

The Pelican

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

Vol. 58-No.3 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
September, 2012



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thoughts from on high

Summer isn't exactly over yet, but the new year is ready to begin again. Posts on [BirdBrains](#) (USF bird sighting website) document that early migrants are already showing up on Florida beaches and in fields and woods. Having just completed our Annual Report (July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012) for Audubon Florida, I'd like to share some of the highlights of the past year.

Excluding the three bird counts, our Chapter led 22 official field trips and 6 weekly walks. Total attendance at these programs was 372, representing 109 different individuals. We hope you were one of them. If not, log onto our [website](#) and click on the Field Trip link to see the 2012-2013 schedule. We will visit some new locations as well as the old favorites, target some different birds and venture out at different times of the day.

Twenty-one people attended the Beginner Bird-Watching Class last October-November and saw a total of 74 different species on three class outings. One photographer from the class contributes his pictures for use on our website.

Our chapter signed on in support of the position taken by National Audubon for a variety of environmental issues, perhaps the most important of which was the RESTORE Act. Halifax River Audubon also weighed in on the first-ever attempt to limit CO2 emissions, guidelines for wind installations to protect birds, National Marine Fishery regulations regarding surface long-line fishing and wood stork delisting, among other topics. On a local basis, we are monitoring decisions about the future use of North Shore Restoration Area at Lake Apopka and are working to prevent approval of a proposed private jetport adjacent to the property. We've written to SJWMD and attended public workshops in opposition to selling land previously purchased as conservation property after it has been reevaluated as surplus.

It's been a busy year. We look forward continuing the work we've begun and to identifying and implementing new endeavors.

Paula Wehr

Calendar and Events

Monday, 9/17 After our two month hiatus, it's time to resume our monthly general membership meetings. Our program for the evening will be "The Story of Thornby." In 2001, "Save Thornby" became the rallying cry that awoke and united the once-famous central Florida community of Enterprise. Join us to hear Sandy Walters tell us how she and a group of ordinary citizens came together to save the historic Thornby House and surrounding property. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; speaker begins at 7:00 p.m. at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill.

Field Trips Resume

Saturday, 9/15 We have three field trips this month. The first of these is the Fall Migration Count. We'll meet in the parking lot at the southeast end of City Island, in downtown Daytona Beach, at 7:00 am. This is an all day affair but if you have other plans for part of the day, we can get you back to your car. Bring a lunch and your sense of adventure. Bird counts are an excellent way for those new to birding to hone their skills with people who may have more experience in the field. You're also making a significant contribution to citizen science. Call David Hartgrove at 386-788-2630 or email: birdman9@earthlink.net him to sign up. This makes assigning teams much easier. Thanks!

Friday, 9/21 Identifying shorebirds can be a challenge to the most experienced of us. Join our Field Trip Co-Chairs, Chuck & Joan Tague, for a Shorebird Chase. We'll meet at the Target on Dunlawton Blvd., east of I-95, in Port Orange, at 7:00 am. Please note, this is a slight change from our old meeting spot in Port Orange at the nearby Lowe's. Bring a lunch. Any questions? Call Joan at 386-253-1166 or you can email her: babyowl@mac.com

Sat., 9/29 We're off to the Guana-Tolomato-Matanzas Wildlife Management Area, in St Augustine. We'll meet at 7:00 am at the Publix at Granada & Williamson Blvds., in Ormond Beach. Bring a lunch. Any questions? Call Joan at 386-253-1166 or you can babyowl@mac.com her.

For a complete list of this year's field trips, click on this [link](#).

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The Paw Paw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society will hold their monthly meeting on Wednesday, 9/5, at the James Street Youth Activity Center, 1700 James Street, South Daytona. Doors open at 6:30 pm and the program begins at 7:00.

Sept. 28 thru 30, The Inaugural Wings and Wildflower Festival will be held at Hickory Point Park, in Tavares, in Lake County. The keynote speaker will be James Currie, host of the popular TV show on birding, "Birding Adventures", on the NBC Sports Channel. There will be field trips for wildflower and bird watching, photography workshops, etc. Check out the website [here](#) for all of the details.

More Events & Announcements

With summer over, the schedule of events is picking up again. Here are more opportunities involving education, travel, birding adventures, etc.

Pelagic Birding Trip Offered

Once again the Friends of the Marine Science Center, in Ponce Inlet, have a pelagic birding trip scheduled. Last year's September trip saw the highest number of Black-capped Petrels (recently proposed for the endangered species list) ever seen in Florida waters. Other birds we expect will be Great and Cory's Shearwaters, Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers, Wilson's and Leach's Storm Petrels and many others. We'll be aboard the very comfortable "Pastime Princess" and set sail from the dock in New Smyrna Beach at 4:00 am on Sunday, Sept. 16th, returning at 7:00 pm that evening. Cost is 180.00. Contact MSC Director, Michael Brothers, for all of the details: 386-304-5545 or email: mbrothers@CO.VOLUSIA.FL.US

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Following Migratory Birds to Cuba

The Friendship Association of St Augustine has been organizing trips to Cuba for over a decade. Established in 2000, they forged an alliance to become a sister city to Baracoa, Cuba. Like St Augustine is here, Baracoa is the oldest city in Cuba, founded by Columbus in 1492. This is short notice but we've just received it. Beginning Wed., October 24, they will set out on a 10 day birding trip to Cuba. The cost is just \$3000 and includes roundtrip airfare Miami-Havana/Havana-Miami, all transportation within Cuba, full medical insurance in Cuba, all hotels (3 and 4 star), full breakfast, most dinners and lunches, all entrances fees, overweight baggage and major tips. Two English speaking guides, one professional Cuban bird guide will be along too. Check out their [website](#) for more information or call Soledad Pagliuca at 904-806-1400.

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Hidden Coast Paddling Festival

Sponsored by the Friends of Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges and Pure Water Wilderness, a partnership with Gilchrist, Dixie and Levy Counties, the Festival will run from October 5th through the 7th and highlights a number of selected kayak/canoe routes. Check out their [website](#) which includes a free PDF of a booklet detailing canoe and kayak routes along Florida's Gulf Coast.

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Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

There will be a ribbon cutting ceremony for the grand opening of the trail extension at Tomoka State Park. On Saturday, Sept. 8th, at 10:00 am, at the park entrance, 2099 N. Beach Street, Ormond Beach. Everyone is cordially invited to this event. The new trail extension will be paved and handicapped accessible and extends through the woods of the park from Inglesa Avenue to the park entrance.

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Dowitcher Identification Help

Identification of Long and Short-billed Dowitchers in the field can be a bit of a head ache at times. Here's a [link](#) to a very helpful tutorial.

MEET OUR CHAPTER VOLUNTEERS

One of the first people to greet members as they arrive at our monthly meetings is Celine Sullivan, Co-Chair of the Welcome Committee. After spending 36 years working at Northeast Telephone in Boston, Celine was ready to leave her home in Randolph, Massachusetts, for a better climate. She arrived in Daytona Beach in April 2004, several months ahead of the three hurricanes. Even though it was difficult to leave her beloved Boston Red Sox, she settled in immediately and began a five-year stint selling raffle tickets in the stands at the Daytona Cubs games. After teaching snow skiing at Wildcat Mountain in New Hampshire, she needed a different activity here in Florida and found a compatible group of tennis players at City Island courts. She can be found there three mornings a week.

Celine is a long-time supporter of Grey2K USA, a non-profit organization dedicated to passing legislation banning greyhound racing in all 50 states. She also volunteers to transport injured birds. Surprising to me, Celine said she had never been a bird watcher or Audubon member prior to moving here. She saw a notice in the newspaper for one of our free field trips. Since she was interested in seeing "natural" Florida, but reluctant to go tramping in remote areas alone, she joined our group and became hooked on birds after seeing them up close and personal in a scope. Be sure to say "thanks" to Celine for her service to our Chapter.



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School Starts Again, And So Does ...

Audubon Adventures, the wonderful program that helps engage kids in the natural world around them. Donations from members fund this program. Send your donation to Halifax River Audubon, P.O. Box 166, Daytona Beach FL 32115-0166. Any donation is welcome; \$45 will supply a classroom. Please specify on your check that your donation is for Audubon Adventures. And thank you!

Conservation Notes

No doubt you all saw Dinah Pulver's articles in the News-Journal detailing the brouhaha at the Doris Leeper Spruce Creek Preserve. Just in case you didn't, let me recap the issue.

Land acquisition for the Doris Leeper Spruce Creek Preserve was begun in 1982. The Nature Conservancy, The Trust For Public Land, Audubon of Florida and the St Johns River Water Management District were all instrumental in the efforts to piece together what is now a roughly 2,400 acre natural area that stretches from west of I-95 to the Halifax River, south of Rose Bay. The land is state owned for the most part but is managed by Volusia County. Martins Dairy Road pulls north off Turnbull Bay Road just east of Pioneer Trail. It dead ends in the parking lot for a portion of the Preserve that's become very popular with mountain bikers and those riding horses on the property.

In 1991 Archbold Biological Station sent a team to Volusia County to survey our Florida Scrub Jay population. The area where the mountain bikers ride was identified as prime Scrub Jay habitat that had been allowed to degrade, primarily because of fire suppression. The Acquisition and Restoration Council, a group within the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, has been urging the County to restore the scrub habitat since 2005, through a combined technique of "roller chopping" and controlled burning. The County posted notices on the property and began by roller chopping a small section. It was at this point that all hell broke loose and the mountain bike folks went to the County Council to complain that the plan would ruin what they thought was one of the best mountain bike trails in the state.

The County Council felt that they were already committed to a policy of scrub habitat restoration and there was little they could do. So the mountain bikers went before the City Council of Port Orange to raise the issue since that part of the Preserve lies within the city limits. All this was taking place during the election season. So all of the politicians were anxious to show that they were responding to their constituents. It should also be pointed out that the original restoration plan was perhaps a bit too aggressive in its scope since it calls for mowing down some beautiful trees and wiping out a canopied pathway popular with anyone using the property. In July, I walked the property for the first time in years. I could see right away that a compromise was easily available. By leaving the canopy shaded trails, a buffer could be created that allowed restoration of the true scrub habitat. This would leave untouched, the trails that were so valued by all of the users of the property.

Chapter President, Paula Wehr, and I attended a special meeting at the County Council to deal with the issue. The County staff had already come to the same conclusion we had and proposed it in their initial statement at the opening of the meeting. In the fractious political times in which we live, a compromise apparently wasn't what the other side on this issue wanted. They don't want any change at all on the property. All three Audubon chapters here in Volusia County have joined with Clay Henderson, former County Council member and state representative, in asking DEP and the County to move ahead with the compromise restoration plan. A delegation from Port Orange met with DEP officials in Tallahassee on August 29th. From that meeting came a decision to have a facilitated conference to determine a course of action that addresses the concerns of all stake holders. The date for that meeting has not yet been set.

David Hartgrove

Beginner Birdwatching Class 2012

October is a good time to begin your birding adventures. The weather is getting cooler (slightly), the mosquitos acting less nasty and northern migrants are moving through to their wintering grounds, many staying right here in Florida.

If you always wanted to know more about birds, but never had the time. Now is the time to unlock your latent birding energies. A Beginner Bird Watcher's Identification program is just the answer. Led by two experienced birders from the Halifax River Audubon, the program will consist of three two hour class periods at the Port Orange Library and three field trips. The field trips are visits to three uniquely different habitats, where a wide variety of different bird species will be observed. In past years we have observed over eighty-five species. A nice start for your "life list."

The field trips will give you the opportunity to practice the information learned and discussed at the meetings. At the meeting you will be presented with helpful visual aids and photographs, a systemic method for positive identification of birds, a list of local birding hot spots, techniques in back yard birding, the importance of birding etiquette and the wisdom of the instructors, who have over 40 years of birding experience.

Aside of the seemingly technical aspects of bird ID, you will be outside in the special wonders of Florida's lush landscape and in the company of enthusiastic people enjoying birding with the same skill-set as you. This is a wonderful way to meet people, visit special Florida places, see interesting things, enjoy the out-of-doors, learn how to identify birds and most of all have fun.

The class covers a three week period with the first class beginning on Friday, October 26, 2012 at 9:30AM at the Port Orange Library. The three classes are held on consecutive Fridays and the three field trips on consecutive Tuesdays starting on October 30, 2012. For more information, dates and applications: go to our [website](#) or call President, Paula Wehr, at 386-673-5332.

Ray Scory

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Florida Scrub Jay

by Chuck Tague

The Florida Scrub Jay is the state's only endemic species. The plan to restore habitat at Doris Leeper Spruce Creek Preserve is being done to help this bird.

A Special Thanks To Our Sponsors

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

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

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