

# The Pelican

For wildlife & people since 1923

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## Comments & Conservation Notes

Today, November 1st, is the last day of early voting. Tuesday, November 3rd is Election Day. I imagine most, if not all of you, have already voted. If not, please be sure to vote YES on both of the last two ballot initiatives, ECHO and Volusia Forever.

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Under the guise of reducing “burdensome” regulations the Environmental Protection Agency has a plan to wreck the Clean Water Act by shifting regulatory authority over Section 404 to the state. Section 404 provides strong guidelines for the permitting of construction in or near wetlands and bodies of water. Developers have long cried crocodile tears over the fact that they can’t dredge and fill wetlands the way their daddies did when they were wrecking Florida’s environment to line their corporate pockets. The final public hearing on the issue took place via Zoom on October 27th. The decision will be announced later. By a show of hands, any guesses as to which way the decision will go?

Sierra Club has a list of very well thought out objections.

Florida’s water resources generate billions for our economy and deserve the highest level of scrutiny and protection -- something that FDEP is not well-positioned to provide.

Florida’s wetlands are essential to our resilience and drinking water supply, and are unique ecosystems that draw tourists and new residents to our beautiful state.

State 404 permitting assumption would add more regulatory burden to FDEP - an agency that cannot meet its existing regulatory demands. *Which of course is the idea. DH.*

FDEP is already too underfunded to properly carry out its own programs and there is no commitment that additional annual federal funding will be available to support the state’s assumption of a new permitting authority.

This will fast-track development permits for powerful special interests that want to exploit Florida’s wetlands and other water resources for profit.

FDEP will not have the checks and balances needed when they review 404 permit applications from other state agencies and water management districts. FDEP will essentially be like a fox guarding the hen house.

As sea levels rise and there’s increased pressure to expand development we need a large and power rooster with a Louisville Slugger guarding our state’s henhouse where our water is concerned.

*David Hartgrove*

## Calendar & Events

**Monday, November 16th, Program Meeting-** Join us for an inspiring presentation by Jim McGinity, a licensed bird bander from Dunedin. Jim’s presentation will be full of photos and an education in what bird banding is all about. Click on the link below to learn how you can register and be assured of joining us for the [meeting](#). We begin gathering at 6:30 and the program starts at 7:00 pm sharp.

### Field Trips

**Thursday, November 5th, North Peninsula State Park-** Join Joan Tague for this trip to walk the trails along the river and into the dunes. Here’s a [link](#) for more information. Meet at the parking lot. 40 Highbridge Road Ormond by the Sea, FL 32176. Questions, call Joan, 386-871-6049.

**Thursday, November 19th, T M Goodwin Marsh-** Join David Hartgrove for this long trip to this excellent birding hot spot. We’ll meet at 7:00 am in the Target parking lot in Port Orange behind Panera Bread. Click on this [link](#) for more information. After our birding those wishing to can join David for lunch at [Marsh Landing Restaurant](#), in Fellsmere. Questions, call David, 386-235-1249.

### Citizen Science Opportunity

#### Save Our Springs and Rivers Academy

Want to become a Blue Spring advocate and help us spread the word about solutions to water pollution? Volusia County Environmental Management’s “Green Volusia” is offering a free 6 part adult education course via Zoom meetings that will have you speaking like an expert on the issues as an “Ambassador.” Space is limited and you must register ahead of time. The meetings will be from 5:30 to 7:30 pm on the following dates: November 4, 5, 11, 12, 18, and 19, 2020. Here’s a [link](#) to the registration form.

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### From the Quotable Birder

“Crows are, as you must know, our most intelligent birds... Crows know the value of organization, and are as well drilled as soldiers- very much better than some soldiers, in fact, for crows are always on duty, always at war, and always dependent on each other for life and safety.”

*Ernest Thompson Seton, “Wild Animals I Have Known”*

## Dirt Digger? and other opportunities at HRA

Yes, another plea for volunteers.... (Dirt Digger explained below)

Like any volunteer dependent organization, Halifax River Audubon depends on the dedication of selfless people that set the meeting agendas and lead the field trips. Every year a beginner bird class is offered. For two years we have shared our love of all things bird at The Great Backyard Bird Count at the Ormond Beach Environmental Discovery Center. We sponsor the Christmas Bird Count.

These events are the most visible services that we provide to the community. And to be perfectly honest, these are activities common all to bird clubs, Audubon and otherwise, across the country. Do we do other things? Sure - we support and distribute Audubon Adventure packets to Volusia County Schools. We conduct bird counts for North Peninsula State Park and the Shorebird Alliance. And we manage all of the administrative details that come with the management of a non-profit. Are we doing all that we can? Of course not. More accomplishments require more dedicated individuals to cover the work.

I've frightened you, haven't I? I have been in this situation. "Don't look at me - I am doing enough already." We all are. So what are we asking for? We are looking for folks that can spare a few hours a month to do any number of tasks. We are looking for folks who just want to do things that they enjoy. Like what?

Do you enjoy social media? Keep our Facebook page current, interesting and relevant.

Do you take photographs or short videos? We would love to use these in our social media and website.

Do you love spending time with people? You could lead a field trip! (Yes you can.)

Do you have basic computer skills? You can keep the membership rosters current.

Do you have writing skills? You can write short pieces about club activities, field trips and more. Help us to document our history.

Speaking of history, would you like to help us archive documents and write our history for 2023? HRA will be 100 years old. Help us plan a great centennial. We are scanning documents and creating an on-line library of these fascinating artifacts. Let's plan a celebration.

Plants for Birds - do you love the Zen of Gardening? We need speakers, native plant enthusiasts and dirt diggers. Could we have a beautiful sample garden in one of our communities? It's not out of the question. What a swell project.

Do you love to be in the field? We are often asked to provide talent for bird census work. Help us help our partners in parks and on public lands.

Can you help us communicate with public stakeholders and officials in the name of conservation? From writing letters to attending public meetings and hearings this work is so important.

Do you want to do something that I haven't mentioned? We love new ideas.

There are no little volunteers. When you step up to help us, you are giving the very precious gift of your time. I have volunteered for many different organizations over the years

*Continued on the following page*

*Adam Hull is a Ranger at Hontoon Island State Park. He sent along this update on his first Volusia County Big Year.*

## Volusia Big Year

How do you fit over 250 species of birds in your binoculars? Well, you see them one bird at a time. When January 1st came around, I was excited to say, "Oh, that's the first so-and-so bird of the year." Carolina Wren got the worm, ringing in the first day of the new year with its boisterous, rolling song. That first day I documented 40 species and went about birding as usual. I had kicked around the idea of doing a Big Year for the county after hearing that Michael Brothers and Bob Wallace had their share of fun in 2019. It wasn't until January 13th, being encouraged by some birding friends while chasing (and missing) the Black-chinned Hummingbird in DeLeon Springs, that I decided I would commit 2020 to seeing as many birds as possible in Volusia County. Thankfully I was already birding obsessively and had racked up enough birds to consider doing a big year. By this point, I had added five birds to my all-time Volusia list, three of them being life birds!

The year progressed and so did the length of the bird list, including some real humdingers. One would be surprised to know that I didn't see a Green Heron until February 18th, two weeks after seeing Snail Kite. I tried six times for Lark Sparrow before seeing the two in Ponce Inlet. On one of these attempts, I found a male Western Tanager. Of course, there was the Shearwater invasion of Summer, with Cory's and Great Shearwaters ornamenting the coast in June and July. Also in June, I had the rare chance of photographing an adult Pomarine Jaeger on the sandbar at Disappearing Island. The biggest surprise of the year was on October 13th when I found the most mind-boggling bird in all of my birding adventures, a Sage Thrasher in DeLand! A bird normally seen in Colorado, Utah and Arizona.

As of today's date, October 24th, the list stands at 260 species. I'm hoping to tick off at least twenty more birds before the end of the year—roughly 10 birds per month. It's going to be very difficult at this point, but not impossible. For the past two winters, a Short-eared Owl has shown up at Shiloh Marsh Road. If by December 31st I haven't gotten it, I'll be down in the marsh, celebrating a year with the birds.

*Adam Hull*



Pomarine Jaeger on Disappearing Island, June 29th. This is a bird more likely to be seen 40 miles offshore.

*Photo by Adam Hull*

focusing on nature. I have worked hard but I have also been rewarded. I have expanded my knowledge, sharpened my skills, and gained new ones. Most of all, I made some great friends (ok, and a spouse) and had a lot of fun. Come on and sign up. Questions? Ideas? Let us hear from you

Joan Tague - HRA Membership [members@halifaxas.org](mailto:members@halifaxas.org)

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*Time for another in our continuing series, "Everyday Birding"*

*by Ray Scory*

## Nothing But A Walk

I walked to my verdant creek and came upon a flower nestled on its stem. There all alone, displayed in its continuing beauty. It remained absolutely still. Not moving. And I wonder why so still when planet Earth spins on its axis at a 1000 miles per hour and the Earth revolves around the Sun at an average speed of 67,000 miles per hour. Quite extraordinary speeds and the flower is so still. Is it the everlasting beauty of the flower that is so mesmerizing or is the wonder of the relationship so complicating to truly understand the mystery that is so fascinating. One describing the other. Then a Carolina Wren chatters high in a nearby tree and it is easier to explain.

My walk becomes more fun. I pass house after house and say hello to a few walkers along the way. My eyes are sharper. My gait is much more sure. I am steady. I see things more clearly and I look for the hawk in the tree or stop to listen to the ascending zee, zee. zee song of a Prairie Warbler. I feel better. My mind is clear, open to the varieties ahead.

Occasionally, I drive by the creek over the imperceptible bridge and glance to see what is there. A fleeting hint of upright red topped in dark gray tells me a Roseate Spoonbill is visiting late this afternoon and I feel good that I make walks to the creek. One day I saw a shadow drop down into the creek. I pulled my car over, grabbed my camera, looked down at the meandering waters of the creek and spotted a Green Heron intently searching along the edges of water. Poking at what this bird knew was there. I looked down from the bridge to the top of the Green Heron, and marvel at the harmonious colors and exquisite design of shapes and lines. What a great opportunity to look down at this bird and observe it from a different perspective as it nonchalantly probes for fish and invertebrates along the waters edge.

The Verdant Creek , a quarter mile from my house , has become my treasure chest. Every morning I walk up to the sidewalk railing and look down and then up stream anticipating a new sighting. Whether it be a bird, insect, plant, fish or simply a reflection on the surface of the stream, something is always there. There is always something to see - never the same always ever changing. At times, some changes are subtle, other times explosive. But always something to experience. To stop and be there. To be still. To be quiet. To be with me and Nature's gifts, close by.

*How far away is close by?*

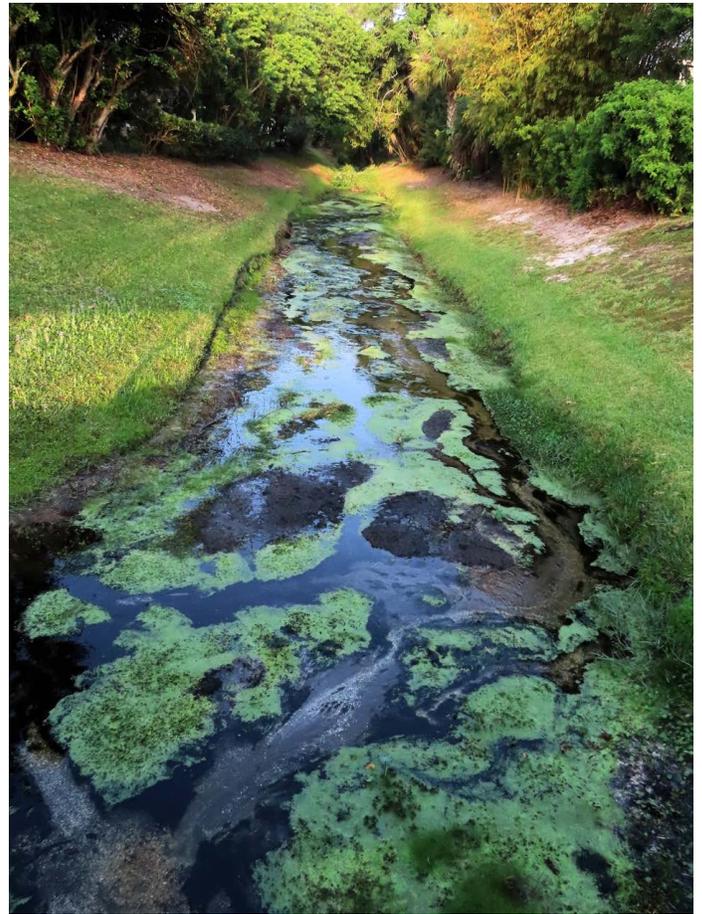
*To a place where the crows choose to fly.*

*Or a spot in the mind*

*without limits with the birds in the sky.*

*Or along side a creek, close by.*

*Ray Scory*



*My meandering verdant creek, painted in early morning sun light, displays an artistic composition of interlocking lines of plant life and water, a vast number of images that abound from this simple creek without the influence of wildlife present.*



*A Great Blue Heron is in juxtaposition with a stylish reflection of early morning overcast light on slow moving water.*

*Photos by Ray Scory*

## Audubon Adventures

[Audubon Adventures](#), is a wonderful program that helps engage kids in the natural world around them. Ranked as one of the most popular environmental education curricula in the country, our chapter has been donating to provide this valuable program to Volusia County school kids since its inception. Donations from members fund this program. Send your donation to Halifax River Audubon, P.O. Box 166, Daytona Beach FL 32115-0166. Please specify on your check that your donation is for Audubon Adventures. And thank you!

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## Audubon Coverage in the Hometown News

[The Hometown News](#) publishes weekly in print and is available digitally all the time. We were pleasantly surprised when they ran an [extensive article](#) on Audubon Florida's Assembly and then included information on local birding and all three local chapters. Click the link above and see if you recognize the birders pictured.

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## Help The Marine Science Center

The Mary Keller Seabird Rehabilitation Sanctuary, Raptor Education and Conservation Exhibit is a mouthful. The planned new building will be an important enhancement of the existing facility. Our chapter will make a donation and we and the folks at MSC hope you'll be inclined to donate too. They want to build a new flight cage to replace the one damaged by Hurricane Matthew. They also want to improve the exhibits of the raptors so that the birds and visitors have a better experience. Please consider a making a donation to this worthwhile project. Here's a link to the [donation page](#).

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Cedar Waxwings will be in our neighborhoods again soon.

*Photo by Chuck Tague*

## Welcome to our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Jane Allison, Gwen Bills, Mary Blackledge, T. Bohn, Dee Borbely, Douglas Brown, James Carter, Carol Chillemi, Brenda Cranmer, Christine Day, Caroline Efstathion, Regina Farley, Mike Frontczak, Richard Goudey, Betty Hendricks, John Hoag, E. T. Hoisington, Karen Jorgensen, Hilary Kaufmann, Carolyn Keene, Marti King, Marjory Kline, J. Kotas, Ed Kocis, Kathleen Mylotte, Violet Nolte, Eileen Pazos, Richard Peterkin, Sally Peterson, Donna Racino, Sharon Rappaport, C. Richardson, Rebecca Sapsford, Barbara Strickland, William Taylor, Joan Vincent, Kathryn Wells, Susan Williams, Dale Yeager, William Young, Joan Youngblood, Bernard Yvon, Mary Ziebell, Rosemarie Zukas. We hope to see you at one of our virtual Zoom meetings or on a field trip.

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## Big Snapping Turtle Story Has Happy Ending

Corresponding Secretary, Steve Underwood, sent along this link to a [You Tube video](#) with a happy ending. You can skip the opening commercial after a few seconds. The sounds of the kids in the background are priceless. Enjoy!

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## THE PELICAN

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PO Box 166  
Daytona Beach FL 32115-0166

Email: [editor@halifaxriveras.org](mailto:editor@halifaxriveras.org)

Web: <http://www.halifaxriveras.org>

### Halifax River Audubon

[forbirds@halifaxriveras.org](mailto:forbirds@halifaxriveras.org)

Meets monthly September through May

President: David Hartgrove

Vice President: Vacant

Past President: Melissa Lammers

Treasurer: Ellen Tate

Recording Sec.: Vacant

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: Joan Tague, David Hartgrove

Newsletter Editor: David Hartgrove

Welcome: Vacant

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.