

The Pelican

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

Volume 63- Number 11 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
November, 2017



The President's Ruminations

Water Woes

Last week, I attended the annual Audubon Florida Assembly. The theme for the Assembly and for all our work in the coming year is Water for Florida's Future. Water is essential for life and the Floridan Aquifer that supplies all our water --- what you drink and bathe in as well as what you draw from your well to put on your lawn, is in trouble. We are using it faster than it can be replenished and we are poisoning it drop by drop. Two thirds of water districts in Florida don't meet State standards. The assault on Florida's water has been long and relentless and takes many forms.

Paving over land prevents our often-abundant rainwater from reaching the Aquifer. One of the presenters said that Hurricane Irma dumped the equivalent of five years' water consumption by the entire State in just one storm. We lost two thirds of that water to run-off as there was no ground to absorb it. This first-world deforestation brings to mind what I saw overflying the border between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The former was verdant and fertile; the latter, sere and brown and unable to grow crops to feed her people.

More than half of water used in Volusia County and Florida goes on turf grass lawns. Not only is overuse of the water a problem, but keeping that grass growing in our Florida climate and ecosystem requires us to add things to it, like poison to get rid of pest bugs and plants, and nitrogen-laden fertilizer to feed it. These chemicals end up in our Aquifer and in our drinking water. The water that is absorbed through our lawn to the Aquifer below is chemical-laden. The water that runs off our lawns, into storm drains, is carrying a toxic load with real health and economic consequences. Google Indian River Lagoon.

You've heard that nature abhors a vacuum. As we draw water from the Floridan Aquifer faster than it gets put back, sea water flows into portions of our porous limestone substrate, increasing the salinity of our fresh water.

If there is no fresh water replenishing the Aquifer and no sea water fills in the gap, the karst structures through which our Aquifer flows collapse, forming sinkholes that increasingly jeopardize homes.

What Can We Do? There is a lot we can do. Each small step we take adds up and helps us to take another, perhaps greater, step. Examples of small but important steps are installing faucet aerators and checking toilet(s) for leaks. Bigger steps could include installing low-flow toilets and removing turf grass lawns. You can also get involved with your Water Management District. Halifax River Audubon, as part of Florida Audubon, will offer you ways to help us all take care of Water for Florida's Future.

Melissa Lammers

Calendar & Events

Monday, November 20th, Program Meeting- Join us for an informative presentation about the Tomoka Marsh Aquatic Preserve and its ongoing restoration. Our speaker will be Deborah Shelley, manager of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Wekiva River and Tomoka Marsh Aquatic Preserves. We'll learn about FDEP's efforts to clean up the Tomoka River, Bulow Creek, the Tomoka Basin, Halifax River, and Halifax islands. 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 & Thursday, November 8th & 9th- Gainesville- **The trip is full and we're not accepting any more applicants.**

Wednesday, November, 15th- Buschman Park- Join Joan Tague for a relaxed walk through this local gem. Meet at the park at 7:30, 4575 Spruce Creek Road, Port Orange. We'll be finished by 10:30. Questions: Call Joan, 386-871-6049.

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Field Trips With Others

Friday, November 17th- Lake Woodruff NWR w/SEVAS- Join our friends from Southeast Volusia Audubon for this trip one of the area's better locations. This one involves several miles of walking. Meet to carpool in the Florida Shores Plaza parking lot in Edgewater, (at the corner of Ridgewood Ave and Indian River Blvd), South of the new Dunkin Donuts building. Questions: call Joe Montpelier at 386-882-8679.

Sunday, November 5th- Orlando Wetlands Park w/ WVAS- Our friends in West Volusia Audubon Society are going to this excellent spot where Purple Gallinule, Limpkin, and Crested Caracara are seen regularly. Information on their website is somewhat sketchy so call Eli Schaperow, 407-314-7965.

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The Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival

It's time once again for the biggest and best birding festival in the country. Between January 24th and the 29th, 2018, the festival will be held at the East Florida State College, in Titusville, just 40 miles south of us. Field trips, photography work shops and events to please every taste will be held in a variety of locations around Central Florida. Here's a link to the [website](#). Registration is now open and the field trips and classes are filling up quickly. Early enrollment closes December 5th and prices will increase after that date. This is the place to buy that new pair of binoculars or that spotting scope you've been promising yourself. This is as much fun as can be had anywhere. Be There!

Conservation Notes

The dismantling of our nation's environmental regulatory safety structure is really moving into high gear now. There's a think tank called the "Heartland Institute" and the Environmental Protection Agency has now reached out to them to provide scientists to help them replace the ones dismissed by EPA Administrator, Scott Pruitt. Mr. Pruitt cleaned house of any remaining scientists at the Agency who still advocated a belief in global climate change.

The Heartland Institute, founded in 1984, has a long history of providing "scientists" who provide opinions that are very business friendly. They have received millions of dollars from oil companies but their willingness to prostitute themselves isn't limited to oil companies. In the early 90's they took millions from tobacco companies to provide "scientists" who would cast doubt on the cancer causing properties of the tobacco. It seems appropriate that a group with such a warm, fuzzy sounding name would be in the business of providing misleading information to the public on a variety of topics. So far they've sent an envoy to the Vatican to try to persuade the Pope that his beliefs on climate change are wrong. They've sent teachers across the country a curriculum to teach kids that climate change is a hoax and in 2012 they funded a series of bill boards around the country comparing those who believe in climate change to the Unabomber, Ted Kaczynski. These clowns will be providing the rationale for dismantling the pathetic climate change legislation our country has passed at this point. We're so far behind the rest of the world that we'd be the laughing stock of the globe if the consequences of our intransigence weren't so serious.

The Heartland Institute has as one of its chief funders a man who's suddenly been in the news lately, Robert Mercer. He's the hedge fund billionaire who funds Breitbart News and was involved in the funding opposition research into Donald Trump for use by Marco Rubio's campaign for president. But as the old saying goes, "Politics makes for strange bedfellows." So having worked against Trump's election originally, he's now supporting Trump's anti-environment agenda. And so it goes...

David Hartgrove

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Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

National Audubon has been experiencing some problems in managing their membership lists. Notifications to chapters on new and returning members has been slow to nearly nonexistent and while we've tried to keep up, we're sure we've missed acknowledging some of you. This month we're trying to correct that. So now we want to extend a warm welcome to all of our new and returning members: Cheryl Allen, Nancy Barber, Donald Bertch, John Buglione, Marilyn Burhoe, Anne Catinna, Carol Chillemi, Joyce Davidson, Brian Deaton, Judy Eaton, Becky & Mike Ely, Zach Foster, Nancy & Joe Galdo, Carol German, Nathaniel Goddard, Richard Goudey, Nancy Govoni, Mal-Sherry Graham, Lauren Herzog, Alan Hovey, Julia Kain, Dan Kalis, Brenda Levine, Richard Lohmann, Linda McQuaig, Janet Mills, Kathy Molholm, Tom Moran, Fred Ormand, R. Turner Ragsdale, Janet Reese, Trish Reonas, C. Richardson, Carol Roberts, Camille Sanabria, Barbara Townsend, Thomas Troutman, David Walsh, Geri Willett and Kim Zechnowitz. We hope to see you at a meeting or on one of our excellent field trips soon.

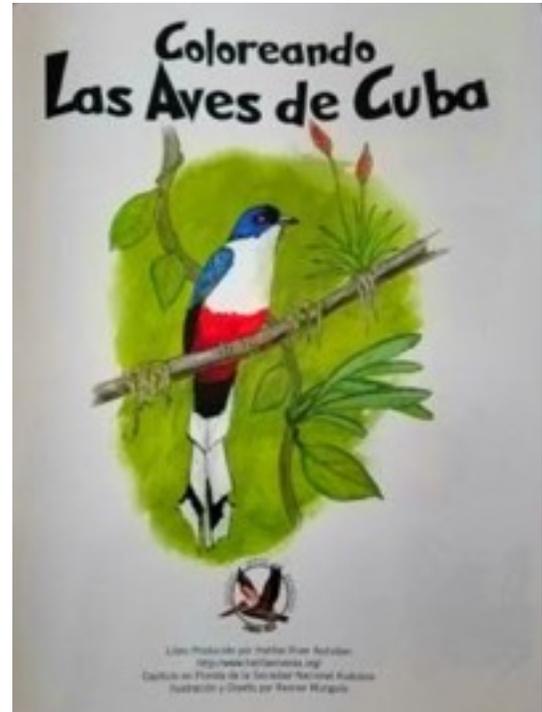
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"I arise in the morning torn between a desire to improve the world and a desire to enjoy the world. This makes it hard to plan the day."

E. B. White



Chapter President, Melissa Lammers, accepts the Conservation Project Award for 2017 from Audubon Florida Executive Director, Eric Draper with Chapter Liaison Jacqui Sulek. Our chapter was recognized for our project on the Cuban coloring book we funded. We printed 2,000 copies of the book in Spanish and they are gradually being taken down to Cuba and distributed to Cuban children by people going there for birding trips and other reasons.



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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!

Time for another in our continuing series, "Everyday Birding" by Ray Scory.

Northern Pintail with Memories

They shot through the sky like arrows from a bow - just at roof top height. I looked up from bagging fallen debris in my yard, trashed by Hurricane Irma. For a split second I saw them. Two speeding Northern Pintail ducks. The image, fitting of duck stamp vintage, locked in my memory so powerfully that it brought back Northern Pintail stories long silent in the deep recesses of my mind.

My first look at Northern Pintails occurred at a picturesque Connecticut swamp alongside the smooth flowing Connecticut River. Tall forest trees stood boldly naked in a sea of shallow waters, like ghostly sentinels watching over a land long ago influenced by age and ancient environmental demons. I came to this spot because it was noted for Eastern Bluebirds who made their nesting holes in these majestic tall wooden poles. Much to my chagrin, the bluebirds had departed their summer home for southern climes. However, rafts of migrating Northern Pintails, busily feasting on food rich, swampy waters, soon captured my attention. I was fascinated with their activity, their individual behavior, their numbers, (hundreds) and their uniquely diagnostic body markings (white line running up the neck on both sides). My birding day to the swamp did not produce as expected. However, it triggered a life time of Northern Pintail memories.

The migration of birds is a fascinating study and offers many interesting possibilities: on a global or local level; on a once-in-a-lifetime level to a migrating hotspot; on a yearly survey level, keeping data for one particular location or more; on an avian photography level or just being there. Watching bird migration is an event impossible to forget.

One time I watched millions of black birds rushing through a north/south valley in upper New York state. The sight was exhilarating. The noise was deafening. Another time, I watched flocks of Snow Geese flying south at five miles high (a Christmas Bird Count estimate). Close by, I have observed American White Pelicans circling over Spruce Creek Park on their way down from their breeding grounds in central border states between America and Canada.

For many years I conducted a Waterbird Survey at Merritt Island NWR in Titusville, Florida. I especially enjoyed watching the thousand and thousand of ducks migrating into the 190,000 acre refuge for the winter months.

I have waited in anticipated excitement for migrating birds by the hundreds or sometimes by the handful appear in my yard, clean out my feeders and pounce on the natural foods in my trees and bushes, then dramatically whoosh out in a fit of controlled frenzy. Cedar waxwings, Common Grackles, American Robins, a lone Spotted Sandpiper, Chipping Sparrows, Yellow-rumped warblers, Hooded Mergansers and others have all contributed to (what I consider) the finest hour of my backyard birding. Sometimes they stop and go, other times they stay longer than an hour.

The unencumbered thrill of these migratory memories becomes more profound as I develop my backyard birding skills. And as age continues its relentless course, I continue to abide by its rules.

So look up, any time, when you are outside, especially during migratory times. Just to enjoy a moment in time with our avian wonders.

Ray Scory



Top photo, a flock of Northern Pintails at MINWR; Bottom photo is a pair of Northern Pintails, male and female.

Photos by Ray Scory

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Fall Trail Walk at John's Island

Saturday, November 18, 2017, 10:00AM. Ormond Scenic Loop & Trail Fall Trail Walk at John's Island. Meet at Gate T3 along northbound US Highway 1 (N Yonge St), east side of the highway, 2.3 miles north of SR 40 (Granada Blvd) and just south of the Tomoka River Bridge. Explore this normally non-public area of Tomoka Park with Park permission under the guidance of Dr Don Spence, Certified Arborist and plant pathologist, learning about the botany and natural history of the area. Admission free. Bring water and insect repellent. We may walk over soft, wet, or uneven terrain or in deep grass. For further directions to location contact Rob Bird, rbird1@cfl.r.com

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Harry Robinson continues his sea watch daily at Tom Rennie Park, in Ormond By The Sea. And as the following note from Harry attests, some days are better than others.

Today (October 2nd) I did a ten hour seawatch at the park; Eli Schaperow was with me for the first half. It was a very and I mean a very good day. We Had 23 Cory's Shearwaters (this included five Scolopi's), 15 Greater Shearwaters, 16 Sooty Shearwaters, 1 Band-rumped Petrel, 1 Merlin, 19 Peregrine Falcons, 1 Red-necked Phalarope, 1 Red Phalarope, 3 Pomarine Jaeger, 28 Parasitic Jaegers, 3 Lesser Black-backed Gulls, 1 adult Sabine's Gull, 4 Common Terns, 1 Arctic Tern, 3 Bridled Terns, 2 Sooty Terns, 2 Black Terns and two Brown Noddies. *Editor*

In an effort to keep our members informed on how Audubon chapters work together on environmental projects, here's an explanation.

NEWS FROM CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

The Audubon Assembly opened at lunch on Friday, October 20, and concluded following full membership approval of the 2018 conservation action agenda. Three workshops—Water Policy Bootcamp, Landscaping for Water & Wildlife and Changing Hearts & Minds: How to Effectively Influence Policymakers—were well-attended and included lively discussions between chapter members, AF staff and State and local decision-makers. As written in the last RCC update, the new lobbying strategy of educating a legislator about a particular piece of conservation land and arranging a site visit were recommended again and again.

State conservation priorities include:

- Coastal conservation and stewardship
- Greater Everglades ecosystem
- Climate Change
- Important bird areas and waterways conservation
- Water for the environment

Plus, individual goals for the 7 Regional Conservation Committee (RCC) geographies.

Central Florida RCC obtained membership approval of the following two goals:

Promote Lake Apopka Restoration, Visitor Access, & New Audubon Nature Center

Chapters will focus joint resources and efforts to assure continued progress on restoration of the Lake Apopka North Shore marshes and to increase appropriate public access to the marshes for birdwatching, nature study, and compatible recreation activities. Chapters will work with Audubon Florida and Orange & Oklawaha Audubon Societies to promote the long-term goal of building and operating a new Audubon Center to showcase Lake Apopka as Florida's most important inland bird habitat.

Monitor and Act on Local & State Government Land Use Decisions Impacting Wildlife Habitat

Chapters will work together to advocate for greater funding for Florida Forever and the Rural and Family Lands Protection Act to secure money to purchase identified conservation property (such as those listed below) by meeting with legislators to build support for specific properties rather than lobbying solely for the umbrella programs.

1. Lenholt Farm: a vital property which links Ocala National Forest and the extensive state holdings along the Wekiva River
2. Conlin Lake X/Kirchman Tract: an 11,000-acre, pristine property at the headwaters of the Econlockhatchee and Kissimmee Rivers watershed
3. Purchase of conservation easements on Kissimmee Valley ranchlands where owners are interested and willing to participate

A copy of the full approved agenda will be posted to the AF website soon, if it hasn't been posted already. This agenda will direct AF staff and volunteers on where to place emphasis in utilizing funding, lobbying the legislature and continuing research in the coming year. Audubon Florida is unique in including input from members when setting action priorities. If you have an environmental concern or a worthy project that is not covered by the 2018 agenda, contact your local chapter leadership and/or participate in the next RCC meeting so we can discuss it.

And, finally, Central Florida RCC is home to two chapters which received awards at Audubon Assembly on Saturday morning. Congratulations to Halifax River Audubon for winning the 2017 Best Conservation Project for a Chapter Under 500 Members and to West Volusia Audubon Society for winning the 2017 Best Education Project for a Chapter Under 500 Members. Well done to everyone in both chapters who work so diligently to achieve success in our communities.

[Paula Wehr](#)

CFL RCC Representative on AF Board of Directors

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A pair of adult Brown Pelicans in basic or non breeding plumage. In nesting season, when they're in breeding or what's called alternate plumage, the birds would have brown feathers along the back of the neck.
Photo by Steve Underwood

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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