

The Pelican

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

Volume 62-Number 9 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
September, 2016



The President's Message

Thoughts and Concepts

My wife and I are fortunate enough to spend July and August in the Berkshire region in a cool part of our country. It is beautiful country and we enjoy hiking and taking advantage of the numerous activities that are available during the summer.

I came across a copy of the 1988 book, "THE BIRDER'S HANDBOOK, A Field Guide to Natural History of North American Birds". Many of you are probably familiar with this amazingly comprehensive, fact-filled book. I did not know it existed and have really enjoyed getting familiar with it. You many recognize one of the three authors, Paul Ehrlich, as the author of the best selling book, The Population Bomb, which was published in 1968.

In this, and the next several articles, I am going to extract bird facts that I hope you will find interesting, useful and informative. This process is somewhat arbitrary and may be too basic and elementary for some of you. I trust, however, that many will learn from this information.

Let's begin with the nest, where the all-important eggs hatch. Nest building is thought to have arisen from a shortage of natural cavities for use in sheltering eggs and young. Birds began to make compartments in soil and decayed soft wood and to chisel new holes in firm wood and to search for and assemble materials to augment their sites. The diversity of nests among bird species demonstrates the variety of structures that can provide satisfactory shelter and how highly specialized nest-building has become. However many non-passerines (non perching birds) do not use nests to protect their eggs. They simply lay their clutch (a nest of eggs) after making minimal scrapes in the soil or they pile available materials and make a pad for the eggs. To compensate for the reduced insulation that a nest would provide they spend more time on the nest, however the price of being so exposed increases the exposure to predators. There is speculation that nest building become more prevalent as the evolutionary diversification of mammalian predators increased. The majority of passerine species (perching birds) build open nests.

Nest types can be classified as follows: the cup is the type that most of us consider to be a "nest". Hemispherical inside with a rim height several times the diameter of the eggs and always with a deep depression. The nest that is a simple indentation in the ground, to prevent the eggs from rolling away, is known as a scrape. Many duck species use this scrape type of nest. Last year, on the beach several miles south of New Smyrna Beach, several of us were fortunate enough to witness a pair of Wilson's Plovers incubating and then raising their chicks. Volunteers had found the scrape nest before the eggs hatched and had roped off the area around the scrape nest to prevent people from walking over the nest.

This article continues on the next page

Calendar & Events

Monday, September 19th- Program meeting: Dr. Paul Gray, Audubon Florida's Lake Okeechobee Science Coordinator, will give us a presentation on the myriad difficulties effecting the state's largest lake and some possible remedies for its troubled waters. 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.

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Field Trips, etc.

Our first chapter field trip will be on October 15th. Here are some choices with other groups. See page 4 for a printable list of ours.

Saturday, September 17th- We've been invited to join Orange Audubon Society to tour Canaveral National Seashore in New Smyrna Beach. This pristine beach stretches 24 miles from New Smyrna Beach to Titusville. This special place is managed by the National Park Service, as one of only 10 National Seashores in the United States, and this trip honors the Park Service's 100th anniversary. The group will search for songbirds that migrate down the East Coast to tropical wintering grounds. We'll scan for birds in Mosquito Lagoon and on Canaveral's beautiful beach. The group will meet at 8 a.m. at the Canaveral National Seashore (New Smyrna Beach) Visitor's Center parking lot. Cost to enter the National Seashore is \$5/carload. Bring correct change, plenty to drink, sun protection, insect protection, birding gear, and lunch.

Saturday, September 17th- International Coastal Cleanup- Looking for something closer to home? Don your hat and sunscreen, grab your gloves and come out to help clean up our beaches and waterways. Coordinated by Volusia County's Environmental Management Department this annual event is open to all volunteers. Registration and information on where to rendezvous is available at this [website](#). Click on the Coastal Cleanup to learn where to report. Then click on the "Register" link to volunteer.

Wednesday, September 21st- Guided hike around Longleaf Pine Preserve with Volusia County's, Trey Hannah. This easy two hour hike will meet at the west entrance trailhead, 3637 E. New York Ave, DeLand, FL 32724. Call 386-736-5927 for reservations.

Tuesday, September 29th- Bicycle around Lake Beresford Park Trail. Join Mr. Hannah again and ride the Lake Beresford Park trail and a segment of the spring to spring trail. Participants will learn about the local environment, and the importance of springs. Emphasis will be on the connectivity of our local waters. Meet at Beresford Park, 2100 Fatio Rd, DeLand. Again, be sure to call 386-736-5927 for reservations.

Beginning Birding Class Announcement Below

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The saucer nest type is a shallow cup with the rim height several times the diameter of the eggs. A structure in a tree or cliff big enough for the bird to land on is known as a platform nest. This nest type is typical of many raptors and birds residing in wetlands. Our Bald Eagles build amazing large and well built platform nests. The cavity type of nest is excavated, as with woodpeckers, or it can be a natural cavity found in a dead or dying tree. Some birds place eggs in a crack in the face of a cliff. This type of nest is classified as a crevice nest. If the eggs are placed in a chamber at the end of a tunnel it is called a burrow type nest. Many kingfishers, puffins and storm-petrels use this burrow nest type. The pendant nest type is an elongated saclike nest structure suspended from a branch. Orioles typically use this pendant type nest.

I'll continue with my article next month, when we investigate the mating systems of our avian friends. Remember that this month means a return to our monthly meetings and our first chapter field trip is on October 15th. I hope you've all had a fun summer.

Jim O'Shaughnessy

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Conservation Notes

The largest single contributor to the degradation of the St Johns River is the Georgia Pacific paper mill in Palatka. For years they dumped millions of gallons of toxic sludge into Rice Creek, which empties into the St Johns. When Audubon, Sierra and others complained and filed a law suit forcing a cleanup of the creek, Georgia Pacific sought and received a permit from Governor Rick Scott and his handpicked DEP Secretary to install a pipeline to dump its effluent directly into the river. When a study raised questions about the damage being done to the river by this move, the study was ignored and another study, more friendly to the polluters, was chosen as the one to follow.

The Palatka mill is now owned by the Koch brothers, whose campaign donations across the country are aimed at keeping candidates like Scott in office. They also own another paper and pulp mill in Taylor County, in the Big Bend area. That one was dumping effluent into the Fenholloway River for years. It's the only "industrial" river so designated in the state. Now the EPA has finally begun trying to get that mill to clean up its act. The river empties into the Gulf of Mexico and thanks to the mill's pollution there's a 10 square mile dead zone in the Gulf. Now this paper company (also owned by the Koch brothers) wants to clean the river by installing a pipeline to dump its poisonous effluent directly into the Gulf. Several adjacent counties whose livelihoods are closely tied to the fishing industry have moved recently to demand that the Governor deny this pipeline permit. Knowing how closely tied the Koch brothers and our governor are, the outcome of this permit process seems a foregone conclusion. It's impossible to over estimate how much damage Governor Scott has done to our state in just 6 years.

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On July 26th, at the Piggotte Center in South Daytona, the public meeting announcing the proposed Critical Wildlife Area designation for Rookery Island was held and many of our members were there in support. Staff members from the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission chaired the meeting and gave an impressive presentation on why this proposed designation is so important. This is one of 14 proposed CWA's. And though most are bird related, two are directed at protecting bat habitat in caves. There are more meetings to be held and the final one will be in Tallahassee in December. We'll keep you posted on the progress of this important program.

David Hartgrove

Time for another in our series, "Everyday Birding" with Ray Scory

The House Finch *Carpodacus mexicanus*

Across the corner of my eye a blurred shadow streaked from my backyard bird feeder, triggering an amazingly human quality - called memory recall. Synapses connected, sparks ignited and a process, taking only milli-seconds, released a history of observations that covered years of field and bird feeder watching experiences. Attention to details and to the behavioral antics of birds are an integral part of these experiences.

Now I don't intend this essay to delve into the physiology of the human brain. I only want to express the importance of observation. In the spirit of birdwatching, acute observations will lead to avenues of surprise and new adventures.



House Finches, female & male. *Photo by Ray Scory*

In the context of that fleeting moment of a blur a deluge of reactions exposed me to an identification - House Finch. To that milli-second reaction to a blur many things happened. I identified a bird at my bird feeder. It brought back memories of my connection with House Finches. I confirmed its identification in my bird bath the next day and it led me to a study of an interesting House Finch behavior.

I thought of the hundreds of House Finches that came to my bird feeders during the Winter months in Connecticut. How hardy they were. How they dug through snow covered feeders to get at the seeds - how determined, persistent. How they escaped from marauding Sharp-shinned Hawks to go another day. How they diminished in flock (development) size in my yard from about forty to less than five in a matter of a few years due to a chronic eye disease. Deciding how different they look from their often times confusing and near look alike relative - the Purple Finch. The Purple Finch looks like it has been dipped head first into a watered down red ink. The House Finch's head is covered with a stronger red head washing down over its breast with a brown back and wings. Both female finches are grayish brown birds. The female Purple Finch has strong, sharper brown stripes and the female House Finch has soft, less pronounced brown stripes. No red shows on either female, only the males.

The next morning I observed a male House Finch splashing in my bird bath with feathers wet in utter confusion. This House Finch displayed a lot of orange/yellow where the red should have been.

Continues below on page 3.



Tiny Jewelry For A Tiny Bird

Membership Chair and Chapter Historian, John Carr, was cruising the Internet a few weeks back and came upon the photo above on the [Hilton Pond](#) website. Those tiny blue bands are leg bands for a hummingbird.

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Ormond Beach Environmental Discovery Center

will host a program on Bats and their importance in Florida's environment. There are all kinds of misconceptions surrounding bats and Shari Blissett-Clark, President of the Florida Bat Conservancy, is just the person to dispel those damaging rumors. The program will be held on Thursday, September 15th, from noon to 1:00 pm, as part of the Center's "Lunch and Learn" program.

Audubon Adventures Needs Your Help

Yes, that means we need your money. Supplying Volusia County schools classrooms with [Audubon Adventures](#) is a major HRA project. The cost to supply one classroom with this exceptional educational material is \$45.00. Please donate what you can to this special project. We are currently serving forty five teachers in sixteen schools. Make your generous check payable to HRA and designate it's for Audubon Adventures. And Thank You!

Water Festival Coming In October

On Sunday, October 16th, from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm The [Water Festival](#) will enliven DeLand and Earl Brown Park. A presentation sponsored by a host of environmental and civic organizations, the Festival will include food, live music, a DJ, an art contest and much more. You won't want to miss this fun and educational event.

Former Education Chair Mourned

Glade Koch, former Education Chair and HRA board member passed away on August 13th after a long illness. Glade joined HRA in 1988 and almost immediately volunteered to be Education Chair. Early in her tenure Audubon Adventures was introduced and rolled out nationally. As a former elementary school teacher she saw the value of the curriculum being offered. Her [obituary](#) in the News-Journal offered only a brief glimpse of the contribution she made to our chapter and the community at large.

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From "The Quotable Birder", a quote from Will Rogers: "Live in such a way that you would not be ashamed to sell your parrot to the town gossip."



Male House Finch, Photo by Ray Scory

Further internet investigations revealed that some male House Finches display partially or totally yellow/orange coloration instead of the more expected red. There is a reason for this quirk of nature. Research has revealed this color changing behavior of the males. It seems the first year breeding females have eyes for the strikingly handsome red colored male. However the flaw in the inexperienced female's selection is that the handsome male prima donna is lazy and a poor provider, leaving the female over worked. The next year after experiencing a first year disappointing lesson. She selects the less attractive yellow/orange colored male discovering that they are better providers.

From a shadowy blur to learning about a unique bird behavior - not bad for a millisecond birding experience at my bird feeder.

Ray Scory

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Beginning Birding Class Starts September 29th

Ray Scory, assisted by past President, John Roessler, will teach our chapter's Beginning Birding Class at the Port Orange Regional Library, 1005 City Center Circle, in Port Orange. There will be 3 classroom sessions held on Thursdays: September 29th, October 6th and November 3rd from 9:30 to 11:30 am. The field sessions will be held on Tuesdays: October 4th, to Port Orange Causeway Park, 8:30 am; October 18th, a visit to the bird banding station at Tomoka State Park, 8:00 am and November 8th, Merritt Island NWR, 8:00 am. Cost for the class is 25.00 per person. Please register as soon as possible by calling David Hartgrove, 386-788-2630 or email: birdman9@earthlink.net. Mail checks, made out to Halifax River Audubon with a note "bird class" in the comment section, to Halifax River Audubon, PO Box 166 Daytona Beach, FL 32115.

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The Million Dollar Duck

Board member, Celine Sullivan, sent this announcement. On Wednesday, September 14th, at 9:00 pm, Animal Planet (check your service provider for the channel) will broadcast, "The Million Dollar Duck." This film won the Jury Award for best documentary at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival and traces the work and drama around selecting the next national Duck Stamp.

HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE 2016-2017

Date	Time	Meet At	Trip	Level	Lunch	Leader	Tel #
Fri, Oct14	8:00 AM	WO	Washington Oaks State Park	2	N	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085
Sun. Oct 16	4:00 PM	Bridge	Dunlawton Bridge	1	N	Ray Scory	386-763-4260
Fri. Nov 18	7:30 AM	KRY	Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive	1	Y	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085
Sat. Dec 3	7:30 AM	TAR	Audubon Park, Deltona	3	Y	Betty Butcher	863-224-4922
Fri. Dec 16	7:30 AM	TAR	Merritt Island NWR	1	Y	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Jan. 10-13			St. Marks NWR	3	Y	Betty Butcher	863-224-4922
Wed. Jan 25	9:30 AM	CC	Cracker Creek Boat Trip	1	N	Celine Sullivan	386-523-4809
Fri. Feb 3	7:30 AM	TAR	Viera Wetlands	2	Y	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Fri. Feb 10	7:30 AM	TAR	Merritt Island NWR	1	Y	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085
Sat Feb 11	7:30 AM	TAR	Merritt Island NWR	1	Y	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Fri. Feb 17	7:30 AM	KRY	Oakland Nature Center	2	Y	Betty Butcher	863-224-4922
Wed. Mar 15	1:45 PM	KRY	Blue Heron Boat Trip	1	N	Celine Sullivan	386-523-4809
Fri. Mar 17	7:30 AM	CHK	Ocala National Forest	3	Y	John Roessler	386-212-6957
Fri. Mar 24	7:30 AM	TAR	Orlando Wetlands	3	Y	Celine Sullivan	386-523-4809
Thurs. Apr 6	8:00 AM	TB	Tiger Bay State Forest	3	Y	Ray Scory	386-763-4260
Sun. Apr 9	3:00 PM	Bridge	Dunlawton Bridge	1	N	Ray Scory	386-763-4260
Fri. Apr 21	8:00 AM	WO	Washington Oaks State Park	2	N	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085
Fri. May 19	8:00 AM	CHK	St. Augustine Alligator Farm	2	N	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085

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

Meeting Places

Bridge - Port Orange Causeway Park under Dunlawton Bridge
 CHK - Ormond Town Square - Granada & Williamson Blvds behind Chick-fil-A
 TB - Tiger Bay State Forest headquarters - US 92 West
 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

Boat Trips - require reservations made thru Celine Sullivan 386-523-4809. Cracker Creek Concession is located at 1795 Taylor Rd., Port Orange. Cracker Creek is a one hour boat tour from 10-11 am with lunch following at the Olive Garden Restaurant located in the Pavillion Shopping Center, Port Orange. The fee for the boat trip is \$10.00 (please bring exact fee in cash). Limit 20 persons. The dedline for this trip is Mon., 1/23/17. The Blue Heron trip is \$20 per person, cash only. Absolute deadline for reservation is Wed., 3/8/17. Limit 36 persons. Meeting place is behind Krystal on International Speedway Blvd. at 1:45 pm. Those going over on their own must be there by 2:30 pm. The boat does not wait for latecomers!

St. Marks NWR - We will leave Tuesday January 10, carpooling to St Marks, FL (appx 260 miles). We will stay at Shell Island Fish Camp (shellislandfishcamp.com) (850-925-6226); they have 1 and 2 bedroom cabins, motel rooms and RV sites (if you want to bring your RV). Dinners will be as a group at local seafood restaurants. Stay from 3, 4, or 5 nights, whichever is better for you. If interested, please contact Betty Butcher, 863-224-4922, for more information.

St. Augustine Alligator Farm - Admission is \$24.99 per adult, Seniors 10% discount. Lunch will follow at a local restaurant in St. Augustine area.

Washington Oaks - Lunch will follow at a local restaurant

A Special Thanks To Our Sponsors

**Florida Power & Light, Garden Club of the Halifax Country,
The Ormond Beach Garden Club, Spruce Creek Garden & Nature 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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