

# The Pelican

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

Vol. 58-No.4 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon October, 2012



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Thoughts from on high*

In the October 2011 newsletter we spoke about Halifax River Audubon completing a chapter project to assist a local environmental organization as our way of participating in the 2012 National Make a Difference Day, the largest national day of service in the country.

USA Weekend magazine helped launch this volunteer project years ago and now boasts participation from thousands of groups and individuals all over the country. See a link to the website [here](#).

This year Halifax River Audubon will partner with Tomoka State Park on Saturday, October 27. **Please contact me at 386-673-5332 if you can help with one of the following projects:**

\* Litter pick up in the parking area at Fairchild Oak on Old Dixie Highway, opposite the south entrance to Halifax Plantation. TSP will provide waste bags and gloves. Litter consists mainly of cigarette butts, candy wrappers and pull tabs from juice boxes.

\* Light trail trimming on the Tomokie Trail (from the former museum building out to the statue.) Volunteers are not required to leave the trail – just trim the vegetation that is growing into the pathway.

\* Light trail trimming (same description as above) on the Whalen Trail which begins at the Fairchild Oak parking area.

Volunteers can work for whatever amount of time they have available. Any and all assistance will be greatly appreciated by the park staff. We hope 2012 will be the beginning of a long partnership between TSP and HRA.

*Paula Wehr*

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## Bylaws Changes To Be Voted On

At our next chapter meeting, on October 15th, we will be asked to vote on a set of changes to the bylaws that were adopted by the board at its September meeting. These are primarily house keeping changes involving updates to language and reflect actions taken by the board over the last few years. For instance, we're removing language regarding an Alternate Treasurer since we've never had one anyway. The proposed changes can be viewed on the website [here](#).

## Calendar & Events

**HRA Monthly Meeting, Oct. 15th, 2012** With so many conservation issues facing our community, the State of Florida and the nation, it is very timely that our October speaker will be Charles Lee, Director of Advocacy for Audubon Florida. Charles will discuss advocacy processes and bring us up to date on some of Audubon's current projects. And as an added bonus, two local fourth grade teachers who participated in the Audubon Adventures program last year will tell us how they used the kits to enhance their classroom lessons. Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about how your donations to Audubon are utilized. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Speakers begin at 7:00 p.m. Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. See you there!

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## Chapter Field Trips

**Wed., 10/10/12** Join Peggy Yokubonus for a trip to beautiful Washington Oaks State Gardens and Matanzas Inlet. This is an easy hike of a mile or two, hopefully with lots of warblers and then a short drive to Matanzas Inlet to see shorebirds and waders. Meet at 7:30 am at the Publix at Granada & Williamson. And bring your lunch. Questions? Call 386-673-7619.

**Sun., 10/14/12** Ray Scory and John Carr will be participating in the Big Sit at the west side of the Port Orange Bridge. This is an all day event sponsored by Bird Watcher's Digest and Swarovski Optics. A team sits in one spot and counts all of the species they can. Stop by any time after 7:30 am to cheer our team on and be part of the fun. Look for them at the gazebo under the bridge.

**Wed., 10/24/12** Join Bob North on a walk around Lake Woodruff NWR. This will be an easy hike of 2 miles or so and we should see early arriving ducks and water birds, along with warblers and sparrows. Bring a lunch and meet at 7:00 am, International Square Plaza behind the Krystal, on US 92 just east of I-95. Questions? Call 352-302-3510

Complete information on our field trips is online [here](#).

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**Oct. 3rd Paw Paw Chapter FNPS Meeting** Our own Chuck Tague will present a program on butterflies, the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde of insects. The adults are gentle, colorful creatures that bask in the sunlight and gracefully float on gentle breezes. Not only do they add joy, beauty and whimsy to fields and gardens, they are crucial pollinators to many plants. However their voracious larvae, the caterpillars, pillage leaves and blossoms. If you've ever been on a walk in the woods with Chuck, you know this will be an excellent evening. The meetings are held at the James St. Youth Activity Center, 1700 James St. South Daytona. Doors open at 6:30 pm and the meeting starts at 7:00. Here's a link to a [map](#).

## Conservation Notes

Many of you may have already heard about the new plans for increasing funding for conservation lands here in Florida. The current legislature and administration seem hell bent on wiping out decades accomplishments in the area of conservation by slashing funding for land and water acquisition and infrastructure improvements. It's up to us, the citizens, to take control of the situation. That desire was the impetus for the creation of "Florida's Water & Land Legacy." Endorsed by all of the state's environmental groups, this will be an effort to put an amendment on the ballot in 2014 that will secure funding for conservation projects that will not be subject to the whims of the legislature. And all this will be done without a penny in new taxes. Our chapter has endorsed the initiative and we sincerely hope you'll sign the petition when the time comes. Florida's landmark land preservation programs, Preservation 2000 and Florida Forever, helped save millions of acres of from Pensacola to Key West. Now, through the use of existing documentary stamp taxes, we can guarantee funding for new lands acquisition to better protect our estuaries and recreational lands and provide for better experience for all users of these environmental treasures. Click the link [here](#) for more information on how you can be involved.

As all of you long time members know, when the Farmton plan was being debated there was a lot of disagreement between Audubon chapters as to its implications and especially its advisability. Well in spite of our reservations, it's a fact of life now. Eventually, a new city with as many as 23,000 new homes will be built in what is now pine plantation and a wildlife management area. As part of the agreement to put this plan in place, large conservation easements were to be placed in legal texts that made Florida Audubon a partner in the management of these lands. The Miami Corporation (Volusia County's largest land owner and Farmton's developer) owns and operates the largest mitigation bank in the country on its property. Now, in order to allow realignment of a proposed 4 lane road, they've applied to change the boundaries of the conservation easements to accommodate the new design. Sierra and others in the local environmental community see this as a complete abrogation of the agreements and have asked us to sign onto a petition to the Army Corps of Engineers. The petition seeks denial of the change in land use. However, it's not that simple. Adjustments to boundaries within mitigation banks are done routinely when the development credits remain unsold. Charles Lee, Audubon Florida's Director of Advocacy, points out that, in part because of this adjustment, 13,000 acres down there will be be, "locked down permanently with an immediate group of easements that will be recorded over the next year." So we're declining to sign onto the petition. It's no secret that we were dead set against the Miami Corporation's plans for its property. The deal's been struck whether we like it or not. At least this way we have an ongoing stake in the conservation lands that remain on the site.

And finally, just when we thought that perhaps the current crop of clowns in Tallahassee had exhausted their penchant for the environmental lunacy, we receive word that the Lt. Governor, Jennifer Carroll, has sent a letter to Transportation Secretary, Ray Lahood and NASA Administrator, Charles Bolden. The letter seeks their cooperation in closing the northern portion of Merritt Island NWR, including SR 3, and converting the property into a space port. We went through this in 2008 and we thought it was dead then. Stay tuned. It appears that bad ideas have a life of their own.

*David Hartgrove*

## And Still More Events

**Oct. 4-7, 2012 Central Florida Nature Fest** Central Florida NatureFest 2012 offers something for everyone; including birding, hiking, kayaking, butterfly and wildflower viewing, nature photography, star gazing, swamp buggy rides, air boat tours and exclusive behind-the-scenes access to some of Polk County's most pristine parks and natural lands. Complete information is available on their [website](#) .

**Oct. 26-28, 2012 Treasure Coast Birding Festival** The Pelican Island Preservation Society and the Cultural Council of Indian River County present their first birding festival. Complete information is available on the [website](#) .

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## Audubon Adventures For Our Local Schools

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, Audubon Adventures is perfect for anyone looking for supplemental science activities for upper elementary students. Created by the National Audubon Society, each kit contains four different editions of the award-winning Audubon Adventures Student Nature News Magazine (32 copies of each). This year's edition in called "Sharing Our Earth." The topics are: Sharing Our Shores, which features St Augustine's, John Brian Brice, on patrol protecting Florida's beach nesting birds; Caring For Our Planet, Be A Friend To Birds; World of the Forest and Grasslands A Prairie Tale. See the link [here](#) for more information. 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!

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## Welcome To Our New Members

After an unintentional hiatus, (a polite way of saying the editor dropped the ball) we resume our column welcoming our new and renewing members: Cheryl Allen, Mary Amato, Robert Arnold, Andre Banchi, Jacqueline Coffee, Julie Day, Barbara Deets, Charles Dodd, Jimmy Doty, Bernice Faust, Susanne Flynn, Valerie Ford, June Frasure, Jae Gates, Brenda Gresham, Sande Habali, Cynthia Hansen, Ben Harrington, David Harris, Richard Hills, Herbert Lazarus, Carolyn Lowell, Elaine Malkani, Belinda Manginelli, Arlene North, Susie O'Neill, Eileen Pazos, Lois Pent, Barbara Peterson, Steve Petruniak, Susan Pfannkuche, John & Phyllis Quesal, Edmond Rancourt, Annette Richards, Margaret Rowley, David Simes, Marjorie Sirk, Charlotte Stanton, Dyanne Strange, Marlene Wagner, William Warren, Andrea White, Janet Wieboldt James Yates, Virginia Young. We welcome to you all! We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting or on a field trip.

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## The Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival

It's time to be thinking about attending the biggest and best birding festival of them all, the Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival. It will run from January 23-28, 2013. Online registration should open in mid October and field trips fill up fast. Every major optics manufacturer in the country will be in attendance in addition to tour operators, photographers, etc. So this is an excellent place to try out new binoculars before making a purchase. Here's a [link](#) to the Festival's website.



## Pelagic Trip Report

In last month's Pelican you were invited to head out to sea to look for pelagic species. Those birds whose habits keep them far out to sea except when nesting. And that's often done on remote islands far from the usual travel lanes. If you were along for the trip, you know how good it was. If not, here's a little summary, complete with some excellent photos by Michael Brothers. Though the seas were a bit rougher than our last outing, we saw some amazing sites. We were about 40 miles offshore in the Gulf Stream when we had a group of 4 Great Blue Herons fly over the boat on their way south. We also saw an Eastern Kingbird, a Hooded Warbler, a Prairie Warbler and 2 American Redstarts migrating south far out to sea. We also saw Cory's, Great and Audubon's Shearwaters, Black-capped Petrels, Pomeraine Jaegers, Magnificent Frigatebirds and Black, Sooty and Bridled Terns. For me though the real treat was the large group of Leatherback Sea Turtles we saw. This is the largest of the sea turtle species, with some reaching over 6 feet in length and weighing in at 1300 to 2000 pounds. They were dining on their number one prey item, jellyfish. On our way in we were joined for a time by a pod of Atlantic Spotted Dolphins. They zipped back and forth under the boat and rode in our bow wake. After looking over the photos, Michael was able to identify several Scopoli's Shearwaters. This subspecies of the Cory's Shearwater breeds in the Mediterranean Sea and isn't known to frequent the waters of the western Atlantic. There's another pelagic trip scheduled for Friday, Nov. 2nd. The cost is 130.00. Contact Michael Brothers at the Marine Science Center, 386-304-5543 or by e-mail: [mbrothers@CO.VOLUSIA.FL.US](mailto:mbrothers@CO.VOLUSIA.FL.US) for reservations.

Some photos from the trip in this and the next column.



Picture 1 is a juvenile Sooty Tern being fed by an adult.

Picture 2 is a Black-capped Petrel

Picture 3 shows one of the Cory's/Scopoli's Shearwaters with its diagnostic extensive white under wing lining and narrow bill.

Picture 4 shows one of the Leatherback Sea Turtles with jellyfish tentacles streaming from its mouth.

*David Hartgrove, photos by Michael Brothers*

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### Travel Opportunities For Birders

How about a trip to see some African birds? Ken Gunn and Tad Fyock, from Southeast Volusia Audubon Society are putting together a trip to Kenya. The trip dates are March 13 to April 1st. Cost is 6500.00 plus airfare. Contact Tad at 386-426-8793 or Ken at 386-423-2334. Just imagine your life list after this trip!

Florida Nature Tours has scheduled 3 trips to the Dry Tortugas beginning on April 11, 2013. These will depart from Fort Meyers Beach aboard the very comfortable "Ultimate Getaway." Cost is 1100.00 and birding doesn't get any better than the Dry Tortugas in April. Check the website [here](#) for all the details.

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

**Our website is [www.halifaxriveras.org](http://www.halifaxriveras.org) For information on upcoming field trips, etc.**

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