

The Pelican

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

Volume 63, Number 1 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
January, 2017



The President's Message

Thoughts and Concepts

I'm pleased to report that our annual beginner bird watcher's workshop was a wonderful success. Twenty seven students signed up on the first day and we had twenty five in attendance at the last class. There were three classroom sessions and three field trips. The success is largely due to our wonderful teacher, Ray Scory. Ray has a great ability to communicate information in an enthusiastic and lighthearted manner. His knowledge is evident and he provides interesting tidbits of information along with his bird pictures. Ray told us after the last session that this successful endeavor would not have gone as smoothly without the assistance of some of our members. John Roessler was there for every session and was constantly solving problems as they arose. David Hartgrove handled the marketing and is responsible for the wonderful turnout that we had. Peggy Yokobonus, Marion Monaghan, Becky Tate and Joan Tague were present when needed to assist Ray and John. It was truly a group effort and each should be proud of this successful workshop.

I'm pleased to let everyone know that our own Joan Tague has agreed to be our webmaster. She has already redone much of our website and if you have not looked at it recently please do so. I think you will be pleased with the improvements that she has already made.

The Space Coast Birding Festival dates are January 25 - 30, 2017. In past years they have mailed a wonderful booklet to past attendees. The booklet contains the schedule for all of the events that take place during the festival. It really is a wonderful tool to help when you register for the events that you have decided to attend. This year they are mailing the booklet only to those who request it. If you wish one call 321 268 5888 and they will take your address and send one to you. All of the information about the festival is on line at this [link](#). Therefore the booklet isn't essential. However I really like having a hard copy with all festival activities at my fingertips.

Every February, Palm Coast and the Flagler Beachs are transformed into bird central as birders from all over gather for the three day "[Birds of a Feather Fest.](#)" With guided field trips, expert led birding workshops and family activities, the festival is perfect for beginners and experts alike. The 2017 Festival will be February 10 thru the the 12th. There is no registration fee. Famed birder Greg Miller will be leading a group to Lyonia Preserve and our own David Hargrove will be leading another group to Merritt Island NWR. These two events are on Friday the 10th. On Saturday Greg Miller will lead a group to Sweetwater Wetlands and David Hartgrove will head up a group going to Viera Wetlands. Many other birding activities are also scheduled. To learn more about this festival go to the website linked above.

Jim O'Shaughnessy

Calendar & Events

Monday, January 23rd, Program Meeting- Note a slight change for this meeting, it's the 4th Monday of the month due to Sica Hall being closed for the Martin Luther King holiday on the 16th. Join us for a program by our own Dan Gribbin, who will talk about photographing birds from his kayak. 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

Tuesday, January 10th thru Friday, January 13th. There's still barely time to go on our overnight trip to St Marks NWR. We will leave Tuesday January 10th, carpooling to St Marks, FL (approx. 260 miles). We will stay at [Shell Island Fish Camp](#), 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.

Wednesday, January 25th- Spruce Creek Boat Tour- Join Celine Sullivan at [Cracker Creek](#) for a 1 hour pontoon boat ride on this Outstanding Florida Waterway. Cracker Creek Concession is located at [1795 Taylor Rd., Port Orange](#). The tour is 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 deadline for this trip is Mon., 1/23/17. Questions? Call Celine at 386-523-4809.

Friday, February 3rd- Viera Wetlands- We wouldn't want this one to sneak up on anyone being so early in the month. Join David Hartgrove for a trip to this water treatment wetlands in Brevard County. Wintering ducks, nesting Great Blue Herons and possibly Least Bitterns are birds we're likely to see, along with Crested Caracara, hawks and others. Very little walking for this trip. Bring a lunch and meet at 7:30 am in the Target parking lot on Dunlawton Ave., east of I-95, behind Panera Bread. Questions? Call David at 386-235-1249.

Field Trips With Others

Saturday, January 14th- Lake Apopka- Join our friends from our sister chapter, the West Volusia Audubon Society, for a trip to this excellent birding destination. From Bald Eagles to Savannah Sparrows this site offers a wealth of birding opportunities. Bring a lunch. For more information and where to rendezvous, contact Eli Shaperow, 407-314-7965.

Conservation Notes

Big Sugar is trying to buy state legislators again. Since the end of 2014 they've contributed 11.5 million dollars to campaigns and political committees. By contrast, the Everglades Foundation and Everglades Trust, the two main nonprofits pushing for a massive land buy to store excess lake water, raised just 561,000.00 for their lobbying efforts. As reported in [Eco Voice](#), this discrepancy bodes ill for a resolution to the problems of the Everglades and the estuaries on both of South Florida's coasts. "It is vital that South Florida farmers have a voice in local, state and national governments that can greatly impact our businesses," U.S. Sugar spokeswoman Judy Sanchez said via email. "We will always oppose those intentionally pitting coastal interests against our farming communities and seeking to fix their problems at our expense."

To be fair, not all of the pollution being dumped into the two coastal systems that have caused the loss of thousands of acres of sea grasses and the deaths of pelicans, manatees and millions of fish comes from sugar farming. But its land holds the chance for an end to the dumping of so much damaging water by becoming a holding area for the polluted water from farms, towns and other sources that end up in Lake Okeechobee. So if that means the "fix" ends up being at "their expense", so be it. It's not like they won't be paid a fair price for the property. If anything the tax payers will get hit with inflated land prices because the deal that would have saved us money was allowed to expire due to more lobbying by Big Sugar. If this seems to you like yet another spin on the merry go round, you wouldn't be wrong. Some day we might have legislators willing to buck the system that's been in place for so long. One that rewards party hacks for continually protecting the benefits for a few subsidized sugar barons at the expense of millions of coastal residents and the Everglades.

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The Christmas and Hanukah season is just behind us and sometimes the presents we get for ourselves turn out to be the best ones. If you haven't already done so you might consider getting a present for yourself that will help improve your birding skills. And best of all, it's **free**. You'll need a smart phone or i-Pad and as soon as you have "Merlin" installed the fun can begin. Merlin is an application developed by Cornell Lab, Google, Visipedia, Jacobs Technion and the National Science Foundation. It will help you identify birds by asking a simple set of questions or by comparing a photo you took with a library of photos provided and image recognition software. It's quite simply amazing. Here's a [link](#) to the site where you can get started.

David Hartgrove

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Audubon Adventures Needs Your Help

Yes, that means we need your money. Supplying Volusia County school classrooms with Audubon Adventures is a major HRA project. The cost to supply one classroom with this exceptional educational material is \$46.00. 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. Mail it to Halifax River Audubon, PO Box 166, Daytona Beach, FL 32115. And Thank You!

Chapter Education Co-Chair, Marion Monaghan

Time For The Birding Festivals In Florida

Everglades Birding Festival

Here's a smaller festival, limited to just 60 participants, that offers excellent opportunities to see South Florida specialties like Snail Kite, Short-tailed hawk, Red-whiskered Bulbul, White-crowned Pigeon and exotics in South Florida hotspots: the Everglades, Corkscrew Swamp, the Keys and STA 5. Birding on full day field trips with Expert Guides. The focus is on YOU gaining advanced skills with workshops applied in the field in small groups. Evening talks, lunch, transportation, snacks & water included. Contact [Paddy Cunningham](#), 754-201-1141, for all the information.

Birdapalooza Birding Festival

The Lake Apopka Wildlife Festival & Birdapalooza Birding Festival, January 20-22, 2017 is sponsored in part by our friends in Orange Audubon. Add to your life list at an amazing birding area, the 20,000-acre [Lake Apopka North Shore](#). Two full-day trips and nine half-day trips led by well-known local birding guides are offered, along with two dinners and keynotes, including one by Greg Miller of The Big Year fame. For details and to register, see <http://orangeaudubonfl.org/birdapalooza>. On Saturday participate in the 5th annual FREE family-oriented Birdapalooza festival with photo walks, bird banding and guided bus tours. For more, see www.birdapalooza.com. Facebook events to share are at <https://www.facebook.com/Birdapalooza/>.

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The Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival

The 20th annual [Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival](#), January 25th thru the 30th, is the largest of its kind in the country and it's headquartered just 40 miles to our south at the Titusville campus of Eastern Florida State College. Click [here](#) for a map. There are field trips, work shops on bird identification and photography and a huge selection of cameras and optics in the gym, along with live bird shows and guided birding tour companies from all over the world. Here's a [link](#) to download a PDF version of the festival program with all of the information. You won't want to miss this exciting event.

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Birds of a Feather Fest

As Jim mentioned in his column above, [Birds of a Feather Fest](#) is yet another local opportunity to learn and have fun at a birding festival. Sponsored by the City of Palm Coast, it runs from February 10th thru the 12th and offers field trips, workshops and family fun activities. There's no registration fee so check the website linked above and plan to attend.

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Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Cassandra Ballard, Carolyn Brewer, Sonia Cryan, Bonnie Filenius, Carol Lehman, Alma More, Mary Peine-Lemay, Susan Plimpton, Wanda ward and Andrea White. We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting or on one of fabulous field trips.

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From the Quotable Birder

"The early bird who catches the worm works for someone who comes in late and owns the worm farm"

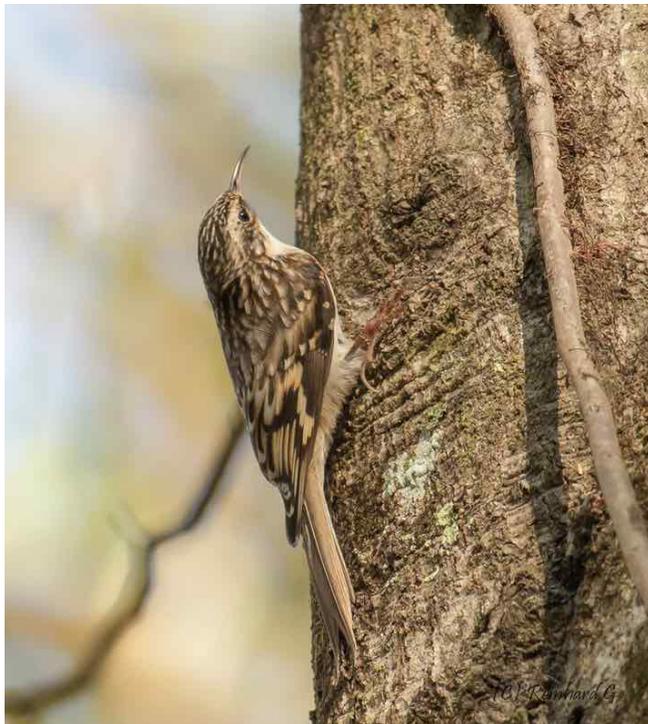
Travis McGee

Chasing Unusual Birds

Every winter we get birds here in Florida that are seldom seen in our state. Some are annual visitors, though in small numbers and not seen by many, if any, birders. So we were all lucky when photographer extraordinaire, Reinhard Geisler, went up in the panhandle area in search of several reported rarities. Horned Larks range across most of North America but are rare visitors to Florida. Brown Creepers nest in Canada and parts of the mountain west. Their secretive ways and good camouflage mean that even though they're here each winter, few birders see them. The same is true for the Golden-crowned Kinglet.



Horned Lark, photo by Reinhard Geisler



Brown Creeper, photo by Reinhard Geisler

PICTURE YOURSELF Owning & Using this Scope!!

Swarovski Optik



Swarovski Optik Spotting Scope / Super Telephoto Raffle Package:

- Swarovski Optik STX (or ATX) 95 Spotting Scope
- Swarovski Optik Spotting Scope Rail II
- Swarovski Optik TLS APO Camera Adapter
- Swarovski Optik CT-101 Tripod with DH-101 head

WINNERS CHOICE – either:

- Sony a7r II camera body
- Nikon D5 camera body
- Canon 1Dx Mk II camera body
- BlackMagic Design Ursa Mini (EF Mount) with 4.6K Digital Cinema Camera body - (camera selected by winner from Hunt's Photo)

***Total Value of Scope + Camera over \$10,000

Presenting Sponsor
for the 2017 Space Coast
Birding and Wildlife

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RAFFLE TO BE HELD DURING THE 20TH ANNUAL
SPACE COAST BIRDING and WILDLIFE FESTIVAL

January 25-30, 2017

Eastern Florida State College, Titusville, FL, located on Florida's Space Coast

Tickets will be available for a suggested donation of
\$100.00 each

Random Ticket Drawing will be held on
Saturday 1:00 pm, January 28, 2017

321-268-5224 • neta@brevardnaturealliance.org



Brevard Nature Alliance is a 501(c) (3) tax-exempt organization. A copy of the official Registration & financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services @ 800-435-7352. Registration #: CH19903. Florida Solicitation of Contributions Act.

The Birder's Raffle of a Lifetime

Swarovski is about as good as birding optics get and here's your chance to own a complete set up. Plus, as part of the package, your choice of a camera valued at 6,000.00. When you're down at the Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival you can purchase tickets for this once in a lifetime prize. Granted, the tickets aren't cheap but that just means the odds of winning are better.

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Golden-Crowned Kinglet, photo by Reinhard Geisler

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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