

The Pelican

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

Volume 60-No.12 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
June, 2015



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thoughts from on High

News flash: Business can be successful AND environmentally sensitive.

Craig Weyandt, Superintendent at the Moorings Yacht & Country Club in Vero Beach proved this case when the golf course was temporarily closed in May 2003 to create a drainage plan. When working on the master plan, he realized that with a greater vision he could remove invasive plants, introduce native plants and create a habitat for wildlife while improving the visual impact and the playing enjoyment of the golf membership. Sounds like a win-win! Lisa Mickey, Audubon member and Kayak Tour Guide/Eco Narrator at [Marine Discovery Center](#), provides details about this project in an environmental story she wrote for the US Golf Association. It is the first installment of ten case studies being examined nationwide on golf courses looking at their sustainability practices and new efforts to become more environmentally responsible. Click [here](#) to read the article. Thanks, Lisa, for sharing this good news.

Abe Ng, CEO of Sushi Maki, agrees. "When your business relies on Mother Nature's bounty, you come to the realization that you have to protect nature to stay in business." His company sells more than 2 million pounds of fish a year, employees nearly 250 people and operates in 16 locations in south Florida. Several years ago he and his management team decided to elevate protecting the environment to the level of being a "guiding principle" for the company. In 2012, they earned the Marine Stewardship Council certification, making Sushi Maki the first chain sushi restaurant in the US to earn that designation. To maintain certification, they commit to tracking the purchase, receipt and delivery of MSC certified seafood in every store. They have opened their records to third-party verification. Mr. Ng realizes that not every company has the resources to make this level of commitment and states his company has also made simple changes like replacing old equipment with energy-efficient models and using recycled materials in their packaging. Click [here](#) to read more.

We can all help business owners to understand that making a profit and operating in an environmentally-sensitive manner are not mutually exclusive. When you note a business wisely using natural resources, compliment the owner or manager and let him/her know that you'll be back because you want to support environmentally-friendly businesses. If you choose one business over another because of their environmental practices, be sure to let the salesperson know why you chose their company. Positive feedback from customers reinforces management's decision. And to paraphrase Martha Stewart, that's "a good thing."

Paula Wehr

Calendar & Events

Monday, June 15, Program meeting "Terns in Volusia County"
Join us on Monday evening, June 15, when Michael Brothers, Director of the Marine Science Center, will show us how to identify the various terns which live in Volusia County and what rarities may visit us. The doors open at 6:30 p.m. at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. A brief business meeting follows.

We will also be collecting donations for the Marine Science Center. Following is a list of items used by staff to assist in the rehabilitation of marine and avian patients. Bring your donations of the following items to the meeting.

Food items: high quality dry dog food, high quality wet cat food, Hill's Prescription canned A/D Diet, wild bird seed, meat baby food (Gerber or Beechnut) Pedialyte and Ensure nutritional shakes.

Cleaning supplies: Multi-purpose cleaners and disinfectants, like Simple Green, Roccal, or bleach, dish soap, paper towels, brooms, scrub sponges and brushes, trash bags of various sizes.

General items like rakes, hose nozzles, pet carriers (all sizes), blankets, sheets and towels, Rubbermaid bins and lids (all sizes).

REMINDER: Elections Will be Held at this Meeting, June 15

The following are candidates who have volunteered to stand for election at our June meeting:

President – Jim O'Shaughnessy

Vice-President – David Hartgrove

Treasurer – Betty Butcher

Recording Secretary – Peggy Yokubonus

Membership Secretary – John Carr

Historian – John Carr

At-Large Board Member (Class of 2018) – Holly Zwart-Duryea

At-Large Board Member (Class of 2018) – Celine Sullivan

Nominations will be accepted from the floor for all positions, providing the nominee has been asked and accepts the nomination.

All members in attendance on June 15, 2015 are eligible to vote.

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Welcome To Our New Members

We welcome our new and returning members: Christine Castle, Sandra Gostomsk, Larry Morgan, Carol Rojas, Michael Smith, Fredrick & Frances Sorensen, Stewart Spar and Helen Wessel. We hope to see you at our next meeting or in September when meetings and field trips resume for the new season.

Conservation Notes

The headline above the article in the News-Journal said, "GOP criticizes new wetlands rules." The new rules are designed to give guidance to those working around wetlands and to help insure safe drinking water for 117 million Americans. So what could the Republican Party find to criticize about guaranteeing safe drinking water for half of our citizens? Once again we find the influence of tea party extremists pushing otherwise good folks into positions they probably wouldn't take under any other circumstances.

Florida Agriculture Commissioner, Adam Putnam, who has been influential in helping negotiate several beneficial conservation easements, was quoted as saying that the new rules, "rob Florida's leaders of the ability to make the best decisions for our distinct bodies of water." Was he referring to the "leaders" who rigged the rules and passed a special exemption to allow Georgia Pacific to continue dumping millions of gallons of dioxin contaminated waste water into the St Johns River? Could he have been referring to the members of his party who just voted to prohibit the gathering of data on contaminated water dumped in to Lake Okeechobee? These criminal clowns who pass for "leaders" in our state will have us drowning in putrid effluent if left to their own devices. We need all the federal regulation we can get if we're to be saved from the ravages of a group bent on profits for the few at the expense of the multitudes.

The Clean Water Act is all that stands between us and the environmental degradation that led to its passing. Richard Nixon may have done a lot of things wrong but the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act are three things he got right. While these vital laws were the result of legislation introduced by Democrats, they were embraced by Nixon and other GOP members because they realized that, left to its own methods, big business would trash the environment in order to squeeze a few more cents out of every opportunity.

There is currently a concerted effort by GOP senators to wreck the Endangered Species Act. Senator Rand Paul has introduced a bill (S. 855) that would strip all protections from any species that exists only in one state, like the Florida Scrub Jay. Another bill (S. 736), introduced by Wyoming Senator, Mike Enzi, would require the use of data submitted by a state, tribal, or county governments when determining the status of a species in question. So, science be damned, if the feds want to protect the Greater Prairie Chicken from being wiped out by pollution and the damaged landscape associated with fracking, they have to include junk "science" from industry flacks in the decision making process.

The local PBS station has been rerunning the Ken Burns film, "The Roosevelts, An Intimate Portrait". While Teddy may have had his eccentricities and championed the idea of our country maintaining a colonial empire, he was perhaps the greatest advocate of the environment ever to sit in the White House. For those who don't know, he proclaimed all of the area around Ponce Inlet a national wildlife refuge in 1908. This designation was later overturned by Congress when it was seen to be an impediment to development in the area. What happened to the party of Theodore Roosevelt? The one that saw a value in nature beyond the squeezing of every nickel out of every square inch of land regardless of the environmental cost. Why have they declared a war on science as it applies to things like population control, global climate change? The challenges we face in the future require forward thinking problem solvers who can make the hard decisions that will guarantee a future for our children and their offspring. One with a clean, healthy environment. The tea party sees no value in that.

David Hartgrove

Pelagic Birding On The Far Side of the Gulf Stream

The Marine Science Center is sponsoring another pelagic trip on Sunday, June 7th. We have a long way to go, so we're leaving the dock at 2:00 am, returning at 9:00 pm that night. Our destination is a spot called the tuna grounds and we're hoping for good looks at birds like jaegers, shearwaters, Black-capped Petrel, Leach's, Wilson's and Band-rumped Storm Petrels and White-tailed and Red-billed Tropicbirds. Cost is 235.00 per person. Contact Michael Brothers, mbrothers@CO.VOLUSIA.FL.US, to let him know you're planning to attend. Send your check, made out to the Friends of the Marine Science Center, (in the note section write "pelagic trip") to: Friends of the Marine Science Center, 100 Lighthouse Drive, Ponce Inlet, FL 32127.

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Lisa Mickey is an HRA member and works at the Marine Discovery Center, in New Smyrna Beach. Below is her story of how she came to be holding a young Brown Pelican.



One of the guests on my Monday eco-tour boat trip took this photo of me rescuing a baby pelican that had fallen out of its nest on the bird rookery island off the North Causeway. I observed the bird over two hours and never saw an adult with it, and on the second time around, I observed that it was bloodied and standing on the shoreline away from the other nests & birds.

So, the captain moved the boat up to the island's shoreline, where I slid off and walked over to the bird. This little guy squawked a bit, but let me take it to the boat. Thirty minutes later, I drove him to the bird rehab center in Ponce Inlet, where the vet tech informed me this little bird was about three weeks old and had a broken wing.

On another trip, I had to cut free an adult pelican that was tangled in monofilament. The pelican has a hook in its mouth, but at least I was able to cut it free from the mangrove trees and it flew away. I had just finished telling the boatload of school kids about the detrimental effects of monofilament line on wildlife when I saw the snagged pelican and asked the captain to circle over to it. The kids got to see a happy ending this time.

Lisa Mickey

Amendment 1 Needs Implementation

As corresponding secretary for the Environmental Council of Volusia & Flagler Counties, I was asked to write a letter on the Council's behalf regarding Amendment 1. It was sent individually to the entire Volusia/Flagler legislative delegation.

Dear Senator,

We at the Environmental Council of Volusia/Flagler are appalled at the cavalier manner in which you and the rest of your colleagues have ignored the wishes of the voters of our state. Amendment 1 was passed with 75% of the votes cast on November 4th of last year. It was meant to restore funding for Florida Forever, to purchase lands necessary for Everglades restoration and to guarantee secure funding for future land acquisition for parks, wildlife, water quality, hunting and fishing.

As one who has sworn to uphold and defend the state constitution, it's incumbent upon you to abide by all of its articles and amendments. Even the ones with which you may not agree. We therefore expect you to honor your oath and to vote to fully fund Florida Forever during this upcoming special session.

We trust that you will lobby your fellow senators to reach an agreement to exercise the option for the purchase of land for the completion of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. This 7 year option expires in a few months and a golden opportunity will be lost. Your fiduciary responsibilities as a member of the Senate require that you find the most cost effective method to accomplish this task. Failure to act to purchase these lands, that have been optioned to the State of Florida since 2008, will mean much higher costs for future taxpayers.

We trust that you will see the wisdom of Florida's voters. Please, honor your oath and their wishes as expressed in the wording of Amendment One. Thank you.

Voters in Florida have seen their votes on issues like the class size amendment and the use of Lottery funds turned on their heads or simply ignored for too long. These people take an oath when they take office. It should mean something.

David Hartgrove

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Tom Dunkerton's composite photo of a young Florida Scrub Jay is disturbing because it seems to show that this bird has avian pox. This highly contagious disease eventually causes death. The photo was taken at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. Treatment options are limited to say the least.

Swallow-tailed Kites On The Nest !



The white dot pointed to by the arrow is the head of one of the young kites.
photo by Paula Wehr

The week before Easter, Sue Donnino noticed several Swallow-tailed Kites flying over the fairway on Hole 6 at Halifax Plantation Golf Course. On March 29 we watched two kites soaring over the tall pines lining the fairway. One kite was carrying something – nesting material or a gift of food. A second kite began circling and lit on a bare branch of a nearby snag. Soon the first kite joined the second and mating began. Then they flew off, circling the area until one kite flew into a large section of Spanish moss hanging in a pine tree 75-80 feet above the ground. Had we not seen the bird disappear into the moss, we would never have found the nest.

Over the next month Sue watched the nest every time she passed in the golf cart. She knew the nest was viable because one kite continued to hunt in the area, and sometimes she could see the long black tail sticking out of the moss curtain as the female incubated the eggs. The chicks apparently hatched while Sue and her husband Joe were on a trip, sometime the first week of May.

Today, May 26, Sue and I walked the fairway and saw the heads of two chicks – nearly full grown. We saw wings being stretched and tails twitching. With first flights taking place 5-6 weeks after hatching, perhaps these two nestlings will have taken their maiden voyages by the time this article appears in the newsletter.

Paula Wehr

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A Real Citizen Science Opportunity

The Florida Breeding Bird Atlas II is entering its fourth year and we need your help. Do you like birding in your neighborhood, in a local park or in areas you're not familiar with but you can read a map? Then you can make a considerable contribution to the data base of bird knowledge and have fun too. It's easy, we can teach you what you need to know in a morning and you'll be doing real citizen science. If you're interested contact me at 386-788-2630 or by e-mail: birdman9@earthlink.net. You'll be glad you did.

David Hartgrove

A Special Thanks To Our Sponsors

**Florida Power & Light, Garden Club of the Halifax Country,
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Our website is www.halifaxriveras.org For information on upcoming field trips, etc.

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