

The Pelican

We need to be the stewards of this world, not its destroyers
Volume 64-Number 6. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
June, 2018



The President's Column

The Board of Halifax River Audubon meets every month, year-round. In our Board meetings, we set goals and check progress on our committee work. This is how we manage nine high-quality programs each year, 19 or more field trips, beginning birding classes, elementary school educational programs in more than 30 classrooms, community outreach at events and conservation advocacy. In addition, we also carry out the work of keeping communications, finances, membership and publicity running smoothly. We're an all-volunteer chapter, so the work of our dedicated Board members is deeply appreciated. We are therefore delighted to welcome Pam Pennella as our newest At-large Director. Welcome, Pam!

We have also had some losses in 2018: both Marion Monaghan and Christine Dann resigned from the Board (but not from HRA). We thank them for their service. Very sadly, we recently suffered the tremendous loss of John Carr, our Historian. Please read more about John's service in this newsletter.

This Summer, Board Members are going to work over-time as we seek to renew our vision and mission and chart the course for 2018 and beyond. It's an exciting moment and we hope that come Fall, you will consider joining one or more of our Committees to ensure that HRA continues the great work it has done in our community since 1923.

Melissa Lammers

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Words of Praise for Audubon Adventures

Our Education Chair, Holly Zwart-Duryea, has heard from some of the teachers who utilize the Audubon Adventures kits we provide them with. Through your donations we're able to provide over 30 elementary classrooms in our area with these valuable teaching tools.

"I just wanted to thank you for your Audubon Adventures kit! My students love reading about birds each year during our unit on living things. We learn about bird adaptations, food chains, and also revisit the characteristics of living things, including birds. Thank you for providing this resource for our students. We appreciate you!"

Sincerely, Jenna Schuld Longstreet Elementary 5th grade.

Ms. Schuld teaches at a school named for our chapter's founder. See more words of praise on page 4. Editor

Calendar & Events

June marks the beginning of our summer hiatus. No general meetings or field trips until September. The board will still meet monthly on the first Monday of the month at the Ormond Beach Regional Library, Meeting Room #4 at 1:30 pm. Members are invited to attend.

Field Trips With Others

While our chapter's field trips are on hiatus there are other opportunities with the Explore Volusia County program. This program offers a number of activities including canoe, kayak and paddle board trips, bicycle rides, etc. on many of the County's environmental properties. You must provide your own equipment and be sure to register for any event you select. Here's a link to the [June Calendar](#) of events.

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If you've never been on the beach at night to see sea turtles hauling their heavy bodies across the sand to dig their nests and deposit their eggs, here are two opportunities for you to do so.

Canaveral National Seashore hosts turtle walks beginning Wednesday, June 13th. Walks will be held Wednesday through Saturday nights and reservations are required. Phone the Apollo District in New Smyrna Beach 386-428-3384, ext.223 to make your reservation. Participants need to have good mobility to walk across the dune and in soft sand. Remember to bring insect repellent. That body of water on the other side of the island is called Mosquito Lagoon for good reason.

The southern end of the Seashore gets even more turtle nests than the north end. Turtle walks there are coordinated by Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. Join them for a late night exploration of Canaveral National Seashore and watch a sea turtle nesting! Dates are for Thursday, June 7th and Saturday, July 7th. The walks will be preceded by a ranger talk about sea turtles at the Visitor's Center. After the program everyone will take their own vehicles and caravan out to Playalinda Beach at Canaveral National Seashore. Once we are all out at the beach, we will wait in our vehicles (to avoid any of those pesky mosquitoes) at a designated parking lot until a sea turtle has been sighted. Once on the beach we will watch as she digs her nest, lays her eggs, covers her nest and then journeys back out to sea.

Reservations are required and may be made by phone at 321-861-0669 or by email at habichat@merrittislandwildlifeassociation.org.

John Carr and Halifax River Audubon

Halifax River Audubon has lost one of its most dedicated supporters and long time board members, John Carr. John passed away on Friday, May 18th. Having long dealt with congestive heart disease his big and generous heart finally gave out.

John's the only person I know to have seen a Bachman's Warbler. Now extinct, they once bred in specific habitat all over the southeast. John's father taught college in Greensboro where T. Gilbert Pearson, founder of the North Carolina Audubon Society and an early President of National Audubon was college president. Through this connection John's family knew Archibald Rutledge, the first poet laureate of South Carolina. Mr. Rutledge lived on an old plantation that bordered the Santee River. Bachman's Warblers nested on the property and once when John and his family were visiting, Mr. Rutledge asked if 10 year old John would like to see them. So John began his commitment to Audubon and conservation at an early age.

After a long career working in health care in North Carolina John and his wife, Fran, retired to Daytona Beach and quickly joined our chapter. Before his health began to fail he was an enthusiastic birder and looked forward to leading field trips, the Christmas Bird Count and doing the Big Sit at the Port Orange Bridge with Ray Scory. In 1997 our then newsletter editor, Carleton Smith, had to resign due to health issues and Fran stepped up to volunteer as newsletter editor. For the next 14 years she and John wrote, edited, had printed and mailed over 600 copies of the newsletter each month. John also served as chapter historian and board member. John had a habit of bringing his check book to board meetings. When an issue arose that needed a financial solution, John quickly and quietly wrote a check. He shunned acknowledgement of this generosity and was loathe to step into the spotlight. His wise council and curmudgeonly smile will be missed by all of us who knew him.

David Hartgrove

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Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Robert Arnold, Renita Bethell, Janet Clark, Joyce Davidson, Mary Derbenwick, Harry Hildebrandt, Shirley Parran, Shed Roberson, Nancy Robinson, Frances Smith, William Valez, Dixie Van Aernam, John Wagner and Peter Walton. We hope to see you at one of our meetings or on one of our field trips when they resume in September.

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John Baker, a board member with the Environmental Council of Volusia/Flagler sent the following:

"This is probably old news to some of you. in 2013 CO2 concentrations reached 400 parts per million (ppm) for the 1st time in human history. A year later, it averaged 400 ppm for an entire month. This April, co2 concentrations were 410.31. the last time it was this high was before humans existed."

These numbers are going in the wrong direction if we want to continue living as we have. Our burgeoning population is crowded along coastlines that will soon be flooding daily. And the current administration continues pushing use of fossil fuels that increase CO2 emissions.

The Trump administration's war on the environment has been ratcheted up another notch. Not content to wreck the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, they have now set their greedy sights on the Endangered Species Act. And to help implement their plans the President nominated Susan Combs. Combs was originally nominated in July as Interior's assistant secretary for policy, management, and budget, but her confirmation been stalled in the Senate for a number of reasons. Perhaps because a number of senators can't stomach the idea of putting such an ideologue in a position of power. So for now she will serve in an acting capacity at Fish and Wildlife and Parks, which doesn't require senate confirmation.

She comes to the office from Texas where she was comptroller. While in that position she managed to get control of the endangered protections program away from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. She likened the Endangered Species Act to "incoming Scud missiles" that threatened to blow up the Texas Miracle economy. In 2015 she prevailed on the Army to reverse its position that special protections for the Golden-cheeked Warbler at Fort Hood had not impaired military readiness. Among her first acts since moving to Washington is to announce a complete rollback of what's called the "blanket rule." The blanket section rule (4D) under the Endangered Species Act covers about 300 animal and plant species, such as the Northern Spotted Owl and manatee, that are at risk of becoming endangered. So this could end protections for the manatee here. The Interior Department has promised that any rollbacks would be subject to a public comment period as required by federal law.

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There are strange happenings in Port Orange. The City has applied for and been granted a permit from the St Johns River Water Management District to extend Yorktowne Drive a short distance. The cost of the project (entirely born by the City) is estimated at 2.4 million dollars. This isn't the first permit issued for this project. One from some years ago was allowed to expire, much to the relief of the residents in the area. The new permit was announced over Thanksgiving weekend, apparently in hopes that no one would notice until it was too late to object. The road will contribute to even more traffic congestion in an area that's clogged already. It will also further degrade the Spruce Creek watershed.

A couple of developers are pushing for the road, assisted by City staff. No one else wants it and a group of Port Orange residents, banded together as the Sweetwater Coalition, has filed a challenge to the permit. Livid at the temerity of this group to challenge their plans the City staff and the City Attorney prevailed on the City Council to fund the hiring of a big time law firm from Jacksonville to defend the permit in court. The Water Management District has its own attorneys to defend its actions and presumably the City Attorney could defend the City's position. But if you want to crush the efforts of your own citizens when they seek to have input on how their tax dollars are spent there's nothing like bringing in some hired gun law firm. Of course that means spending even more tax payer dollars but that's the price of "progress."

The Sweetwater Coalition's spokesman, Derek Lamontagne, offered to put together a presentation for the City Council on the group's objections to the proposed road extension. The City Attorney told him that he was not to approach any of the Council members under any circumstances. When you're up to no good it's important to control the message.

David Hartgrove

By Ray Scory

The Carolina Wren

...hopefully, my bird of brown will always stay around.

What is there not to like about the Carolina Wren? A bundle of Joy. A tiny ball of energy to spare, alive with action, inquisitive, charming, inventive, aggressive, and loving. Cloaked in an exquisite palette of brown shades. Vibrant color could not add to its beauty.

The stage is set. The drama is about to begin. The curtain rises and a new day awakens. The actors appear and the show begins. The audience reacts and the applause is loud - now and then a cheerful whistle pipes up. All in all, an enthusiastic audience. Some of this is in the form of my imagination and other parts are real. What is real, takes place at my bird feeding station everyday in my backyard here in Florida. It is a guarantee that every time I look out my kitchen window and a Carolina Wren appears, something wonderful and interesting will happen.

They are not acting out their life for their audience, they are actually living the everyday act of survival. They come to my feeder to eat. Eating is an important component of survival. They come well prepared for this challenge - just watch them... and listen too. The quality and variety of their songs belong in the high reaches of symphonic orchestration. It is melodic and honey smooth, shattering and intense. Horn like in structure it reminds us of high and echoing castle halls of ancient times. Close your eyes and listen. You are there, hearing the music. In the hall, realizing the spirit of a magical moment.

The Carolina Wren is a fascinating nest builder. Placing its nest on a bemusing variety of solid structures. In my neighborhood I have witnessed their dome covered nest woven inside a shoe, on the bench in a garage and in a wreath attached to a next door neighbor's front door. In my yard they have nested in a birdhouse, in the tangles of a coral honeysuckle vine and most astoundingly of all - they wove a nest into a garden hose, through the metal supports of a rotary garden hose caddy that is attached to side of my house. A most interesting structure this nest, more like a two floor condo instead of a one room hut. I watched them build that condo using thin sticks, dead brown grasses and a few feathers, flying across a green lawn not more than six feet from a large palmetto island. They moved back and forth in this small area until the nest was completed. I did not witness the exit of their fledglings, but I did notice a few more Carolina Wrens coming to the bird feeding station the following week.

The Carolina Wren may not be explosively dressed in vibrant colors, but their exquisite shades of browns and blacks, intricate feather designs, buff brown and white underparts, a very diagnostic white supercillium, all lightly sprinkled from above with a few white flecks, is simply beautiful. The Carolina Wren is truly a remarkable bird.

Ray Scory

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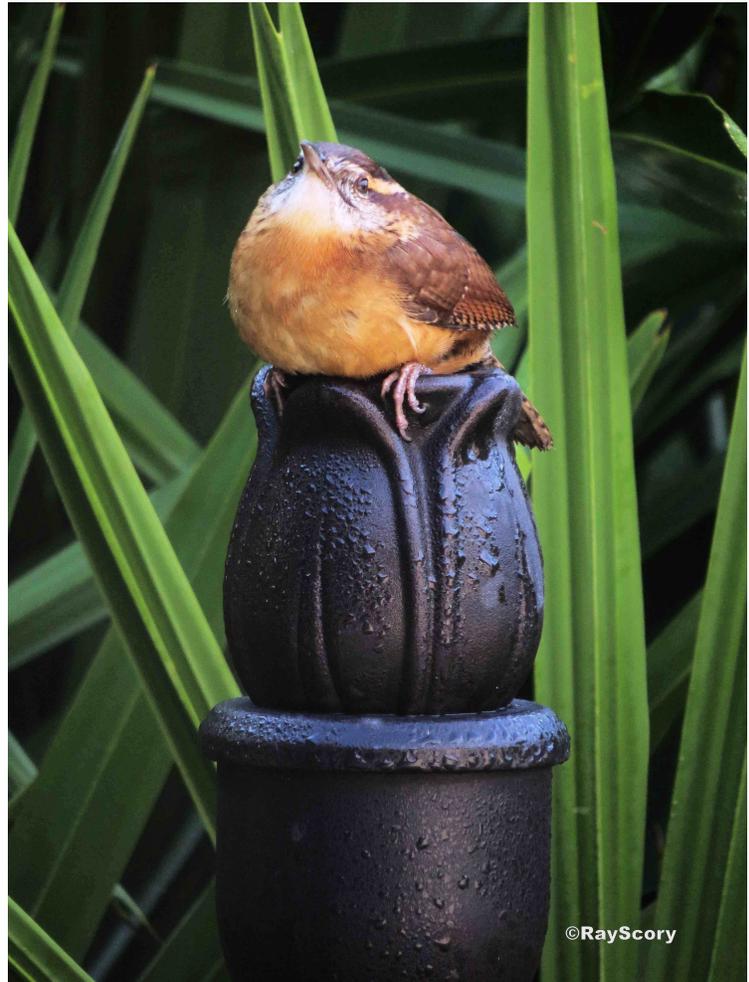
From the Quotable Birder

"How come the dove gets to be the peace symbol? How about the pillow? It has more feathers than the dove, and it doesn't have that dangerous beak."

Jack Handy, "Deep Thoughts" From SNL



Carolina Wren showing its classic upturned tail pose



This Carolina Wren sits in a puffed out wintery pose on a dry water fountain head. Photos by Ray Scory

Scrub-Jays at North Peninsula State Park

It's always good to see that special places are not forgotten nor the very special birds that once resided there. I started participating in Jay Watch back in 2008. I believe the first year for Jay Watch at the park was 2006. It was organized by Gail and Mike Duggins, long time Flagler Audubon members. At least that is when my "records" start. The last time a Florida Scrub-Jay was seen at NPSP was in the spring of 2016. The jay was not in his/her usual location, and for about three months was seen at the south end of the park (much closer to Kingston Shores Condos than usual). I believe this was our last Florida Scrub-Jay at the park and he/she was headed south looking for new habitat and companions.

Maintaining ideal habitat is essential for a healthy Scrub-Jay population. NPSP's location adjacent to A1A creates a problem when it comes to prescribed burns. Winds have to be out of the Northeast so that the smoke doesn't drift over A1A. Generally speaking, with a northeasterly wind we have a low pressure center sitting offshore and of course that means rain. This means looking for a weather pattern that is not all that common. I have seen scheduled burns delayed for months looking for optimal weather conditions. It's my understanding that the ideal situation is for mechanical clearing to precede the burn within a certain amount of time. It is also my understanding that much of the restoration and maintenance at Lyonia Preserve is "mechanical" because it sits in the middle of an established city (Deltona) and burns are not practical in all locations there.

When Jay Watch started at NPSP, three main family groups were identified. Other groups were believed to be sub-groups of these three family groups. The scrub-jays from Matanzas Shores and Shelter Cove in northern Flagler County migrated down to NPSP after development destroyed the habitat at those locations. They were easily identified because of their unique colored leg bands.

In earlier years (2006 through 2009) there were between 10 and 12 Scrub-Jays in the park. The number dropped to 8 jays in 2010. By 2012 we were down to 6 adult scrub-jays and only 3 adults in 2013 and 2014. In 2014 we were also observing predators: Cooper's Hawk and Swallow-tailed Kite. Cooper's Hawks tend to take adult or fledgling birds. Swallow-tailed Kites are looking for nestlings.

It's been suggested that some birds could be relocated from other active sites to establish a population here. About 5 years ago, at a Jay Watch Volunteer Appreciation event, there was a young woman who gave a presentation about the first translocation attempt. It was a great presentation and a bit of a wake up call on what locations were to be considered for translocation. I remember her saying that sites that would be considered needed to already have an established "community" of jays. That community would have to consist of ten families of Scrub-Jays. Not ten jays, ten families! They may have revised the criteria since then but as Marianne Korosy (Director of the Jay Watch Program) pointed out, an already established community seems to ensure success for translocated jays. It's great that translocation is taking place "somewhere". Hopefully, this will result in an increased Florida Scrub-Jay population. Anywhere the numbers increase is better than nowhere. We sure want to see them back here.

Laura Ostapko

Laura is a long time volunteer at Gamble Rogers State Park, which manages North Peninsula State Park. Editor

Words of Praise for Audubon Adventures, cont.

"My class absolutely loved the Audubon Adventures magazines. They eagerly read them with a partner in order to learn more about birds and bees. A project that they enjoyed participating in was to create a paper cube with their favorite learned facts listed on each side of the cube with an illustration. The students then shared their cubes and they were engaged in what each classmate felt was important. I look forward to getting next year's set of magazines. Thank you for the learning!"

Katherine S. Reynolds 4th Grade Teacher, Gifted Pine Trail Elementary

"The "Audubon Adventures" were a great resource in my class. We used them to learn the content, but they were also valuable for our reading standards. I used them with my class to identify text features, discuss fact and opinion, and create summaries. The engaging information, eye catching layout, and color print made these fun for my students. I appreciate the opportunity to use them Thank you.

Sincerely, Robin Knight Pine Trail Elementary ESE gifted

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THE PELICAN

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4 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.