

The Pelican

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

Vol. 57-No.10 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon April, 2012



Message From The President

Thoughts From On High

Spring Training! The crack of the bat. The slap of the ball hitting the catcher's mitt. Hot dogs and peanuts in paper sacks. The continuous undercurrent of the crowd noise. The intermittent organ music piped into the stadium when the home team loads the bases. That's what Spring Training means to many folks in Florida.

To some of us, spring training means cleaning the binoculars and opening the Peterson Field Guide to Warblers to pages 105-106 to study the under tail pictures because that's the most common view of a warbler. A walk around the neighborhood or a nearby park can take much, much longer than it did a few weeks ago. The songs of birds we haven't heard for 5-6 months make us slow down to try for a glimpse of the bird as we search our memories to identify the notes. We've become complacent over the winter as we watched waders, waterfowl and shorebirds – most of which are relatively large, out in the open and tend to stay put. Spring training requires us to find a 5-inch bird flitting from branch to branch in a fully-leaved tree, follow it with our eyes, find it in our binoculars and make an ID – all in the matter of seconds.

While spring warbler watching may be physically more demanding (think warbler neck,) the rewards are oh so satisfying. Happy warbler watching to you all.

Paula Wehr

April Program: Bees and the Environment

Bees aren't just for making honey. Learn about why bees are critical to successful gardens and how they play a part in our food chain when Ed Williams, The Bee Dude, talks about bees and their role in our environment at our chapter meeting on Monday, April 16, at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. And remember, the bridge on Daytona Avenue is still out. So use 10th Street. Also, the parking lot lights have now been repaired. We hope see you there.

Calendar & Events

Wed., 4/11, Join Chuck & Joan Tague for a trip to Tiger Bay State Forest, where we'll look for Bachman's Sparrows, Brown-headed Nuthatches and others. Meet at 7:30 am at International Square, 2500 W. International Speedway Blvd., behind the Krystal and bring a lunch.

Wed., 4/18 through Friday, 4/20, Our big overnight trip to Ft DeSoto. This is one of the best birding spots in Florida during Spring migration. We have arranged a reduced rate at the Comfort Inn, 1400 34th Street North, St Petersburg, 727-323-3100. The rate is 92.50 per night for a double room plus tax. Please contact Joan Tague, 386-253-1166 or by e-mail: babyowl@mac.com if you are planning to go and for further information.

Sat., 4/28, Join Meret Wilson for a trip to Tomoka State Park. Meet her at the park near the concession stand at 8:00 am. Meret runs the bird banding station at the park and knows the place like the back of her hand. Bring a lunch.

Sat., 4/14, the Southeast Volusia Audubon Society will be going to Canaveral National Seashore. Rendezvous with them at 8:00 am at Indian River Village, corner of US 1 and SR 442 near the Dunkin Donuts and bring a lunch. Info: call Gail Domroski, 386-428-0447.

Friday, 4/20, SEVAS will be going to Princess Place Preserve, in Flagler County. Again, meet them at the Indian River Village. This time at 7:00 am, with your lunch. Call Gail Domroski for info: 386-248-0447

Thurs., 4/19, Join the West Volusia Audubon Society for a trip to Gamble Place. This site in Port Orange has been in the news recently as the city and the Museum of Arts & Sciences negotiate over its ownership. It's a very special place with diverse habitats and many species. It's located at 1819 Taylor Road, approx. 1 mile west of I-95. Those living on the east side of the county may wish to rendezvous with the group at Gamble Place. Call Harry Robinson, 386-943-8342, for more information.

For information on field trips with the Paw Paw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, check out this [link](#).

Conservation Notes

On our way home from the chapter field trip to Orlando Wetlands, on February 13th, some of us stopped by River Breeze Park, in Oak Hill. We were hoping to see some shorebirds on the sandbar that's exposed there at low tide. Standing there with several Willets and some assorted gulls was a Marbled Godwit. On each of its legs were single yellow bands, with "A5" on them. I went on the USGS website, [here](#), and entered the information. About a week later I heard from the database administrator, Jeannine Parvin. I had made a mistake in reporting the GPS location. We got that corrected and then I waited to hopefully hear from the researcher who banded the bird. Here's what I learned.

On the morning of November 20th, 2008, researchers from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources were using a cannon net on Little St Simon's Island. They captured 19 Marbled Godwits that day. The bird that would soon wear the bands "A5" was one of them. Brad Winn (no longer with GDNR) weighed and banded the bird. The bird, a male, weighed 286 grams. That was a little too low for it to be fitted with one of the new solar "geolocators." Females tend to weigh almost 20% more than males. So they're the ones most often fitted with the tiny devices.

The latest issue of Audubon Magazine has an extensive article on these amazing devices that are revolutionizing the science of migration studies. It also mentions one of the birds written about in this column in October of last year. Six of the Marbled Godwits that were captured that day were fitted with geolocators. The signals from 2 of the geolocators were lost before spring migration began the following April. The other 4 did begin migration. One was lost over Illinois on its way north. The other 3 reached nesting grounds in North and South Dakota. I learned all of this in an e-mail from Bridget Olsen, Deputy Project Leader with the US Fish & Wildlife Service. The birds were banded and the geolocators were placed as part of a study she was doing for her thesis on Marbled Godwit biology. It has now been published online and can be viewed [here](#).

Technology has brought us many things. Some of them horribly destructive and causing the extinction of many species. But it's also given us these new devices, which may help us save some species for future generations.

David Hartgrove



Marbled Godwit

by Chuck Tague

The Circle B Bar Field Trip

A great trip to a Polk County gem. That's how I would describe the Circle B Bar Reserve field trip Thursday and Friday, Feb 23 & 24th. The Circle B Bar Reserve was purchased in December, 2000 by the Polk County Board of County Commissioners and Southwest Florida Water Management District for the protection of water resources and wildlife to restore the Banana Creek Marsh system. This 400 acre marsh reclamation project creates habitat for thousands of resident and migrating birds and wildlife. Nineteen HRA members and one member of Duval Audubon participated in the trip. We arrived around 10:30 on Thursday morning and banded the trail for about three hours. Highlights that morning were a nesting Sandhill Crane, nesting Bald Eagles and a Great Blue Heron eating a Round Tailed Muskrat. After lunch in the pavilion at the Visitors Center, we all decided to go to downtown Lakeland to see the birds on Lake Morton. We had great views of Ring Neck Ducks, Mute and Black Swans, White Ibis, Ruddy Ducks and White Pelicans. All of these were very close and right in the middle of town! Our next stop was a short visit to the gorgeous Hollis Garden on Lake Mirror. That evening we had dinner at Harry's, on the square in downtown Lakeland. Next morning everyone returned to the Circle B Bar to walk the Alligator Alley trail, which was aptly named for it's large alligators. This beautiful trail runs between two canals, provides great views of Lake Hancock and is good for warblers and wading birds. Our total bird count for the two days was 84 species. Circle B Bar is definitely worth the 2 hour drive and Lakeland has a pleasant downtown to visit.

Peggy Yokubonus

The 2012 Florida Birding and Photo Fest

The 10th annual Florida Birding & Photo Fest in St Augustine runs from April 25th through the 29th. It promises to be their best yet.

So What is the Birding & Photo Fest?

It's a five-day annual festival that features some of the world's greatest outdoor photographers sharing their skills and stories with amateur photographers and birders who want to listen to and learn from the very best in the business. There are classroom sessions, outdoor workshops, field trips and social events – more than 100 to choose from, ranging from \$10 to \$100 on an advance registration basis. Included are workshops on warbler and shorebird identification, beginning and advanced photography, digiscoping, use of Photoshop to clean up those images you thought were beyond repair, and much more.

Speakers include Kevin Karlson, whose book on shorebird ID is [the one to have](#). Check out all of the information [here](#).

Welcome To Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new members: Juliet E. Bain, Gayle Barrett, Carolyn Beekman, Robert Devine, John Dias, Elizabeth D. Franco, Cathryn E. Holt, Fred Loeser, Danielle Rigby, Sandra J. Rossmeyer, Gracie Sauter, and Judith Schroder. We hope to see you at a meeting or on one of our field trips soon.

Experience the Magic of the Dry Tortugas

And do something good for yourself and the environmental organization of your choice. The Dry Tortugas during Spring migration is one of the best birding experiences in Florida. Florida Nature Tours is scheduling a number of trips from Key West to this birding wonderland beginning in April, 2012. FNT will donate \$100.00 to the environmental organization of your choice when you book your trip. Check [here](#) for all of the information.

A Special Thanks To Our Sponsors

Florida Power & Light, The Ormond Beach Garden 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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