

The Pelican

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

Vol. 58-No.10 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon April, 2013



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thoughts from on High

During a recent forum in Daytona Beach, Eric Draper, Executive Director of Audubon Florida spoke about a passage from a letter written by John James Audubon during his travels in what may have been Brevard County. Mr. Audubon wrote that when he rounded a curve in his boat and came upon an abundance of Roseate Spoonbills, Great Egrets and other plumed birds, the sight "made his heart soar."

That reminded me of my first trip to Forsythe NWR north of Atlantic City several decades ago. As we rounded a bend in the road, we were greeted by mud flats which looked as if they were covered with snow. It was late fall, when darkness begins to fall early in the north. As we neared the white area, the "snow" came alive and lifted off the ground in what seemed a single mass. The hundreds (or maybe thousands) of Snow Buntings flew into the slanted light of the lowering sun, gleaming a brilliant white. Just as quickly, they all turned as a single unit and nearly disappeared. It was a moment of heart-soaring beauty.

Much more recently, March 13 to be specific, our chapter went to a section of the Ocala National Forest on Route 19 in search of the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker. It was a cool, damp morning. We walked a hundred yards or so into the forest. The tall, old-growth pines further shaded the somewhat overcast skies. We heard the squeaking call of our target birds and spotted several flying from tree to tree. Our leader set up his scope on one bird who was working on enlarging the nest hole. At nearly that same moment, the sun broke through the clouds and shone like a spotlight right on the very tree where the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker was working. Unfazed by all the attentive eyes on his every movement, the woodpecker continued his work in the "spotlight" and unknowingly provided heart-soaring moments for everyone in our group.

I thank John Audubon for providing a name to the feeling we all experience many times as we pursue our hobby of watching birds. And I thank Eric Draper for relating the story and reminding me of these heart-soaring memories. Heart-soaring moments are not as rare as we may think. We have to go outside, keep our eyes and ears open and make ourselves available for the wonder of nature all around us.

Paula Wehr

Calendar & Events

Monday, April 15, Program Meeting, David and Sharon Baker spotted one hundred seventy-five species of birds during their almost two-week stay in Montana in 2012, including 31 new life birds. David photographed Black-billed Magpies, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, an American Dipper and more. David will present a photo show of "The Birds of the Big Sky Country – Birding Western Montana" on April 15 at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. See you there!

Field Trips, etc.

Sunday, April 7, Port Orange Bridge Walk, with Ray Scory. Meet at 3:00 pm under the west side of the bridge. Great Egrets have little ones in the nest already on Rookery Island. Questions? Call Ray at 386-763-4260

Friday, April 12, Wekiva Springs State Park, with Chuck Tague. Plan on a hike of a mile or so and some excellent Spring warbler viewing. Meet at International Square Mall, Blvd., behind the Krystal, 2550 Int'l Speedway Blvd. at 7:00 am. Bring your lunch. Questions? Call Chuck at 386-253-1166

Friday, April 26, Tiger Bay State Forest, with Ray Scory and Chuck Tague. This will be an easy hike that could find a muddy or wet spot in some places. Tiger Bay has excellent butterfly and bird watching and Bachman's Sparrows should be singing on territory by then. Meet at International Square Mall, Blvd., behind the Krystal, 2550 Int'l Speedway Blvd. at 7:00 am. Bring your lunch. Questions? Call Chuck at 386-253-1166 or Ray at 386-763-4260.

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Also on April 7th: The Palmetto Club was founded in 1894 and was the first building in Daytona Beach to have electricity. It has a long history of civic engagement and charitable work. They are hosting a unique fund raiser on Sunday, 4/7. At 1:00 pm there will be a luncheon and boutique at their clubhouse, 1000 South Beach Street in Daytona Beach. This will be followed by a tour of 4 historic homes, 3 of which are now operated as B&B's. You can get more information on their website [here](http://www.palmettoclub.org) or by calling Diane Lessard, 386-760-9169.

Volusia County Outdoor Learning Adventures

Bonnie Cary has been thrilling Volusia County school kids for years with her presentations on the tracks and scat of local animals. She's also leading a number of field trips focusing on bicycle and eco buggy tours of a number of state and county properties. Native plant expert, Ray Jarrett, will lead a trip at Hickory Bluff. Herpetology expert, Jim Duby, will talk snakes at Deep Creek Preserve. The list of trips can be found [here](http://www.volusia.org) on the County's website. Come out and learn about places you may not have been to.

Conservation Notes

By now you probably know that on March 21st the Volusia County Council voted 5 to 2 against endorsing the opening of Tiger Bay State Forest to off road vehicles. On behalf of our entire board I want to thank each of you who took the time to contact the Council members and express your thoughts on the issue.

The Council will be hearing from Space Florida and their plans to grab off 150+ acres of land from Merritt Island NWR for a totally unnecessary new launch facility. The proposed new facility will be located in extreme southeast Volusia County and one of the County Council's new members who represents that area, Deborah Denys, thinks this is a fine idea that will help kick start the County's economy. This will be the first item on the Council's agenda on Thursday, 4/4. We'll be there to let them know that not everyone thinks this is such a great idea.

Imagine trying to document every species of bird breeding in the entire state of Florida. That's what we tried to do with the first Breeding Bird Atlas, conducted between Jan. 1, 1986 and Dec. 31, 1991. You can read about that effort [here](#). In that first BBA, 196 breeding species were documented. Last year, knowing that many changes have come to Florida in the intervening years, a new BBA was begun. The first one was done using field data cards. In 1988 not too many people had computers in their homes. Now, not only do people have them in their homes, they frequently have them in their pockets, in the form of smart phones. So this new effort allows direct input of data by the field volunteers. If you've ever entered your sightings in [e-Bird](#) then working with the new [BBA II](#) database will be easy for you. I can't emphasize too much just how important this citizen science project is to the environmental future of our state. If you'd like to participate (and this is a great way to improve your birding skills) please contact me. We really do need your help and I guarantee you'll have fun and learn a lot.

Finally, some sad news regarding the Bald Eagle nest in Holly Hill's Centennial Park. After the article in the News-Journal announcing that the nest had 3 chicks, the park was over run with photographers and some violated the space requirements that federal regulations mandate around active nests. So the City placed barricades and closed off much of the park until nesting was complete. This proved a minor inconvenience for local documentary film maker, Steve Brown. Steve has been in the park filming every day since the first chick hatched out. Several of the regular park visitors had decided to name the birds. They called the entire group, "The Hill Family." The female's name was to be "Holly." The male's name was never decided upon (I vote for "Hank") but the names for the chicks came easily, "Faith, Hope and Charity." I was with Steve one afternoon as we watched the young ones hopping around on the ground exploring their new world and looking for lizards. On Sunday, 3/24, Steve was there at sundown watching as the birds all flew into the nest tree. This created something of a traffic jam and Hope, the second chick, flew back, circled out over LPGA Blvd. and disappeared in the fading light. Steve assumed the bird flew back into the nest tree as he was leaving for the night. The following morning he arrived to find both adults and 2 of the young birds perched in a nearby dead oak looking into the water treatment plant and screeching like he'd never heard. Tragically, he then learned that Hope had been found drowned in one of the tanks at the water treatment plant. The bird will be sent to the USF&WS center in Colorado which supplies eagle feathers to Native American tribes. Steve says work on the film will continue.

David Hartgrove



MEET OUR CHAPTER VOLUNTEERS

John Roessler

John has been chapter President for four years and a past Field Trip Chair. He is currently one of two chapter Vice-Presidents.

He was born and raised in Cincinnati. After receiving his draft notice in 1965, he selected the US Navy and signed on for four years. He did tours at sea and in Viet Nam. His tactical squadron was assigned to Cecil field in Jacksonville which brought John to Florida. He liked the weather and the beach and decided to stay after he completed his military duty. He held a variety of part-time jobs prior to joining the City of Daytona Beach in the mid-1970's. After 30+ years with the City in positions of increasing responsibility, he retired as Manager of Water & Waste Water.

John credits Lois Robinson (former chapter President) and John Carr (current chapter Membership Secretary & Historian) with teaching him how to identify birds. He attended their chapter bird ID class held at The Casements more than a decade ago. As an avid fisherman, he spent hours near the water and had been photographing birds long before he could identify them. The ID class gave him his start in official birding. Through lots of field work and studying field guides, John built his knowledge base and now assists Ray Scory in teaching our current Beginner Bird ID Classes each fall.

When he's not birding, John still spends time fishing with his daughter, an avid fisherwoman. His grandson is away at college and his pre-teen granddaughter lives with her mother in Daytona Beach. He plays golf several times a week. John has owned a motorcycle since he was 16 years old and still enjoys riding in and around the area. In the early 1970's he raced his motorcycle on the beach at Daytona Beach Shores.

Without our chapter volunteers, we could not provide all our current activities. Be sure to say thanks to John when you see him.

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Welcome To Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new members and to a few old members who are joining us again: Frank Barr, Patricia Bays, Joesph M. Bierworth, Christine Dann, Deloris Dixon-Claus, Jim Evans, Deborah Green, Virginia Groh, Susan Haynes, Pam Heapley, Patricia Herold, Thomas R. Ingersoll, Donna Jordon McLachlin, Dale Meagley, Lisa Mickey, Patricia Monaghan, Ruth Scholl and Harry E. Thomas. We hope to see you all at our meetings and on our field trips.



The Yvonne Scarlett-Golden Cultural and Educational Center

James Hanis, City Architect for Daytona Beach, designed and oversaw the construction of a beautiful new cultural and educational center at 1000 Vine Street. The building is built around a square, open-air amphitheater. Windows on all sides of the building overlook natural areas preserved from what was originally a treed retention pond. Mr. Hanis contacted our chapter in January to ask if we'd provide bird houses and feeders to support the existing resident birds and to attract other native species. In mid-March, two large platform feeders with squirrel/raccoon baffles were installed outside the classroom windows. Two songbird houses and an owl nest box were strategically placed on the grounds and a bat house, constructed by Shari Blissett-Clark of the Florida Bat Conservancy, was placed on the southwest corner. Shari told us that pregnant young female bats will be looking for new homes over the next few weeks, so there is a good possibility that we'll have a bat colony living in the house this spring. Keep your fingers crossed that one of our nest boxes will house a Great-Crested Flycatcher family over the next months.

An official grand opening of the facility will be held in the coming weeks. HRA is proud to partner with the City on this project. The classroom facilities are excellent. We look forward to participating in educational programs at the YSG Center in the future.

Paula Wehr, who also took the photos



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. 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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Opportunities To Help The Marine Science Center

And to have birding adventures too. The Marine Science Center is sponsoring another pelagic trip, this time to the far side of the Gulf Stream 100 miles out to a spot called the "Tuna Grounds." In 2011 this trip found White-tailed and Red-billed Tropicbirds Black-capped Petrels, all 3 species of storm petrel, all 3 species of jaeger and Brown Booby. The boat is the very comfortable and safe, Pastime Princess, from New Smyrna Beach. The trip will be on Sunday, May 19th and will leave the dock at 3:00 am, returning at 9:00 pm that night. Cost is 195.00.

If you've been seeing the notices in the Pelican about birding the Dry Tortugas with [Florida Nature Tours](#) next month, book your trip now through the Marine Science Center and they will get a donation from Florida Nature Tours. The dates for the Dry Tortugas trips are: Sat., 4/20 thru Tues., 4/23; Fri., 4/26 thru Mon., 4/29; and Thurs., 5/2 thru Sun., 5/5. All three trips have a few vacancies yet but they're filling fast. E-mail MSC Director, Michael Brothers [here](#) or call him, 386-304-5543, for all of the details.

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photo by David Hartgrove

This spectacular male Rufous Hummingbird was found at a home here in Daytona Beach. Though it's probably just a matter of time before this species nests somewhere in Volusia County, there's no evidence they are yet. This winter migrant has probably already headed back west. Twenty years ago Ruby-throated was the only hummingbird nesting east of the Mississippi. Rufous and Black-chinned have been found nesting in Florida's western panhandle in the past few years. Keep an eye out for these little guys.

David Hartgrove

A Special Thanks To Our Sponsors

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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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