



Perhaps the most important knowledge we received from Dr. De Freese is that there is no single, easy remedy but that all of us can play at least one role in making improvements. Pollution in the estuary affects water quality, habitats, living natural resources and the health of the communities on its shores so it should be no surprise that we can help in many ways, whether through citizen science projects, approaching local businesses to be friendlier to the waterway or speaking to our elected officials as well as through our own behavior, especially when it comes to our lawns.

Another important way you can assist is to go to the IRL Council's website and read as much as you can of the IRL National Estuary Program Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. The public comment period has been extended and your comments are welcomed. You can find the report [here](#).

You can also attend the [SHORE](#) Symposium to be held November 30th at the Brannon Center, in New Smyrna Beach. Here's a link to [registration](#).

At home, you can follow the Volusia County Fertilizer Ordinance, summarized as

\* Don't apply nitrogen and/or phosphorus fertilizer on your lawn between June 1st and September 30th or when the ground is saturated (when there is runoff).

\* Don't let yard waste go into the street and down a storm drain. Bag it or use it as mulch.

\* If you live on the water, don't fertilize within 15 feet of the body of water. Leave that as a buffer zone.

You can find answers to frequently asked questions about water-friendly gardening at this [site](#).

As our year progresses, we will surely have more ways for you to get involved in the health of our spectacular estuary but if you do just one thing among the items included here, you'll have made a huge step in the right direction!

*Melissa Lammers*

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## Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: M Alzona, Greg Anest, Karen Berkowitz, Renita Bethell, Lenore Cowan, Donna Dross, Dolores Jackson, Diana Kaufman, Patricia Klein, Karen Leonard, Karen Madigan, June Sefscik, Margaret Snyder, Ellen Tate, Richard Verstay and John Young. We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting or on one of our excellent field trips. Welcome aboard!

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## Great News For Lake Apopka

On September 19th the City of Apopka voted to accept the 69.5 acre Hickerson property ( at the beginning of the wildlife drive) for the Gateway Birding Park! This was in exchange for the St. Johns River Water Management District's option to build its service center on Binion Road near the University of Florida's IFAS Field Station. Our Regional Conservation Committee was lobbying the Apopka City Council to accept this land swap. But it was Orange Audubon Society's President, Deborah Green, who really spent the hours working the phones and attending meetings to make this happen. This new facility will enhance an already great experience.



## Festival of Flight and Flowers

Oct 12-14, 2018

Ocklawaha Valley Audubon Society, in Lake County, is sponsoring a three day birding and nature festival where you'll likely see birds like this immature Yellow-crowned Night-Heron. [The Festival of Flight and Flowers](#) promises to be a fun event. Click on the link and register for the exciting field trips and enjoy listening to presentations by Greg Miller, of "The Big Year" fame and Naples resident Yve Morrell, who last year became the first woman to win the Big Year contest with 817 species! A good time will be had by all.

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## Donating To The Future

After a unanimous vote by the board in August, our chapter made the largest donation in its history (5,000.00) to the Merritt Island Wildlife Association. Our donation will help fund the exhibits and amenities in the new Visitor's Center at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. The Department of the Interior is funding the construction of the new building but they provide no funding for all of the exhibits and amenities that make for a quality experience. Below is a photo showing MIWA President, Chris Fairey, receiving the check from President, Melissa Lammers and yours truly.

*David Hartgrove*



*Photo by Luis Villalon*



John Carr participating in the Big Sit. *Photo by Ray Scory*

## John Carr, One Special Guy

*...lasting memories are created by extraordinary experiences.*

A few I hold closely come from the second Sunday in the month of October at the Dunlawton Bridge over the Halifax River in Port Orange, Florida. I have sat there this one special day every year since 2001 at a table next to the river. I sit from sunrise to sunset counting birds that I see or hear from an imaginary circle seventeen feet in diameter. I can't leave this circle to ID the birds, thus abiding by the rules of **The Big Sit**.

Throughout the years as I entered the parking lot before sunrise to begin my Big Sit birding day, my first sighting was of John Carr already at the table identifying the night time birds. This sighting made me very happy, because I knew the coming new day would be about birds and stories about birds and other related things.

And could John tell a story. He told his stories delivered in a smoothly, deliberate style. I would anxiously await John's climactic ending to his stories when a sly, whimsical smile (ever so slight) would inevitably appear revealing his worthy conclusion. John had many stories to tell - many about his family, many about Halifax River Audubon, many about how special it was to produce the HRA newsletter with his wife, Fran, and the pleasure it gave them both, many about his career in the medical field and many about his birding experiences. And did he have many. All very interesting, none tedious. All voiced with a "sense of humor" and a dedication reaching far beyond. At the end of the day, when we walked away from our circle, John would always turn and say, "I can't wait for next year."

John, you will again be with me Sunday, October 14 at the Dunlawton Bridge, I will be there and happy your spirit is too. John Carr was one special guy, an extraordinary birder and an enduring friend.

*Ray Scory*

*Ray Scory will again be at the Dunlawton Bridge on Sunday, October 14th for this year's Big Sit. The Big Sit was first organized by the New Haven Bird Club, of which Ray was President, before retiring to Florida. If you'd like to join him for all or part of the event you'd be welcomed.* Editor

## Conservation Notes

We've had a pretty wet summer and the road side ditches are full and wet once again. That doesn't mean we're flush with all the drinking water we need. In fact "flush" is a pertinent term when looking at future water use choices. Twenty years ago, seeing a looming water crisis ahead, Tampa came up with TWRP, the Tampa Water Reuse Project. Much to the chagrin of the engineers pushing this project the public started calling it "toilet to tap."

Of course the problem is that there's no way to make waste water safe for human consumption. Not because we can't purify it from a biological standpoint. We can surely do that. What we can't do is remove the antibiotics, antidepressants, hormones and other compounds we take into our bodies and excrete in our own bodily wastes. Our waste water now is pumped out of our treatment facilities and eventually into our rivers and streams. Its potential effect on wildlife remains to be seen.

In spite of the monstrous population growth our state has undergone over the past 50 years, municipalities are not the biggest consumers of our groundwater. It's agriculture that takes 60% of the water. No one would want to eat food irrigated with treated waste water. But in an effort to keep feeding the monster of growth we're considering drinking it.

*From the [Birding Community E-Bulletin](#) we learned...*

Every year along our coasts there are conflicts between beach nesting birds and people. On most public beaches there are too many people for the birds to attempt nesting. So they often go to small islands in an attempt to get some privacy. Unfortunately those islands are where people go to avoid abiding by the rules, like no dogs or drinking. Case in point locally, Disappearing Island.

This past July at the mouth of Mobile Bay, in Alabama, a new law for human behavior was set by a group of beach volleyball players. Andrew Haffenden, a biologist with Birmingham Audubon's Coastal Bird Survey was conducting a survey from his boat. There's a small island that juts off Dauphin Island called Sand Island. Haffenden counted 17 boats there and several tents. The island just happens to host the largest Least Tern colony in the state. Black Skimmers were nesting there too. Haffenden reported that, "The people had collected all the eggs from the nests to clear out an area to play volleyball. The people had actually made a little dome of sand and placed the eggs around it to decorate it." In photos of the destruction some of the eggs showed signs of pip marks, meaning they were about to hatch. Denied the attention of the nesting adults the eggs quickly cooked in the hot sun. The US Fish & Wildlife Service and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources were contacted. They erected fencing and posted the island but the damage had been done. To make matters worse, two weeks later high winds and tides caused an over wash of the island and many more eggs and nestlings were lost. A natural event but tragic nonetheless.

And speaking of tragedy, while all eyes have been on the Senate, the new EPA Administrator, Andrew Wheeler, has been further gutting the agency. Gone is Dr. Orme Zavaleta who's been at the agency since 1981 advising on the effects of chemicals in the human body. Gone too, Dr. Ruth Etzel, head of the Office of Children's Health. She too had clashed with Trump's agenda to put profits for his contributors ahead of the health of the public. Why base decisions on science when they can be based on what's good for polluters?

*David Hartgrove*

## From Our Chapter's Facebook Page

Our President, Melissa Lammers, recently posted a [story](#) on our Facebook page about a plant often called heavenly bamboo. Also called nandina (*Nandina domestica*) it's an invasive exotic from China and the far East. Marketed by garden centers and big box stores as a beautiful foliage plant with bright red fruit, it's actually a killer. The long lasting red berries contain cyanide and every year birds like Robins and Cedar Waxwings are poisoned by them.

There are native plants whose berries are poisonous to birds too. These include nightshade, lantana, poke weed, castor bean and others. In 1970 over 1,000 ducks died near Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge after consuming castor beans found floating on the surface of a lake. There are enough threats to our feathered friends out there without our buying what looks like a tasty berry that turns out to be deadly.

*Editor*

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### This month's bird photo



Roseate Spoonbill preening, *Photo by Peter May*

Roseate Spoonbills appear to be experiencing a population boom. Over the past few years they're being seen in more places and in larger numbers. Spoonbills are tactile feeders, meaning they feed by touch. Their bills are lined with very sensitive nerve endings which allow them to detect prey as they walk forward sweeping their bills back and forth in the water. Their diet consists mostly of small fish, shrimp and aquatic invertebrates. Next May a drive up to the St Augustine Alligator Farm will provide you with an opportunity to photograph these gorgeous birds close up as they're nesting.

*Editor*



*Photo by Luis Villalon*

Melissa and David discussing ways for students to get involved with Audubon with Tracy Grimes-Mayo and her daughter, Madison. We were all at the Natural History Day event at the Museum of Arts and Sciences on September 8th. We'll have our table at Tomoka Fest at Tomoka State Park on October 6th and we'd love to have you join us.

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