

The Pelican

We need to be the stewards of this world, not its destroyers
Volume 64-Number 4. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
April, 2018



The President's Column

Your Audubon Wants YOU!!!

Have you ever wondered how Halifax River Audubon maintains a steady calendar of informative evening programs, delightful birding field trips and educational classes? It's due to the unwavering commitment of our volunteers. Halifax River Audubon is a 100% volunteer lead organization and as a "new-last-year" board member, I can say that our directors, committee chairs and birding class leaders are capable, passionate and energetic about what they do for our chapter. And we need more like them!

Halifax River Audubon has standing committees whose chairpersons sit on the Board of Directors. These committee chairs would like to have more people working with them to further our various initiatives. Joining a committee is a great way to get to know more about Audubon, to get to know a board member and what she or he does in-depth, as well as decide if some day, you might also like to sit on the Board of Directors. Please take a moment to read about some of our committees below. If you have an interest in joining a committee, you can approach the chair at one of our meetings or you can send an email to president@halifaxriveras.org.

Program Committee - Ensures we have high-quality speakers for our monthly programs.

Chair – Melissa Lammers

Responsibilities: Identify speakers and topics for nine monthly meetings (September through May); approach speakers and secure their commitment to give a talk; with at least six weeks of lead time, request and receive speaker biographies and overview of topic for use in publicity, in the newsletter, on the website and at the program; coordinate arrival instructions, equipment needs, honorarium and anything else to facilitate the speaker's talk.

Publicity Committee - Promotes the various activities carried out or sponsored by us in the various media

Chair – Melissa Lammers

Responsibilities

Receive speaker biography and topic overview from Program Committee to draft press releases; disseminate press releases according to the various media deadlines; write press releases for other events as these arise during the year; seek other ways to amplify the public's awareness of Halifax River Audubon and our mission; manage social media presence.

Calendar & Events

Monday, April 16th, Program Meeting- Wildflowers and Pollinators with Paul Rebmann- One of the marvels of nature is the symbiotic relationship - where both parties benefit - between wildflowers and pollinators. When pollinators are mentioned, the first thing that probably comes to mind are bees, or possibly butterflies. Paul will show us, with his photos and a few videos, other pollinators working away to make our lives better. 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

Thursday, April 5th, Tiger Bay State Forest- Ray Scory will lead us on this trip to see the southern pine woods birds that inhabit this local birding jewel. Targets will be Brown-headed Nuthatch, Bachman's Sparrow and Yellow-throated Warbler. For this trip we'll meet at 7:30 am at the [Forest](#) headquarters, 4316 W International Speedway Blvd. Daytona Beach, FL 32124. Bring a lunch. Questions, call Ray at 386-290-0075

Friday, April 13th, Washington Oaks Gardens State Park- Peggy Yokubonus will lead us on what promises to be a lucky Friday the 13th. Migration should be in full swing and we hope to see birds that are usually seen here just twice a year. We will meet at the park at 8:00 am, 6400 N Oceanshore Blvd, Palm Coast 32137. Bring a lunch. Questions, call Peggy, 386-316-4085.

Sunday, April 15th, Dunlawton Bridge- For our last field trip of the season, Ray Scory will lead this casual walk under the Dunlawton Bridge. We'll meet at the bridge at 3:30 pm. We'll look for nesting American Oyster-catchers, Brown Pelicans and any Bald Eagles that may be lurking around. Questions, call Ray, 386-290-0075.

Field Trips With Others

Wednesday, April 18th- St Augustine Alligator Farm- Join our friends from West Volusia Audubon on a trip to this birding photography hot spot. Reservations are required. Call Eli Schaperow, 407-314-7965.

Friday, April 20th- Mead and Leu Gardens- Join our friends from Southeast Volusia Audubon for a trip to these two lovely garden and birding destinations in Orlando. Meet the group at 7:30 am 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. Bring a lunch and plan on some extended walking. Questions, call Joe Montpelier at 386-882-8679.

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Membership Committee - Maintain membership records and email list; manage renewals

Chair – Joan Tague

Responsibilities: Maintain membership list including emails, telephone numbers and addresses for both National and Chapter-only memberships; update and maintain email list and send reminders for chapter memberships.

Webmaster Committee, Chair, Joan Tague. The primary task is to maintain and keep the official website up to date. The webmaster may be asked to assist in other applications that are used to keep members and the community informed, such as Facebook, Mail Chimp and Meet Up. The website has many sections, with assistance also needed in ways that do not require any knowledge of website coding. Some opportunities to help include: data collection - Field Trips and Bird Lists (maintain spreadsheets that are used in annual reports); submit news items with pictures - especially of HRA activities like Community events, Christmas Bird Counts, Meetings, Field Trips; develop content for social media; help edit articles and news items for posting to the web and in our newsletter; update older pages and club activities.

Conservation Committee, Chair, David Hartgrove.

Responsibilities: Monitor local environmental threats, like large developments; attend planning and zoning and Council meetings at local and county level when necessary; volunteer with FWC and Volusia County for wildlife surveys, etc.; compile Christmas Bird Count and other counts in which we participate.

Education Committee, Chair, Holly Zwart-Duryea

Responsibilities: Currently focused on providing Audubon Adventures to 3rd through 5th graders at public and private schools. This Committee is ripe for growth by seeking other opportunities to educate the public both about Audubon Adventures (see below) as well as additional topics like Plants for Birds. Audubon Adventures is a learning module typically made up of 3 environmental topics developed for Audubon by scientists and educators. A classroom kit provides 32 student newspapers per topic and teacher access to online resources. Expansion of the committee would enable us provide this resource at environmentally friendly festival tables and other similar public events.

Field Trip Committee - Plans and manages all aspects of field trips held from September through April.

Chairs – Peggy Yokobonus and David Hartgrove

Responsibilities: Plan and establish yearly field trip schedule during Summer. Schedule must be finalized by September; Lead or find leaders for all of the yearly field trips.

Welcome Committee- The “face” of Audubon at monthly meetings, ensures people feel welcome.

Chair, Christine Dann-

Responsibilities: Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to door-opening at monthly meetings (6:15 pm); man the welcome table; ensure meeting attendees sign-in, noting whether they are members or not; ensure we are getting email addresses, especially for members; provide list of meeting attendees to Membership Committee; Have informational materials on-hand at sign-in, if appropriate and manage the 50-50 raffle.

It's election time and we need new volunteers to help on these committees. We're hoping we can count on you and your expertise to assist in making ours the best chapter in the state. Think about it, then contact me to volunteer. Thank you!

Conservation Notes

In last month's column I wrote about the need to prevent the passage of SB 1402/7043. By way of an explanation, bill numbers are constantly changed as they move through the legislative process. The combining of similar bills and merging with companion bills in the other legislative body makes for some confusion when tracking legislation. HJ 1114, the final number on the bill that is sitting on the Governor's desk will transfer the permitting of dredge and fill activities in wetlands from the federal government to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

I had asked all of you to please call Senator Joe Negron's office to request that he (as Senate President) prevent the bill from reaching the Senate floor for a vote. The bill passed the Senate on a 35 to 1 vote. Senator Jose Javier Rodriguez (D, Miami) was the only one to vote against this terrible bill.

Now our hopes are placed on Governor Scott. Not an encouraging thought I grant you but we have to work with what we have. Please call the Governor's office, 850-488-5000 and ask that he veto HJ 1114. You'll almost certainly be asked to leave a voice mail so this won't take but a few minutes.

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Not content with the level of damage already done to our environment by their legislative assault on a long established regulatory structure, Congress is set to make serious changes to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The MBTA is one our oldest wildlife protection ordinances, enacted 100 years ago in 1918.

This began of course with the Trump administration issuing a new interpretation of the Act that weakens enforcement for activities known to kill birds. The House is set to enact legislation which will weaken the Act permanently. This was done in response to oil industry trade groups who were asked by the Trump administration for a “wish list” of regulatory reforms they'd like to see.

Open oil dumping pits from fracking and drilling activities collect rain water on their surface. Birds are attracted to these new ponds, land in them and quickly die. Under the MBTA the drilling company could be prosecuted for leaving a hazard that killed birds protected by the Act. When the Deep Water Horizon blew up in 2010 and its associated oil spill killed an estimated 1 million birds, BP paid a 100 million dollar fine for violating the Act. Under the new interpretation set down by the Interior Department, BP wouldn't pay a dime.

National Audubon has a page devoted to citizen participation where it will take just one minute to register your opinion and make a difference. Click on this [link](#) and follow the instructions.

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Finally, we're in nesting season for all kinds of birds. This includes the cardinals, mockingbirds, hawks, etc. that nest in our yards and neighborhoods. It's also nesting season for shorebirds, wading birds and seabirds, like Brown Pelicans. Rookery Island, just south of the boat ramp at the Dunlawton Bridge, is an excellent place to see this nesting activity. Least Terns, which will soon be arriving from their wintering grounds on the beaches of Brazil, often nest on gravel rooftops here. I have 15 buildings I monitor as a volunteer with the [Florida Shorebird Alliance](#). If you should see evidence of nesting Least Terns on a building (birds flying above the roof repeatedly) please contact me: birdman9@earthlink.net. Thanks!

David Hartgrove

Watch For Swallow-tailed Kites



Swallow-tailed Kite, Photo by Joyce Stefanic

Swallow-tailed Kites returned from their wintering grounds in western Brazil and Paraguay last month. Audubon Florida board member, Paula Wehr, has been monitoring a nest on the golf course at Halifax Plantation. Here's a report she sent to Gina Kent, an associate at [Avian Research and Conservation Institute](#).

"Several weeks ago my golfing friend said several Swallow-tailed Kites were flying over the sixth tee again. Today, March 22, she and I stood in the back yard of a friendly resident whose yard abuts the golf course and saw a kite on the nest in the same tree. Through my scope we saw the kite fussing in the nest, perhaps rotating the eggs or finding a more comfortable position. She finally settled down into the nest, disappearing below the edge. Only her long tail was visible poking out of the nest."

The birds will probably have young fledglings flying by late May or early June. At that point they relocate to large, communal roosts that can sometimes host 2,000 birds.



Swallow-tailed Kite roost in northwest Volusia County

Photographed here on a foggy morning in late July several years ago are just a few of the birds seen annually at this roost.

David Hartgrove

Interested In Some Out of State Birding?

Orange Audubon is sponsoring a trip to South Carolina. It's coming up May 18–20, 2018 and you're invited to attend.



The elusive Swainson's Warbler, Photo, Nat'l Park Service

Swainson's Warbler is just one of the target birds in this birder's paradise. How many of you have driven up I-95 and never stopped in South Carolina to bird? South Carolina is fantastic, with the largest preserved bottomland hardwood swamp in the East, a virgin cypress tupelo swamp owned by Audubon South Carolina, a national forest with Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and estuarine habitats in the ACE Basin. Our nearest national park besides the Everglades is Congaree National Park, upgraded from a National Monument in 2003 (so it is our 3rd newest national park). Birds that only overwinter in Florida breed in South Carolina, so the bird song in mid May is fabulous.

On Friday, May 18th, we will drive 4 hours from Orlando to Savannah for a lunch break and then 2 hours more on to South Carolina. If your starting point is other than Orlando, you can meet us at our Friday destination at approximately 4:30 p.m. Cost of the three-day trip is \$60 for Audubon members, \$75 for non-members, which includes honoraria for local expert guides, field trip fees, and picnic supper Friday at Congaree. Lodging, other meals, transportation and incidentals are not included. Tips for guides are always appreciated. We need to know how many people are going and the sooner the better. Please make your reservations before mid-April. For more information contact Chapter President, Deborah Green, (407) 637-2525 or sabalpress@mac.com.

Deborah Green, President, Orange Audubon

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From The Quotable Birder

"The thousands of warblers and thrushes, the richly blossoming magnolias, the holly, beech, tall yellow poplar, red clay earth and hilly ground delighted my eye."

John James Audubon, writing in his journal about visiting Oakley Farm in Louisiana.

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

Birds In Brown

When a female Northern Cardinal lands on my backyard feeder or a Brown Thrasher makes a surprising visit, I am excited. Equally so, when Chipping Sparrows make their annual three month Winter appearance under my bird feeder, I marvel at their return. I watch their unhurried feeding maneuvers in quiet solitude. Why? Because of my wide-eyed fascination with the wide variety of brown colors that they bring to my yard.



Brown Thrasher, The vast variety of browns are evident on the bird, from light tans to a rich chocolate brown. Pure genius to outline the rich chocolate brown with two, thin white wing bars that are juxtaposed with the rufous brown on the back and mantle of this bird. Photo by Ray Scory

Occasionally it is fun, if not needed, to temporarily put aside the mainstream pursuits of a particular passion and go off on an unfamiliar tangent.

Wouldn't it be nice to just put aside the rush to see more new birds, to temporarily close the book on the academic study of birds and the various categories that they offer, to slow down the pursuit of identifying every bird in sight or to quietly rest the desire to be the first one to ID a shadow of a bird? Instead, adding a new dimension to your birding activities could be as exciting. For me, I have enjoyed searching for the color brown in birds that define their beauty.

When it comes to the color of birds, I am hooked on the color brown. From a rich cordovan brown like the female Boat-tailed Grackle to the subtle, creamy beige on the under belly of the Red-bellied Woodpecker I am moved to look for more examples. I am partial to the stunning variations of honey, auburn browns that cloak the body of the Brown Thrasher. I take great pleasure in slowly scanning the multiple variations of this bird and marvel at the discoveries I make.

There is something solid about "brown" - something grounded. I recently read an anthology titled, "In Search of Harmony." Harmony is a small agricultural town just south of Fort Collins, Colorado. The author reaches back to the first days of its settlement, when the land was open plains and swaying grasses and covers up to the today, of sturdy homes and hardworking ancestors- a vital agricultural community. From her childhood the author remembers the fragrance of brown: as the turning of rich, fertile sod, the color and aroma

of wheat, various smells abundant in beets and haylage (a grass based food for farm animals stored in a silo). The miracle of a potato, newly pulled from the ground. A staple to our everyday diet - vital. I did discover in searching for the color of brown in birds that it is not only a visual experience. I learned that the color brown can arouse other senses we use as well: touch, smell. I, also, relate to the color brown through language - on the printed page, in conversations with other birders. The opportunities to investigate this seemingly offbeat "color brown" tangent in birds are endless. Cinnamon, cordovan, chocolate, light tan, toasty brown, coffee, chestnut, a nice brown suit. How about brown as a berry for a deep, rich bodily tan or cook them nice and brown. All exciting sensory treats that define a color.



Chipping Sparrow, The exquisitely designed markings on this bird are truly a work of art. To keep it on the pallet of browns is selectively special. Photo by Ray Scory

It is no wonder, now, that I can reminisce about how a search for browns in small birds that come to my yard to feed have opened a whole new way to look at the connections that exist in my birding. All because of the color brown.

So I salute the Chipping Sparrows, Brown Thrashers, Carolina Wrens, Cedar Waxwings, House Finches, Mourning Doves, Mallards, Winter warblers, Spotted Sandpipers, female Northern Cardinals, Great Horned Owls, Red-shouldered Hawks and Wilson's Snipe. The one I'm waiting for- the female Boat-tailed Grackle. She has yet to appear in my yard. I know she is nearby and I welcome her and her exquisitely varied, brown colorations. I will, again, be looking out my backyard window.

Ray Scory

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Welcome to Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Joseph Bierworth, Eleanor Christman, Edythe Donnelly, Jean Jackson, Anna Lambert, Ann Meres, William Rogers, Margaret Schlageter, Pia Vilaragut. We hope to see you at a meeting soon or on one of our excellent field trips.

Our Cuban Coloring Book Update

Sierra Club International Outings went to Cuba in February and took along some books. Here's their story.

Our Cuban ornithologist and guide, Maikel Canizares, located a school for our group to visit and distribute the coloring book. The school is in Tunas de Zaza, a small fishing village on the southern coast. We arrived to find that the school kids had prepared skits for us. One was a boy who likes watching birds and shares his enthusiasm with his friends, which inspires them to learn the bird's names and to protect them. The second was a child displaying a migration map, explaining Cuba's importance in providing resting and feeding habitat for birds along the flyway- a lesson in conservation.

The director of the Tunas de Zaza Natural Preserve accompanied us to the school and kept a few of the books to use with her environmental education in schools even more rural than Tunas de Zaza.

We were impressed and delighted that the teachers, the naturalist and the students had put together such a warm welcome and skits for us. Maikel (a Ph.D candidate and graduate student advisor at the Instituto de Ecologia y Sistemática) gave the kids a brief lesson in bird anatomy highlighting features such as the color and shape of the beak. He pointed out the inside covers of the coloring book to learn the correct colors and promised to return and give a pair of binoculars to the child with the best artwork.



Sierra Club International travelers and the students of the primary school in Tunas de Zaza. Photo by Pati Rouzer

Many thanks for providing the coloring books! It was a wonderful experience for our group and hopefully inspired the kids to learn, love and protect their birds. The teachers suggested that colored chalk is also an excellent gift. We have another trip going back in February 2019. If you have more books we'd love to deliver them.

Pati Rouzer, Sierra Club International Outings

There are currently about 300 copies of the Spanish version of the book left from the first printing. We will see about funding a second printing. *Editor*



Here a student is coloring Cuba's national bird, the Cuban Trogon. To its right in the is the Great Lizard Cuckoo. Photo by Pati Rouzer

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THE PELICAN

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Meets monthly September through May

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Membership Sec.: Joan Tague

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Holly Zwart-Duryea

Field Trips: Peggy Yokubonus
David Hartgrove

Newsletter Editor: David Hartgrove

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