

# The Pelican

For wildlife & people since 1923

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## Comments & Conservation Notes

Regular readers will note the change in the title of the president's column. Yes, we have a new president. Actually, we have a returning president. One who does so reluctantly. But since I was vice president and no one else stepped forward to accept the role, it fell to me. I've been Conservation Chair since 1987 and have served in several other positions over the years. We have a very experienced and capable board to help me over the next two years and I look forward to working with them as we carry on our mission to protect our environment and the quality of life we hope to leave for others.

We all owe a debt of gratitude to our our immediate past President, Melissa Lammers. It says a lot that someone who had just joined the organization volunteered to accept the position of President. She served with distinction and showed us all new ways to communicate our message to the community at large. Thankfully she remains on the board to help us even more.

One big duty the board has over the summer months is to plan our field trip schedule for the 2019/2020 season. If you have any suggestions for field trip destinations please contact [Peggy Yokubonus](#) or [me](#) with your suggestion. And thank you.

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The wetlands restoration and dragline ditch mitigation in Flagler County is moving right along. In the latest report we learn that the project is just over 25% complete, that turbidity levels are well below permitted requirements and that new vegetation is already growing in Section A, on which barriers were recently removed. Members of the St Johns River Water Management District's governing board toured the project on May 5th to see the progress for themselves. Look for a new kayak trail through the area to be announced later this year. Stay up to date on the project by visiting their [website](#).

Nesting birds are all around us now and one pair is new to our area. The first documented nesting by a pair of Roseate Spoonbills in Volusia County is playing out now in New Smyrna Beach. Chapter member, Lisa Mickey, who leads kayak and pontoon boat trips for the [Marine Discovery Center](#), discovered the nesting pair on one of the small islands just south of the North Causeway. The colony there includes Brown Pelicans, Great and Snowy Egrets, Tricolored Herons and others. It continues to be monitored by Lisa and others for the [Florida Shorebird Alliance](#). In addition to the spoonbills there are other shore and water birds nesting here, including on rooftops. Least Terns have returned to the roof of City Island Library.

*Continued below.*

## Calendar & Events

*As we're in our summer hiatus the only meetings to announce are our monthly board meetings. All chapter members are invited to attend and they are held on the 1st Monday of the month at the Ormond Beach Regional Library at 1:30 pm.*

## Field Trips

*Again, as we're in our summer hiatus there are no chapter field trips to announce. However, there are other choices out there.*

## Lyonia Environmental Center Programs

The Lyon Environmental Center, located at 2150 Eustace Avenue, in Deltona has programs for all ages. Below is a sampling.

**Saturday, June 8th**, "Incredible Insects" Creature Feature from 2:00-3:00 p.m. Have you ever wondered how insects grow? Or how fast is the fastest flying insect? Join LEC staff and experienced Animal Care volunteers to learn the answers to these questions and more fun facts. This program is designed for all ages and we encourage participants to ask questions, explore and have fun!

**Saturday, June 15th**, Animal Coverings: Fur, Feathers & Scales from 1:00-2:00 p.m. Humans wear jackets, hats and boots to stay warm, and protect us from the elements. However, animals have these layers already built in. Whether it helps them to stay warm, or provides protection from predators, animal coverings all have a role to help them survive in their natural habitat. Join LEC staff and volunteers to get an up close encounter with some of our scaly reptile animal ambassadors as we discuss what role their coverings play in their own survival.

## See Nesting Sea Turtles At Canaveral National Seashore

If you've never been on the beach at night and watched a massive loggerhead or green sea turtle crawl ashore, dig her nest and lay her eggs, this is your chance. Canaveral National Seashore programs will take place in both districts: Apollo (NSB) and Playalinda (Titusville). The schedule is for Wednesday through Saturday nights in June and July. Reservations are required and can be made by calling 386-428-3384 ext. 223 or in person at the Visitor Center daily 9:00am-5:00pm. The fee is 14.00 per person for ages 16 and older. Fifteen and under are free and children must be 8 years old to participate. Spaces fill up quickly so they'll appreciate your patience when scheduling for this very popular program.

I was able to scope the rooftop from the nearby Broadway Bridge and counted 89 incubating adults and estimated 109 adults in the area. They've been nesting there for about 2 weeks now as I write this. So hatching should begin soon. In addition, we all have cardinals, mockingbirds and lots of other species nesting in our neighborhoods and yards. Keep an eye and ear out for the special moments that allow us to witness this miracle of adaption to their living with us.

**Spoonbill update!** As we got to press Lisa sends word that she lead a kayak trip today (5/31) and was able to confirm at least 2 and possibly 3 chicks in the nest.

David Hartgrove

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### Our New Board Roster

President: David Hartgrove

Immediate Past President: Melissa Lammers

1st Vice President: Vacant (you could volunteer)

2nd Vice President: Vacant (we haven't had one in years)

Recording Secretary: Pam Pennella

Corresponding Secretary: Steve Underwood

Treasurer: Ellen Tate

Membership Secretary: Joan Tague

Historian: Holly Zwart-Duryea

At Large Members: Barbara Northrup, Steve Underwood and Peggy Yokubonus.

There are two At Large positions unfilled. There's still time for you to volunteer for one of the vacant positions or to join one of our standing committees: Conservation, Education, Field Trips or Welcoming. Please consider volunteering. We, and you, will be glad you did.

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Roseate Spoonbill standing with American Avocets at MINWR, January, 2016. Photo by David Hartgrove

## Saying Goodbye To Hope

The following is taken from [The Birding Community E-Bulletin](#) Published by Massachusetts Audubon and the National Wildlife Refuge Association. I wrote about Hope in a previous issue. Editor.

“Hope” was one of seven Whimbrels banded in 2008 and 2009 as part of a joint project between the Nature Conservancy and the Center for Conservation Biology at the College of William & Mary in Virginia. She was initially tracked with a satellite transmitter and became a living symbol of the challenges faced by migratory shorebirds throughout their lives. Hope was the last of her group of seven that continued to be monitored for years. Unfortunately, she is also considered to be one of the many casualties of Hurricane Maria in September 2017.

Hope was originally captured as an adult on 19 May, 2009 while staging in Boxtree Creek in Virginia where she was banded and fitted with a satellite transmitter as part of a study focused on Whimbrel migration. Hope was then tracked for more than 50,000 miles back and forth four times between her breeding site on the Mackenzie River in far western Canada and her wintering site on Great Pond, on St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. Once her transmitter antenna was lost in September 2012, shortly after she arrived at Great Pond, researchers decided to remove the transmitter rather than replace it. After removing the transmitter in late November 2012, Hope simply had to be identified by her coded leg flag (AYY).

Hope was featured on a website that allowed the public to potentially track her movements. She rapidly attracted a near-cult following of shorebird biologists, bird watchers, and school children from across the hemisphere and beyond. Over the years, she became a virtual ambassador for shorebird migrants making impressive nonstop flights, sometimes moving great distances out over the open Atlantic Ocean, and navigating with great precision to specific stopover sites. Hope reliably exhibited high fidelity to her breeding site, her wintering location, and several staging areas along the way.

One of the more dramatic events during Hope's tracking life occurred in August of 2011 when, after taking off from South Hampton Island in Hudson Bay, she encountered Tropical Storm Gert over the open ocean off the coast of Nova Scotia. Hope flew through the storm for 27 hours against powerful headwinds. Once she broke through the storm, she immediately made a turn toward Cape Cod, and after an unplanned layover to refuel, she ultimately continued to her winter territory on Great Pond.

In mid-August 2017, Hope arrived at her usual wintering site at Great Pond where she was positively observed and photographed. St. Croix was hit by Hurricane Irma on 6 September 2017 as a category five storm with heavy rain and major damage. Unfortunately, less than two weeks later, on 19 September, St. Croix was hit by Hurricane Maria, with the eye of the storm passing directly over Great Pond. In spite of careful searching Hope was not seen again.

In a thoughtful homage to Hope, Bryan Watts, from the Center for Conservation Biology, wrote the following: "Over a short period of time, by just living out her fascinating life, Hope unknowingly taught scientists important lessons about the requirements of Whimbrels through the annual cycle, educated the broader community about the challenges faced by migratory birds, demonstrated that local actions can contribute to international movements, and left a legacy that will educate children for generations. Fair winds and following seas, Hope."



Black-bellied Plovers in basic and alternate plumage

*Photo by Ray Scory*

### The Last Field Trip

The Dunlawton Bridge never disappoints. I stand by my proclamation that at anytime of the day, any day of the week, any week of the month or any month of the year, you should be able to observe at least twenty-five species of birds in one and a half hours at the bridge. At our chapter's recent, last field trip of the season, it happened again - twenty-eight species of birds in a two hour time frame. In the last twenty-one years, I have led many Halifax River Audubon field trips and have birded the bridge hundreds of times. Always, I target the magic twenty-five number and again and again and again I have not been disappointed.

Usually I experience at least one special birding treat per visit, such as: an American Oystercatcher nesting, a lone American Avocet, a small flock of migrating Black-throated Blue Warblers resting at my feet, a Brown Booby bucking October hurricane force winds and a glorious Rainbow closing out a rainy December afternoon. Memories. Not replaceable.

Our last of the season field trip again provided memorable birding. A special treat, this late afternoon, was watching 30 to 40 Black-bellied Plovers in full breeding plumage feeding on the sandbars south of the bridge. Stop, go and poke is their feeding technique. A few, fast steps forward, a stop, a drop of their bill, a short probe into the sand and then again repeat, over and over again. A theater of activity and black and white contrast radiantly displayed on a sandy stage illuminated by a sunny warm day.

I get to see them more frequently in their non-breeding plumage of a light brown/gray appearance, white underparts with a softly mottled back and two large dark eyes. Their breeding plumage is a study of extreme contrast - a rich black face and belly with white under parts and black and white speckled wings and back. Flying overhead, a black patch under the armpits of each wing is diagnostic.

*To be so bold as to memorialize the birds that graced our last field trip, I list the following:*

Rock Pigeon, American Oystercatcher, Black-bellied Plover, Semi-palmated Plover, Rudy Turnstone, Sanderling, Least Sandpiper, Semi-palmated Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper Willet, Laughing Gull, Herring Gull, Least Tern, Royal Tern, Brown Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron,

Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Reddish Egret, Green Heron, White Ibis, Bald Eagle, Fish Crow, Red-winged Blackbird, Boat-tailed Grackle and Common Grackle.

*Ray Scory*

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Tom Colvin, Melissa Lammers, Ranger, Celena Zimmerman and Sande Habali

*Photo by Luis Villalon*

### Cross-Pollination Makes Us Better Together!

Partnership for the environment truly pays off. On Saturday, May 25th, at North Peninsula State Park, Ranger Celena Zimmerman, Gamble Rogers / North Peninsula State Park, hosted a "Landscaping for Wildlife" event and invited Halifax River Audubon (HRA) and the Pawpaw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society (Pawpaw) to participate as co-presenters. A very attentive group of about twenty-five people took in valuable information and stayed post-event to ask many good questions of Sande Habali, Tom Colvin, Melissa Lammers and Ranger Zimmerman.

Based on Audubon's "Plants for Birds" program, HRA and Pawpaw (Melissa Lammers, Sande Habali and Don Spence) have been speaking at events and to homeowner's associations about the essential role native plants in home landscapes play in stopping the decline of North American song bird populations, and indeed, in maintaining the biodiversity that supports all life. We emphasize that planting native plants for birds is far kinder and gentler on our environment, and especially our water, than typical Florida landscape practices, and we provide a "roadmap" to help others begin to go native. If you know of a group or homeowner's association that would be interested in learning about Native Plants for Birds, please contact Melissa Lammers, [melissalammers@gmail.com](mailto:melissalammers@gmail.com).

*Melissa Lammers*

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### From The Quotable Birder

"I wish the Bald Eagle had not been chosen as the representative of our country; he is a bird of bad moral character; like those among men who live by sharpening and robbing, he is generally poor, and often lousy. The turkey is a much more respectable bird, and withal a true original native of America."

*Benjamin Franklin, in a letter to Sarah Bache on eagles*



## Articles Needed

I know there are a number of you out there who could write an excellent article for this publication. You've had an interesting experience watching birds in your backyard or on a trip to somewhere to see birds, like the Biggest Week In Birding, which I know a number of you have attended. Please, send them to me. The deadline for articles to be published is the 25th of the month. You can include photos if you have them. We may not have room for all of the photos and your article may have to be edited for length but this goes with publishing. Send them to me at [editor@halifaxriveras.org](mailto:editor@halifaxriveras.org) and many thanks! *Editor.*

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## Membership News

Regular readers may notice that this is the second month without any information on new and returning members. The national office has been experiencing some issues with what we're assured are upgrades to their system. Look for a very large list in an upcoming issue of the Pelican. *Editor*

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## THE PELICAN

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### Halifax River Audubon

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Meets monthly September through May

President: David Hartgrove

Vice President: Vacant

Past President: Melissa Lammers

Treasurer: Ellen Tate

Recording Sec.: Pam Pinnella

Membership Sec.: Joan Tague

Corresponding Sec.: Steve Underwood

Historian: Holly Zwart-Duryea

At-Large: Barbara Northrup, Steve Underwood and Peggy Yokubonus

### Committee Members

Conservation: David Hartgrove

Education: Holly Zwart-Duryea

Field Trips: Peggy Yokubonus

David Hartgrove

Newsletter Editor: David Hartgrove

Welcome: Pam Pinella

Webmaster: Joan Tague

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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.

