

The Pelican

For wildlife & people since 1923

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Comments & Conservation Notes

In October, 2009, a young black bear was captured. He was weighed, blood and fur samples were taken and he was fitted with a GPS tracking collar that identified him as M34. For the next several months the tracking information showed that he stayed in the area near Sebring, where he had been captured.

At the beginning of mating season in May, 2010, he began a long, circuitous route north. He crossed the Avon Park Air Force Range. In the first week of June he reached the outskirts of Celebration, the Disney housing development. There his northward progress was stopped by I-4. He wandered back and forth along the highway and luckily made the decision not to try crossing 10 lanes of 70 mile per hour traffic.

By the third week of June M34 had given up and turned back south. Meandering along the western shore of Lake Kissimmee he continued south, back across the Avon Park Air Force Range. Soon he was on the north shore of Lake Okeechobee. He turned west and the collar stopped transmitting on July 8th as he was near Fisheating Creek Wildlife Management Area. The collar was designed to drop off after 8 months and M34 had made it to the center of the southern colony of Florida's black bear population where he hopefully will mate.

We know all this because a University of Kentucky graduate student, Joe Guthrie, was working in Florida at the Archbold Biological Station in 2009 when he caught and collared M34. The bear's 500+ mile journey was so well documented that Joe's published research was used to help convince the state Legislature to enact the Florida Wildlife Corridor Act to help ensure the completion of the [Florida Wildlife Corridor](#).

I learned this story from a newsletter sent out by the Archbold Biological Station, where today Joe Guthrie is the head of Archbold's Predator/Prey Program. His research builds on that done by Dr. James M. Layne. Layne had earned his Ph.D. in 1954 at Cornell (major in vertebrate zoology/mammalogy; minors in botany and entomology) and accepted a position at the University of Florida in 1955. In 1967 he became the first Director of Research at Archbold. [Archbold Biological Station](#) is one of those places that quietly works behind the scenes to facilitate all kinds of biological research, mentoring thousands of students across the decades since its founding in 1941. A grant from the grandson of the man who built the Brooklyn Bridge and the vision of [Richard Archbold](#) made this science mecca a reality.

The foresight and generosity of voters here in Volusia County in voting for Volusia Forever and of our state for voting for Amendment 1 will help secure the future of the Florida Wildlife Corridor.

David Hartgrove

Calendar & Events

Monday, December 19th, Program Meeting- Join us for an informal meeting as we share bird stories and partake of holiday spirits without the need to drive afterwards. If you have a few photos to go along with your bird story email them to me no later than Wednesday, December 14th and I'll add them to our program. Our Zoom meeting will begin flocking together at 6:30 pm and the fun starts at 7:00.

Field Trips

Saturday, December 10th, Lake Apopka- Join David Hartgrove for this make up trip. We had to cancel the first one after TS Nicole. As you know Lake Apopka offers some of the best of Florida birding. We'll meet at 7:30 am at Int'l Square - East of I-95 on Int'l Speedway Blvd behind Krystal 2550 West International Speedway Blvd. Daytona Beach FL 32114. Bring lunch. Questions, call David, 386-235-1249.

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Christmas Bird Counts

There are a number of CBC's being done in our area. A CBC is an excellent way to hone your birding skills and these compilers need help filling their teams. Here's a list in the order in which they will be done.

Thursday, 12/15, Zellwood/Mount Dora. Contact Gallus Quigley, gallusq@gmail.com

Friday, 12/16, Flagler CBC. Contact Jennifer Lewis jlewis511@icloud.com

Saturday, 12/17, West Volusia CBC. Contact David Stock, dstock@stetson.edu

Monday, 12/19, Merritt Island NWR CBC. Contact Kristina Fisher, sirkfish12@gmail.com

Friday, 12/23, Daytona Beach CBC. Contact David Hartgrove, birdman9@earthlink.net or 386-235-1249

Friday, 12/30, Ponce Inlet CBC. Contact Marsha Cox, billnmarsha@pshift.com

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From the Quotable Birder

"Did Saint Francis preach to the birds ? Whatever for ? If he really liked birds he would have done better to preach to the cats."

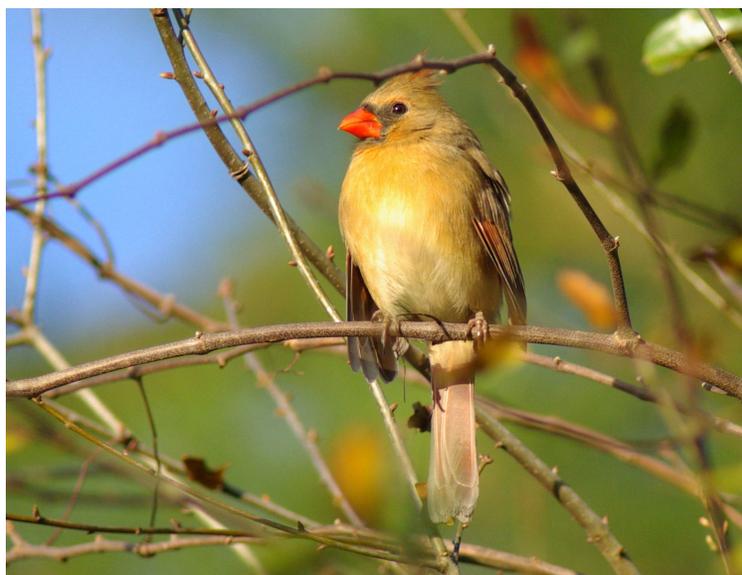
Rebecca West, *The Real Night*

by Ray Scory

Just Sitting There

Just sitting there at the entrance of Jane's outdoor garage clubhouse. Bathed in serenity, looking out at our neighborhood surroundings. Just relaxing. Letting our eyes wander, taking in the sights- shapes, details, colors; the clouds, the driveway and all things in between; waving to neighbors walking by, a friendly greeting, a smile. And the next door neighbor's tree.

"Whoa, Hey, a Northern Cardinal just flew in!" Bright Sun glistening off brilliant red feathers. What a sight, silhouetted against the ultra- green of scraggly button size leaves nestled on a garden tree limb. Within seconds a light caramel colored shape bullets in announcing the male's counterpart sporting her telltale, red seed-cracking beak. And flashing her high standing crest, she excitedly commands attention. Quite an auspicious display of avian wonder as we quietly relax in our open garage clubhouse.



Direct, brilliant sunlight ignites the golden brown coloration of this bird. Defining the power of light in all it's splendor, and showcasing the stunning beauty of the female Northern Cardinal.

And the show continued as we became aware of the goings-on in the small garden tree. A whizzing Ruby-throated Hummingbird deftly alighted on an outer branch of the garden tree and silhouetted itself in front of a blazing blue Florida coastal sky. Stayed a while giving us time to study the shapes of this unexpected presentation set much like an ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic.

Not to be outdone, two Northern Mockingbirds bombed into the willing, waiting tree to claim their presence. And what an act. Long tails flashing - waving. Both birds jumping from twig-like branch to another, maintaining balance as would a tightrope performer waving an umbrella while crossing a high wire. The energy displayed when a mockingbird first enters a familiar location is explosive. Comparable to young children bursting from their auto when first arriving at their favorite vacation place.

But let us not forget the ever present Gray Squirrel circling around the trunk of the tree searching for a snack. Finding one, sitting up, chewing upon a tasty nugget and occasionally looking up to view the show. The feeding habits of squirrel

look almost human-like, even like they enjoy the taste.

To punctuate the beginning of the last act of our half hour show, a Palm Warbler dropped down upon the sidewalk not more than five feet from my resting foot. Pumped it's tail up and down; looked up at me; flew up into the tree and delicately moved from branch to branch. Again, pumping its tail up and down. So utterly typical for this tiny bird.

As the Palm Warbler departed the small garden tree, it closed the last act to a special moment. The show was over. The stage was empty and quiet again.

Jane and I have just thoroughly enjoyed the performances of the actors in the tree.



The western subspecies of the Palm Warbler breeds west of Ontario, Canada and winters in the southeastern coastal U.S. States and the Caribbean. Look for a relatively drab counterpart to the more colorful breeding eastern Palm Warbler. The western bird has an overall grayish brown look compared to the more yellowish eastern subspecies. Also, the western bird has a white and longer supercilium than the eastern subspecies, which sports a yellowish, shorter supercilium.

Text and photos by Ray Scory

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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. 45.95 will cover the cost for one classroom. Any amount will be greatly appreciated. Send your donation to Halifax River Audubon, P.O. Box 166, Daytona Beach FL 32115-0166. Please specify on your check check that your donation is for Audubon Adventures. And thank you!

And now here's another plant profile from our resident expert, Leslie Nixon.

Marlberry, This Plant Has it All

Are you looking for an evergreen shrub that has big, juicy berries for birds? How about one frequently adorned with large clusters of fragrant flowers? Or one that withstands hurricane winds and short-term flooding? Would you like a shrub that prefers a bit of shade and doesn't demand a lot of water? Look no further than the marlberry shrub (*Ardisia escallonioides*).

Marlberry is a large shrub, growing naturally to 8-10' tall and 4-6' wide, but can be pruned to a smaller size. It boasts of all the desirable qualities listed above. The name marlberry is a contraction of marble and berry because of its marble-sized fruit. While these marble-berries are produced primarily in the summer, they can occur anytime for the pleasure of birds and small mammals. The white flower clusters that feed beneficial insects bloom sporadically throughout the year but predominate in the fall.

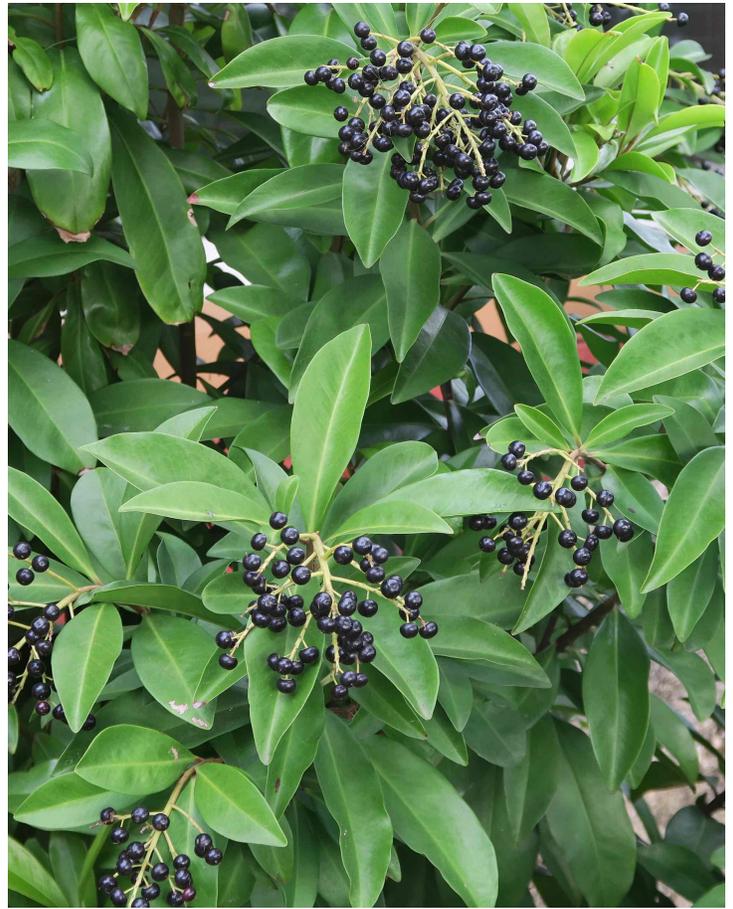


This photo, showing the plant's fragrant flowers, was taken the day after Hurricane Nicole blew through.

Marlberry performs best in part-sun (2-4 hours of Florida sun per day). Too much sun will yellow the leaves; too little sun and the berries and flowers won't reach their full potential. Another versatile native shrub, it can be grown in a hedge, as a single specimen, or by the foundation of your home. Just be sure to plant it in a prominent location so you can enjoy its good looks.

Searching for a lush, durable, shade-tolerant shrub favored by birds? You've found it in marlberry.

Text and photos by Leslie Nixon



Large, juicy marlberries, a treat for birds and small mammals.

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Mangrove Cuckoo

Photo by Danny Bales

By all accounts the "Grail Bird" of Florida. It's on the wish list of every birder who comes to the state. Seldom seen north of Miami on the east coast and Fort Myers on the west coast it's a special treat for those with patience and the ability to withstand a mosquito onslaught.

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Editor



Green Heron, photographed at the Port Orange Bridge.

Photo by Ted Johnson

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Chapter member, Suze Peace, who lives in DeLand, had an odd occurrence not long ago.

Merlin Can Be Fooled

I was on my porch the other morning. I had Merlin, the bird identification app from Cornell Lab, turned on and set to identify the birds nearby by their sounds. As I drank my coffee the phone chirped in the background: Northern Cardinal, American Crow, Carolina Wren. My cat, "Ollie", walked out to keep me company and began to meow. My phone called out, "Gray Catbird." I nearly choked on my coffee laughing.

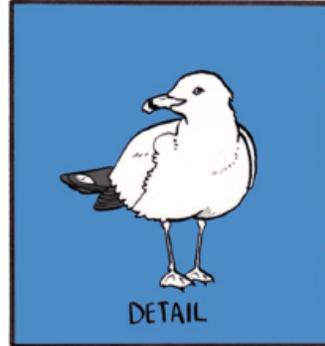
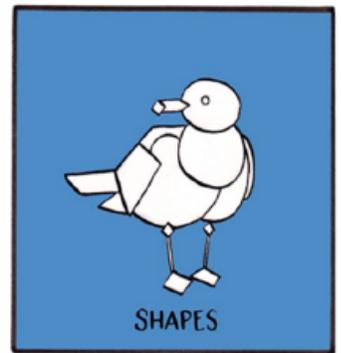
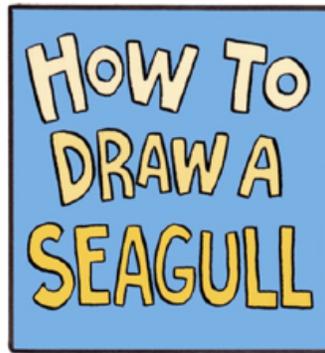
Suze Peace

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From the Quotable Birder

"Everyone likes birds. What wild creature is more accessible to our eyes and ears, as close to us and everyone in the world, as universal as a bird?"

David Attenborough



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