

The Pelican

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

Volume 63- Number 10 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
September, 2017



The President's Ruminations

The Accidental Birder

This month's letter is a cautionary tale about not wasting precious time. If you suspect you are a birder-in-the-making, this is for you.

I never set out to become a birdwatcher or birder. For many years, I have begun each day with a long walk outdoors, no matter where I have found myself. I am an indiscriminate omnivore for nature's sights but it turns out that the birds have sneaked up on me, insisting I pay them greater attention.

I bought my first bird book when I lived in Puerto Rico. I was very casual about observing the birds and only looked up the ones that seemed unusual. Of those, I particularly remember non-native Java Finches and a wayward Brown Booby. When I moved to South Florida, I was taken with the "invaders" first, giant macaws and Monk Parakeets, both pet shop escapees. Then it was the Cattle Egrets hunting in the boulevard medians, the White Ibis pecking at lawns, the Screech Owl that sat with me for 15 minutes on my balcony one New Year's Eve, the lethal hawks with deceptively sweet, high calls, and the fearless Anhinga and cormorants in the Everglades. I bought my second bird book.

Then I returned temporarily to Ormond-by-the-Sea. What was that odd bird on the beach every morning waiting by the ghost crab holes? No one seemed to know. I found out he is a Yellow-crowned Night Heron. I watched the Osprey catch breakfast, carefully turning its catch lengthwise under its body as it flew back to a condo-top nest. An early morning walk down High Bridge rewarded me with views of Roseate Spoonbills, Wood Storks, Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets and some birds I didn't know. I bought my third bird book.

When I returned to Ormond-by-the-Sea for good, my husband and I joined Halifax River Audubon and signed up for a birding class. Please, just do this. If my story sounds even remotely like you, you will love the class! Although I am still one of the least experienced birders in our chapter, I know so much more than I did. My enjoyment of birds has grown exponentially. Whether you take the birding class, go on our great field trips or just bird on your own, there are a few basics that are helpful to know:

- * Move as quietly as you can to get a look at a bird
- * Speak softly, if at all
- * Don't point. Waving your arms like a scare crow is...you get it, right?
- * Realize that birds (and all animals) have a safety zone. If you enter that zone, they will run or fly away. You'll develop a feel for it over time

The article continues on the next page

Calendar & Events

September's here and that means we're into our new season of field trips and meetings. Please come out and join us.

Monday, September, 18th, Program Meeting- Join us for a program on Volusia and Flagler's special places with award winning News-Journal reporter, Dinah Voyles-Pulver. 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

Wednesday, September 20th- Dunlawton Bridge- Join David Hartgrove for this easy walk. We will meet at 4:00 pm in Port Orange Causeway Park, below the west side of the bridge. Bring your binoculars, etc. and we'll look for migrating shorebirds and the young pelicans on Rookery Island. Questions ? Call David at 386-235-1249.

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How About An Ocean Voyage ?

Saturday, October 7th- The Marine Science Center is sponsoring a pelagic birding trip that will leave from Port Canaveral aboard the 85 foot "Canaveral Princess" to look for birds like Band-rumped Storm Petrels, Pomarine Jaegers and Cory's Shearwaters. Cost is 245.00 per person. Contact Michael Brothers for all of the information: mbrothers@volusia.org

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Due to necessary changes in our plans for the Gainesville trip, information in last month's Pelican has been updated below.

We're Going To Gainesville In November

Several years ago our chapter took an overnight birding trip to Gainesville. Alachua County has a number of excellent birding hot spots and we had a great time. We got a behind the scenes tour of the avian collection at the Museum of Natural History. We also watched the nightly flight of the thousands of bats from the University's huge bat house as a Red-tailed hawk tried to make his dinner of one. We're happy to report that we're doing this trip again on **Wednesday and Thursday, November 8th and 9th**. We have a block of rooms reserved at the Hampton Inn with a price for these double queen rooms of 119.00 per night. Hampton has set up a special website for our group to make reservations. Click on this [link](#) and follow the instructions. The cut off date for this trip is October 8th. You must have made your reservation by then. Contact David Hartgrove: birdman9@earthlink.net by phone, 386-235-1249 to add your name to the list of those going. In addition to Paynes Prairie and the Museum's avian collection, we'll be going to the new Sweetwater Wetlands where we'll have a catered picnic lunch. More information on possible carpooling, etc. to follow. You don't want to miss this one.

* Get a good field guide and read a little each day

* Wear muted colors

* HAVE FUN!

Our next Beginning Birding Class starts on October 24th and runs through December 7th. It includes three classroom sessions and three outdoor workshops. See the announcement here on page 4 and if you wish, print it and register for the class. We hope to see you at our September meeting.

Melissa Lammers

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Conservation Notes

Martin County, on Florida's east coast just north of Palm Beach County, was ground zero for the massive algae blooms in the Indian River two years ago. Septic tanks, which leach nitrogen into ground water, are a major source of the nutrients feeding these algae blooms. So when debating the choice between eliminating the septic tanks or switching to a sewer system, guess what the Martin County Commission voted to do. That's right, they voted to more than double the allowable size of septic tanks, from 2,000 gallons to 5,000 gallons. The reason for this incredibly dumb decision is so that development can continue paving over and covering what's left of Martin County with more houses. The costs associated with switching to a sewer system are huge and tax payers and home owners will be saddled with footing the bill. But to continue the use of septic tanks is a myopic choice that assures continued pollution; fetid, smelly water unfit for human contact and loads of dead fish whose aroma is even worse than that of the water. Actions have consequences and the folks in Martin County and the other counties along what was once the nation's most productive estuary will have to live with these consequences for a long time.

* * *

On the other side of the state there's another threat brewing that needs our attention and if possible, a little bit of our money. Little Estero Island is a dedicated bird sanctuary that hosts nesting herons and egrets along with nesting shorebirds like Wilson's and Snowy Plovers and Least Terns and Black Skimmers. An out of state corporation owns a large seasonal rental complex nearby and they asked the state for permission to build an elevated board walk out to the island from their development. This will allow the renters access to the island's beach. If built, it will also allow predators like coyotes and raccoons access to the island's nesting birds. This is such a stupid idea that the Town of Fort Myers Beach joined Audubon Florida in pleading with the state to deny the application. But the developers are well connected and the Department of Environmental Protection (in this case perhaps it should be called the Department of Environmental "Prostitution") granted the permit. Audubon Florida has no choice but to seek redress in the courts and that's not a decision they take lightly. Litigation is expensive and we always try to negotiate a compromise but this time that's not an option. If you'd like to contribute to the legal fund for this cause, click on this [link](#). Audubon Florida really needs the support. Thanks!

David Hartgrove

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Curmudgeon Quote of the Month

"Anti-intellectualism has been a constant thread winding its way through our political and cultural life, nurtured by the false notion that democracy means that "My ignorance is just as good as your knowledge."

Isaac Asimov

Help Out With The International Coastal Cleanup

On Saturday, September 16th, 9:00 am-11:30 am join volunteers from all over the county to help remove trash from beaches, rivers and parks during the 2017 International Coastal Cleanup and Halifax/Indian River Cleanup. Last year, 1,683 Volusia County residents came together to remove over 7,700 pounds of trash. We're a bit late getting the word out and registration for this event closes September 1st. However you can simply show up at one of the collection sites listed below to do your part. Participants are asked to bring garden gloves, drinking water, and buckets for collecting trash. Wear a hat, sunscreen, comfortable clothing and outdoor footwear. Here's a list of the places to show up at 9:00 am:

- * Bicentennial Park, 1800 Oceanshore Blvd., Ormond-By-The-Sea
- * Sanchez Park, 329 Sanchez Ave., Ormond Beach
- * Cassen Park, 1 S. Beach Street, Ormond Beach
- * Sunrise Park North, 1135 Riverside Drive, Holly Hill
- * Daytona Beach City Island Park, 105 E. Magnolia Ave., Daytona Beach.

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Audubon & The League of Women Voters

Partners For Sensible Solutions

The Volusia Solar Coop is coming soon. So what's a solar coop you're asking yourself ? To quote from the LWV press release, "Solar co-ops consist of homeowners who are bundling their buying power to secure a discounted price for solar PV arrays on their respective homes." PV stands for photo voltaic, the magical little panels that make electricity from sunshine and lower your electric bill. The League of Women Voters of Florida is partnering with FL SUN, a new statewide nonprofit bringing solar co-ops to communities across Florida. Local organizations, like Halifax River Audubon, will be invited to become local partners to help publicize and provide public support for the co-op. Here's a chance to become a part of the solution to climate change and lower your monthly electric bill a lot. Nancy Vaughn, Co-Chair of LWV's Solar and Water Action Team, will speak on this at our meeting on October 16th. A list of local workshop locations appears below.

Editor

LET THE SUN PAY YOUR ENERGY BILLS!

Come to one of our info sessions!

- 9/20 6-7:30pm Stetson University
Lynn Business Center Auditorium
345 N. Woodland Blvd., Deland
- 10/5 5:30-7pm Deltona Regional Library
2150 Eustace Ave., Deltona, FL
- 10/21 1:30-3pm Port Orange Regional Library
1005 City Center Circle
Port Orange
- 11/15 12 - 1pm Daytona Beach Library
105 E. Magnolia Ave., Daytona Beach
- 11/15 5:30-6:30pm New Smyrna Beach Regional Library
1001 S. Dixie Freeway
New Smyrna Beach, FL

FIND OUT MORE BY VISITING FLSUN.ORG/VOLUSIA



Florida Solar United Neighborhoods

In partnership with: LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF FLORIDA

flsun.org

A Bird Feeder and Apple Pie

When my mother made an apple pie, I think she took more pleasure in watching her young family dive into her delicious creation than she did in actually taking part in the gourmet feast. I guess my remembrance of those past apple pie treats can today apply to my backyard birding obsession. I really enjoy watching the antics of birds at my backyard bird feeder station. To the birds it is a necessary act of feeding, positioning and posturing, to me it is a wonderful feeling of satisfaction and delight. The effort is simple. Keep the feeder full, clean and standing.

However, first you must have a bird feeder and a window. A window to look out of and a feeder to look at. You can place your feeder anywhere outside. I prefer to have mine ten feet from my house and in front of a window and at least five feet off the ground.

There are many acceptable bird feeders in the market place that will attract birds to your window. Some are ready to go and some require minor assembly. All seem well designed and should bring you years of service and satisfaction. However, I prefer to make my own. I can be more creative and customize it as desired, for the seasons and avian migration. At the beginning of the winter season at my Connecticut home I would go to my friendly apple orchard, select a short section of an apple tree limb, drill holes in it, stuff it with suet and attach it to my self-made pipe feeder station. Throughout the winter season this arrangement would attract Hairy, Downy, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, White-breasted Nuthatches and Yellow-shafted Flickers. An occasional European Starling would try it but the Copper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks patrolling my yard would keep their numbers low.

In my Florida yard I now use two inch white PVC pipe to make my bird feeder station. I found that the steel water pipe rusted too fast and came down during heavy winds. I do not use glue to attach the various pieces together.

You have the freedom to design it as you please. Just adhere to my few recommendations and you will enjoy your own apple pie treat.

Tools: sledge hammer, block of wood, saw, phillips head screw driver, electric drill, step ladder.

Material: two 10 foot x2 inch PVC pipe, 2 inch fittings, stainless steel screws, bolts nuts, tray, 6 inch stove pipe with cap.

To Proceed: From the ladder pound the 10 foot pipe (cushioned by the wood block) 2 feet into the ground. Have someone sight the vertical position when pounding and use a carpenter level for vertical accuracy. Drill a 2 inch hole into cap and attach to the stove pipe with stainless steel sheet metal screws. Drill screws into the upright pipe to anchor the stove pipe (squirrel proof) in place. Slip it over upright pipe, then attach feeder assembly to top of pipe.

During the time that I have used this feeder station, I have been surprised, flabbergasted and charmed by the various birds appearing and the uniqueness of their individual behaviors. I observed that a Tufted titmouse will take one seed at a time, fly to a nearby branch, place the sunflower seed between its toes, rapidly peck at the seed and finally break away the husk to get to a well deserved treat. Whereas a mourning dove will stay at the feeder and just gobble down one seed at a time while protecting its position at the feeder ferociously. Lastly, suspend a flower pot tray below the large feeder to lessen fallen seeds, attach your feeders (your choice), add bird food and enjoy your hypothetical apple pie feast.

Ray Scory



The photos above show Ray's feeder from two angles. The three birds in the second photo are male and female Northern Cardinals and a male Painted Bunting. *Photos by Ray Scory*

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Audubon Adventures

[Audubon Adventures](#), is a wonderful program that helps engage kids in the natural world around them. Ranked as one of the most popular environmental education curricula in the country, our chapter has been donating to provide this valuable program to Volusia County school kids since its inception. Donations from members fund this program. Send your donation to Halifax River Audubon, P.O. Box 166, Daytona Beach FL 32115-0166. Please specify on your check that your donation is for Audubon Adventures. And thank you!

HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON

Presents

BEGINNER BIRD WATCHING CLASS

2017



Cardina

Learn how to identify birds, how to find birds, how to develop birding skills, how to improve your binocular use and many other birding facts. Join our class for fun, information and fellowship.

Donation: \$25.00 check, payable to **Halifax River Audubon**, noting "Bird Class" in the comment section. Mail to:

Halifax River Audubon
PO Box 166
Daytona Beach, FL 32115



Crow

Place: Port Orange Public Library Auditorium, 1005 City Center Circle, Port Orange.

Classroom instruction will be held on **Tuesday October 24, November 14 and December 5 at 9:00 to 12:00 p.m.** Sign up with a friend, or make a new one, and have lunch after the class.



Dabbling C

Outdoor workshops to practice techniques learned in the classroom will be held on Thursday mornings following the Tuesday morning class; i.e.:

Thursday, October 26 – 8:00 a.m. at Port Orange Causeway Park*

Thursday, November 16 – 8:00 a.m. at Tomoka State Park*

Thursday, December 7 –7:00 a.m. at Merritt Island NWR*

* Outdoor workshop details are subject to change. Instructor will confirm time/location at the prior class. Students who miss the class should contact instructor for details. Outdoor workshops are limited to registered class members only.



Bring your **binoculars** to all classes, especially the first class, as well as to all outdoor workshops.

Contact **David Hartgrove 386-788-2630** or birdman9@earthlink.net.

Class size is limited to 28, so sign up early. You do not have to be a member of Halifax River Audubon to attend.

✂Cut here and mail with your check-----

BEGINNER BIRD WATCHING CLASS - 2017

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

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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