

The Pelican

For wildlife & people since 1923

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The President's Message

Having been swamped with things this month I'm "phoning in" my column this month. Here's an interesting piece from our friends at the [Eco-Voice Daily Digest](#). Melissa Lammers

The Cost of Horseshoe Crab Blood

Horseshoe crabs are fascinating animals. They may look like prehistoric crabs but are actually more closely related to scorpions and spiders. They also happen to be one of the most important animals when it comes to keeping humans alive.

The pale blue blood that circulates within the bodies of horseshoe crabs is extremely sensitive to bacterial pathogens. This has allowed biomedical scientists to use the blood of horseshoe crabs to test whether or not potentially life-saving medicines and medical devices are safe for humans. While this is extremely helpful for humans, it may not be so for horseshoe crabs. Scientists extract blood from the horseshoe crabs and then return them to the ocean. This is relatively safe; however, around 50,000 horseshoe crabs die during this process every year. Additionally, Asian horseshoe crabs have experienced dramatic population losses from habitat loss, as well as overfishing. In order to keep the horseshoe crab populations constant, some change needs to occur. If not, the biomedical industry could be seriously threatened.

Jeak Ling Ding is one scientist who has decided to expedite the change needed to preserve horseshoe crabs. Factor C is a specific molecule in horseshoe crab amebocytes (blood cells) that detects the bacterial toxins. If she could find the gene that made factor C and could manipulate the DNA, she could make the factor C without the need to harm more horseshoe crabs. After many trials and errors, Ding discovered she could splice the DNA from the horseshoe crabs into insects that would then manufacture the factor C. This meant it was no longer necessary to bleed horseshoe crabs.

Although Ding has arrived at a solution, biomedical companies have been slow to adopt her method. They could potentially lose money if they adopt the factor C method and drop the traditional way of bleeding horseshoe crabs. But the population numbers of horseshoe crabs are dwindling, and they will continue to dwindle if nothing is done to help them. Red Knots and many other bird species depend on horseshoe crab eggs for survival, as do the crabs. If we want to save the horseshoe crab, other threatened species, and our own biomedical industry, the factor C method should be adopted.

One source for this article was "The Last Days of the Blue-Blood Harvest." by Sarah Zhang. It appeared in the May 9, 2018 issue of Atlantic.

Calendar & Events

Monday, April 15th, Program Meeting- Rob Diaz de Villegas is WFSU Public Media's Ecology Producer. This spring, WFSU Public Media is undertaking an ambitious ecology outreach, education, and media project called EcoCitizen. The project challenges community members to actively engage with nature through citizen science, and to integrate their homes with surrounding wild spaces by landscaping for wildlife. Rob will talk about creating this kind large scale project centered on the video production work he's been doing. This promises to be a fascinating talk. 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. We hope to see you there.

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Field Trips

Thursday, April 11th, Washington Oaks Gardens State Park- **Change of scheduled trip.** Join Peggy Yokubonus on this trip to one of the best spots in our area for migrating Spring warblers. Meet at the park, 6400 N. Oceanshore Blvd., Palm Coast in the garden parking lot at 8:00AM to look for spring migrants. We will walk the Gardens and search the beach across the street. There is a fee for park entrance if you do not have a current Florida State Park pass. Bring snacks, water and sunscreen and bug spray. We have been known to stop at Captain's Barbecue for lunch on this trip at Bing's Landing. Questions? Call Peggy, 386-316-4085.

Wednesday thru Friday, April 17th thru 19th, Fort DeSoto-

Join David Hartgrove for this overnight trip to one of Florida's premier birding spots, in Pinellas County. You should have already made your reservations at the Holiday Inn in St Petersburg. We will meet at 12:00 noon at the big flag in the park. If you've been there before you know where the flag is. If you haven't you can't miss it since it's right in front of you as you pay the entrance fee. Call David, 386-235-1249, so we'll know you're going. Then we can make arrangements for our lunch on Thursday, 4/18. Questions? Call David.

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If you're a member of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology you may have seen an article in the newest issue of "Living Bird" about Canadian artist, Calvin Nicholls. His art will leave you speechless. He creates paper sculptures of birds and other wildlife that seem to come to life before your eyes. Here's a link to a [Cornell Lab webpage](#). Be sure to click on the linked short video. *Thanks to Paula Wehr for this.*

It Doesn't Take Much

Backyard birding begins with a window. That miracle of transparency that allows a wall to be pierced bringing in light and allowing a telescopic view of an outside perspective. Framed by a window and basking in backyard birding go hand in hand. It doesn't take much to stop and look out a window - to see what is out there, to look at birds.

That is exactly what I did this past first three days of Spring. The count for this 3 day period is 27 species of birds. Occasionally, I wandered outside to confirm my sightings of flybys, birds in my backyard trees, ducks and waterbirds in the backyard pond. However, looking at the view of my backyard window was the biggest treat of the three day period.

The morning of the 21st began quietly, gently easing in a blush of golden reds, mixing with the blacks of night. A fluid transition from night to day was happening. A golden, red sun electric and joyous rose above the treetops and a new day appeared.

A male and female Northern Cardinal were at the feeding station, brilliantly mimicking the explosive colorations of the morning sunrise. On the final day of this three day backyard safari a single male American Robin stood upon the eight foot pole of my feeding station, adding, significantly, to the first-time historical lore of the twenty year, in-place feeding station.

My cross-like bird feeding station is constructed of 2.5 inch PVC plumbing pipe and fittings with the four foot cross bar seven feet up from the ground. This height affords protection from the five feet high jump of clever and persistent squirrels. I can hang any make of bird feeder from the upper crossbar as long as the bottom of the feeder hangs no lower than five feet to the ground. A six inch stove pipe threaded on the pole prevents a climbing squirrel's assault. Finally I place the feeding station 10 feet from any jumping off point. Squirrels are amazing jumpers. I once saw one push off from a vertical tree trunk and land about eight feet away onto a 10x12 inch feeder tray. They are creatively acrobatic creatures.

Back in the yard I placed a green seed hopper feeder with four ports. Small sized birds eagerly feed on the small sized seeds, as: white proso. Occasionally Northern Cardinals will use this feeder, but prefer larger feeders with black oil sunflower seeds.

During the time between daybreak and 9:30AM of the first morning I counted 17 species of birds feasting at my feeders. The smallest are Chipping Sparrows. They normally eat on the ground. At times, I have seen them up higher in the hanging bird feeders. The largest are the Muscovy Ducks. They are so focused that they would pass between my legs on their morning waddle to my feeding station, if I didn't move. My most beautiful- the Painted Bunting for its explosive color combinations - chartreuse back with a red belly and a blue head and red eye ring (unmatchable). The female with her various shades of greens, a winner that regular comes to my feeders. One note of observation - the female is so much feistier than the male, especially when the male tries to get to an open feeder port.

I look forward to the semi-annual visits of the Spotted Sandpiper. Normally he visits alone. From my window, I recognize its rapidly beating wings and low to the water flight pattern. Upon landing, its body rocks to a steady eternal beat. I am fascinated by the stoic Mourning Dove, the light headed Mottled Duck, the grayness of the Gray Catbird, the frenzied movements of the Carolina Wren, the every winter presence

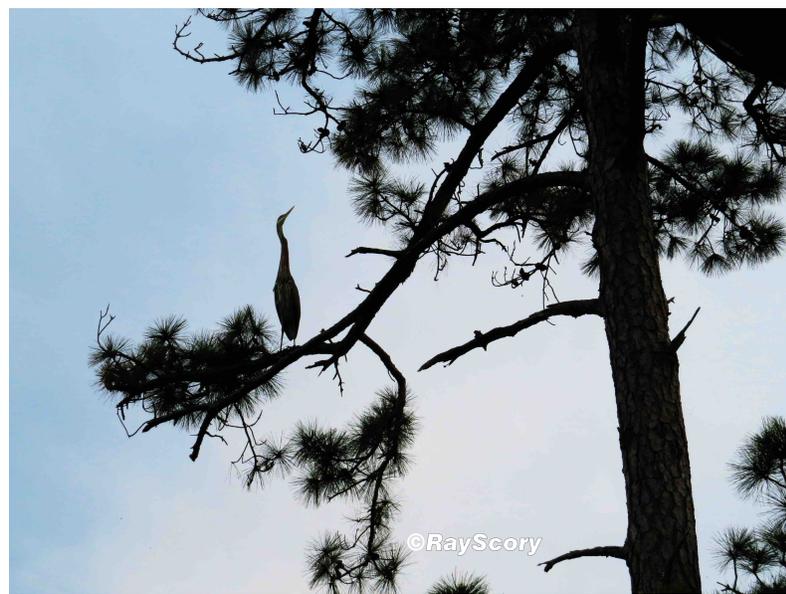
of the Yellow-rumped Warbler, the Great Blue Heron roosting 30 feet high in a pine tree and all the other magnificent birds that grace my yard.

Looking out my backyard window is a great birding activity. ...and I don't have far to go to begin.

Ray Scory



Bird Feeding Station with Brown thrasher feeding on "No Melt" suet and a Northern Mockingbird looking on.



Great Blue Herons normally walk through my yard and along the pond. This one got a better view.

Photos by Ray Scory

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From the Quotable Birder

"There is nothing in which the birds differ more from man than the way in which they can build and yet leave a landscape as it was before."

2 Robert Lynd, 1879-1949, *The Blue Lion and Other Essays*

Chapter member, Lisa Mickey, wrote this for the New York Times. It appears here with permission. Editor.

Not Just The Links Are Green

Minimizing manicured grass isn't the first thing that comes to mind when you think of improvements to a high-end golf course.

But Sailfish Point Golf Club on Hutchinson Island on Florida's east coast, did just that. Now, butterflies have moved in where native grasses and flowers have been allowed to grow tall.

Across the state, on Sanibel Island, the Sanctuary Golf Club ripped out concrete cart paths and brought in beehives to help pollinate the local wildflowers.

In Skidaway, Ga., near Savannah, the Landings Club dug a new irrigation system to lower water consumption, and it built nesting areas for a native terrapin rescue program.

Golf courses and environmental initiatives haven't always coexisted. But today, many course superintendents — the men and women who plan and maintain courses — hope to reshape that thinking.

Sustainability efforts are often “motivated by economics,” said Max Adler, the editorial director of Golf Digest. “The whole industry is seeing a correction away from the very manicured, over manufactured look of golf—and at the same time what really motivates golf courses to pursue that look is the bottom line. The less water you use, the less grass grows, the less maintenance you have to cover.”

In the last 10 years, he said, many clubs have replaced manicured areas of their courses “with sand, with native florals and shrubs that exist naturally on the topography and just leave it. And it looks beautiful.”

“If you're doing things that are economically sound, it's often in line with what you are doing environmentally,” said James Murphy, an extension specialist in turf management at Rutgers University in New Jersey. Players and residents also are demanding more eco-friendly practices.

“It's very important to people now that the community they live in respects the environment and takes care of it,” said Kristen Cheskaty, a broker and a managing partner at Sailfish Point Realty in Stuart, Fla.

Because of that, golf communities in the United States and elsewhere in the world are focusing on things as varied as eliminating plastic and foam cups in their snack shops and reducing fertilizers and chemicals in the upkeep of the fairways.

“All the little things add up,” Mr. Adler said. “Even though it's a small footprint for the day, over the course of the season it's real. More importantly it sends a message to people's minds that we want to be thoughtful and sensitive to the environment.”

Florida's Sailfish Point has followed guidelines created by a not-for-profit environmental education organization called Audubon International, which offers a certification program for good golf-course management practices. It is not affiliated with the National Audubon Society.

Sailfish Point is bordered on the west by the Indian River Lagoon, which in recent years has suffered extensive algae blooms. Most experts believe these are linked to discharges from Lake Okeechobee, which suffers from fertilizer and manure runoff from the extensive cattle and agribusiness properties around the lake.

Scott MacPhee, the director of golf course operations at Sailfish Point, said many residents were concerned about any role the golf course could play in contributing to such pollution.

“A lot of fingers could easily be pointed at our community and our operation, and I didn't want that for our members,” Mr. MacPhee said. “Whether the blame is on golf courses, farms or septic tanks, ultimately, we all want to do the right thing and we all want clean water.”

More than 800 golf courses in the United States and 2,100 courses in 34 countries have been certified by Audubon International. At Sailfish Point, earning the certificate took about two years. The work began in 2016 and included an environmental assessment and developing a wildlife and habitat management plan; reducing chemical use; and stepping up water conservation. In some areas, the golf course staff planted vegetation buffer zones, allowing growth of mangrove trees and aquatic plants to form a barrier between the golf course and waterways.

The Landings, with six Audubon International certified golf courses on Skidaway Island, near Savannah, Georgia is situated within tidal salt marshes and the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. It's also popular with native Diamondback Terrapins, which had a risky habit of depositing their eggs in golf course bunkers.

Carolyn McInerney, a local real estate agent who lives at the Landings, began the Diamondback Terrapin Rescue Project by placing the eggs in little flower pots on her back porch. “Now, we have five different nest boxes built around the golf course with community signs telling people about the program, as well as terrapin hatchling release parties,” Mr. Steigelman said. “It's become a big community project.”

In addition to the terrapin nests, the Landings has a system of bluebird boxes installed throughout its courses and monitored by community volunteers; pollinator gardens with native plantings for bees and butterflies; and a bird-cam to monitor owl, eagle and osprey nesting.

In southwest Florida, the Sanctuary stands out for its location. The community and its course, which has been certified by Audubon International, are surrounded by the 6,300-acre J.N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge — home to more than 300 species of birds, 50 species of reptiles and more than 30 mammal species. Two-thirds of the island is protected land.

Kyle Sweet, the superintendent at the Sanctuary Golf Club, the island's only private course not only maintains his course to Audubon International standards, but he also is guided by the wildlife refuge, as well as by rigid city requirements. Water quality and chemical nutrient loads are regularly monitored and the city issues an annual grade.

Even residences are regulated in regard to impermeable surfaces, such as driveways. The Sanctuary has removed more than a mile and a half of concrete cart paths from the course. They've installed salt tolerant turf grasses and upgraded their irrigation system for a 30% water reduction.

“We have a lot of members who are on the board at the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation and Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge,” said Kathryn Riggio, the membership coordinator at the Sanctuary. “They are very invested in our environmental responsibility.”

Lisa D Mickey

Conservation Notes

Chapter member, Celine Sullivan, alerted me to some new construction at the south end of South Beach Street in Daytona Beach, near the property where the old WROD radio station sat for so many years. The land contains considerable amounts of red and black mangrove, a protected species. We will be watching this project as it develops. Current plans call for retention of the native vegetation and an Environmental Resource Permit has been issued by the St Johns River Water Management District.

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The President recently signed into law the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act. It reauthorizes the act which was originally passed in 2000. Now comes the sticky part. The Administration's proposed budget slashes funding for the parts of the Department of the Interior that deal with implementing the protections granted in the Act. Once again we see a feel good bill passed but with the knowledge among our legislators that there won't be any funding to actually make progress on keeping birds off the extinction list.

This same mind set is at work in our state legislature. There were speed limits set for our state's waterways to help protect manatees. Then, when it came to to fund the Florida Marine Patrol and FWC's enforcement arm, they made sure there wouldn't be enough to adequately fund the operations. That's why there are just a handful of officers to cover the entire east coast of Florida.

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Our own state Senator, Travis Hutson, has been busy. It seems that several municipalities around the state have had the temerity to pass ordinances that ban plastic straws. Racing to the plastic straw manufacturer's rescue, Senator Hutson has filed a bill, S. 588, which will prohibit local governments from banning single use plastic straws. There are over 750 million plastic straws used in this country every day. Is it any wonder that we see photos of sea turtles with plastic straws in their nostrils or that a rare whale recently washed ashore in the Philippines with over 400 pounds of plastic in its stomach? And when concerned citizens try to address the problem by getting their local governments to ban plastic straws along comes our state senator to file a bill to crush that effort. In case you'd like to let the Senator know your thoughts on his bill his number is (850) 487-5007. You'll probably have to leave a voice mail but it's good for him to hear from you.

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President Trump's little vanity monument at our southern border has finally been corralled a bit by an agreement that should save Bentsen-Rio Grande State Park, Santa Ana NWR and the butterfly preserve. However, the other conservation designated lands, many of which are part of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Important Bird Areas, will be bulldozed into oblivion. While there are all kinds of electronic monitoring devices and state of the art drones with special infrared imaging technologies that could do a far better job of protecting our borders, our President insists on antiquated technology developed thousands of years ago. Nobody built a better wall that China and Genghis Khan easily defeated that one. The same is true of France's vaunted Maginot Line. A lot of good it did them. So all kinds of wildlife will be sacrificed on the altar of Trump's enormous vanity. Will we ever learn?

David Hartgrove

Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Jackie Anthony, Tom Arbogast, Cassandra Ballard, William Batchelor, Gwen Bills, Donald Boatner, Alyssa Bolt, Renate Calero, Larry Carrico, James Carter, Karen Collins, John DiCesare, Jeni Donald, Edythe Donnelly, Donna Dross, Elizabeth Edinger, Korin Ferris, Richard Goudey, Doris Grazulis, Jayne Hecker, Denise Hentze, Janet Hintz, Dana Jacobsen, Marion Jacobsen, Deborah Keith, Kim M. Klancke, Margaret Knight, Ed Kocis, Leslie Kolleda, Richard Langston, Tom Lynch, Paul McKinnon, Jacqueline Mirani, Joan Myers, Kathleen Mylotte, Jim O'Shaughnessy, Sarah Ostby, Penny Pierce, Shirley Porter, Dianne Reed, Janis Robinson, Patricia Sample, Ronald Schultz, Trudy Shoemaker, Chris Smith, Lynn Stackhouse, Rosella Stern, John Sullivan, Joan Tague, Becky Tate, Nicelette Triantatellu, John Wagner, Jean Young, and Rosemarie Zukas. We hope to see you all at an upcoming meeting or on one of our excellent field trips. And whether you're new to the organization or have been a member for years, we could use your expertise on our chapter's board. Please think about joining the board. Thanks!

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