photo by Steve Underwood*

* * * *



A very washed out adult male Eastern Bluebird perched above one of his recently fledged young.

Photo by Ray Scory

More photos from our 100th anniversary



Finger foods and fellowship at the Museum



Many years ago Clay Henderson, our keynote speaker, suggested the three local chapters form an impromptu group called “The Audballs” to work cooperatively on local environmental issues. Though we don’t use the name we do all work together on local issues. Above are the three chapter presidents with their spouses. On the left, long time West Volusia President, Arnette Sherman and her husband, Ed. In the back row is Jacqui Sulek, Chapters Representative from Audubon Florida. In the middle are Dennise & David Hartgrove and on the right are Southeast Volusia Chapter Co-Presidents, Marsha & Bill Cox.



Joan speaking about the chapter’s early days and its pioneer members.



Here’s a dynamic threesome. Left to right: Louise Chapman, Environmental STEM Resource Teacher and founder of the Rose Bay Project and its successors, like Project IBIS. This program has taught generations of kids who’ve never been outside the wonders of birds, the experience of standing waist deep in Rose Bay pulling in a 70 foot basket seine to see the wide variety of fish there, testing water quality, counting the biodiversity in a square meter of salt marsh and peering at plankton through microscopes. Matt Reinhart, Volusia County Councilman for District 2 and Pat Northey, long time Volusia County Council member and known locally as the “Queen of Trails.”



The current board, left to right: Ellen Tate, Carol Roberts, Melissa Lammers, Catherine Kellogg, Bob Kellogg, Holly Zwart-Duryea, David Hartgrove and Joan Tague.

A Few More Photos



Two long time members. On the left, Madeline Shaddix, an HRA “angel” in the background. On the right, Rachel Ramsey, a former board member, chapter treasurer, the imaginative source for our chapter’s Cuban Coloring Book and a Decorating Committee member.



Our keynote speaker, Clay Henderson. Clay served two terms on the Volusia County Council, was President of the Florida Audubon Society and the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation. Until his retirement, he served as Executive Director of the Institute for Water and Environmental Resilience at Stetson University. He’s authored two books: “The Floridas” and “Forces of Nature, A History of Florida Land Conservation.”



* * * * *

THE PELICAN

is published monthly by Halifax River Audubon, a chapter of the National Audubon Society and a member of Audubon Florida serving eastern Volusia County.

PO Box 166
Daytona Beach FL 32115-0166

Email: editor@halifaxriveras.org

Web: <http://www.halifaxriveras.org>

Halifax River Audubon

forbirds@halifaxriveras.org

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: Steve Underwood

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

* * * * *

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.