

The Pelican

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

Volume 61-No.4 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
October, 2015



The President's Message

Thoughts and concepts

We continue this month with the second half of my review of the book, "GIFTS OF THE CROW, How Perception, Emotion and Thought Allow Smart Birds to Behave Like Humans" written by John Marzluff, a Professor of Wildlife Science at the University of Washington.

There are numerous examples of crows speaking clearly and with purpose. Other corvids, magpies and ravens, have been known to speak and give commands. Research indicates that all of these talking corvids were pets and had spent years around humans. Their learning required revisiting and refining of memories. Learning to imitate human speech is certainly an advanced cognitive trick that points to an important parallel between corvids and humans.

Using creative and innovative methods to get a meal has been documented numerous times. Crows relish roadkill and use our cars to their advantage. The author has observed formations of crows continually diving over a flock of doves and forcing the flock into high-speed traffic where some of the doves will be killed. The crows then harvest the roadkill. Crows have been known to force squirrels into traffic where the squirrel is then struck by an oncoming car. The crow waits for traffic to clear and then dines on fresh squirrel. Corvids have been known to chase unsuspecting robins into windows. The stunned or dead birds are quickly retrieved and eaten. Crows use bait to catch a meal. Crows have distracted dogs who are eating their meal by dropping items away from the food bowl. The distracted dogs investigate the dropped item and the crow moves in to dine on the abandoned food bowl. Ravens have been known to pull on a dog's tail while the canine is dining. The dog leaves the food bowl in favor of a chase and the raven quickly circles back to the bowl as the hapless dog gives fruitless chase. Numerous other examples of creative and innovative behavior abound. This behavior demonstrates corvids's ability to reason, plan and anticipate outcomes. Crows are clearly clever problem solvers, routinely making associations and using insight to succeed in whatever their mission.

Much to my surprise I learned that corvids enjoy playing. Ravens have been frequently observed taking advantage of strong winds and updrafts. They dive, dip, chase, roll, tumble, somersault and seem to shout as they ride the wind. The stronger the wind to more they appear to enjoy themselves. Numerous stories of ravens careening down slippery slopes have been reported and photographed. They slide headfirst on their bellies or roll sideways like kids in a barrel. When the ride comes to an end, they lope up the slope and repeat the fun. In Russia, crows have been filmed using plastic lids as sleds to slide down steep roofs.

Continued on the following page

Calendar & Events

Monday, October 19th, Program Meeting, "My FL Birds + 3".

Join us for this presentation on local birds by Ray Scory. 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.

Saturday, October 10th, Marine Discovery Center Open House

This free event is an opportunity for the Marine Discovery Center to give back to the community which helps support it throughout the year. Games for the kids, fun for all. Hours are 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. The MDC is located at 520 Barracuda Blvd. New Smyrna Beach.

Friday & Saturday, Oct. 23rd & 24th, Audubon Assembly. This is the annual main event for Audubon Florida. This year it will be held nearby in Maitland. Click on this [link](#) to get all of the info and hotel reservations if needed. The theme of this Assembly will be "Parks, The Heart of Natural Florida". The keynote speaker will be Rafael Galvez, founder of the [Florida Keys Hawk Watch](#). There's a whole list of great field trips, the Friday night awards banquet and a great opportunity to meet other Audubon members from around Florida.

Field Trips

Friday, October 2nd, Buschman Park Warblers. Join Becky Tate on a search for migrating warblers and other birds seen in this spot on our hot spots list. Meet at the park, 4575 Spruce Creek Road, Port Orange, at 8:00 am. We'll be through by 11:00 am so lunch is optional. Questions? Call Becky at 386-451-2436.

Sunday, October 11th, Dunlawton Bridge. Join Ray Scory at one of his favorite local birding spots. We'll be looking for migrating shorebirds, gulls, etc. Meet at 3:00 pm under the west side of the bridge. Questions? Call Ray at 386-763-4260.

Wednesday, October 21st, Audubon Park, Deltona. Join Paula Wehr on a trip to the west side of the county to again look for Fall migrants and other things of interest. Meet at Int'l Square - East of I-95 on Int'l Speedway Blvd behind Krystal Restaurant at 7:30 am. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Paula at 386-299-6651

Field Trips With Others

Saturday, October 10th, Buschman Park & Dunlawton Bridge.

Join our friends from Southeast Volusia Audubon Society on a trip that combines both warbler and shorebird opportunities. Rather than driving south to their meeting spot you can meet them at the park, 4575 Spruce Creek Road at 8:00 am. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Dick Domroski at 386-453-1211.

Thursday, October 22nd, Gemini Springs. Join our friends from West Volusia Audubon Society on a trip to look for Fall migrants in this gem of the County's park system. Meet the group at Lake Monroe Park, 975 S. Charles Richard Beall Blvd., DeBary at 8:15 am. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Eli Schaperow, 407-314-7965.

Conservation Notes

Others use their bodies to slide down the cupolas of Russian Orthodox churches. Ravens also engage in tug of war games using twigs, pieces of food or a bone. One entices another to play and the game of strength begins. Both pull in opposite directions until one lets loose. They sometimes continue playing for several hours. Several other types of games have been observed and recorded by researchers throughout the world. There is no doubt that play is a part of corvids's activities. Play helps these birds build better brains and provides them with skill sets necessary to cope with their environment.

Crows and ravens routinely gather around the dead of their species. Rarely do they touch the body, in contrast to their reaction of the dead bodies of other species, upon which they quickly feed. They often circle the dead bird for a period of time then fly away. The assembled birds may be assessing how they fit into the new social hierarchy as well as investigating the cause of death and how they might avoid a similar fate. Much is still to be learned but it is clear that mourning is a part of corvids's emotional state.

Corvids assume characteristics that were once ascribed only to humans, including self-recognition, insight, revenge, tool-use, deceit, murder, risk-taking, social learning and traditions. We are different, but by degree. We both survive in large part because of our brains. This fascinating book, so well researched and intelligently written, is indeed a gift. My respect for these amazing birds has increased immeasurably.

Dr. Marzluff has written a fascinating and informative book, with gorgeous illustrations by gifted artist, Tony Angell. I highly recommend it.

Jim O'Shaughnessy

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Some Good News For A Change

Gleaned from the newsletter of the American Bird Conservancy

Recently there have been efforts by some in Congress to kill the Endangered Species Act. A new poll shows they do so at their peril. 90% of those polled voiced strong or somewhat strong support for the ESA. A deeper look into the poll results shows that 96% of those who identified themselves as liberal and 82% of those who identified as conservative supported the ESA. Further, 71% said that decisions about what species are included under the Act's protections should be made based on science and the recommendations of biologists at the US Fish & Wildlife Service, not by Congress members. To paraphrase the opening of an old TV show, it's a blow "for truth, justice and the American way."

If you've ever gone on a pelagic trip off the California coast you may have gone out with Debra Shearwater. She's been a keynote speaker at the [Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival](#) a number of times and leads trips to Antarctica and other spots. She also stepped up to the plate and was a party, along with several other individuals and the American Bird Conservancy, in a lawsuit against the US Fish & Wildlife Service and the American Wind Energy Association. The USF&WS violated their own rules to give the AWEA a 30 year Incidental Take Permit for Bald and Golden Eagles at wind energy generation sites across the west. AWEA said they needed a pass if any of their turbines killed or injured either of these protected species. Under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act permits can be issued for up to a period of 5 years. Those filing the lawsuit said a 30 year blank check to kill these magnificent raptors was too long since research during a shorter time span could find ways to reduce or eliminate the threats to the birds altogether. On August 11, US District Judge Lucy Koh agreed and ended the 30 year permit.

Editor

In Congress there continues a relentless attack on the environment and the regulations that offer us a small level of protection. Having received vast funding from extraction industries, like mining, oil and coal companies, these extremist members of Congress encourage the "drill baby drill" and dig where and when we want mentality. Regardless of consequences. This behavior and mind set would be laughable if not for the fact that these people have managed to get themselves into positions that enable them to make public policy based on these extreme beliefs. We and our grand children will be paying the cost for these benighted policies for decades to come.

The latest attack is a move by these extremists to prevent the reauthorization of the overwhelmingly popular and crucial Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Passed by the same Congress that gave us the Voting Rights Act in 1965, the LWCF collects money from offshore oil and gas leases. Not a dime of tax payer funds goes into this. The funding is intended to go into a trust to acquire inholdings and expansions of our national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and other sites, including local parks. According to the National Recreation and Park Association, 98 percent of the counties in the United States have had a park or recreation site that was created with LWCF grants.

In the fifty years since the founding of the LWCF, Florida has received nearly a billion dollars. The LWCF state assistance program provides matching grants to help states and local communities protect parks and recreation resources. LWCF funding has benefited nearly every county in America, supporting over 41,000 projects. From building hiking and biking trails, to improving community parks, playgrounds and ballfields, this 50:50 matching program is the primary federal investment tool to ensure that families have easy access to public, open spaces. Right here in Volusia County Ormond Central Park, Lighthouse Point Park, Spruce Creek Park, River Breeze Park and the new Andy Romano Beach Front Park in Ormond Beach were all recipients of funding from the LWCF. Based on the self interested beliefs of a handful of extremist "leaders" in Washington and Tallahassee, all of this good work must come to an end.

The move in Tallahassee to turn our award winning state park system into a profit center is part of this same thinking. I wrote in August about the move to open portions of both Myaaka River and Payne's Prairie State Parks to grazing and timbering. Audubon Florida's Executive Director, Eric Draper, reported the other day that the newest threat comes at Anastasia Island State Park, in St. Augustine. There's a proposal there to bulldoze 38 acres of prime coastal hammock so we can squeeze in more campers and trailers. People come to Anastasia State Park to walk the hammock trails and enjoy the beautiful trees. Not to sit in their campers with the air conditioning running watching satellite TV. That's what private camp grounds are for.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund will have expired by the time you read this unless something is done in Congress to reauthorize it. It's scheduled to sunset out of existence on September 30th. It will be a crime against all of us if this is the end this valuable program. With luck and an enlightened electorate maybe the 2016 election will see a return to sanity in both Washington and Tallahassee. Let's hope so.

David Hartgrove

Once again it's time for an article from our own, Ray Scory, in his continuing series, **Everyday Birding**.

I once read that when Roger Tory Peterson, famed ornithologist, was asked - why feed birds in the Summer time, isn't there enough food available to them anyway? His reply was, "because I just like having them around." This article is an introduction to my show, "My FL Birds + 3", to be presented at the Halifax River Audubon's monthly meeting October 19, 2015.

This show will not take you to far away places to look at interesting and exotic birds. Birds you have never seen before and may never see again. Birds set against or within a landscape never imagined before.

No, this show will take you to places you frequent often - familiar places, places close by your home. You will venture from your home to embark on a journey through your neighborhood or take a short drive to the store or a wild life refuge - close by. Here, also, you may see birds for the first time. But you will see them again, because they live here, or they stay here for a seasonal visit or pass through to migratory grounds. You will see birds that are around. Some of the birds here are quite beautiful, some are dazzling, eye-catching or subtly picturesque. I find the subtle shades of brown on the female Boat-tailed Grackle as exciting to look at as the eye-popping color scheme of the Painted Bunting. Each and every sighting presents its own unique expression. Expressions and feelings I find exhilarating.

Some birds perform interesting behavioral activities and it may be the primary clue to their identity. The feeding dance of the Reddish Egret is a behavior to watch- a thing of beauty, frantic yet graceful, or the stop and go habit of a feeding Black-bellied Plover. Put up a bird feeder and watch bird behavior, fascinating stuff.

Listening to singing birds is a treat. How our spirits rise to the call of gulls riding high on soft ocean breezes, or the eerie call of owls cloaked in nightly secrecy. A mysterious silhouette gliding silently through a darkened sky is what stories are made of. How well we respond and rejoice to the talented Northern Mockingbird as it belts out its repertoire of mimicked songs. How we dream to the songs of birds and the sight of their flight. It's so nice to have them around to see them, to hear them, to watch them.

I take pleasure in surprises, especially in the birding arena. Many times during my daily routine I will take a time out to check a tree or bush in a parking lot, to stop at a small park active with people, to check out a pond, to look up at the sky, to look out a window. I have walked through, visited, driven by places without paying attention to birds. But, when I do, I find them. Sometimes my discovery surprises me.

I encourage you to explore the common places around your neighborhood. Check out the ordinary places. You, too, might just be surprised and enjoy having them around.

Ray Scory

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Welcome To Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Donald Byerly, Joan Garber, Laura Morganstern and Jeffrey Sebastian. We hope to see you soon at a meeting or one of our excellent field trips. Welcome aboard!



Standoff between a Brown Thrasher and a Mourning Dove



Snowy Egret in peak breeding plumage. Photos by Ray Scory

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A New Hummingbird Species Nearby?

If you have a copy of an older "Peterson Field Guide To The Birds East Of The Rockies", look in the back pages for a plate showing images of "Accidentals From The Tropics." On that page you'll see a hummingbird called the Bahama Woodstar. According to the new, "Florida Bird Species: An Annotated List", by Jon S. Greenlaw, Bill Pranty and Reed Bowman, there are only 3 records of this bird in Florida. None since 1981. Originally listed as 2 distinct species, they were lumped together as Bahama Woodstar in 1945. New research by Dr Christopher James Clark of the University of California, Riverside confirms that instead of being subspecies, these truly are 2 distinct species. The Bahama Woodstar (*Calliphlox evelynae evelynae*) occurs across most of the Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands. The new species, the Inaguan Lyretail (*Calliphlox evelynae lyrura*) occurs only on the Bahamian islands of Great and Little Inagua. Both species use their tail feathers to create unique sounds when displaying in courtship and territorial defense. Here's a [link](#) to more information on this possible new check mark for your life list.

David Hartgrove

Halifax River Audubon

Birding Workshop (Birdwatching Workshop)



Birding is a fast-growing, enjoyable hobby and central Florida is the ideal place to learn its techniques. Join experts from **Halifax River Audubon** and experience the wonders of fall migration while developing your skills. No experience is necessary. The workshop includes four classroom sessions and three outdoor workshops.



Indoor workshops will be held on
Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Place: Prince of Peace Church Hall,
600 S. Nova Rd., Ormond Beach
October 22, 2015
October 29, 2015
November 5, 2015
November 12, 2015



Field workshops will be held on Saturday mornings:
October 24 – 8:00 a.m. at Tomoka State Park*
October 31 – 8:00 a.m. at Ponce Inlet*
November 7 – 8:00 a.m. at Merritt Island NWR*
*Field workshop details will be covered in class
and may be subject to change.



Bring your binoculars to all classes and field workshops.

Donation: \$25.00 check, payable to Halifax River Audubon.
Mail to: Halifax River Audubon c/o Joan Tague
22 Creek Bluff Way, Ormond Beach, FL 32174

Contact instructors @ 386-253-1166
Joan Tague at babyowl@mac.com
Chuck Tague at kingrail@mac.com

Class size is limited, so sign up early. Children are encouraged. Minors and a parent/guardian pay only one \$25 donation. Check with instructors to determine if your child's age is appropriate.

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Last month we ran the new field trip schedule. Here's an updated version. You can print this individual page for easy reference. Remember too to check the website for the latest information.

HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE 2015-2016

David Hartgrove - 386-788-2630 (h); 386-235-1249 (c)

Peggy Yokubonus: 386-673-7619 (h); 386-316-4085 (c)

Date	Time	Meet At	Trip	Level	Lunch	Leader	Tel #
Wed, Sep 23	8:00 AM	WO	A1A Run - North	2	Y	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Fri, Oct 2	8:00 AM	BP	Buschman Park - Warblers	2	N	Becky Tate	386-451-2436
Sun, Oct 11	3:00 PM	Bridge	Dunlawton Bridge	1	N	Ray Scory	386-763-4260
Wed, Oct 21	7:30 AM	KRY	Audubon Park, Deltona	2	Y	Paula Wehr	386-299-6651
Fri, Nov 13	7:30 AM	CHK	Ocala Forest & Rodman Dam	3	Y	John Roessler	386-212-6957
Fri, Nov 20	7:30 AM	KRY	Apopka Wildlife Drive	1	Y	Paula Wehr	386-299-6651
Wed, Dec 9	3:00 PM	FR	Gull Watch	2	N	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Sun, Dec 13	3:00 PM	Bridge	Dunlawton Bridge	1	N	Ray Scory	386-763-4260
Wed, Dec 16	7:30 AM	TAR	Black Point Drive, Merritt Island	1	Y	Paula Wehr	386-299-6651
Fri, Jan 8	7:30 AM	TAR	Merritt Island NWR	1	Y	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085
Sat, Jan 9	7:30 AM	TAR	Merritt Island NWR	1	Y	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Fri-Sat, Jan 15-16	TBA		Circle B Bar/Lake Hancock #			Betty Butcher	863-224-4922
Fri, Jan 29	7:30 AM	TAR	Viera Wetlands	1	Y	John Roessler	386-212-6957
Wed, Feb 3	4:00 PM	FR	Gull Watch	2	N	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Fri, Feb 5	7:30 AM	TAR	Orlando Wetlands	3	Y	Bob North	352-302-3510
Wed, Feb 17	7:30 AM	TAR	Merritt Island NWR	1	Y	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085
Fri, Feb 26	7:30 AM	KRY	Apopka Wildlife Drive	1	Y	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085
Fri, Mar 4	8:00 AM	WO	A1A Run - North	2	Y	Paula Wehr	386-299-6651
Fri, Mar 18	7:30 AM	CHK	Ocala Forest & Rodman Dam	3	Y	John Roessler	386-212-6957
Wed, Apr 6	8:00 AM	KRY	Tiger Bay State Forest	2	Y	Ray Scory	386-763-4260
Wed-Fri, Apr 13-15	TBD		Overnight trip to Fort DeSoto, Pinellas County #	2		David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Fri, May 13	7:30 AM	KRY	Dora Canal Boat Trip, Leesburg #	1	Y	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249

Indicates change from original published dates

IMPORTANT: Call leader or check website, www.halifaxrivers.org, before trip to confirm details.

Meeting Places

- BP - Buschman Park - 4575 Spruce Creek Rd, Port Orange
- Bridge - Port Orange Causeway Park under Dunlawton Bridge
- CHK - Ormond Town Square - Granada & Williamson Blvds behind Chick-fil-A
- FR - Frank Rendon Park - 2705 S Atlantic Ave, Daytona Beach Shores
- KRY - Int'l Square - East of I-95 on Int'l Speedway Blvd behind Krystal
- TAR - Target East of I-95 on Dunlawton Ave behind Panera's
- WO - Washington Oaks State Park, 6400 N Oceanshore Blvd, Palm Coast - park fee or pass

Trip Rating

- 1 - Easy or little walking
- 2 - Walking ~ 1 mile - flat terrain
- 3 - Walking 1+ mile and/or uneven terrain

Remember equipment: Hat, sunscreen, bug spray, sturdy walking shoes, drinking water and snacks as needed

trip requires reservations. Circle B Bar & Fort DeSoto are out of town, overnight trips that involve staying in a motel with a block of reserved rooms.

For Fort DeSoto trip we will stay in a La Quinta Inn in St. Petersburg located 30 minutes from the park. We'll drive over on Wed., 4/13, and rendezvous at the big flag in the park at 2:00 p.m. Those wishing to can bird the park until 5:00 p.m. Then we will drive to the motel and check in. Dinner is on your own that night. Thursday, 4/14, we'll leave the motel at 8:00 a.m. and drive to the park. We'll try to have box lunches delivered to the park. Dinner on Thursday night is at Billy's Stone Crab Restaurant in Tierra Verde. We'll return to the motel by 8:00 p.m. On Friday morning, April 15, we'll leave for home at 8:30 a.m. Those wishing to can stop at the Circle B Bar in Lakeland on the way home.

The Circle B Bar trip is still in the planning stage. Details regarding time, meeting location, etc. will follow.

The Dora Canal trip will be on a pontoon boat. Arrangements will be made later. The trip lasts 2 hours and costs \$27 per person. This is one of the most reliable spots in Florida for Prothonotary Warbler as well as a number of other good birds. We can have lunch at the launch site or at a nearby park.

Revised 9/6/2015

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.

Contact Our Board Members

Office	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
President	Jim O'Shaughnessy	386-253-0335	jebk75@gmail.com
Vice President	David Hartgrove	386-788-2630	birdman9@earthlink.net
Treasurer	Betty Butcher	386-310-8039	bbutcher6@cfl.rr.com
Recording Sec.	Peggy Yokubonus	386-673-7619	pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com
Membership Sec.	John Carr	386-255-9360	jcarr14@gmail.com
Historian	John Carr	386-255-9360	jcarr14@gmail.com
Past President	Paula Wehr	386-673-5332	paulawehr@cfl.rr.com
At Large 2017	Renate Calero	386-761-8179	renate_c@hotmail.com
At Large 2017	Marion Monaghan	7386-60-2747	nautilus411@aol.com
At Large 2018	Holly Zwart-Duryea	386-672-8788	hollis1000@aol.com
At Large 2016	Deborah Green	407-625-1390	greenmermaid55@att.net
At Large 2016	Dan Gribbin	386-760-8226	bluzeman1@hotmail.com
At Large 2018	Celine Sullivan	386-257-1980	Celinesul@aol.com

Committee Members

Committee	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
Conservation	David Hartgrove	386-788-2630	birdman9@earthlink.net
Education	Marion Monaghan	386-760-2747	nautilus411@aol.com
	Holly Zwart-Duryea	386-672-8788	hollis1000@aol.com
Field Trips	Peggy Yokubonus	386-673-7619	pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com
	David Hartgrove	386-788-2630	birdman9@earthlink.net
Newsletter Editor	David Hartgrove	386-788-2630	birdman9@earthlink.net or hrapelican11@earthlink.net
Welcome	Jari Arbogast	386-761-2283	arbofish@att.net
Webmaster	Paula Wehr	386-673-5332	paulawehr@cfl.rr.com