

# The Pelican

For wildlife & people since 1923

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## Comments & Conservation Notes

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was signed into law on January 1, 1970 by President Nixon. NEPA's basic policy is to assure that all branches of government give proper consideration to the environment **prior** to undertaking any major federal action that significantly affects the environment. I-95, being a federal highway, a big construction project on it is subject to regulation under NEPA. Except when the folks pushing a new interchange at Pioneer Trail have the ear of the governor and can wrangle anything they want from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. That august body made a one sided ruling that the interchange wasn't subject to federal guidelines under NEPA. The reasons for this are clear to anyone who's been paying attention. The interchange would directly and severely impact the Spruce Creek watershed. Spruce Creek is a designated Outstanding Florida Waterway and as such is afforded higher levels of protection. If a comprehensive environmental impact study was done the numbers would be decidedly against building the interchange due to the harm that is sure to occur. The folks pushing the project have concluded that if there's no study done then those pesky environmentalists won't have the data to back up their objections. [Save Spruce Creek](#), a group fighting the uphill battle to stop this project, has filed a petition for an administrative hearing before a federal magistrate to force compliance with the regulations. Stay tuned.

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A big "atta boy" to the Governor and the Cabinet !! We have no qualms about attacking the policies of this governor and his cabinet for the terrible decisions they so often make. But when they do something right we need to be there to cheer them on. On August 25th they announced a decision to spend some of Florida Forever funds, 56 million dollars to be exact, on nearly 20,000 acres of prime habitat, much of it in the Lake Wales Ridge that is crucial to completing the Florida Wildlife Corridor. This includes over 2,500 acres in Highlands County and further protects Archbold Biological Station, Fisheating Creek and Buck Island Ranch. At least one of the field trips with Audubon Assembly will be going to Buck Island Ranch property. Over 4,200 acres in Okeechobee County in conservation easements will add to lands adjacent to Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park, and parts of a key region of the Northern Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area. It will benefit native, imperiled Florida wildlife such as the Grasshopper Sparrow, Sandhill Crane, Mottled Duck, Wood Stork and Crested Caracara. Again, a round of applause to the governor for a job well done.

David Hartgrove

## Calendar & Events

*It's September and that means we're back to our regular schedule of monthly meetings and field trips. For a variety of reasons the board chose to continue with online meetings this season. Just like last year you'll need to send an email to [members@halifaxriveras.org](mailto:members@halifaxriveras.org) to register for the meeting. You'll receive an email back with a link to the meeting.*

**Monday, September 19th, Program meeting, via Zoom-** Join us for our first of the season meeting and once again we call on our chapter favorite, Michael Brothers, to kick off the season's program meetings. Michael's topic will be Pelagic Birds of Volusia County. Flocking together for the meeting begins at 6:30 pm and Michael's program will begin promptly at 7:00. A brief business meeting will follow. Please plan to join us.

### Field Trips

*Mindful of September's often hot, muggy conditions, we have just one field trip this month.*

**Wednesday, September 28th- [Buschman Park](#)-** Join Peggy Yokubonus for this pleasant stroll around this great spot in Port Orange, 4575 Spruce Creek Road. Meet the group at the park at 8:00 am. We'll be looking for Fall migrants and we'll be finished by 10:30. So no picnic with this one. Questions, call Peggy, 386-316-4085.

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## The International Coastal Cleanup

Volusia County residents can participate in the Ocean Conservancy's 36th annual International Coastal Cleanup anywhere along the beach, Halifax River or Indian River Lagoon on Sept. 18. Participants are encouraged to use the Ocean Conservancy's Clean Swell App in place of a paper data card to track their trash collection. Click on this [link](#) for all of the information.

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## Audubon Assembly

Audubon Assembly is our chance to meet and greet chapter members from around the state. [Registration](#) is open now and we hope you'll consider going. This year we'll be in Fort Myers, with learning sessions, a keynote presentation, awards, and field trips to some of the birdiest hotspots in the region. Assembly is a great opportunity to network with Audubon members, staff, and volunteers across the state.

Be there or be square.



*Our most senior chapter member, Carol Branch, passed away recently. Anyone who knew Carol knows she would have picked a whimsical photo like this to run with this article. Editor.*

### Carol Branch

Carol Branch passed from this life on July 14th. She was 93.

Carol, who spent many winters in Daytona Beach along with her life partner, Joan Treves, had a long connection to Halifax River Audubon. Her grandfather had a riverfront home here that the family used in the winter. His daughter, Carol's mother, Margaret Gamble Branch, was active in the early years of our Audubon chapter. (Indeed, Margaret regularly submitted a birding report to the Daytona Beach News-Journal.)

Carol and Joan met during college while working at a YWCA camp, and both had teaching careers in the Michigan public school system. They built a cabin on a small lake in upstate Michigan where they enjoyed fishing from their rowboat and exploring the surrounding habitats. Carol also was an avid golfer and an enthusiastic Detroit Tigers fan.

After retirement, they moved to the by-then-substantially-expanded cabin, but always looked forward to coming back to Daytona Beach for the winter season where they lived in a condo overlooking the Halifax River.

Carol and Joan were regulars at Halifax River Audubon's monthly meetings and programs and Carol clearly enjoyed participating in the field trips. On field trips Carol was the first to propose a sing along while riding to and from our destinations.

A select group of chapter members will have a special additional memory of Carol: the friendly (albeit cutthroat) sessions of Mexican Train dominoes that she would host. Long one of our strongest supporters of Audubon Adventures, her gentle manner and generous spirit will surely be missed.

*Ken Hunter*



# Native Plant Expo



October 8, 2022 from 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM  
 Piggotte Community Center 504 Big Tree Rd South Daytona  
 The expo will include several native nurseries and workshops.

**Nurseries will include:**

- "The Lovely Weeds" - Gia Leigh
- Mockingbird Natives - Jonathan Edwards
- Natural Beauty Florida Landscapes. - Katie Tripp
- Pawpaw Chapter - Petal Pushers

**Workshops will include:**

- Landscaping with Natives, by Katie Tripp owner of Natural Beauty Florida Landscapes,
- Intro to the Botany of Plants by Dr. Cynthia Bennington of Stetson University
- Plants for Birds by Melissa Lammers of the West Volusia Audubon Society
- Spread the Word about Native Plants - by Christie Miller
- Tours of the Park of Honor - native demonstration garden.

Additional booths of interest - Wild Florida Photography by Paul Rebmann, SouthEast Volusia Audubon, Be Floridan Now, South Daytona Parks and Rec

For more info email: [pawpaw@fnps.org](mailto:pawpaw@fnps.org)



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Bald Eagles at Lake Apopka

*Photo by David Hartgrove*

Bald Eagle nesting season begins soon. Keep an eye out.

by Ray Scory

## From My Window Anytime

*A bird feeder, a bird, a window and me.*

I am reminded of an Ansel Adams story; America's premier landscape photographer, when he was in the quieter time of his life. He had set a movie camera on a tripod in front of his window overlooking his backyard. More particularity, focused on an eight foot high deciduous tree. He used this setup making one frame each day at the same time throughout the changing seasons of the year.

I don't know if he ever finished his project, but I can imagine him draped behind his camera covered within his black focusing cloth, shutting out the world. Bringing about his own. His concentration, his camera, his subject - his creation.

Now here is this same man, as a younger photographer, walking with a donkey carrying his photo equipment into the far reaches of Yosemite Valley, the high mountains of the Sierra Madre and Yellowstone. Landscapes never photographed with such intensity and skill before. In fact images of grandeur never seen by America before. Images that introduced people of all persuasions to the stunning beauty existing in this newly discovered western land.

An 8x10 view camera set on a heavy tripod was the camera of his day, not the smart phone of today. As all serious photographers of that day, he recorded first the image on a large sheet of B&W film to be carried back to the darkroom where he processed and enhanced the film to be made into stunning photographs. It was a grueling, time consuming effort of immeasurable persistence and a wonderful accomplishment for Ansel because he brought forth a photograph of such spirited influence, thus fulfilling a vision of unique perception. Please search "[Ansel Adams](#)" to view his remarkable photographs and story.

Now if Ansel can put a camera in front of his window, why can't we put a camera in front of our window? Or a chair to sit in and look out the window at the myriad changes taking place everyday right in front of us. Take a few minutes a day as Ansel did to experience the ever changing scenery graced in movement, action, shadows, shapes, colors and details. Doesn't that sound like something we do every time we go on a field trip to observe and identify birds? When we look through our binoculars at a bird in the distance to watch and ID.

I like looking at birds. Their color patterns. How they do things. How they behave. How they are designed. I'm fascinated by all living things, how they fit together, how they work. And I like photographing all of it. Discovering lines, shapes, volumes, colors that harmonize with each other. Paying attention to details within the composition. Having fun seeing, observing.

Photography and birdwatching are so akin to each other. Using similar tools to gather information - to bring a sense of personal discovery, excitement.

Our own private world to enjoy - to treasure.

The wonder of it all.

Ray Scory



Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*)

I was thrilled when I focused on this Blue Jay and heard the snap of my camera's shutter. Coastal sky-blue serves as a dramatic background to exquisitely laced, black horizontal lines sketched accurately across vertical feathers. A cape of delicate, contrasting feathers drapes elegantly on the its shoulders and a head mask is expertly designed by an artist of infinite experience. Truly a masterpiece of exceptional merit.



Antillean Skimmer (*Orthemis macrostigma*)

The tip of a small palmetto frond supports this 2 inch dragonfly. The complexity of the wing pattern first caught my eye after it alighted upon the frond. While the magenta body color leading to its lavender colored head certainly is an impressive visual. The Antillean Skimmer is most frequently seen in Florida from August to mid-September. This particular dragonfly was photographed on September 3, 2013.

Text and photos by Ray Scory

Time now for another plant profile from our resident expert, Leslie Nixon.

## Fall For Wildflowers

Wildflowers can brighten your day with their cheerful beauty, but they can also brighten a bird's day by providing a nutritious snack in the form of an insect or seed. Florida wildflowers attract a variety of insects that come to sip nectar, collect pollen, or munch on tasty leaves. Songbirds instinctively know to check out native flowers for these high-protein meals. Once the flowers have faded, seeds form and hang on, waiting patiently to spread their beauty – or be eaten by another lucky bird.



Spotted Beebalm (*Monarda punctata*), photo by Leslie Nixon

Two phenomenal Florida wildflowers that are blooming right now (late summer into fall) are spotted bee balm and goldenrod. Before you balk at goldenrod, let it be known that it does not trigger hay fever – it is the similarly-looking ragweed that is responsible for your misery. Both bee balm and goldenrod produce large, striking displays of long-lasting flowers. They are easy-to-grow and prefer dry to slightly moist, sandy soil, and full sun. As perennials they retain their green basal leaves during winter and spring, bursting forth again with blooms each August. Once the flowers fade, let them remain on the plant until early spring – or until you can't stand looking at them anymore, whichever is first. This is so the plant can reseed in your yard, bugs can over-winter in the dead flower stalks and, most importantly, hungry birds can eat the seeds.

When in bloom, both bee balm and goldenrod grow tall, reaching 4' and 4-6' respectively, so plant them where their height can be appreciated. Chapman's goldenrod (*Solidago odora* var. *chapmanii*) is a smallish (4' tall) and well-behaved goldenrod recommended for home landscapes. All wildflowers are best planted in groups of three or more to provide sufficient resources for both the insects and songbirds.



Goldenrod (*Solidago odora*), photo by Shirley Denton

Florida does not have the dramatic autumn colors of the more northern states, but it does have some spectacular fall wildflowers that delight people, pollinators and passerines.

Leslie Nixon

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## Audubon Adventures

The Audubon Adventures program is aimed at third, fourth and fifth grade classrooms. Each sponsored class receives four sets of a newsletter with materials for 32 students in each set. They are filled with information and learning activities. There is also a teacher's manual with support ideas, activities, and evaluations. They are specifically designed to mesh with the science curriculum offered by our local schools and help the students prepare for their end of class exams.

Please send your donation to Halifax River Audubon, P.O. Box 166, Daytona Beach FL 32115-0166. Any donation is welcome; \$45 will supply a classroom. Please specify on your check that your donation is for Audubon Adventures. And thank you for thinking of our future leaders.

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## From The Quotable Birder

"Some social birds apparently call to each other for aid; as they flit from tree to tree the flock is kept together by chirp answering chirp."

Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*

*Harry Robinson has been up to his usual habit of counting birds at Tom Renick Park. Here's report for July.*

With Fall migration just beginning, July was its typically slow self. A total of 99 species seen in July is a high count (the previous high count was that of 97 in 2018 and 2021). There were 31 surveys over 181 hours of field work. So far this year 215 species seen with 306 ever. Nearly forgot there was an addition this month. The best days were the 19th with 46 species and the 25th with 497 birds.

We started with some shearwaters there were single Cory's Shearwaters on the 1st, 6th and 9th. There was a Great Shearwater on the 1st with two on the 2nd, two on the 6th and one on the 9th. There was also an Audubon's Shearwater on the 6th.

There were single Reddish Egrets on the 6th, 11th and 17th. There was a Black-crowned Night-Heron on the 3rd. Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were seen all month with four on the 3rd. Glossy Ibis were seen on eight dates with 15 on the 12th and 27 on the 18th. There were three Roseate Spoonbills on the 1st with four on the 4th, five on the 7th and one on the 20th. Wood Storks seen all month with six on the 9th, seven on the 19th and seven on the 29th.

The only ducks were three Blue-winged Teal on the 7th and a Surf Scoter on the 4th. Swallow-tailed Kites were seen to the 25th up to eight a day with 11 on the 19th. Black-bellied Plovers were seen on seven dates from the 3rd with three on the 29th. There were also three Semipalmated Plovers on the 29th. There were two American Oystercatchers on the 3rd. Black-necked Stilts were seen on seven dates with eight on the 14th and 25 on the 25th. There were two Greater Yellowlegs on the 19th with a Lesser yellowlegs on the 22nd. There was a Solitary Sandpiper on the 25th. There was a Spotted Sandpiper on the 15th with three on the 23rd and one on the 24th. Next comes the addition to the list an Upland Sandpiper flew to the south on the 22nd. There was a Marbled Godwit on the 11th. There were three Ruddy Turnstones on the 20th with two on the 30th. Sanderlings were seen from the 21st with 43 on the 29th. Semipalmated Sandpipers were seen from the 23rd with 57 on the 29th. Least Sandpipers were seen from the 18th with 14 on the 20th. There was a Pectoral Sandpiper on the 10th with three on the 28th. There were four Stilt Sandpipers on the 11th with one on the 17th and four on the 19th. Short-billed Dowitchers were seen on nine dates with 11 on the 23rd.

There was a Ring-billed Gull on the 11th. There was a Roseate Tern on the 27th. There were single Common Terns on the 9th and 12th, they were then seen daily from the 16th when six seen. Least Terns seen on most dates with 11 on the 9th. There were three Black Terns on the 9th they were then seen on most days from the 19th with four on the 26th.

There was an Eastern Screech-Owl on the 10th. Two female Chuck-will's-widows were present all month one by the river the other by the park. Chimney Swifts peaked at 11 on the 3rd. There were single Ruby-throated Hummingbirds on the 7th, 10th and 25th. There were also single Belted Kingfishers on the 1st, 4th, 29th and 31st. There was a Pileated Woodpecker on the 12th. There was a Great Crested Flycatcher on the 13th with two Gray Kingbirds on the 19th. A Loggerhead Shrike was present all month. There were single Purple Martins on the 7th and 11th. There were single Tree Swallows on the 4th and 18th. There were also two sightings of Northern Rough-winged Swallows with singles on the 10th and the 17th. There was a Bank Swallow on the 28th. Barn Swallows were seen from the 4th with 37 on the 28th. There were two Carolina Chickadees on the 16th this is only the second record for the park. There

was a Tufted Titmouse on the 16th with another on the 26th. There was a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher on the 13th. Brown Thrashers were seen on six dates with two on the 18th. There were single Yellow-throated Warblers on the 16th and 26th. There was a Prairie Warbler on the 17th with three on the 21st this is a new high count. There was a Common Yellowthroat on the 27th. There were two Summer Tanagers on the 8th. Brown-headed Cowbirds seen regularly with seven on the 26th. Finally, House Finches peaked at 14 on the 30th. August should be better.

*Harry Robinson*

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## Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members. Just three this month; Tracy Dawson, Lawrence Morgan and Antonia Pineiro. We hope to see you on a field trip or at one of our Zoom meetings.

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## THE PELICAN

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### Halifax River Audubon

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Meets monthly September through May

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Treasurer: Ellen Tate

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Corresponding Sec: Steve Underwood

Historian: Holly Zwart-Duryea

At-Large: Carol Roberts, Steve Underwood

### 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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