

The Pelican

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

Vol. 58-No.9 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon March, 2013



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thoughts from on High

March Madness is nearly here. No, not the one associated with NCAA basketball. I'm talking about the squabbles that will take place as millions of birds seek the best territory they can find. A good territory must supply not only a sufficient amount of food for the adults and young, but the right type of food. The territory also needs to include nesting sites that provide protection from predation and materials to build the nest. Territory size varies widely by species with some birds needing large areas and others able to live nearly side-by-side with various species because the territory provides different food for different needs. Territory size can be dramatically increased during years of drought when food is scarce or reduced in times of abundance.

Migratory birds may begin to claim territory in early spring when males arrive from their wintering grounds. They want to find the best territory in hopes of attracting a mate. Year-round resident birds will begin re-defending their territory to alert newly-arrived migrants that "this space is taken."

Singing is the most common way that birds tell other birds that a territory is taken. Songs can carry quite a distance and birds perch near the edge of their territory to broadcast their claim. An added bonus is that loud song may also attract a mate. Woodpeckers and some game birds, like the Ruffed Grouse, claim territory by drumming instead of singing. The woodpeckers drum on hollow trees, telephone poles or the metal flashing on the side of a roof. Ruffed Grouse drum while standing on fallen logs or hollow stumps. They inflate their chest cavity with air and tightly grip the log or stump on which they're standing. This transmits the vibrations through their feet to the hollow log and it amplifies the sound throughout the forest. Here's a [link](#) to a You Tube video.

Some birds, like wrens, claim their territory by building multiple nests in various locations within the territory. Females look over the nests, make their selection, and often begin redecorating immediately. Aggressive species may take the direct route and chase the intruder out of the territory. This behavior is common when a dominant male is discouraging younger males from taking over an existing territory.

As time goes on, the madness increases—staking the territory, protecting the nest, feeding the family. Then the hatchlings leave home, the frenzy slows and birds begin moving toward wintering grounds. March Madness takes over birders, too, as we watch each cycle in the lives of the birds we love.

Paula Wehr

Calendar and Events

Our next meeting, Monday, 3/18/13 Join us at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill, on Monday, March 18, to learn about fish in central Florida. Jimmy Hull, owner of Hull's Seafood in Ormond Beach, will share his vast knowledge of local fish. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m.

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Field Trips, etc.

Friday, 3/8/13, Our field trip to Orlando Wetlands Park. This will be a good one. Recent sightings posted for the park include Vermillion Flycatcher, Purple Gallinule, Purple Martin and Least Bittern. Join Peggy Yokubonus for this trip, meeting at the Target parking lot on Dunlawton Ave., east of I-95 in Port Orange at 7:00 am. This trip involves a good hike and excellent picnic facilities. So bring your lunch. Questions, call Peggy at 386-673-7691.

Wednesday, 3/13/13, Ocala National Forest. Join John Roessler on a trip to this nearby treasure. We'll look for Florida Scrub Jays and Red-cockaded Woodpeckers among other avian treats. Meet at 7:00 am at the Publix at Granada & Williamson Blvds. in Ormond Beach. Bring a lunch. Questions, call John at 386-255-9826.

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Other Field Trip Opportunities

Can't make our trip to Orlando Wetlands on Friday, 3/8? Then perhaps you'd like to join Southeast Volusia Audubon on a trip there the following day, Sat., 3/9. Or how about a trip to Peacock's Pocket and Biolab Road, at Merritt Island on 3/22? Click on this [link](#) for all the details.

On Thursday, 3/21, West Volusia Audubon will be taking a river trip on the Blue Heron. Our chapter has taken this boat out before and it promises to be a good trip. Call Eli Schaperow as soon as possible at 407-314-7965 for all the details.

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Spring in the Dry Tortugas can be as good as birding gets in Florida. Join Florida Nature Tours for an exciting adventure. Here's a [link](#) to their website. Due to price increases for the boat, the cost of next year's trips will probably increase by 200.00 per person. So now's the time to book your trip to this tropical paradise. One day on a trip last year we had 4 Black-whiskered Vireos in a single tree! There are Sooty Terns, Brown Noddies and Magnificent Frigatebirds galore and star gazing beyond compare. I'll be co-leading the 2nd trip, 4/26 through 4/29, though this is not a Halifax River Audubon sponsored trip. Don't miss out on this once in a lifetime experience.

David Hartgrove

Conservation Notes

In January I wrote of the proposal to open Tiger Bay State Forest to off road vehicles. I've looked all over the internet for a copy of this proposal and been unsuccessful so far. As reported in the press, the proposal seeks access just 10% of the Forest property. The 10% they're seeking includes all of the roads and fire breaks. Since these roads and trails are how any and all current user groups access the property the request is really for access to all of the Forest. As the old saying goes, "I might have been born at night, but it wasn't last night."

The City of Daytona Beach has already written a letter to the state outlining their approval of this proposal. We were sort of blind sided by this since we didn't even know they'd been asked to support it. By the time we found out their letter had already been sent. Now they've sent another letter to the County Council asking them to come on board with this proposal. Of course, Tiger Bay State Forest is just that, it's a state forest and neither Volusia County nor the City has any power to open it to off road vehicles. The reason they're weighing in on the issue is because they've been asked to by the plan's proponent. When he approached the state with his proposal they were completely unreceptive. With a budget that barely allows for toilet paper to be kept in the restrooms, the last thing the Division of Forestry needs is to open the entire property to a group whose motorized equipment has the potential for environmental damage.

All of the local Audubon chapters have been in contact with each other on this issue. Stephen Kintner, Conservation Chair for West Volusia Audubon Society, has been asked to speak for us and to represent us on what we hope will be a moderated panel that will include all user groups when and if a decision is made to open some portion of Tiger Bay to off road vehicles. I've written to the Volusia County Council outlining our opposition to the proposal. In one of my e-mails to the Council I indicated that I saw this issue as being similar to the issue of jet skis having access to the beach. As taxpayers they should have access to the beach. But one group's activities can have damaging effects on the activities of others. As a result, jet skis are limited to certain sections of the beach. Perhaps such a compromise can be worked out for ATV users in Tiger Bay. We will continue to work with our sister chapters and the Volusia/Flagler Environmental Council to urge that any recommendations to the Governor's office and the Division of Forestry be the product of a moderated meeting where all user groups are represented.

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The State Legislature is in session again. So of course the loony legislation has already begun to surface. Perhaps the worst so far to emerge has been SB 584. Senator Alan Hays, from Lake County, is the author of this bill. It seeks to place the state in the position of having to sell off one park in order to establish another. It says that before the state can take ownership of any more land it must sell off an equal amount of the land it already owns. Apparently aimed at derailing the effects of any new land buying program, (like Florida's Water and Land Legacy amendment) the Senator said he was shocked at how much land the government now owns. With our population growing again we're going to need a lot of land for parks, recreation and water recharge in the future. We shouldn't have to sell off what we have already. Perhaps a respectful note to the Senator sent [here](#) will get him to remove the bill. It's worth a try.

David Hartgrove



MEET OUR CHAPTER VOLUNTEERS

Renate Calero

Renate is an At-Large Board Member, elected to her first three-year term in June 2011. She was born in Germany where she lived until she moved to England to study the language when she was 18. She next moved to Madrid to study Spanish for one year, later relocating to Paris to learn French. Three years later she returned to Spain where she met and married her American husband who was a career military man. They lived in Spain for 25 years, raising a son and a daughter. Renate worked as a trilingual executive secretary. She and her husband moved to Florida in 1989. In December 2002, Renate graduated Summa Cum Laude from UCF with a BA in Liberal Studies. Her husband passed away in 2001. Renate has three grandchildren – two in Ohio and one in Texas.

She learned to love all nature – trees, plants, birds, animals, insects – from her grandfather and continued studying field guides throughout her life. She learned about the local Audubon chapters, attended a few events, made friends and became active with our chapter, as well as participating in the West Volusia Audubon CBC. Renate attends yoga sessions and Wisdom in Senior Education lectures at Daytona State College. She is also interested in local history. Be sure to thank Renate for her contributions to our chapter when you see her at an upcoming meeting or field trip.



A big (24") Dusky Pygmy Rattler on the trail at Marlbed Flats

photo by David Hartgrove

Teacher of the Year Has High Praise

For Audubon Adventures

Laura Smith, voted Teacher of the Year at R. J. Longstreet Elementary, Daytona Beach successfully uses the Audubon Adventures materials to supplement her curriculum. She is a teacher of the fifth grade and this is what she has to say about the materials:

“The Audubon Adventures are well liked by the students. Each of the newspapers and the activities within are easily incorporated into different subject areas. They are wonderful resources for building vocabulary, learning about different ecosystems, practicing science skills such as observing, recording data, and analyzing data. They are a wonderful help in building reading skills such as cause and effect, compare and contrast, text features, etc. They have been an excellent resource for the students. I have used them in whole group discussions or as a center activity in science, reading, and social studies. The students enjoy them because the newspapers are colorful, have real life pictures, quick and fun activities, and are a change from reading textbooks.”

These materials are supplied to fourth and fifth grade teachers and students in thirty-one classrooms this school year through the generous support of our members. A donation of \$45.00 supplies one classroom with Audubon Adventures.

Marion Monaghan

Editor's note: For those who don't know, R. J. Longstreet was the founder of our chapter and of the Florida Audubon Society, in addition to being Principal of Seabreeze High School. Donations in any amount for Audubon Adventures are welcome. Please note on your check that the donation is for Audubon Adventures. Thank you.

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Welcome to Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new members and to a few who were old members and are joining us again: Nancy Barber, Pat Bays, Junemarie Biege, Michael Carson, John Dicesare, C.W. Ebbert, Gina Holt, Reid Hughes, Janet Kappa, Mimi & Fred Mansour, Susan Taylor, Nicole Triantafellu and Irma Trovato. We hope to see you at a meeting or on one of our field trips.

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Great Backyard Bird Count a Roaring Success

This year's Great Backyard Bird Count was the largest bird count in the history of the planet. Over 4 days birds were counted in 103 countries, including Argentina & Afghanistan, Italy & Iraq and Antarctica and Zimbabwe. Over 120,000 checklists were turned in, with 116,688 in the United States alone. 25.6 million birds were counted covering 3,144 species. With 5,414 reports, Florida ranked 4th among the states after California, 8,584; New York, 7,484 and Pennsylvania 7,000. The top 5 most reported species (reported on the highest number of checklists) were: Northern Cardinal, Dark-eyed Junco, Mourning Dove, Downy Woodpecker and House Finch. The top 5 most common birds were: Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Red-winged Blackbird, European Starling and American Coot. Thousands of photos have been submitted to the GBBC photo contest. Here's a [link](#) to view some of them.

Riding Your Mouse To Adventure

No, we're not talking about a revival of Stuart Little novels or the movie. This about using your computer to follow the flights of a variety of interesting birds. The Avian Research and Conservation Institute, ARCI for short, has been tracking a number of bird species for the past 16 years. At first this was done using older radio technology, which has a relatively short range. New, miniaturized transmitters are now capable of using satellite based technology and have opened up a whole new range of options.

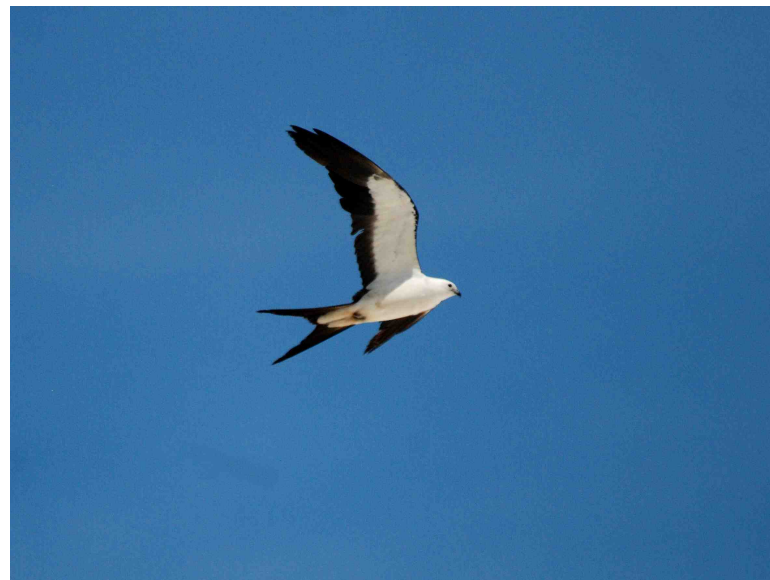
Our ARCI website just went through some major revisions (sorry it's not ready to view on a smart phone yet). The best addition is that we've now linked all of our satellite tracked birds maps with a mapping website called seaturtle.org, so you can follow our birds in real time, and see maps of passed birds tracked too. Note that these maps do not show the fine-scale GPS data. Start with going to our website [here](#). Then, on the home page, scroll down to the Satellite Tracking link. Click here and get to our Tracking Studies page where you'll see sections on 7 different bird species we are tracking: Reddish Egret, Snail Kite, Magnificent Frigatebird, Swallow-tailed Kite, Great White Heron, Northern Harrier and Short-tailed Hawk. Each has a link to its own page on the Seaturtle site. From the Seaturtle site you'll see a list of all the birds we're tracking and a map of all of their tracks. Click on an individual bird and you can see its entire map, a zoomed in map, and even animation of the bird's route.

We hope you enjoy keeping up with our research, and the spectacular journeys these birds go through. We continue to learn so much from these birds and get more clues to answer conservation questions throughout their range.

Gina Kent

Editor's note, Gina is the Research Ecologist and Coordinator for the Avian Research and Conservation Institute in Gainesville, FL. She's been up many tall trees attaching tracking devices to young Swallow-tailed Kites. While you're visiting their [website](#), please consider making a much appreciated donation to this worthwhile group.

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American Swallow-tailed Kite

photo by Joyce Stefancic

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

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