



Mourning Dove

Photo by Ray Scory

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EAGLE SCOUT PARTNERSHIP

Cody Carrier, ninth grade IB student at Spruce Creek High School, approached the HRA Board in August 2013 requesting editorial and financial assistance with his proposed Eagle Scout project. Tomoka State Park had already approved his proposal to upgrade the wildlife observation platform on Boardman Pond, clear the trail leading from the street to the platform and to design and install an interpretive sign on the platform. Cody had already raised nearly \$1,200. The HRA Board approved a matching gift donation of up to \$600 – meaning that if Cody could raise an additional \$600, we would match that amount. Cody was up to the challenge and had commitments for most of the required funding early in the fall.

Working with a professional graphics designer, he took a panoramic photo of the view from the platform and drafted text explaining the importance of this salt marsh to the many species of local and migratory birds that depend upon its continued existence. HRA Field Trip Co-Chair, Chuck Tague, provided photos of birds which are commonly found on Boardman Pond. Together, he and Cody selected nine photos to include in the 54x24-inch sign.

From start to finish, the project took about 13 months and cost about \$2,700 which covered panel design and manufacture with mounting brackets, stain and sealant, painting supplies, caulking and hardware. He began the refurbishment of the platform over the Christmas break but had to work in short time blocks due to rain, cold and school commitments. He finished all work during the first weekend in March and passed inspection by Tomoka State Park. Cody, now in 10th grade, did a great job and we're proud of him.

Story & photo
by
Paula Wehr



Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*)

a feature of Everyday Birding

by Ray Scory

A Mourning Dove song sung in a soft, plaintive way. Yet it sounds so far away. Nothing very complex here. Yet it serves as an everlasting memory to a place once visited. In the pines of Cape Cod, the backyard of our Florida home, at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, In Boulder, Arizona, Michigan, Connecticut and the Florida Keys, The Mourning Dove is always a welcoming friend. Found most anywhere except deep woods . Wide spread and very common. It is no wonder that 400 million Mourning Doves have been estimated in North America.

The Mourning Dove is a prolific breeder, inhabiting suburbs, farmlands, woodlands, fields and open spaces with trees for its nesting purposes. In warmer areas it can have at least six broods per year. As a game bird the Mourning Dove is well managed. It is estimated at least 20 million are shot each year for food and sport. However, because of its healthy proliferation, it maintains its high numbers and is not considered a threatened species.

I once stood under a mourning dove's nest teetering at the end of a white pine tree in the backyard of my Connecticut home. I looked up and right through to the sky above. I never saw a bird's nest constructed so flimsily, nothing like the fortress-like construction of a robin's nest. A few randomly placed sticks allowed me to see two beautiful white eggs from underneath. Quite an amazing sight. On the other hand, I thought that the bird was quite lazy and really an inept builder of a safe nest for its young. A breeze, that couldn't blow out a match, seemed capable of blowing this nest out of the tree.

Docile and detached the Mourning Dove seems to be. Watch how they sit on a feeder awaiting a refill of seed. Oh, so patiently. Upon refill, so deliberately they feed. Harboring the patience of a good birder, or most likely, the other way around. Don't be fooled by their timid demeanor. I repeatedly watch its ferocity at my feeder. They stand their ground and will not let another bird bully, including another Mourning Dove. The other day, I watch feathers fly before one was pushed off the feeder after a worthy struggle.

While the Mourning Dove does not display eye-popping color, its brilliance is quite in tune with its subtle behavior. Patience and keen observation will expose the delicacies of its color. Open, expressive eyes surrounded by thin azure eye rings contrasts nicely with its soft tan gray body and wings. I especially scan individual mourning doves looking for the soft wash of quiet pink on its neck and lower chest and the strength of the buffed color tan cloaking its underparts. Note the small iridescent patch on each side of its neck. The Mourning Dove is resilient, interesting, softly beautiful and easy to find. A favorite of mine.

Bird Call - Mourning Dove

- * the oldest known mourning dove was 31 years 4 months old
- * a straight, fast flying, ground feeding, seed eating bird, a popular bird feeder bird
- * long pointed tail, small head in comparison to sleek body, wing span - 17.7 inches
- * drinks by suction without lifting its head
- * begins feeding young a special "milk" stored in its crop
- * wing whirl on takeoff and landing is a diagnostic feature



Connie Paulding Photo by Paula Wehr

MEET OUR CHAPTER VOLUNTEERS

Connie Paulding was born in New York State but lived most of her life in Massachusetts. After raising two sons, she worked in retail sales before starting her own business. Connie had been making sterling silver jewelry as a hobby. A friend from metal-working class invited her to a lecture about making glass beads. Connie was fascinated and began producing her own beads – melting the glass in front of a torch, dropping the molten glass onto a rod and spinning the rod by hand while creating the design in the glass. She sold her creations at juried craft shows in the northeast section of the US before opening her own business.

Her husband, Bart, a consulting engineer specializing in ground water and a professor in the Civil Engineering Dept at their local college, became Connie's moving man when they traveled to craft shows. Connie is more or less retired from jewelry making now but is still a member of Florida Society of Goldsmiths and works in the studio in Deland to make special gifts and to keep her skills current.

She and Bart owned a 38-foot sailboat for 25 years, living on the boat moored at Halifax Marina during the winters of 2000 through 2008. They brought the boat to Florida via the ICW, but have taken ocean voyages to Nova Scotia and Maine. They participated in races from Massachusetts to Bermuda twice with a crew of six, including themselves. Not only did Connie do the cooking, she also had to take night watch and her turn at steering the boat. Racers sail 24x7.

They moved to a condo in 2008 but remained snowbirds until 2013 when they sold their home in Massachusetts and are now permanent Florida residents. They joined Halifax River Audubon after reading an ad in the newspaper about one of our meetings. Connie found Audubon to be very educational. She enjoyed the field trips but wishes the birds would sleep in just a little bit later. Be sure to greet Connie when you see her selling 50/50 raffle tickets at our monthly meetings.

Paula Wehr

Mike Judd, a birder from Dunedin, FL, posted this fascinating article to [BrdBrains](#) on 4/14/14. Our thanks to him and the article's author, Felicia Sanders, of the South Carolina DNR. The points made in Felicia's article about the birds utilizing beaches applies to ours here in Florida as well. Geolocators are tiny devices used to determine information on migrating animals. Here's [link](#) to more information. Editor

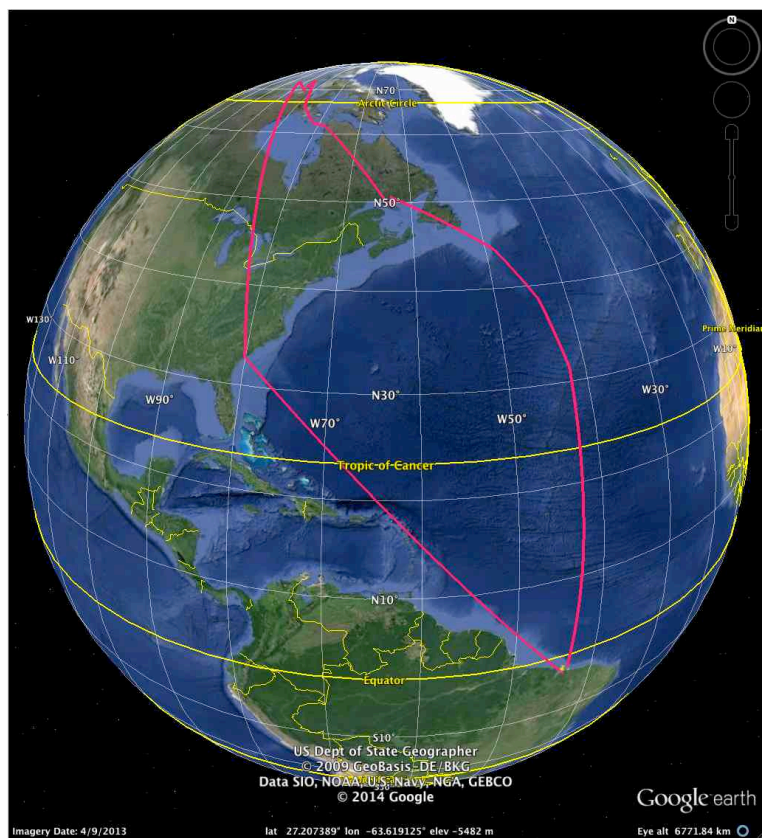
Ruddy Turnstones, Long Distance Flyers

A team of researchers lead by Dr. Larry Niles captured and attached geolocators to Ruddy Turnstones in Brazil. This is a map of the flight path one Ruddy Turnstone took during one year. Ron Porter is an expert at interpreting data downloaded from geolocators and attachment of these devices. They shared this map and timeline with us.

This Ruddy Turnstone was captured Feb 27, 2013 in Brazil and banded and a geocator attached to a leg band. May 15, 2013 it flew 4 1/2 days and landed at Cape Island, in Cape Romain NWR, SC. June 1, 2013 it flew from SC to Arctic nesting grounds. At the end of July it flew south and arrived back in Brazil August 24, 2013. On Feb 26, 2014 it was recaptured in Brazil, the geocator retrieved and the bird released. The western line is the north migration and eastern line south migration.

Ruddy Turnstones are an arctic nesting shorebird. They are seen on South Carolina's coast all year but are especially common during spring migration when they gain weight and fat to fuel the long flight to the Arctic. Many shorebirds are declining and one reason for this decline is human disturbance on beaches and in coastal areas. This research points to the importance of South Carolina and a need for undisturbed beaches so these birds can rest and feed and make the trip another year!

Felicia Sanders





Red-shouldered Hawk nest at the Port Orange Library

photo by David Hartgrove

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Science and Engineering Fair Winners

Each year the three Audubon chapters in Volusia County pool equal donations to award 4 winners cash prizes for projects with an environmental theme in Senior and Junior categories. Due to space limitations in last month's Pelican these budding scientists were not mentioned. We correct that situation here.

1st prize Senior (\$100) awarded to Priya Gurjar from Spruce Creek High School for her project "Soil analysis for detection of antibiotic producing bacteria".

1st prize Junior (\$100) awarded to Samantha Serroao from River Springs Middle School for her project "Determining the Earthworm's ability/preferences in decomposing common organic waste".

2nd prize Senior (\$50) awarded to Rachel Jimenez from Spruce Creek High School for her project "Pollution in the Intracoastal".

2nd prize Junior (\$50) awarded to Matthew Davis from Burns Science and Technology Charter School for his project "How Does Salinity Affect Manatee Grass?".

While at the "Lagoonacy" event at the Marine Discovery Center on Saturday, April 12th, Matt introduced himself to me. Our future is in good hands.

David Hartgrove

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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. 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!

Many of you saw the articles in the News-Journal about the hawks at the Port Orange Library. Renate Calero, one of our board members, relates her experience below. Editor

A Red-shouldered Hawk Protecting Its Nest

Something unexpected happened several weeks ago, just as I stepped out of the local Port Orange library to go back to my car. I felt an impact, as something hit me in the back of my head. Instinctively, I covered the area with my hand, while turning around to find out what it could have been. Since other library patrons seemed to be far away, I looked up above me to see whether there was an explanation to what had just happened. There it was: a hawk sat at the edge of the roof gazing down at me! What a magnificent bird, I thought, as our eyes interlocked for what seemed like an eternity. I took in all its beautifully colored plumage - it was a Red-shouldered Hawk. A lady calling out to me, brought me back to reality: "You are bleeding profusely. You better go into the library to get some help."

Once inside the library I learned that a pair of hawks had an active nest with three chicks in a tree right above the entrance of the library. Yes, they had acted aggressively in the last few days, swooping down close to patrons, but that I was the first person they had physically attacked. While I was putting pressure onto a bump swelling up on my head and to stop the bleeding from three lacerations, the librarian filled in what seemed like endless paper work. The EMT people recommended I to go to the emergency room for a tetanus shot. Then I overheard someone they had to send in a "nuisance bird" report and maybe have the nest relocated. I remember saying to them that I believed that hawks are a protected species and that their nests could not be relocated.

Several hours later, when I finally came home after getting my tetanus shot, I called David Hartgrove, our Chapter's Conservation Chair, with regard to a possible "nuisance bird" report. He did talk the following day to the Library Director, Jane Weimer, who told him that "the hawks had been in residence there for a number of years" and that to her knowledge "this is the first time they've ever attacked anyone." She assured David that the library "would not consider calling in an animal control person to remove the nest or harm the hawks." Thereafter, signs appeared warning of "nesting hawks" and suggesting the use of an umbrella while going in and out of the library.

News spread quickly, especially, after a newspaper article talking about several more people being attacked by the hawks in the days that followed mine. Bird enthusiasts, photographers and other curious onlookers who came to see the hawks feeding their chicks in the nest, started to "hang out" in front of the library. Adults and children alike kept pointing excitedly to the nest. I am sure that for some of them it was a first to see hawks that close. All in all, it was a good learning experience for everyone.

Many friends and neighbors who know my love for birds and nature, did ask me in the first few days after the happening whether I had heard about the aggressive hawks at the library. All I could do was to smile knowingly, before letting them know about my close encounter.

Renate Calero

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Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: David Anderson, Robert Auth, George Blewitt, Clyde Bridewell, Alyce Disiena, Earl Griswold, Walter Harwell, Jr., L L "Doc" & Vera Larrison, Elaine Malkani, Janet Mills, Sandra Owens, Clyde Rodgers, James Schweizer, Patricia Stout, Deborah Sweet, Ferrer Terranera and Bernard Yvon. We hope to see you at one of our meetings or on a field trip soon.

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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