

# The Pelican

For wildlife & people since 1923

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## Comments & Conservation Notes

The Volusia County Council has voted to include two very important questions on the November ballot. They will reauthorize Volusia Forever and Volusia ECHO. Our chapter will be working hard to insure passage of both of these initiatives. As I wrote last month, "Looking at the new developments about to break ground and those to be approved in the very near future, it's clear we're going to need all the green space and wetlands we can purchase for use as parks and fresh water recharge areas."

The Trump Administration continues its assault on environment while handing a big gift to corporate polluters. They gutted both the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. Now they're doing away with many of the protections for birds under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. They've published a new rule that says if birds die due to the actions of corporations, they don't have to pay any fines. Had this rule been in effect in 2010, BP wouldn't have had to pay a dime for the damage done to the Gulf from the Deep Water Horizon oil spill. There's a [website](#) where you can make comments on the proposed Environmental Impact Statement for this new rule. Please, click on that link to register your opinion before July 20th.

A friend recently sent me a link to a story in [The Atlantic](#) about birds and how and why they do what they do. It references two new books, one by David Sibley, *"What It's Like to Be a Bird: From Flying to Nesting, Eating to Singing—What Birds Are Doing, and Why."* And another by Jennifer Ackerman, *"The Bird Way: A New Look at How Birds Talk, Work, Play, Parent, and Think."* Though I haven't had time to read either book yet I certainly plan to after reading this fascinating article.

On June 9th the US Fish & Wildlife Service proposed designation of 1.5 million acres as critical habitat for the Florida bonneted bat in response to a legal agreement with the Center for Biological Diversity, Tropical Audubon Society and the Miami Blue Chapter of the North American Butterfly Association. The bat is found only in South Florida where its population declined steeply as its forest and wetland habitats were developed and/or denigrated by pesticides for decades. As a result, it was listed as an endangered species in 2013. "Designation of this critical habitat is an indispensable step toward protection of this unique South Florida species," says Paola Ferreira, executive director of Tropical Audubon Society.

Finally, Audubon, conservation and local birding lost a very good friend with the recent passing of Don Picard. Don served as President of the Southeast Volusia Audubon Society for over 20 years. He will be missed by all who knew him.

David Hartgrove

## Calendar & Events

Here we are in the heat of summer and the middle of our annual hiatus from meetings and field trips. We're hoping to be able to hold regular meetings at Sica Hall by the time September rolls around. However, as I write this, on June 27th, the state has just announced another one day record for new Corona virus cases. So we'll take this slowly and see what happens. One alternative the board is looking at is streaming virtual meetings via Zoom or some other platform. The board has held its last 2 meetings this way and though there were a few awkward steps the first time we're getting to be old pros now.

Our field trip committee met earlier this month and we're looking at a new way of communicating with everyone. West Volusia and Southeast Volusia Audubon Societies have been using "Meet Up" to publicize their meetings and field trips for several years. We decided to affiliate with them and share the cost of this new way of communicating. Click on this [link](#) and when the page opens you'll see a red button marked "Join the Group." Click that and you'll be offered a variety of ways to link up. The easiest is probably the one at the bottom, using your email address. You'll also be asked to supply a 10 character password. Once you've done that you'll be sent an email with another link. Look in your email, click that link and that's all there is to it.

At this point we haven't posted the field trips there yet, nor any meeting information. Our thinking is that even if we're unable to hold regular meetings at Sica Hall for a while, we should be able to offer field trips since they're outside and social distancing will be easier. So far we're looking at trips to the Port Orange Bridge, Lighthouse Point Park, in Ponce Inlet, Lake Apopka, Biolab Road, at MINWR and a few others. Information will be forthcoming on when we've finalized a field trip schedule and posted it to Meet Up. And as usual we'll post the field trip list to our [website](#).

We're all navigating uncertain times. Things we've taken for granted in the past won't necessarily work in the foreseeable future. Hopefully there will be a breakthrough on the vaccine front. We'll all be able to get a shot or drink a tiny, tasty cup of liquid like the old polio vaccine and we can get back to what passes for normal. Please, stay safe, wash your hands, wear a mask when you're out in public in enclosed spaces and maintain your distance until that day when a vaccine is available. You're all too important to us and each other to take unnecessary risks.

David Hartgrove

## It Takes A Village

Toward the end of April, one day around dinner time, my neighbor, Ed, called me, "Since you're Audubon, a baby bird is on my lawn. It fell out of a nest. What do I do?" [That "Audubon Plants for Birds" sign in my front yard is very helpful, apparently]. I asked Ed if he could put the baby bird back in its nest. Many people are still unaware that this is what we should do when we find a hatchling, a baby bird with no or few feathers-- out of its nest. If we find a fledgling---a feathered juvenile, place it in a bush where it's less likely to be taken by a predator. The parents will hear it calling and feed it. Ed said he had no idea where the nest was or even what kind of bird it was, so I said I'd go take a look.

I'm quite fond of Fish Crows (*Corvus ossifragus*). They are intelligent, social and resilient. And I know that they nest in the tall palms in my neighborhood, including in Ed's yard and mine. As soon as I saw the baby bird, it was obvious that it was a newly-hatched Fish Crow that had fallen from a tall palm directly above. I picked it up and checked for any external injuries. It was fine and in fact, quite strong. I asked Ed and his daughter, Laurie, if they had an eye-dropper ("yes") and could they take the bird inside and keep it warm ("yes" again). I gave them a can of cat food for them to water down and feed the baby (Fish Crows are omnivorous and almost all bird babies need protein) and began making calls. After consulting with Halifax River Audubon's, Joan Tague, and raptor rehabber, Gina Holt of [Wild About Birds, Inc.](#) I knew that if the baby made it through the night, I'd need to take it to the Mary Keller [Seabird Rehabilitation Sanctuary](#) at the Marine Science Center.

The baby lived through the night, thanks to Laurie's great care, so the next day, I took it to the Sanctuary. At the Marine Science Center, they told me that if the bird did well, it was quite possible that FPL would use one of its bucket trucks to put the baby back in the nest. Who knew?

Later that day, I talked to David Hartgrove, President and Conservation Chair of Halifax River Audubon, and retired FPL lineman, and told him what had happened. He immediately called the Marine Science Center and said that when the time came, he'd coordinate with FPL. About five days later, it was time.

I'd scouted the location of the nest. David picked the baby crow up from rehab and brought it to my house, across from Ed's. Shortly after, FPL's bucket truck showed up with two great bird-helpers, Yuriy Sawchin, who had lots of experience putting birds back in nests, and Marcos Romero who was doing it for the first time. We verified the location of the nest and David handed the baby crow to Marcos and up they went! Marcos returned the baby bird to the nest and we called it a day.

This rescue story is brought to you by Ed and Laurie, Halifax River Audubon, FPL and the Mary Keller Seabird Rehabilitation Sanctuary at the Marine Science Center and me. It takes us all to make a difference.

*Melissa Lammers*

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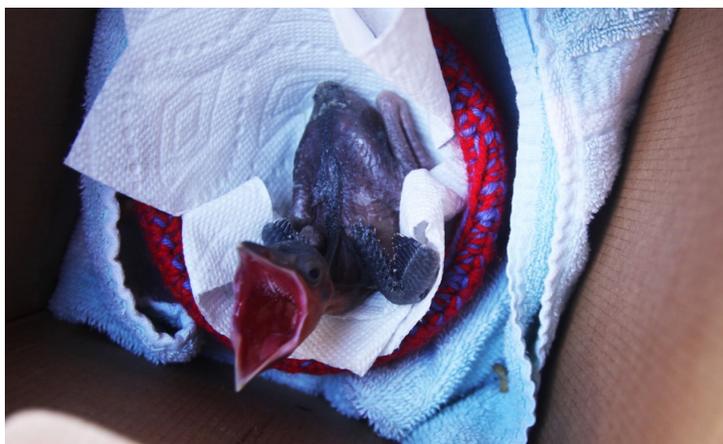
## From the Quotable Birder

"If men had wings and bore black feathers, few of them would be clever enough to be crows."

Rev. Henry Ward Beecher



Caring individuals, Ed and Laurie Ferguson.



A young Fish Crow, just a few feathers but a very big mouth.



Marcos prepares to take the box with the bird from David.

*Photos by Luis Villalon*

More photos below.

The Black Lives Matter movement was founded on July 13th, 2013 in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the killing of Trayvon Martin in nearby Sanford. Since then there have been multiple incidents that have sparked continuing protests. One involved a black man birding in Central Park. Much has been written about the protests and the reasons for them. None more eloquent than the piece below.

Editor

## On Birding and Race and Life- a personal story

As the first "Black Birder's Week" draws to a close amid nationwide protests against racism, I am reminded of something that happened to me a few years ago. I am seeing it from a different perspective.

One hot Miami day, I was pulling into my parking space at home, car windows rolled up, radio playing, when I heard birds screaming and screeching from outside my sealed capsule. The sounds were so frantic and urgent that I backed up a little and looked up through the moonroof of my car at the tree above to see if I could find the source of the commotion. A hawk was tearing into the breast of a grackle, holding it in his talons, preventing any struggle, while other grackles tried fruitlessly to save their comrade. There were people on the sidewalk walking past that tree, but none of them looked up. They seemed not to hear the screaming, even though they were not behind safety glass and steel. The grackles and their collective pain were invisible to them, their language beyond the range of the peoples' ability to hear. I marveled that they could be so unaware of the mayhem just above their heads.

Shortly thereafter, on June 17th, 2015, a young man named Dylann Roof was welcomed at a Bible study session in Charleston, South Carolina, at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, called "Mother Emanuel" by many. When the faithful began praying, Dylann Roof stood up and opened fire, killing nine congregants because of the color of their skin. He was as much a predator as the hawk above my head a month or so before, but while the hawk must kill to eat in accordance with the laws of God and nature, Dylann Roof's actions were unnatural, unholy and evil.

Like many Americans, I was horrified and filled with sorrow. It was a sorrow I felt I could not contain and it grew to rage because this wasn't new. It was another vile incident of white on black unprovoked violence, and again, on Holy ground. I didn't know what to do. The feelings swirled in my head and heart. I called an African American classmate, who also lived in South Florida. He agreed to meet me for lunch. We talked about what is now called the Charleston Church Massacre and about race relations during our lifetime, about school integration, about intersections in our lives. I felt a little better for the talking but nine people were still dead because of racial hatred. Our conversation didn't change that. My letting one black man know that I gave a damn didn't change that.

Now, as the nation rises up in the vortex of the death of George Floyd, an unarmed black man, at the hands of the Minneapolis Police, I am reminded of the hawk and the grackle. I am reminded of lunch with my friend after the Church Massacre. My ears were tuned to the language of suffering of the grackles and they were also tuned to the suffering of black people in America, but my response was lacking. It was right to leave the hawk to devour the black bird. It is wrong to allow white hatred to devour the black man. However well-meaning, when I asked my friend to lunch, what was I seeking? Was I looking for comfort?

*continued below*



Marcos swings the bucket toward the nest tree.

*Photo by Luis Villalon*



Back in its nest, thanks to the efforts of many.

*Photo by Marcos Romero*

For some answer that he might have? He did not need to hear from me that I was horrified. That I was sorrowful. That I was angry. He should have expected those things from me and from every other decent human being in America. What he needed from me was for me to speak out to other white people to ensure their decency was awakened, their righteous anger activated, to help propel us to the kind of sustained effort it will take to stamp out racist hate in our society and racist policies from our institutions.

All over America, people have been marching for eleven days now. This is the most sustained and diverse protest of my lifetime. It seems the peoples' ears finally hear the screaming. The flock circles against the hawk. All of us, but most especially white people, myself most definitely included, must ensure the sustained momentum to achieve the precious goal we clearly have before us as never before, to deliver on the promise of America as laid out in The Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal..." The World is watching us.

*Melissa Lammers*

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### A Friday Well Spent



American Oystercatcher Chick *Photo by Jean Olbert, FWC*

One Friday recently I was fortunate to be invited to help band two American Oystercatcher chicks at a site just south of the Port Orange Bridge. Based on overall size and bill length we think this is a female. Look closely and you'll see her new red bands with the white letters, "W37." Her brother wears "W38." The bands will help track the birds's movements in the future.

*Continued in the next column*

American Oystercatchers are listed as "Threatened" in Florida. Nesting on bare rock or shell substrate, their nests frequently fall prey to avian or mammalian predators. Their nests can also be destroyed by people walking into the nesting area and not seeing the well camouflaged eggs until it's too late. These birds join another adult bird seen near the bridge. A female that sports a blue band with white letters, "DP." She was banded at Cape Romaine NWR, off the coast of South Carolina in 2014. That knowledge helps biologists monitor this species as they look at an uncertain future.

*David Hartgrove*

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### A Short and Fascinating Film On Kingfishers

Local film maker, George Sibley, (that's George's film and voice you see when starting the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse Tour) recently sent a link to a [British made film](#) on Common Kingfishers. They're native to Europe and points east and south. Our Belted Kingfishers here also nest underground. Enjoy!

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### THE PELICAN

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