

# The Pelican

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*For wildlife & people since 1923*



## The President's Column

It's Thursday night before our first meeting on Saturday, September 30. We are emphasizing public participation with a Saturday bird walk followed in the afternoon with a presentation about Warblers. When you read this, the event will be over. Will it be successful? I have no idea. Will we inspire participants to love and protect birds and the environment? Will we create a sense of wonder about the natural world around us? (Warblers did that for me) Our HRA goals will be to open our "doors" to new members and invite increased participation from current members. Will this new initiative to make our programs exciting and accessible work for the chapter? We are trying some things for the first time - please let us know what you think.

I am keeping an HRA commitment calendar, partly for my own sanity and to communicate to the board and active members where we are focusing our efforts. It's a very crowded document. We have meetings and field trips planned and these are regularly listed on our calendar and social media. That fulfills the "bird club" function of our chapter. HRA, however, is a chapter of Florida Audubon and National Audubon. Our mission is so much more. I am proud to say that we are extending our reach into the community in many ways. We are often asked to provide programs for libraries and civic groups. We partner with like-minded organizations and initiatives, like Regrow The Loop, an effort to maintain the integrity of one of the best drives in North America. We are looking for opportunities to partner with state parks. We stand in council chambers and write to elected officials in support of birds. Our members have been asked to present to other Audubon Chapters and to support local bird festivals as guides. We look for more opportunities to encourage Plants For Birds in our neighborhood. We could do so much more. We work hard, but it's what we love, and it is actually fun. Do you have a couple of spare hours? We can put them to good use...

*Joan Tague*

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## Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Marilyn Cloutier, Laurene Cujko, Mary Lou DeLuca, Charles Demay, Margie Dieck, Dane Hermansen, Jonathon Lathrop, Janet Rabe-Meyer and Katherine Rambo. We hope to see you at a meeting or on a field trip.

## Calendar & Events

**Monday, October 23rd, Program Meeting-** Join us as we welcome Michael Brothers and his presentation on the geology of Volusia County. The meeting will be held via Zoom. There's more to geology than the Grand Canyon and Michael's fascinating program will open your eyes to why Volusia County looks as it does as you drive its diverse habitats. Here's the [link](#) for the meeting. We will begin flocking together at 6:45 pm and the program begins at 7:00. A brief business meeting will follow. We hope to see you there.

## Field Trips

**Wednesday, October 4th, Sugar Mill Gardens and Buschman Park-** It's time to stare into the tops of the trees and strain our neck muscles looking for migrating warblers. We'll meet at 8:00 am just inside the gate at Sugar Mill Gardens, 950 Old Sugarmill Road, in Port Orange. After a few hours there we'll move on to Buschman Park, 4575 Spruce Creek Rd, Port Orange, to look for more. Questions? Call Joan Tague, 386-871-6049.

**Friday, October 6th, The Masters Tract and Faver-Dykes State Park-** The Masters Tract is a storm water treatment facility that has attracted over 200 species, according to eBird. After birding there we'll move north to Faver-Dykes State Park. Meet Joan Tague at 7:00 am to carpool at Ormond Town Square, 1498 W Granada Blvd. Ormond Beach behind Chick-Fil-A. Expect to walk about 3 miles over the course of the day. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Joan, 386-871-6049.

**Wednesday, October 11th, Mead Gardens-** Considered a migrant trap, Mead Gardens is a 48 acre urban oasis in Winter Park, near Orlando. Join Peggy Yokubonus for this leisurely walk of 2.5 miles or so. We'll meet at 7:00 am to car pool at International Square, 2500 W International Speedway Boulevard, Daytona Beach, behind the Krystal Restaurant. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Peggy, 386-316-4085.

**Tuesday, October 24th, Washington Oaks Gardens State Park-** Join Joan Tague as we walk the gardens along A-1A. We will not carpool to this location but will meet at the park at 8:00 am. We encourage you to arrange carpools with your friends before the outing. The address is 6400 N. Oceanshore Blvd. Palm Coast. This outing will entail easy walking along maintained paths. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Joan, 386-871-6049

*Field trips continued below on the next page*



American Flamingoes at Apollo, Parking Lot 5, Canaveral National Seashore

Photo by Nina Ehmer

## Idalia Brings Flamingoes to Florida

Hurricane Idalia was first listed as a tropical depression on August 26th, 2023 as it swirled in the warm waters off the Yucatan Peninsula. The Yucatan is home to around 20,000 pairs of American Flamingoes. Some of them fly north every winter and spend several months feeding in the rich waters of Florida Bay, down at the south end of Everglades National Park. In a spot appropriately named, Flamingo.

At least 100 of the tall, pink birds were swept up in Idalia's maelstrom. Eventually they arrived in Florida and points north. There have been sightings in at least 10 states: Florida, North and South Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, Alabama, Texas, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania and in the chilly waters of Lake Michigan in Wisconsin. Can you imagine how the rare bird alert lit up in these states?

American Flamingoes are hearty, strong flyers and they will eventually make their way back south to the warm waters of the Yucatan. That's not always the case though. Following Hurricane Michael in 2018 a lone flamingo appeared at St Marks NWR, just south of Tallahassee. That solitary individual, affectionately known as "Pinky", has been there for 5 years now. There's a long record of hurricanes bringing flamingoes to St Marks. According to an article in the Tallahassee Democrat written back in 2018, hurricanes carried flamingoes to the refuge in 1927, 1965, 1972, 1995, 2018 and now 2023. It's thought that nearly all of those birds found their way back home to the Yucatan.

Nina, our photographer, has a [website](#). Check it out.

David Hartgrove

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## From the Quotable Birder

"Over increasingly large areas of the United States, spring now comes unheralded by the return of the birds, and the early mornings are strangely silent where once they were filled with the beauty of bird song."

Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*

**Tuesday, October 31st, Ravine Gardens-** Ravine Gardens State Park is one of the nine New Deal-era state parks in Florida. The park has two ravines up to 120 feet deep with steep banks at 45-degree angles. Join Joan Tague for what can be a challenging hike down into the depths of the ravine. Or drive or walk the perimeter road that allows you to view the tops of the trees growing up from the bottom of the ravine. This puts you at eye level with where the warblers are feeding. We will meet at 7:00 am to carpool at Ormond Towne Square, 1498 W Granada Blvd. Ormond Beach behind Chick-Fil-A. We will have lunch at a local restaurant on the way home. Questions? Call Joan, 386-871-6049.

## Fall Bird Walks With Joan at Ormond Central Park

Joan Tague is leading easy bird walks every Wednesday morning at 8:00 am through December 6, in Central Park in Ormond Beach. Explore the groomed trails in the park looking for early avian migrants. Pace is very casual. Binoculars are highly recommended. All levels of expertise are welcome, from beginners to "experts". Meet at the Ormond Beach Environmental Discovery Center, 601 Division Avenue, Ormond Beach. Hosted by the Ormond Beach Environmental Discovery Center and Halifax River Audubon. See the [calendar page](#) on our website.

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## Links and More to Enjoy at Your Leisure

Here are some links to webpages that offer beautiful photography and writings you may find enlightening.

[The Audubon 2023 Top 100 Photography Awards](#)

[The Audubon 2023 Honorable Mention Photography Awards](#)

Craig Pitman was the environmental writer at the Tampa Bay Times for thirty years and won numerous awards. Here's a link to an article for the [Florida Phoenix](#).



The Waterbird Society will hold its 47th Annual Conference in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, from October 9-13, 2023. The conference will be a joint meeting with the Atlantic Marine Bird Cooperative (AMBC) and is hosted by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. See the full conference details [here](#).



## Painted Buntings - WOW!!!

“Jane, look; look out the window at the two Painted Buntings at the feeder, WOW!”

“Ray, isn’t one of them a female?”

“Yes, yes, you’re right. And the male is fully developed, not like the shaggy one that has been around the yard for the past two weeks. But all three are early. It’s only August. Painted Buntings historically don’t show up in our yard until October and leave in April to their breeding ground in coastal Georgia and southern South Carolina. Hold me down. This is exciting. I’m about to skyrocket high up into a burst of brilliant celebration and thanks.”

I had never seen a Painted Bunting before we came to Florida twenty-three years ago. Oh yes, maybe a photograph in birding literature, but not the real thing. They existed on another planet, a place where I might not live or visit in the distant future .

Yet in January, 2000 due to unforeseeable circumstances and under the influence of destiny, We moved to Port Orange, Florida. Four months later in early April, I spotted a female Painted Bunting clandestinely moving through the palmetto bramble in our new backyard. I was elated. “Jane, we will have Painted Buntings in our backyard. Fantastic!”

I hastily hoisted a bird feeder, loaded it with black oil sunflower seeds and white millet and waited. Birds came, but no Painted Buntings. Not for 12 years and then they only trickled into our yard - one or two a year sometimes missing a year or two.

It wasn’t until October 2016 that they came in force to our yard. Now every year, and in numbers. Sometimes as many as fifteen Painted Buntings at once share the offerings at the two feeding stations. Plus, water and “no melt” suet cakes are always available for all birds at our larger feeding station.

I was told when we first arrived here in Florida that Painted Buntings only ventured as far North as Titusville for their Winter stay over - moving on in April to their Georgia breeding grounds.

I noticed the first male that came to our yard this year appeared less brilliant in color than previous males. In fact, it’s red breast was speckled with tiny grayish brown splashes, not the brilliant painterly wash the adult male has. However, one week later a beautiful pair of fully decorated Painted Buntings entered our yard, made friends with the shaggy male, stayed one week. Two weeks ago, after their evening feeding all three evaporated into the night. Hopefully they’ll grace our yard again, but for now they were off to parts unknown.

Further investigation revealed that the male Painted Bunting has two formative plumage changes, about a month apart, in their first Summer. Is this what we are seeing?

I guess we will just kept looking out our kitchen window to watch the antics and admire the beauty of this colorful songbird and keep looking to see what comes next.

Isn’t this one of the many enjoyable facets of birdwatching? The wonder of birdwatching.

*Ray Scory*



Two male painted Buntings display their colorful front and back attire at our tube feeder. The feeder holds only millet (white proso) seeds . The male Painted Buntings is considered by many the most beautiful in North America.



Both male and female Buntings feeding on a seed bell in our backyard. The seed bell consists of millet (white proso), sunflower, peanuts, cracked corn, raisins, dried cranberries. Many other bird species come to this seed bell to feast.

*Photos by Ray Scory*

## Thank you, Holly!

I was preparing to join a monthly Florida Audubon Zoom call when I read the email from one of our stalwart board members - Holly Zwart-Duryea: "I have made the decision to resign from the board..." I understood the reasons but still felt a twinge of sadness for our organization. Holly has served on the board for 16 years quietly performing some very important duties with professionalism, humor and, might I say, style. She prodded us to keep track of our hours, placed Audubon Adventure packets in countless classrooms and tracked our history. Her commitment to Halifax River Audubon has and I am sure will continue to be a template for those who will follow in those duties. She stepped up for the Great Backyard Bird Count and for the April Centennial Gala. I hope we can persuade her to join us now and then in some of our special projects. Thank you, Holly!

*Joan Tague*



Holly, on the right, assisting a young birder at the Great Backyard Bird Count.

*Photo by Joan Tague*

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## New Sites on The Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail

Last October the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail began accepting new site nominations for the first time since 2011. Anyone could nominate a site for addition to the Trail until the nomination period ended in February 2023. There are fourteen new sites now listed on the Trail. They include some we've been to, like Sweetwater Wetlands, in Gainesville. Here's a link to the [Kite Tales](#) newsletter for September that has all of the new sites listed.



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## THE PELICAN

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## Halifax River Audubon

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Meets monthly September through May

President: Joan Tague

Vice President: David Hartgrove

Past President: Melissa Lammers

Treasurer: Bob Kellogg

Recording Sec.: Catherine Kellogg

Membership Sec.: Joan Tague

Corresponding Sec: Vacant

Historian: Vacant

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.