

The Pelican

We need to be the stewards of this world, not its destroyers

Volume 63-Number 10 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
October, 2017



The President's Ruminations

Gone With The Wind

I am afraid that I almost missed the deadline for this note due to *Hurricane Brain*, a phenomenon in which predicted wind speeds, wind fields and storm surges reduce higher cognition in inverse proportion to their numeric ratings. Simply put, my brain is on half-power.

Our area has historically avoided direct hits from the Atlantic thanks to the Bermuda High. However, this year and last, we have experienced the destructive power of the outer bands of Category 3 hurricanes as well as the even greater destruction wrought by storm surge. In Volusia County, Irma did not give us the severe lashing we feared but many people and businesses suffered heavy losses from flooding.

Florida has always been on the hurricane highway but Nature, or Providence, provided Florida with two incredible defenses: dunes and wetlands. These two features, properly conserved, can extensively mitigate the damage from hurricanes.

Florida has 2,276 Statute Miles of Tidal Shoreline, 663 miles of beaches and more than 11,000 miles of rivers, streams and waterways 1. There are more than 900 freshwater springs2 and 276,070 acres of functional wetlands3. These geographic features are "living". Untouched by the hand of man, they change in response to differing conditions. Absent hurricanes, our beaches lose sand each winter and gain sand each summer. Hurricane Matthew eroded thirty to forty feet of dune in some places, overnight. Human activity (walking on dunes) subsequently hampered plants from re-establishing on the dune to help it rebuild itself. Further erosion took place in Hurricane Irma. As a result parts of State Road A1A and the homes west of it are now vulnerable as never before. But we are not the only ones affected. Sea turtles (loggerhead, green, leatherback and the rare Kemp's Ridley) return to our beaches yearly to lay their eggs as their parents, grandparents and beyond have done. Shorebirds nest in the vegetation of upper dunes. Dumping sand along our beaches to shore up A1A is a nice quick fix for man but it's not so great for our animal and vegetable brethren who depend upon a healthy dune for food, shelter and reproduction.

Our wetlands are Nature's retention ponds, absorbing storm surge. Wetlands take one for the team, expanding and contracting as necessary for the greater good. When we change their course or fill them in, water has no choice but to enter our backyards and homes. Wetlands are also important habitat for many of the birds we see along the seashore, like snowy egrets, great blue herons, yellow-crowned night herons and brown pelicans as well as roseate spoonbills, wood storks, white and glossy ibis and more.

The article continues below on the next page.

Calendar & Events

Monday, October 16th- Program Meeting- Join us for an evening of bird photography and education as our own Dan Gribbin gives a presentation on White-tailed Tropicbirds of Bermuda and American Oystercatchers here at home. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. A brief business meeting follows.

Field Trips

Friday, October 13th- Washington Oaks- Join Joan Tague for a walk through this lovely state park looking for migrant warblers and others. Meet at the park at 8:00 am, 6400 N. Oceanshore Blvd. Palm Coast. There is a fee for entrance to the park. Bring your lunch. Questions? Call Joan, 386-871-6049

Wednesday, October 25th- Mead Gardens and the Birds of Prey Center- *Sorry, this one's already filled.* You can call Peggy Yokubonus, 386-316-4085 to see if there's been a cancellation.

Gainesville Trip

This is your last chance to sign up for our trip in November. Reservations must be made by October 7th.

Several years ago our chapter took an overnight birding trip to Gainesville. Alachua County has a number of excellent birding hot spots and we had a great time. We got a behind the scenes tour of the avian collection at the Museum of Natural History. We also watched the nightly flight of the thousands of bats from the University's huge bat house as a Red-tailed hawk tried to make his dinner of one. We're happy to report that we're doing this trip again on **Wednesday and Thursday, November 8th and 9th**. We have a block of rooms reserved at the Hampton Inn with a price for these double queen rooms of 119.00 per night. Hampton has set up a special website for our group to make reservations. Click on this [link](#) and follow the instructions. The cut off date for this trip is October 8th. You must have made your reservation by then. Contact David Hartgrove: birdman9@earthlink.net by phone, 386-235-1249 to add your name to the list of those going. In addition to Paynes Prairie and the Museum's avian collection, we'll be going to the new Sweetwater Wetlands where we'll have a catered picnic lunch. More information on possible carpooling, etc. to follow. You don't want to miss this one.

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Field Trips With Others

Trey Hannah and the staff at Volusia County Land Management have a number of interesting field trips planned for October. You can learn about geocaching, take guided kayak trips, ride their eco-buggy and go on guided bike rides on the County's ever expanding bike trail system. Here's the [link](#) to the webpage. Once there scroll down to the "Upcoming Events" section.

I hope you'll take the nudge from Harvey, Irma and Maria and do some research of your own to learn about how important and how fragile our dunes and wetlands are for every living creature in Florida and beyond. Below are links to three webpages with information.

- [www.stateofflorida.com/facts.aspx /](http://www.stateofflorida.com/facts.aspx/)
- www.dep.state.fl.us/springs/faq.htm
- www.dep.state.fl.us/secretary/stats/geographical.htm

I hope to see some of you at the [Audubon Assembly](#) later this month. It'll be in St. Augustine so it's a short drive.

Melissa Lammers

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Conservation Notes

The carnage continues at the Environmental Protection Agency as Secretary Pruitt (having squandered 25,000.00 on a sound proof phone booth for his office so that staffers located nearby can't overhear as he sells out our environmental heritage to oil, gas and coal companies) announced four new appointments that require Senate confirmation. It would be hard to find a more inappropriate collection of unqualified candidates than these clowns.

Andrew Wheeler, nominated as Deputy Administrator, is a long time coal lobbyist and former staffer for Senator James Inhofe, the loudest climate change denier in Congress. Mr. Wheeler has represented one coal company whose environmental and mine safety record is the beacon for the industry on how to mine coal in the dirtiest and most unsafe ways possible.

Bill Wehrum was nominated to lead the EPA's Office of Air and Radiation, which oversees Clean Air Act compliance. He's an attorney whose client list reads like a who's who of the country's worst polluters. He was nominated for this position in 2006 but there weren't enough senators then willing hold their nose tight enough to vote for this guy so his nomination was pulled. It's doubtful we can count on them to reject him this time around.

David Ross has been nominated to head the Office of Water. Another industry shill, he's sued the EPA countless times over their enforcement of the Clean Water Act. A suit he filed trying to stop the clean up of Chesapeake Bay was tossed out of court. In his comments on why, the judge wrote that the suit was "long on swagger, but short on specificity".

Finally we come to Michael Dourson. Mr. Dourson has long standing ties to the chemical industry and earlier in his career to big tobacco. As the sole spokesperson testifying in the case of a chemical spill in the Elk River in West Virginia he failed to report that he had previously done paid work for both of the companies that produced the chemicals involved in the spill. He was also paid by Dow Agrosience to downplay concerns about a pesticide that causes developmental problems in children of farm workers exposed to it. Now, if confirmed, he'll be in a position to do some real damage. Apparently making America great again will involve us drowning in toxic sludge, drinking fouled, polluted water and gasping for breath breathing polluted air.

And Interior Secretary, Ryan Zinke, not wanting to be seen as slacking in fulfilling the President's wish list, has announced he wants to roll back portions of several national monuments that have been attacked by ranching and mining interests. Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante in Utah, Gold Butte in Nevada and Cascade-Siskiyou in Oregon have all been referred to the President for some form of executive action to reduce or eliminate their national monument status under the Antiquities Act. Write to Senators Nelson and Rubio with your comments.

David Hartgrove

Here's an invitation to a special event. Those of you who know Charley DuToit already know how good this will be. Editor

ORMOND SCENIC LOOP & TRAIL and FRIENDS OF TOMOKA BASIN STATE PARKS PRESENT



Do you love the history of Ormond Beach and surrounding areas? Come see Charles DuToit do what he does best- SHARE HISTORY. Meet us at Tomoka State Park's recreation hall facility (climate-controlled) on **Saturday, October 14 at 11:00 a.m.** DuToit is retired from the Florida Park Service and a volunteer for the Ormond Beach Historical Society. Charley worked as an Environmental Specialist in state parks and preserves in southwest and northeast Florida, including Tomoka and Bulow Creek State Park. Contrary to his job title as a "specialist," Charley was involved in a diversity of projects involving the management and restoration of natural habitats as well as assisting historians and archaeologists at state cultural sites.

So gather up the family, friends and neighbors and make this a day of fun facts, history and an exploration back in time. Then enjoy the park the rest of the day and re-connect with nature.

The Ormond Loop – Off the Beaten Path

Charley DuToit, former biologist for the Tomoka Basin State Parks, explores abandoned homesteads, lost cemeteries, moonshine camps, and other vestiges of the "Bulow" community in the shade of live oaks and islands in the swamps of the great hammock north of Ormond Beach

Park entry fees apply: Annual pass or Daily fee of \$5/car and \$4/single driver



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Shorebirding in Canadian Summer

Long time readers of the Pelican may remember articles in years past about Jean Iron, a volunteer with the Canadian Wildlife Service. Jean has spent portions of the last nine summers on the shores of James Bay in northern Ontario counting shorebirds. The [James Bay Shorebird Project](#) is doing vital work monitoring these very susceptible species on their nesting grounds and areas where they stop over as they migrate. Jean's [website](#) has tons of great photos you're sure to enjoy.

Editor

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Audubon Adventures

[Audubon Adventures](#), is a wonderful program that helps engage kids in the natural world around them. Ranked as one of the most popular environmental education curricula in the country, our chapter has been donating to provide this valuable program to Volusia County school kids since its inception. Donations from members fund this program. Send your donation to Halifax River Audubon, P.O. Box 166, Daytona Beach FL 32115-0166. Please specify on your check check that your donation is for Audubon Adventures. And thank you!

* * *

"The red breast whistles from the garden croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies."

John Keats, "To Autumn"

Memorable Birding Experiences

Birding has been good to me and for me and here is why.

* John Carr relating to me how he was invited to look for Bachman's Warblers by Dr Archibald Rutledge, poet laureate of South Carolina. Dr Rutledge took John to a swampy area on his 2000 acre South Carolina property. They observed two Bachman's Warblers in a cat-briar patch. The Bachman's Warbler is now extinct. John may have been the last boy to see one alive.

* Witnessing a long flight of Roseate spoonbills straight-lining south along the Halifax River, glowing brightly against a dusky setting sun.

* Watching a Brown booby maneuver against pounding rain and fierce winds during "The Hurricane with No Name."

* Welcoming friends and inquisitive visitors to my "under the bridge" [The Big Sit](#) circle on the second Sunday of October.

* Sitting quietly under the bridge before sunrise listening to the winds, water and sounds of birds.

* Watching two Great Horned Owls hooting, displaying and flying between the trusses of the bridge until the sun just peaked above the horizon. Then, silently they were gone.

* Surprised by a flock of American Woodcocks swirling under power lines before dawn.

* Doing THE BIG SIT in Port Orange, Florida and on the Farmington Canal in Connecticut. These experiences I own forever. They cloak me in everlasting warmth and happiness.

However, this is not the end of my story, just the beginning. Because to go birding, whether looking out a window or being part of a huge birding event, is a beginning. It is adventurous, exciting and refreshing. Commit to birding and newness will prevail.

Birding offers the chance to expand your individual talents and desires - to fit them to the many facets making up the birding experience. You can become a teacher, a leader, an expert, a connoisseur, an artist, an inspiration, a volunteer, a world traveler and, yes, even a great backyard birder. It will give you so many things to do while you experience the wind and the rain and watch something wild and beautiful.

I carry with me many wonderful experiences from my bird watching adventures going back to my younger days watching Eastern bluebirds going in and out of the tiny, wooden bird house just outside my parent's kitchen window, and my active involvement with the New Haven Bird Club, the Halifax River Audubon, and the wintery Christmas Bird Counts in Connecticut. My participation in recent years with Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge's water bird survey, photographing for the Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival and heading up the Beginner Bird Watching Workshops for the Halifax River Audubon have stoked my burning passion for birding.

You're welcome visit me under the Dunlawton Bridge in Port Orange, October 7, 2017. I will be there from 6:30AM until 6:00PM sitting The Big Sit. Also, you might want to print the page below to take part in or to suggest to a friend to register for our Beginner Bird Watching Workshops beginning October 22, 2017.

As I have often said in the past - bird watching is fun, exciting and adventurous aiding in the enjoyment of memorable and wonderful experiences.

Ray Scory



My First Photograph (1948). This Scarlet tanager rested on a hedge in the yard of my parent's Connecticut home and inspired this young boy into a lifetime of birding.



Each year, faithfully and annually, a Spotted Sandpiper stops by the backyard pond behind my Port Orange home twice a year. I, faithfully, awaiting each return.

Photos by Ray Scory

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Welcome to Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new members: Lauren Hertzog, Brenda Levine, R. Turner Ragsdale, Amy Swenson and Barbara Townsend. We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting or on one of our excellent field trips.

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Pelagic Birding Opportunity

On Saturday, October 7th, The Marine Science Center is sponsoring another pelagic birding trip. Sailing out of Port Canaveral at 7:00 am. Here's your chance to see birds like Black-capped Petrel, Cory's Shearwater, Red and Red-necked Phalarope and others. The cost is 245.00 per person. For all the information contact Michael Brothers: mbrothers@volusia.org

HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON

Presents

BEGINNER BIRD WATCHING CLASS

2017



Cardinal

Learn how to identify birds, how to find birds, how to develop birding skills, how to improve your binocular use and many other birding facts. Join our class for fun, information and fellowship.

Donation: \$25.00 check, payable to **Halifax River Audubon**, noting "Bird Class" in the comment section. Mail to:

Halifax River Audubon
PO Box 166
Daytona Beach, FL 32115



Crow

Place: Port Orange Public Library Auditorium, 1005 City Center Circle, Port Orange.

Classroom instruction will be held on **Tuesday October 24, November 14 and December 5 at 9:00 to 12:00 p.m.** Sign up with a friend, or make a new one, and have lunch after the class.



Dabbling C

Outdoor workshops to practice techniques learned in the classroom will be held on Thursday mornings following the Tuesday morning class; i.e.:

Thursday, October 26 – 8:00 a.m. at Port Orange Causeway Park*
Thursday, November 16 – 8:00 a.m. at Tomoka State Park*
Thursday, December 7 – 7:00 a.m. at Merritt Island NWR*

* Outdoor workshop details are subject to change. Instructor will confirm time/location at the prior class. Students who miss the class should contact instructor for details. Outdoor workshops are limited to registered class members only.



Bring your **binoculars** to all classes, especially the first class, as well as to all outdoor workshops.

Contact **David Hartgrove 386-788-2630** or birdman9@earthlink.net.

Class size is limited to 28, so sign up early. You do not have to be a member of Halifax River Audubon to attend.

✂Cut here and mail with your check-----

BEGINNER BIRD WATCHING CLASS - 2017

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

www.halifaxriveras.org

A Special Thanks To Our Sponsors

**Florida Power & Light, Garden Club of the Halifax Country,
The Ormond Beach Garden Club, Spruce Creek Garden & Nature Club
and Colonial Colony**

Our mailing address is PO Box 166 Daytona Beach, FL 32115-0166

Our website is www.halifaxriveras.org For information on upcoming field trips, etc.

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