

The Pelican

We need to be the stewards of this world, not its destroyers
Volume 64-Number 2. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
February, 2018



The President's Ruminations

What Kind of Birder Am I? What Kind of Birder Are you?

This isn't really about me but maybe if I share my story, you'll help me out with tailoring our chapter to your wishes. In 2016, I moved back to Volusia County with the very certain but fuzzy goal of devoting myself to protecting the environment in this beautiful area where I grew up. In the early fall, I attended a talk at Halifax River Audubon (HRA) where an upcoming birding class was announced. My husband and I signed up. We had a wonderful time but we weren't really sure we were going to be birders like our most experienced members. We still are not sure, although we just went on our first extended birding field trip to St. Mark's National Wildlife Refuge and loved, loved, loved it!!

However, if spending three days searching for and finding birds doesn't grab you yet, IT DOESN'T MATTER. If you love birds, it follows that you love nature. Audubon is one of the oldest environmental organizations in the US, with a track record of making a difference. Here is a link to a short YouTube [video](#) that tells the story of National Audubon.

Halifax River Audubon has been around since 1923. Here is a link to our [webpage](#) that tells of our history.

And now we'd like to know about you and what fires your passion. Here's a link to a [short survey](#) that will give us information on how you'd like to interact with us and our mission to help protect our area's environment. Thanks in advance for your participation and I hope we'll see you at an upcoming meeting or on a field trip.

Melissa Lammers

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From the Quotable Birder

"The very idea of a bird is a symbol and a suggestion to the poet. A bird seems to be at the top of the scale, so vehement and intense is his life... The beautiful vagabonds, endowed with every grace, masters of all climes, and knowing no bounds- how many human aspirations are realized in their free, holiday lives- and how many suggestions to the poet in their flight and song!"

John Burroughs, Birds and Poets

Calendar & Events

Monday, February 26th, Program Meeting- First, please note that this will be the 4th Monday in the month. The 3rd Monday being President's Day. Our speaker will be Dr. J. Cho. Dr. Cho is the author of numerous publications and is a Professor of Integrated Environmental Science at Bethune-Cookman University. She will present an overview on the current status and results of research projects of the Halifax River and Indian River Lagoon areas. We meet at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Ave, Daytona Beach, FL 32117. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. We hope to see you there!

Field Trips

Friday, February 2nd, Lake Apopka- Join Peggy Yokubonus for this trip to one of Florida's best birding locations. We'll meet at 7:30 am at International Square, east of I-95, behind Krystal to car pool. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Peggy, 386-316-4085.

Tuesday, February 6th, Orlando Wetlands- Celine Sullivan will be our leader to this great spot. We'll meet at 7:30 am at Target in Port Orange, East of I-95 on Dunlawton Ave behind Panera to carpool. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Celine at 386-523-4809.

Thursday, February 22nd, Dunlawton Bridge- Join Ray Scory for a morning walk at this local hot spot. We'll meet in Port Orange Causeway Park in the parking lot below the bridge. Questions? Call Ray, 386-290-0075.

Field Trips With Others

Friday, February 23rd, Lake Apopka- If you can't make our trip to this hot spot on 2/2, join our friends from Southeast Volusia Audubon for theirs. Meet 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 at 7:30 am. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Joe Montpelier at 386-882-8679.

Sunday, February 4th, Lake Woodruff NWR- Join our friends from West Volusia Audubon for a walk around this great spot. During the recent Space Coast Festival a LeConte's Sparrow was found here, along with lots of other good birds. You can meet the group at the Refuge, 2045 Mud Lake Road DeLeon Springs, FL 32130. Contact Eli Schaperow to arrange the rendezvous, 407-314-7965.

Volusia County Science & Engineering Fair

Projects Win Special Recognition

Four projects and the students who created them received Special Awards from Volusia County's Audubon Chapters. The three chapters, Halifax River Audubon, Southeast Volusia Audubon Society and West Volusia Audubon Society once again came together as judges for Special Awards at the 51st Tomoka Regional Science and Engineering Fair with Volusia County Schools. The Special Awards consisted of cash prizes to the students who had the best projects in the areas of Audubon's interests: environment, conservation, alternative energy and climate change.

The winners were:

First Place Senior: Jessica Hanflink and Taylor Young for their project, "Can Lithium Hydroxide be used as an effective substance to neutralize dissolved carbon dioxide in salt water to mitigate ocean acidification?"

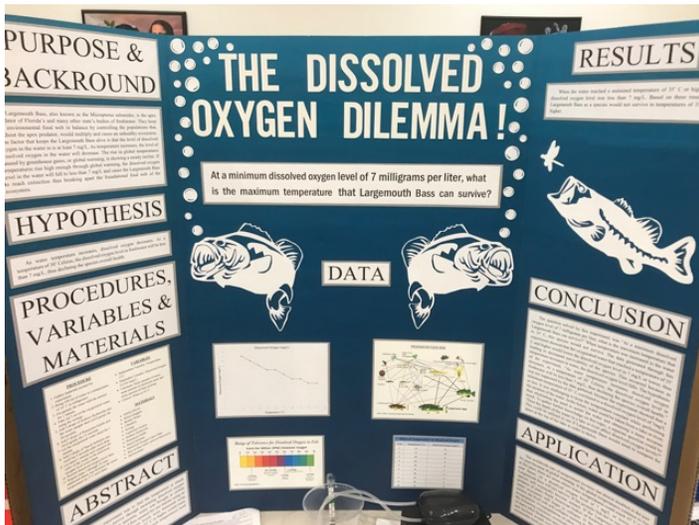
Second Place Senior: Aubrey Heiss, for "King Tides"

First Place Junior: Rita Gupta for her project, "What plant is most beneficial to water filtration in the Tomoka River?"

Second Place Junior: Cody McCafferty for "The dissolved oxygen dilemma."

The Audubon judges were Steve Underwood, Halifax River Audubon, Don Picard, Southeast Volusia Audubon Society and Eli Schaperow, West Volusia Audubon Society.

Melissa Lammers



This was the second place winner in the Junior Division

Photo by Steve Underwood

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It's That Time of Year Again

Time for the [Birds of a Feather Fest](#), presented by the City of Palm Coast. There will be lots of great field trips, classes and workshops. World renowned wildlife photographer, Moose Peterson will deliver the keynote address. Click on the link above for all of the information and to register.

Conservation Notes

It never ceases to amaze me the lengths some people will go to make a fool themselves. A good example just unfolded in Palm Coast over the past several years. A homeowner on one of the water ways up there has two posts with man-made, gourd type, Purple Martin nest boxes mounted on his dock. Purple Martins are migratory insect eaters that are some of the first migrants to arrive here from their wintering grounds in South America. As colonial cavity nesters they depend on manmade nest boxes for nesting. They are popular with people across the country who believe they eat lots of mosquitoes. The only place I've ever seen them nesting in natural cavities is at Orlando Wetlands, where they nest in old woodpecker holes in dead palm trees. We have a field trip to this location on February 6th.

The neighbor next door to the dock with the nest boxes decided to take offense for some reason. He claimed that the birds were depriving him of sleep and were a nuisance. What he did next shows the truth of my opening sentence. In order to drive them away, he rented one of those tall, inflatable, waving characters often seen at used car lots. They're inflated by a somewhat noisy fan and noise from the birds was one of this guy's chief complaints. Purple Martins are diurnal, they're silent at night and in the daytime they're hardly what you'd call noisy. It's not like standing at Payne's Prairie listening to 25,000 Sandhill Cranes. The guy also used some sort of laser device to scare away the birds. As you can see, his efforts were far more of a disturbance to the neighborhood than the birds.

Finally, he sued his neighbors for 40,000.00 for all kinds of imagined complaints and they counter sued. Earlier this month, Circuit Judge Scott DuPont ruled in the bird lovers' favor and tossed the suit out of court. So four years of anger and acrimony are over, for now.

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NEWS FROM CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

In early January Interim Executive Director Julie Wraithmell held a conference call with chapter leaders to summarize Audubon Florida's focus for the 2018 legislative session. Governor Scott recommended funding for conservation, but it is up to the legislature to determine the numbers. Senator Bradley introduced [SB 370](#) and [SB 204](#), including \$100 million to Florida Forever and \$75 and \$50 million, respectively for springs and the St Johns WMD. SB 370 passed the Senate unanimously and has a companion bill in the House, H 1513, which is in committee. SB 204 has been moved to the Special Order Calendar.

Members of the Central FL Regional Conservation Committee met on January 14 to discuss continuing efforts with local land advocacy and visits with legislators in their hometown offices. Seminole Audubon Society is educating legislators by showing them conservation land which absorbed the flood waters from Hurricane Irma as nature intended vs. developed areas where homes and businesses were flooded following the storm because they were built on flood-prone properties.

David Hartgrove and

Audubon Florida Board Member, Paula Wehr

by Ray Scory

The Joy of Bird Watching

I write this column in January 2018. A first month in a new year. A new year is always full of new hopes and new dreams and new aspirations and, yes, even a setback or two, All still untested but out there to become new experiences, to become a part of our life's history.

About four years ago Halifax River Audubon asked me to write a column for their newsletter, The Pelican. Specifically to write about birds that visitors and newcomers to our region would see and know more about. I accepted this challenge and it opened a whole new way of enjoying birds.

And to think that it all began when I was a boy of fourteen and earned the Bird Study Merit Badge from the Boy Scouts of America. Pursuing that merit badge exposed me to observing birds in different habitats, watching their behaviors, checking the details and colors of their feathers and watching them fly. I was thrilled by their various landing techniques and getting to know their names. I read about the pioneers of bird watching and was excited to own and use Roger Tory Peterson's, "Field Guide to the Birds", published in 1947. I took that book everywhere.

This was my first leap forward in the total enjoyment of bird watching. Previously I had watched my mother feed the birds and my father set up the bluebird house in front of the kitchen window. My mother planted a honeysuckle vine next to our front porch so she could watch the hummingbirds and my father trimmed the cedar tree so that every year they could watch close-up a family of robins, catbirds, blue jays or cardinals raise their young. I was there too.

Yesterday, at the Port Orange City Center pond, I watched a young mother with her knee high child joyously centered in of a flock of over one hundred White Ibis. I thrilled at watching that young boy cautiously touch an ibis and timidly reaching out with a tiny morsel of food for a patiently waiting ibis, always acting as if this child was not a threat. How do they know? A child and a bird, two distinctly different orders of living things, coming together, understanding.

I would like to know what was going through the minds of that mother and child and bird at that time, possibly to become a cherished memory. I like to think I do know because I can still remember the rush I felt the first time I was touched by a bird - a Scarlet Tanager. I then slowly turned and went for my camera and made my first bird photo at fourteen years old. My mother was watching.

The Wonder of it all. The Thrills. The Rushes. The Experiences. The Memories. The Realizations and Awareness. The Joy. The Friends. A new Adventure - every time. Something for Everyone. Wonderful.

Ray Scory

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Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Edward Flanagan, William Harrington, Gina Holt, Betty Kelly, Wilma Kyle, Nancy Mellon, Jolene Ran, John Roessler and Earl Stutzman-Miller. We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting or on a field trip.



My first bird photograph, a Scarlet Tanager, made in the front yard of my Connecticut home in May 1948 when I was 14 years old.



I made this recent photograph January 23, 2018 at Port Orange City Center between the town hall pond and the town hall building. The best time to observe the hundreds of White Ibis that visit this area is late in the day during winter months.

Photos by Ray Scory

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Volunteer Opportunity With Manatees

Volusia County is looking for enthusiastic volunteers to participate in Manatee Watch, a program that identifies manatees and gives us a better understanding of how they are using Volusia County waterways. You must be 16 years old to volunteer. Advance registration is required, so please contact Debbie Wingfield at dwingfield@volusia.org or 386-736-5927 ext. 12235, if you would like to attend one of the following dates:

Thursday, February 22, 2018, 10 a.m. to noon at the Thomas C. Kelly Administration Center (first-floor training room) 123 W. Indiana Ave. DeLand.

Saturday, February 24, 2018, 10 a.m. to noon at the The Marine Discovery Center 520 Barracuda Blvd. New Smyrna Beach.

Halifax River Audubon Is Holding a Bird-a-thon

So, you may Be Asking Yourself, What's a Bird-A-thon ?

It's a fun citizen-science competition and fund-raiser to support the work of Halifax River Audubon in our community. It starts with you! You can pledge an amount in support of the efforts of others or you can mount a team of your own.

A team could be just one person but we recommend 2 to 4 people. It's more fun and those pledging to donate feel better about it. Here's how it works. If your friend pledges 25 cents per species to sponsor your birdwatching team and the team sees 61 species, your friend would donate \$15.25 to Halifax River Audubon (61 species x 0.25 cents). Sixty-one is about average. A really committed team could get up to 90 or more, but that takes a lot of work and a lot of luck!

The Bird-A-Thon will take place on Saturday, February 24th from 5:00 am to 5:00 pm. At our meeting on Monday, February 26th, we'll announce the totals and see which team found the most species. Check our [website](#) for details and a pledge form.

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We hope to see you all at the Scrub Jay Festival



Florida Scrub-Jay Festival and Wildlife Festival
FESTIVAL
 at
 Lyonia Environmental Center

February 3, 2018 • 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
2150 Eustace Ave., Deltona
386-789-7207

Join us for these fun-filled, family activities:

- Early bird hike at 8 a.m.
- Guided hikes in Lyonia Preserve
- Eco-buggy tours of the preserve
- Guest presentations on native wildlife
- Environmental exhibitors
- Kids' activities
- Food available for purchase
- Free admission!



LyoniaPreserve.com



This Western Tanager hung out in Port Orange last month. Unfortunately not in an easily accessible area.

Photo by Michael Brothers

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THE PELICAN

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Meets monthly September through May

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Historian: John Carr

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Field Trips: Peggy Yokubonus
 David Hartgrove

Newsletter Editor: David Hartgrove

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We wish to thank our sponsors, whose contributions play a vital part of allowing us to continue our work: Florida Power & Light, Colonial Colony and the Spruce Creek Garden and Nature Club.



LeConte's Sparrow Photo by David Hartgrove

Birding Lake Woodruff

While leading a trip to Lake Woodruff NWR for the just ended Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival, I managed to digiscope the bird above along the trail just south of the observation tower. Though easily seen on their breeding grounds in Nova Scotia, this is a hard bird to see in Florida. They usually offer only brief glimpses when they pop up in the middle of dense grass.

David Hartgrove

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Sea Watch Report From Frank Rendon Park

When compared to the fall and winter passage, January was a quiet month. Even so there were two new additions to the bird list. During the month 97 species were located as against 91 species in 2017 this was over 31 surveys and 146 hours at the park. Highlights were a Magnificent Frigatebird on the 10th, Red-throated Loons on the 2nd, 4th and 25th, a Long-tailed Duck on the 8th and 2 Peregrine Falcons on the 28th. One new species seen were 6 American Pipits. A large group of pipits were blown off course up north and ended up in Bermuda. Could these seen here being some of those birds that got back on track? Who knows?

On the 12th a cold front was approaching and on its leading edge came 3,750 American Robins, along with the pipits, 1,460 Cedar Waxwings, 910 Brown-headed Cowbirds and 62 Goldfinches. I look forward to what February will bring.

Harry Robinson

Birding The Dry Tortugas

Spring Migration Birding at its best with Florida Nature Tours!



We have the best prices by far. We're offering three tours in April & one in May aboard the M/V Playmate. They are the best tours at BY FAR the best price. Just 1295.00. There are only 2 other companies offering multi day stand alone birding tours of the Dry

Tortugas this coming Spring. One charges 1895.00, the other, 1795.00 and we give you a day's birding in the southern Keys and donate 100.00 to your favorite Audubon chapter. Contact Wes Biggs: 407-376-6967 or birdsatfnt@bellsouth.net

While we don't accept paid advertising this is a bit different. If you go our chapter gets a donation. There really is nothing like Spring migration in the Dry Tortugas. Standing on the parade ground in Fort Jefferson in mid April it's possible to see 100+ Indigo Buntings all feeding at once. Or to see the fountain full of warblers. I once saw Black-and-White, Blackpoll, Northern Parula, Prairie and Palm Warblers all crowded in bathing and drinking. As the first land fall for trans Gulf migrants the Dry Tortugas is a magnet for birds. Plus it hosts the only Sooty Tern and Masked Booby colonies in the US. Check out the [website](#). Then pack your bags and head south.

Editor