

The Pelican

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

Volume 60-No.10 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
April, 2015



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thoughts from on High

David Yarnold, CEO of National Audubon, recently wrote about the Board of Director's meeting held on Feb 6 in Amelia Island. He mentioned Audubon members being "...among the most vocal and effective advocates to get Florida's Amendment One on the ballot and passed...." He spoke of his excitement about Audubon's momentum and how members are seeing connections along the flyways and acting in partnership with one another to get things done.

The "[President's Report to the Board of Directions](#)" can be accessed by clicking the link. Inside you'll find summaries of environmental successes, information about funding for climate initiatives, and bar charts showing the numbers of chapters around the county working on key Audubon initiatives like identifying and saving Important Bird Areas, community education, saving coastal habitats and creating bird-friendly communities. One of the most impressive graphics is one showing 36,771 Audubon volunteers who donated 904,847 hours of their time in 2014 for a total value of \$20,404,300. Audubon volunteers worked at 723 outreach events and engaged 225,326 children in environmental education and/or projects. Four hundred three citizen science projects were reported throughout the country, including 398 chapters involved in Christmas Bird Counts, 298 chapters participating in Great Backyard Bird Counts and 31 chapters reporting on Hummingbirds at Home. Halifax River Audubon was involved in many of the initiatives targeted by National Audubon for inclusion in the report.

In June, we'll be electing chapter officers and two At-Large Board members. Vacancies remain for some positions. Please contact me at 386-673-5332 to join our Board and become one of the reasons that Halifax River Audubon will go forward as a strong and vibrant organization, ready to lead in the next challenges to our environment.

Paula Wehr

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Welcome To Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Scott Burdick, Harold Butts, Laurie Dusen, Patti Godwin, David Hess, Karen Madigan and Debra Sanfilippo. We hope to see you all at one of our upcoming meetings and or on one of our excellent field trips.

Calendar & Events

Monday, April 20th, Program Meeting: The Evolution of Birds from Dinosaurs Scientists have mapped how a group of massive dinosaurs evolved and shrank down to the size of robins and hummingbirds. Join us at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill on Monday evening, April 18, to hear Dr. Fred Mosher explain how this seemingly impossible transformation took place. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. A short business meeting follows. Guests and visitors welcome.

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Field Trips

Friday, April 3rd, Buschman Park Join Peggy Yokubonus for a walk around one of our area's better spots for Spring migrants. We'll meet at 8:00 am at the park, 4575 Spruce Creek Road, Port Orange, and be finished by 11:00 or so. Questions, call Peggy at 386-673-7619.

Friday, April 17th, Tiger Bay State Forest Join David Hartgrove for a trip to look for Bachman's Sparrow, Brown-headed Nuthatch and other birds of the southeastern pine lands. Meet at 7:30 am at International Square - East of I-95 on International Speedway Boulevard behind the Krystal Restaurant. Bring lunch. Questions, Call David at 386-788-2630.

Friday, April 24th, A1A Run, Spring Join Paula Wehr and John Roessler for this dash up the coast to some of our favorite spots for migration. We'll meet at Ormond Town Square - Granada & Williamson Blvds, behind Chick-fil-A to form a car pool. Bring lunch. Questions, Call Paula, 386-673-5332.

These are our last field trips for the 2014/2015 season.

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Field Trips With Others

Saturday, April 18th, Migration Count Join our friends from West Volusia Audubon Society for their Spring Migration Count. You don't have to be an "expert" and this citizen science field work is one of the best ways to improve your birding skills. To get on a team, call Harry Robinson, 386-943-8342. Bring a lunch and Harry will advise you where to meet your team mates.

Monday, April 27th, St Augustine Alligator Farm Join West Volusia Audubon Society for this photo safari and birding trip. This is a fund raiser for WVAS and pre registration is a must. The cost, including your admission to the Alligator Farm, is 25.00 per person. If you haven't experienced the wonders of this place during nesting season you're in for a treat. Herons, egrets, spoonbills and Woodstorks are all nesting now and often their nests are too close to use binoculars. So imagine the photos you can get. Questions, call Eli Schaperow, 407-314-7965. Mail your check, made out to West Volusia Audubon, to Eli at 902 Sweetbrier Lane, Deltona, FL 32725.

Conservation Notes

Last November Florida voters approved Amendment One by a 75% majority. The language in the amendment is pretty straight forward and seemed to those of us who voted for it to be clear in its goals. It's no secret that some members of the Legislature were dead set against the amendment and openly voiced their displeasure at its passage. The Legislature is given the task, by the Constitution, of appropriating state funds. So we knew they were going to be making decisions on how the money generated by Amendment One would be spent. In spite of my many years of watching the Legislature cheat, lie and rob us time and again, I was blown away by the level of deceit and petty vindictiveness we've seen since this legislative session began.

Senator Alan Hays (R-Umatilla) managed to get himself onto the Senate Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation. He did this because he's an ideologue whose views on the environment seem to be from the James Watt school of environmental policy. He was a big proponent of the idea of selling off parks and other environmental lands last year. So you can imagine his views on Amendment One. He and some of the other anti environment, brain dead, tea party darlings in Tallahassee have come up with a budget that demonstrates just how much contempt they have for Florida voters and their ideas on land preservation and good government.

When you voted for Amendment One, did you mean to send 25 million of those dollars to the Department of Transportation for arterial roads? Did you expect the Legislature to dump the entire system of paying state employee salaries from general revenue and move that over to Amendment One funding? Would you believe there's only 2 million in there now for land acquisition? How about using Amendment One as a vehicle to stamp out over 50 years of very effective land buying programs, like CARL, which allowed Florida to have one of the best state park systems in the country? All of these nit wit ideas are in the current budget proposals of the House and Senate and will need to be sorted out by the responsible leaders still in Tallahassee when the budget conferences begin. As usual, it will come down to the final 72 hours of the legislative session when, in the dark of night, the sleazy deals are cut. Then we'll see just how much our votes mean to the people we send to Tallahassee.

One item that should be funded is the purchase of thousands of acres of US Sugar Corporation land on which state has a purchase option. The option runs out later this year and it was originally meant for this land to be a new treatment area to store polluted water from Lake Okeechobee. Water dumped from the lake over the past 2 years is a big source of the pollution in the Indian River Lagoon and San Carlos Bay. Seven years ago, when USSC was about to go bankrupt, then Governor Charlie Crist rode to their rescue with his plan to save the Everglades. He bought some USSC land and optioned the rest with a 7 year option. Late last year USSC and Hilliard Brothers (another agribusiness giant) announced something called the Sugarhill Sector Plan. Instead of selling the land to Florida for Everglades restoration, they want to build 18,000 homes and 25 million square feet of retail and industrial space. This explains why our representatives in Tallahassee are falling all over themselves trying to prevent the purchase of the land we have an option on for Everglades restoration. This is the type of purchase for which Amendment One was written. The tax payers of Florida get a good deal, Everglades restoration moves forward and large areas with impaired water quality are on the road to recovery. So of course, our elected representatives are trying every tactic in the book to scuttle the deal. Please, contact [Senator Hukill](#) and Senate President, [Andy Gardiner](#). Ask them to honor the will of the voters of Florida when dealing with Amendment One issues.

David Hartgrove

"The good thing about science is that it's true whether or not you believe in it." So said Neil DeGrasse Tyson. The February issue of [National Geographic](#) contained an article about climate change and its potential effects on Miami and Florida. Below is a piece sent out by Audubon Florida on the subject. Ed.

Become a Climate Change Messenger For The Birds

Sea level is rising along Florida's coastline – the experts agree. With a rise of 9 inches over the past 100 years we're seeing more frequent inundation and more rapid erosion of barrier and mangrove islands and coastal beaches that provide nesting grounds for colorful American Oystercatchers and Black Skimmers, Roseate Spoonbills and Brown Pelicans, plovers, gulls, terns and many other species of wading birds. We're watching mangroves migrate into salt marshes and salt marshes migrate landward. And Florida's iconic Everglades ecosystem is threatened with saltwater intrusion if restoration plans aren't kept on track to increase freshwater flow southward to keep the rising saltwater at bay.

The special places where Florida's coastal birds now nest, feed, and rest are some of our state's most important "climate strongholds". If birds aren't protected where they nest now, their populations will continue to decline as sea level rises leaving them little capacity to adapt to future changes in habitat, temperature, and rainfall conditions.

Given the uncertainty around projected timing and magnitude of future sea level rise, and the focus of local and regional agencies on protecting the human-built environment from erosion and inundation, we call on our chapter members to get involved locally in public discussions focused on protecting coastal and tidally-connected freshwater habitats from rising sea levels.

What can you do to help?

View and download the three short videos (scroll to bottom on the page) at [FloridaClimateMessenger.com](#)

View and download the short PowerPoint slide presentation (scroll to bottom on the page) at [FloridaClimateMessenger.com](#)

Put these climate change messages (featured in the videos) into your own words so you'll be ready to talk to anyone who will listen:

Learn more about coastal birds and wildlife and how to protect their habitat (climate strongholds) as sea levels rise.

Recognize that Everglades restoration – increasing freshwater storage and flow within the Everglades - will defend against sea level rise.

Plan for climate change and make sure our response to sea level rise helps - rather than harms - Florida's coastal habitats.

Join chapter leaders to help identify and meet in person with local agency and government decision makers to whom we can deliver our messages.

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An Eagle Is Faithful 100%

That headline reminds me of the old Dr. Seuss book about Horton the Elephant. Horton appears in two of the Dr. Seuss books: Horton Hatches The Egg, published in 1940 and Horton Hears A Who, published in 1954. It's Horton's dedication to his task from the first book that applies here. The Pennsylvania Game Commission has a nest cam on a Bald Eagle nest in Condorus State Park, near Hanover, PA. Here's a link to [some photos](#) of Mom before the eggs hatched. And here's a [link](#) to the live feed. The little ones appear to be no more than a week old.

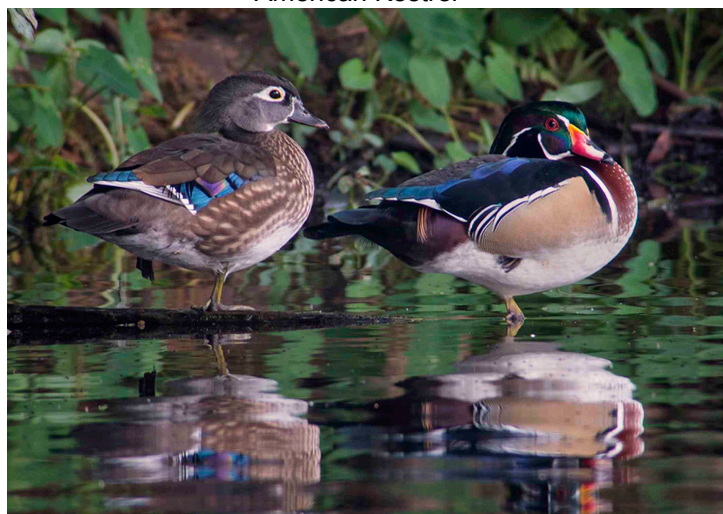
David Hartgrove

Take A Camera & A Spotting Scope

Then add the eye and knowledge of an experienced photographer and you get images like these below. Chapter member, Robert Wilson, retired after a 30 year career as an industrial photographer. He shot images of all kinds of exotic things like rocket motors and engine parts. Once he retired he joined his wife, Tobey, in her pursuit of birds to photograph. Though he still has the big lenses and cameras used by many, his interest in digiscoping has blossomed into an avocation. He helped organize the first World Digiscoper Meeting that was held in conjunction with the recent Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival and sponsored by Swarovski Optik. Thanks Robert!



American Kestrel



A Pair of Wood Ducks

Digiscoped images by Robert Wilson

Volunteers Needed

Okay, don't all of you jump forward at once. Wait until you hear what you're volunteering for. Volusia County, in cooperation with the [Florida Shorebird Alliance](http://www.floridashorebirdalliance.org), has posted signs and a string fence on Disappearing Island. We will need volunteers to monitor the area in case the Least Terns that attempted to nest there last year return again this year. Jennifer Winters, Coordinator of the County's Habitat Conservation Plan, has asked us to look for people willing to put in a few hours at a time to help these threatened birds. Disappearing Island lies at the west side of Ponce Inlet and is the big sandbar visible from both Lighthouse Point and Smyrna Dunes Parks. You would need to have transportation to the island, like a boat, canoe or kayak. So we realize this limits the pool of volunteers. There is a possibility that we can arrange something for those without their own water craft but that's still being worked out. Please contact David Hartgrove at home: 386-788-2630 or birdman9@earthlink.net if you're willing to help.



Disappearing Island with the Lighthouse in the background



Least Tern on the nest last year. *Photos by Jennifer Winters*

There's no guarantee that the birds will return this year since they were unsuccessful last year. We're just trying to get ahead of the game and have people ready if the birds do show up.

David Hartgrove

Endangered Woodpecker Gets A Helping Hand

Danny Bales is a Titusville based photographer whose work has graced a number of publications, including ours. The following story was written as a post on [BRDBRAIN](#) and appears here with permission. Ed.

It's that time of year again for my work at Hal Scott Preserve with the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker. I started working this year getting ready for breeding season around the 5th of March. [Hal Scott Preserve](#), in Orange County, is exploding with the singing birds. I've seen all the regulars, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Bachman's Sparrow, Brown-headed Nuthatches, Eastern Bluebirds, Eastern Towhees, Meadow Larks, and Pine Warblers. Even Wild Turkey are moving around. On one of my trips I noticed that one of the male breeder Red-cockaded Woodpeckers had an extremely swollen foot. The bird was captured, and taken to a veterinarian. It was discovered that it had a broken foot, and had to be put in a cast. Since RCWO's don't do well in captivity he suggested the bird be released, and captured again in 2 weeks to remove the cast. He said it had a 50/50 chance. It's getting near time to remove cast so we had to see how it was doing. I located it this morning, and it appears to still have most of the cast on. However it pecks at it a lot, and has unraveled some of the cast. I took numerous videos of the bird, and some still shots. I think it's going to make it. I've been doing this job for 9 years now, and this is a first for me.

And now an update. The bird we had with a cast on his broken foot had been caught, and his old cast was replaced with a new one. His foot wasn't healed yet so he has to wear it for another 2 weeks.

Danny Bales

Below are links to several of Danny's videos and photos.

www.flickr.com/photos/mudhen/16876692595

www.flickr.com/photos/mudhen/16667559077

www.flickr.com/photos/mudhen/16839732855

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A Birding Trip To Portugal and Spain

Ken Gunn, of Southeast Volusia Audubon, is arranging a birding trip to Portugal for the last half of April, 2016. The current low exchange rate for the Euro and the depressed economy in Southern Europe make this an ideal time to see an entirely new list of species. The tour will be operated by Birds and Nature Tours Ltd. of Lisbon and is planned for 13 days in country. Birds and Portugal's wonderful network of protected natural areas are the focus of the trip, but the route will pass through beautiful countryside, with hills and valleys, bluffs, beaches, Cork and Holm oak and Olive plantations, and will overnight in historic cities, some founded by Phoenicians, Romans or Moors. The trip will start with a tour of the beautiful city of Lisbon where the group will spend the first night. From there, it will visit the nearby Tagus Estuary and the Sado Estuary on the Atlantic coast. Next we'll be inland to the granite hills of Castro Verde and Guadiana Valley National Park then south to bird coastal Algarve, situated on one of Europe's major migratory flyways. Finally, the tour will cross into Southern Spain to bird the Coto Doñana, considered one of the world's most valuable wetlands. It is expected that more than 180 species will be seen. My target birds for the trip are Azure-winged Magpie, Great Bustard, Red-necked Nightjar and Eurasian Eagle Owl. There's also a possibility of an extension of the trip to see points in Catalonia.

For more information, contact me at this email address: gunnsatbeach@cfl.rr.com It's going to be a great trip.

Ken Gunn

SALT MARSH RESTORATION WORK TO BEGIN ADJACENT TO SMITH CREEK LANDING AT NORTH PENINSULA STATE PARK

Nature Trail will be Temporarily Closed

ORMOND BY THE SEA- Work is set to begin phase 4 of the salt marsh restoration project at North Peninsula State Park in Volusia County. Mobilization began the week of February 23rd. During phases of the project the park's 'Coastal Strand' nature trail will be closed. Notices will be posted on site to keep visitors informed of the status of the trail.

The work will take place along the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) west of A1A and north of the Smith Creek Landing use area at the park. Initially the access road will be improved on the north side of Highbridge Road. Contractors will then begin restoration of another eighteen acres of historic salt marsh that was filled with spoil material during the dredging of the ICW in the early 1900s.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's North Peninsula State Park continues its partnership with the St. John's River Water Management District and the Floridan Resource Conservation and Development Council on this project. This work, funded by a grant from a NOAA Coastal Habitat Restoration Program and the St. John's River Water Management District begins the project's fourth phase.

The salt marsh restoration project at North Peninsula State Park began in September 2009. Phases one and two, completed in November 2011, are located along the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway north of Highbridge Road and west of A1A. Phase 3 of the project along John Anderson Drive south of Highbridge Road was completed in 2014. Phase 4 will complete the saltmarsh restoration along John Anderson Drive and also restore 23 acres of saltmarsh north of North Peninsula State Park's Smith Creek Landing to complete the project. The restoration effort will remove fill which was placed on pristine saltmarsh habitat while dredging what is now the Intra Coastal Waterway. The goal of this restoration is to create a healthy, productive saltmarsh habitat connected by tidal creeks to the open estuary, benefiting an extremely wide range of plants and animals, including critical fish nursery and bird habitats. Additional benefits include increased recreational opportunities including scenic overlooks for hikers, increased recreational fishing opportunities, birding opportunities and educational opportunities for local students.

During the project, heavy equipment will be brought in to clear existing vegetation and assist in the removal of spoil material. Once the area is graded to match elevations in adjacent marshes, revegetation will begin and native vegetation will be reintroduced into the restoration area. The park will enlist volunteer assistance in the planting activities of the project. For further information, Gamble Rogers Memorial State Recreation Area at (386) 517-2086 or visit www.FloridaStateParks.org.

Paul Haydt, SJRWMD & Barbara Roberts, FDEP

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Proof That Spring Is Here

A friend sent me this link to a [short video](#). The male Sharp-tailed Grouse on the grass lands of Montana are showing signs of raging hormones. They do so by trying to impress females with their dancing ability. Enjoy!

David Hartgrove

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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