

The Pelican

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

Vol. 59-No.3 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
September, 2013



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thoughts from on High

September marks the beginning of a new year – the birding year, that is. Many species of far northern breeders are already winging their way south. Shorebirds have begun to show up along Biolab Road, Black Point Drive and other areas of Merritt Island NWR.

The annual Autumn Hawkwatch at Hawk Mountain, Kempton, PA begins on August 15 and runs through December 15. Bald Eagles, American Kestrels and Ospreys are among the first migrants. Broad-winged Hawks will peak in mid-September at the same time that the first migrating Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks will be spotted. [Hawk Mountain Sanctuary](#) was founded in 1934 by conservationist Rosalie Edge to stop the shooting of hawks migrating along the Kittatinny Ridge.

Migrating raptors sometimes form kettles (groups) that seem to float in circles overhead rather than flying on a direct course. They are actually conserving energy by riding air thermals. Wind following a cold front blows from the northwest and strikes the geographic line of mountains (like the Appalachian Range which runs north and south along the eastern US) at a nearly 90° angle. This pushes the breeze upward, creating lift along the ridges that the hawks follow during migration. Raptors soar on this rising air, spiraling ever downward until they catch another pocket of rising air and repeat the procedure, essentially flying from one hot air bubble to another.

The best hawk watching in Florida is at Curry Hammock State Park, on Marathon, in the Florida Keys. The Florida Keys Hawkwatch has all of the information on their [website](#).

Paula Wehr



Paula and her sister, Jayne, on Kittatinny Ridge. Photo taken on Paula's phone by another birder who also happened to be there.

Calendar & Events

Monday, Sept. 16, PROGRAM MEETING Ray Scory found himself evolving into a suburban birder and photographer. He enjoys searching the nooks and crannies of his immediate environment, anticipating the surprise of a spectacular birding experience. His efforts yielded a collection of interesting bird images which were photographed along city streets, parking lots, neighborhoods and backyards – all close to his home. Join us on Monday evening, September 16, at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill to see Ray's presentation of "Birds Near By." Doors open at 6:30 p.m. The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. Guests & visitors are welcome.

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Field Trips and More

Fri., Sept. 20, We start our new field trip season with what we're calling, "The Shorebird Chase." Basically, this means we're off to wherever the birds are found when we scout the areas earlier. Meet at 7:00 am, International Square, 2500 West Intn'l Speedway Blvd., behind the Krystal restaurant. Bring a lunch.

Mon., Sept. 16, A special night for a special meeting of the Paw Paw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. A presentation on Coastal Wetlands, Wetland Plants and Seagrass Beds will be held at 7:00 pm at the Piggotte Center, 504 Big Tree Road, in South Daytona. Refreshments will be served. Doors open at 6:30 pm. Check out their [website](#) for lots more information.

Field Trips With Others

Flagler Audubon Society Here's a [link](#) to the field trips page on the Flagler Audubon Society's website. Their first trip is on Oct. 5th to Washington Oaks Gardens State Park. Meet at 8:30 am in the parking lot adjacent to the Friend's Gift Shop in the park, 6400 N. Oceanshore Blvd., Palm Coast, FL

Volusia County Land Management Join County Naturalist, Bonnie Cary, and other staff members on a variety of interesting and informative field trips to the County's environmental treasures. There are hikes, bicycle rides and eco-buggy tours showcasing spots you may not be aware of. Click the link [here](#) for all the info.

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Landscaping For Birds Seminar

Sat., Sept. 7, "Birdscaping" is what master gardner, Kevin Bagwell, calls it. Join Kevin at his nursery, Full Moon Natives, for a lesson in how and what to plant in your yard to attract our feathered friends. It's **free** and light refreshments will be provided. Call 386-212-9923 or [e-mail](#) your reservation. Attendance is limited. The address is 1737 Fern Park Drive Port Orange, FL 32128. That's about 6/10's of a mile west of I-95 off Taylor Road.

Conservation Notes

In late March of this year an invitation soliciting comments for an event called the "Rocketman 2013 Triathlon" went out to various members of the environmental community. The event was scheduled for May 5th. So there wasn't a lot of time to think about the implications. The route for the race included SR 406, the Max Brewer Memorial Parkway, which runs past the entrance to Black Point Wildlife Drive at the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. The majority of the route was actually along roads through Kennedy Space Center property. I thought it over and came to the conclusion that since the event was being held in May, when the bird population at MINWR was considerably less than it is in January, there would be little if any disturbance to the birds and other wildlife. I was joined in this opinion by members of Orange Audubon and Audubon Florida, among others. It was about this time that the Law of Unintended Consequences made itself felt.

Earlier this month Layne Hamilton, Refuge Manager at MINWR, sent me a copy of the post event report she compiled. The event was nothing short of a disaster for the refuge. Roads used by regular visitors to the Refuge were closed for the event. So those who weren't aware of the road closures were inconvenienced by having driven there only to be turned away or faced with a 30 mile detour. Fire protection, which is a 24/7 duty on the Refuge, was impacted because 12 wildfire personnel and 4 engines had to be relocated to a Brevard County facility in Mims since the road closure prevented access to the Refuge's Fire Dispatch Center. This came at a time when the area was in extreme fire danger due to the lack of rain. If a fire had occurred response times would have been significantly increased. A request from a local Boy Scout troop for a camping permit was denied due to limited emergency access with the Titusville Bridge closed for the event. Finally, there were the impacts to wildlife. It turns out that there have been numerous studies showing that birds are very much effected by bicycle traffic. So have 1,400 of them whizzing by at various intervals was a major disturbance indeed. Due to the frequency with which motorized vehicles go by the road side impoundments, the birds become habituated to their presence. A car is like a mobile blind and the birds often pay little attention, unless the vehicle stops and people get out slamming the doors. Bicycles, because of the extra motion involved and the fact that they aren't seen often by the birds, create disturbance and cause stress.

So it's time for a mea culpa on my part. Making a decision with few facts and a what turned out to be a bad hunch means dining on crow. And I hate that. They're some of my favorite birds.

A depressing 50th anniversary milestone comes up this month. On September 4th, 1963, the last known Eskimo Curlew was shot on Barbados. This news arrived via the monthly Bird Studies Canada newsletter. There's an excellent article online [here](#) that tells the tale. Regular readers will remember that I wrote in the past of the notorious "shooting swamps" on several Caribbean islands where satellite tagged Whimbrels were shot in 2011. Thanks to a massive outpouring of letters and support for controls on the activities at these places, the French government has begun tentative steps to curb the slaughter on islands where they have jurisdiction. You can read the news [here](#) on the World Waders Blog.

Finally, if you ever went to southeast Arizona for a birding trip, you probably found yourself in Mrs. Paton's backyard at some point. It's one of the most famous spots in the country to see hummingbirds. Now that she and her husband have passed on, the American Bird Conservancy, Victor Emmanuel Nature Tours, and Audubon chapters all over the country are banding together to purchase the property. They need our help. Click [here](#) to donate.

David Hartgrove

Meet Our Chapter Volunteers

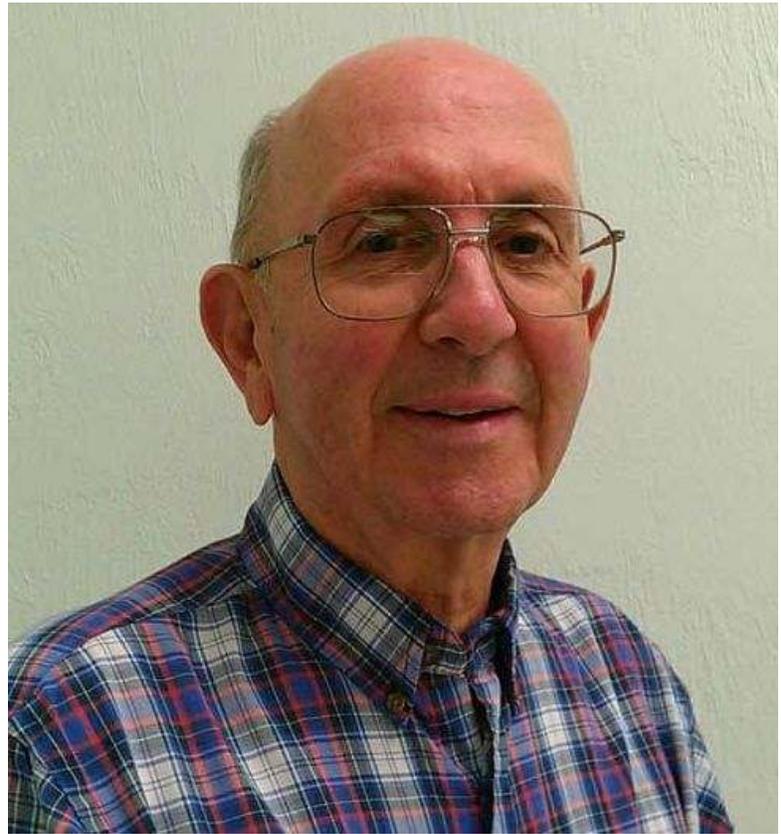


photo by Paula Wehr

Ray Scory discovered his passion for photography when he was in college at the University of Connecticut. Two days after arriving at Fort Dix for US Army basic training, he met up with an old fraternity buddy who just happened to be the man to know in a place like that. He assigned Ray to Fort Lee, Virginia as an Army photographer and what had been an avocation soon became his life's love and work.

After his tour of duty he returned to Waterbury, Conn. and went to work at Industrial Photo Service. He bought the business a year later and began a 40 year career providing photographic services to industrial and commercial clients all over the northeast. He also met and married his wife, Jane, a high school art teacher. They had two children, John and Shelby, who went on to give them several grand children.

Ray has received far more awards for his work than we have room here to list. He taught photography at several colleges and served on the boards of numerous professional photography organizations. He also served as President of the New Haven Bird Club for several years. He has served as a volunteer ranger at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, is an official photographer for the Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival and has taught our Beginning Birding class for the past 10 years. So if you see Ray on a field trip, patiently teaching someone the finer points of warbler identification, be sure to say thanks.

David Hartgrove

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Audubon Assembly – Boots on the Ground

Join Audubon members from around the state for our annual celebration. Get inspired and get involved in citizen science, habitat stewardship, and grassroots advocacy. This year's exciting event will be held at the beautiful Innisbrook Resort and Golf Club in Palm Harbor, Florida – about 30 minutes from downtown Tampa. Click [here](#) for all the details.

Come Out And Support These Events

Sat., Sept. 21 The Natural History Festival at the Museum of Arts and Sciences. This event is part of the "Septembers With The Smithsonian" program. This is an event for the whole family. There are hands on activities for kids, presentations like the one by Dr. Rachel K. Wentz, "How Fire Has Transformed Civilization" and much more. The fun begins at 10:00 am and is Free for Museum members or with paid admission.

Come out and spend an hour to help our Indian River Lagoon.

Hands Across the Lagoon

September 28, 2013
9:00–10:00 a.m.

South Causeway (SR 44)
New Smyrna Beach, FL

Parking available on Canal St., Palmetto St., Live Oak St., the Brannon Center and at Callalisa Creek

Hands Across the Lagoon events are occurring in all five lagoon counties to call attention to the declining condition of our Indian River Lagoon and to ask our leaders to make the health of the lagoon a top priority.

Devastating algae blooms in 2011 and 2012 destroyed 60% of the lagoon's seagrasses. Since the fall of 2012, and continuing this year, the lagoon's wildlife is under threat, with the unexplained deaths of many brown pelicans, manatees and dolphins.

Join your friends and neighbors in standing up for lagoon protection and restoration. At 9:45 a.m. participants will join hands for 15 minutes to show that we care about the lagoon and want to see it restored to a healthy condition.

Sponsored by:

- MDC
- Marine Science Center
- Volusia County
- Indian River Lagoon
- Indian River Lagoon Program
- UF Florida
- UCF
- Indian River Lagoon Program

For additional information, contact:
Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program
321-722-5363
khill@sjrwm.com

Find us on facebook.

Indian River Lagoon News and Events

As you can see, we're one of the sponsoring organizations. This will be a fun way to start your weekend and do something positive to raise awareness about this major water quality issue. We hope to see you there.

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Take Two Minutes To Help Save Our Parks

In yet another example of just how out of touch with their constituents our state Legislature is, they have directed the Department of Environmental Protection to survey all of its land holdings to see what there is to be surplussed and sold off to the highest bidder. Here in Volusia County there are 4 parcels on their list: a small part of Tomoka State Park, a strip of land near Blue Springs State Park that the County plans to include in its bike trails program and 2 small parcels near Lake George State Forest. Across the state there are far larger parcels, including a 400 acre tract adjacent to Wekiva Springs State Park and a 150 acre site in Oleta River State Park in Miami. We have a program here in the state called "Florida Forever", which is designed to fund the purchase of environmentally endangered lands. The Acquisition and Restoration Council will meet in Tallahassee on Friday, Sept. 13th to discuss this issue. Here's a [link](#) to send them an e-mail. Let them know that "forever" means just that.

David Hartgrove

Tomoka Eagle Scout Project Partnership

Cody Carrier, a 9th grade IB student at Spruce Creek High School and a Boy Scout with the rank of Life, is working toward the highest rank of Eagle Scout. In order to attain this rank, he is required to plan, develop and lead a service project that benefits a non-profit organization. He selected Tomoka State Park. His project proposal has been approved by Park officials and the Boy Scouts.

His project will upgrade the Boardman Pond wildlife observation platform built a number of years ago by Scouts and Halifax River Audubon. To visit the platform, take North Beach Street/Old Dixie Highway north from the Tomoka State Park entrance. Turn right onto Walter Boardman Lane. You'll see the tidal pond on your left. Continue past the pond to the small parking area on the right. The trail to the platform is on the left; walking only, no cars permitted.

He will also clear vegetation from the trail and coordinate the design, manufacture and installation of a color wildlife interpretive panel. Total cost for the project is about \$2,000. He has raised a little less than half the money already. Our HRA Board voted to provide up to \$600 to match future donations he will raise.

Cody is requesting individual donors to contribute to his fundraising efforts. Send a check, payable to Friends of Troop 403, Cody Carrier Tomoka Eagle Project, to Cody Carrier, 18 Cameo Circle, Ormond Beach 32174.

The interpretive panel will be tamper-proof with a 10-year warranty, will meet requirements of the American Disabilities Act and will be designed to highlight the importance of this salt marsh to the many species of local and migratory birds that depend upon its continued existence. The current platform will be repaired, cleaned and treated with sealant.

Paula Wehr



This photo (taken by his Dad, Phil) shows Cody standing on the existing observation platform.

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Video Links

Below are two links to beautiful and interesting videos online. The first was sent to me by our Membership Chair and Historian, John Carr. It's a lesson about hummingbirds and how they're able to get nectar. They're even more amazing than we thought. Here's the [link](#).

The other one came to me from Capt. Jim Boyle, who's often been so helpful when doing bird surveys along the Halifax River. This one has some amazing photography of flowers, accompanied by beautiful music. Here's its [link](#). Both are just a few minutes in length and are guaranteed to brighten your day.

Ed.

This month we begin a new column. Every other month Ray Scory, who teaches our Beginning Birding class, will contribute an article.

A Mockingbird's Song

an *Everyday Birding* close by message...

by Ray Scory

She fed the birds and planted honeysuckle along side the open porch, because they smelled nice and attracted the hummingbirds, too. She had my father put a bird box on a pole outside the kitchen window and bluebirds nested there. He also had to trim the two cedar trees in the small front yard so we could see the birds nesting and watch the young ones fly away.

This all began just before the War, when my mother and father first moved into their little bungalow in a neighborhood where everyone worked in the factories. She fed the birds with stale bread and tied suet to the grape arbor poles when times got better.

For fifty years, she watched the birds on this small plot of land in a neighborhood of small white houses set side by side. She didn't stop until the day we drove her away to the rest home where she sat in a wheel chair in her special world and always liked to watch the birds. I don't think she knew the names of all of the birds that came into the yard or even cared, but she liked looking at them. She didn't keep a yard list or have a lot of bird books and who knew about video tapes in the nineteen forties, but because my mother watched the birds in the yard, her young son watched, too.

A few years before she left her home she would open her front porch door and a Mockingbird would appear on top of nearby hedges and they would talk to each other. The Mockingbird would then deftly dance closer from branch to branch and they would talk again. I'd like to think that the Mockingbird was thanking my mother for taking care of the birds all those years and thought she was quite special.

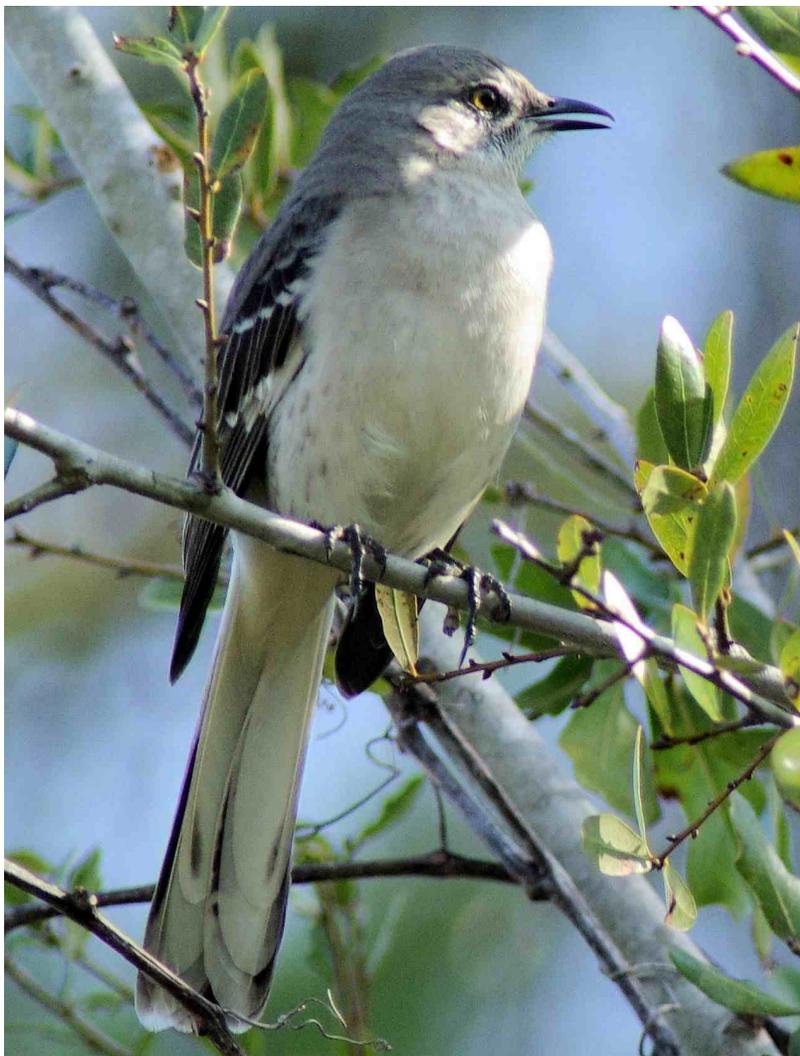
In loving gratitude to my mother and in memory of all the other nice people who inspired us to watch the birds. I dedicate to them my first *Everyday Birding* message printed in the Halifax River Audubon newsletter.

Postscript: This column was published (September 1997) as my first President's Message in the Chickadee, the New Haven Bird Club newsletter. I have altered some sections to bring it up to date. At the request of Paula Wehr, our president and David Hartgrove, our editor, I will begin to write a column in our newsletter featuring everyday birds that are familiar to us but may be an exciting "first time seen" bird for visitors to our area. This first time column will coincide with our chapter's first monthly presentation of our new year in September 2013. The presentation is called, "Everyday Birding, close by."

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Help Save Florida's Environmental Heritage!

The Florida's Water & Land Legacy Amendment campaign has just under 3 months to gather half a million signed petitions to get on the ballot in 2014. With your help that goal can be achieved. Halifax River Audubon, our sister chapters locally, Audubon Florida, the League of Women Voters and all of the state's environmental groups are working hard to see that this initiative is successful. If you haven't signed already, here's a [link](#) to the website. You can download and print a copy for mailing and even donate to the cause. This is without question the single most important action you can take to help save what's left of Florida's environmental beauty.



Northern Mockingbird, photo by Ray Scory

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Welcome To Our New & Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new members and to those who are rejoining us again: Suzanne Allen, Toby L. Begger, Courtney Benford, Rebekah Berman, Renee Burson, Betty Buss, Dearcey Campbell, Joe Cappetta, Penny Crouch, Mildred Drogowski, James Drummond, Robert Edinger, H.L. Funkhouser, C. Gagnon, Ethelyn Gass, John Green, Antonio Haselman, Josephine Kerrigan, Frances Larsen, Lorraine Lee, Donald Leroy, Jane Lingenfelter, Dave McGan, Vivian S. McLellan, Linda McQuaig, Howard Newton, Mary Nilsson, Violet Nolte, Dorothy Orton, Rose F. Patterson, Penney Peirce, Margaret F. Pfoutz, Katie Rodgers, Harry L. Ruppenthal, William Ryan, Eda Shlyam, Frederick J. Steger, Ronald Strain, Shoshannah Tempest, Doug Traver, Mark J. Vogenitz, Linda Vosbury, Kimberly Wallace, Mary Wender, Luise West, Laurie White, Melanie R. Whyte.

We hope to see you at our meetings or on one of our field trips.

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A Pelagic Birding Trip At The End of the Month

The Marine Science Center is sponsoring another pelagic birding trip aboard the "Pastime Princess." We leave the dock in New Smyrna Beach at 4:00 am on Sunday, Sept. 29th and return at 7:00 pm. This your chance to see birds like Cory's, Great and Audubon's Shearwaters; Wilson's and Leach's Storm Petrels; phalaropes, jaegers, and more. You can bring a small cooler and the boat's galley has sandwiches, burgers, etc. Cost is 195.00 per person. Contact Michael Brothers [here](#) or call him at 386-304-5543 for complete details.

A Special Thanks To Our Sponsors

**Florida Power & Light, Garden Club of the Halifax Country,
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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