

The Pelican

We need to be the stewards of this world, not its destroyers

Vol. 57-No.2 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon August, 2011



The President's Message

thoughts from on high

The air temperature is mid-90's; the humidity level is hovering near 70%. You broke into a sweat walking to the mailbox at the end of your driveway. You may not be thinking about field trips to watch birds right now. But you'll be missing some excellent opportunities.

Black Terns are migrating and small numbers have stopped off in Merritt Island NWR. Two white morphs of the Great Blue Heron were reported on Peacock's Pocket Road. Red-necked Phalaropes have been photographed at Viera Wetlands. The second record of a Mississippi Kite in Volusia County, perched in a tree in Holly Hill, was caught on camera by Kitty Albee and Steve Petruniak. And all of this happened in the middle two weeks of July. Birding in Florida in the summer isn't for the faint of heart. Insect repellent is a must. Water, a hat and sunscreen are high on the list, too, as are closed shoes. No matter how hot, it's not recommended to wear open shoes or flip-flops. We never know what biting or stinging critters may be lurking when we take just a few steps into a weedy patch to attain a better view.

You'll notice changes, too, in the neighborhood birds you hear singing as you walk your dog. The Northern Parulas which sang daily for the past five months in my neighborhood haven't been heard for about two weeks. Immature Northern Cardinals are everywhere – flitting from one low branch to another and sitting on the sidewalks.

Enjoy the changing sounds and sights of nature around you. Until next month....

Paula Wehr

Calendar

The Paw Paw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society's August 16th meeting will focus on mangroves. Guest speaker, Danny Young, will give a program on mangroves and their place in Florida's environment. The Paw Paw Chapter meets at Grace Lutheran Church, in Ormond Beach. The church is located at the corner of Neptune Drive and A1A, the first traffic light north of Granada Blvd. Doors open at 6:30 pm, the meeting begins at 7:00.

They also have a field trip on Sat., August 20th. This will be a plant swap at the home of Virginia Dombach, 227 Grove Street, Ormond Beach. Following the plant swap the group will have lunch at a nearby restaurant. Contact Sonya Guidry at 386-690-1797 or sonyaguidry@yahoo.com

Lyonia Environmental Learning Center has a number of programs scheduled for August. Included topics are: The Ecological History of Volusia County, Manatees, Bees, building a nest box for birds, etc. Here's a link to their website: <http://www.lyoniapreserve.com/calendar.htm>

This early Louisiana Waterthrush was photographed by Michael Brothers at Lake Woodruff NWR in July.



Conservation Notes

Our state legislators have once again upped the ante on betting that they can be dumber than their counterparts in other states when it comes to wrecking the environment for the profit of their campaign contributors. Our state's water management districts have long been criticized for operating in a profligate manner when it came to protecting water resources. It seemed that there was no development plan brought before them that they would deny. While current residents are restricted to watering their lawns just two days per week, a ruling last year by the St Johns River Water Management District allowed the Niagara Bottling Company to withdraw 176 million gallons of water annually from the Floridan Aquifer and put it in little plastic bottles for sale nationwide. Still, the SJRWMD did a lot of good too. Locally, they were instrumental in spearheading the clean up of Rose Bay and in monitoring discharges of storm water into the Halifax River. Their purchase of conservation lands to protect freshwater recharge of the aquifer has provided us with a number of excellent birding spots, along with increased protection of our drinking water. Some in our legislature though saw this agency and the others around the state as an impediment to growth. In the latest session they mandated a thirty percent reduction in funds for the districts statewide. So 140 of our neighbors will lose their jobs and our precious water resources will have even less protection than they had before. This is yet another example of short sighted thinking that will have serious consequences in the future.

Lest we think we have the least enlightened legislature in the land, we can look northward to Kentucky. There the residents will, by Christmas time, be able to shoot Sandhill Cranes again for the first time since the early 1900's. Actually, it wasn't the legislature that set this in motion. It was the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commission with input from the legislature. This makes Kentucky the first state east of the Mississippi to allow hunting of these birds. Eight western states have a Sandhill Crane hunting season. The season in Kentucky will run from December 17th through January 15th. This just happens to coincide with the timing of the migration of critically endangered Whooping Cranes. They fly south from Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, in Wisconsin, with support from an ultra light aircraft and the route takes them across Kentucky. Not all of the Whooping Cranes fly right along side the aircraft. Some birds drift away and can be several miles from the rest of the flock. The chances are probably quite good that some bored eighteen year old with a shotgun may blast one of these magnificent birds out of the sky and reduce its already endangered population. West of Bunnell several years ago a young man shot a Whooping Crane that was standing in a field. The bird was from the introduced, non-migratory population here in Florida that at the time numbered fewer than 40 birds. When he was apprehended his excuse was that he thought it was a duck.

Hunters are some of our strongest supporters of the environment and, though I'm not a hunter myself, I strongly support responsible hunting. The taxes on hunting supplies and the revenue from duck stamps fund some of the nation's most important wildlife protection efforts. This is one time when I'd have to disagree with a decision actively courted by the hunters in Kentucky though. To quote from the press release issued on the Kentucky state website, "Cranes are typically hunted for sport and for their meat." Now I suppose an argument could be made that people have a right to eat a Sandhill Crane if they want to. No doubt it was on the menu of our ancestors. But I have to ask, what "sport" is there in hunting these birds? They're large, slow flying and therefore easy to shoot. Whose den would be the better for it if a mounted Sandhill Crane stood in the corner? The new rule is subject to approval by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in August. Hopefully, the potential threat to Whooping Cranes will cause the feds to put the brakes on this before it becomes official policy in Kentucky.

One of the fundamental building blocks of our national environmental policy is under increasing attack. The Endangered Species Act was signed into law on December 28, 1973 by President Richard Nixon and has been instrumental in protecting our environmental heritage ever since. There are those among us who see nature as something to be squashed and bent to our will. They have long sought to remove this road block to their plans for domination of the environment for fun and profit. The latest attack comes in the form of a budget amendment that will prohibit the protection of wolves anywhere in the country. Wolves are an easy target and one that serves as a wedge issue. Break the back of the Act with wolves and then those pesky manatees, Spotted Owls and others will be easier to sweep aside in our rush to make a buck and engage in assorted destructive behaviors. Please, take a minute or two to write your Congressperson. Here's the link to the US Congress website: <http://www.house.gov/> When you get there, click on the "Find Your Representative" link and tell them that you'd appreciate their support for a strong Endangered Species Act.

David Hartgrove
Conservation Chair

Crows, Our Intelligent Neighbors

Here in Volusia County, as in the rest of Florida, we have two species of crows: American Crows and Fish Crows. American Crows are one of the most widespread bird species in North America. They range across the continent from south Florida all the way to eastern British Columbia. They're absent from the desert southwest but ubiquitous elsewhere in rural, suburban, and even urban landscapes. Fish Crows are generally limited in their distribution to the southeastern states but in recent decades their range has been expanding west and northward up the eastern seaboard as far as Cape Cod. Fish Crows are somewhat smaller than American Crows averaging 7 to 12 ounces in weight. American Crows weigh between 11 to 20 ounces. Because of the similarities in coloration and some overlap in size, voice is the only reliable way to identify these birds in the wild. Even that can be problematic though since the begging calls of both species by their young can sound very similar.

A recent thread of conversations on Bird Brains, one of the two list serves here in Florida devoted to birding, discussed the variations and gave information on identification. Here's the link for their archives: <http://listserv.admin.usf.edu/archives/brdbrain.html> . David Simpson, who holds the state record for seeing more bird species in Florida in a 24 hour period than anyone else, gave some interesting insights to the problem and a link to a fascinating site that has a number of crow calls that you can click on to listen to: <http://pjdeye.blogspot.com/2009/11/fish-crow-calls.html> . When we do a bird count, either the Christmas Bird Count or the Spring or Fall Migration Counts, the standing rule is that you must hear the bird to identify it. Otherwise, it's listed as "Crow species" on the data sheet.

Crows have demonstrated amazing problem solving capabilities and have adapted to living near us, even though they've long been persecuted. Capturing crows for banding studies is notoriously difficult and recapturing them is all but unheard of because of their intelligence. Though there's no evidence of interbreeding among the species, both birds respond to each other's distress calls and flock together to mob a potential predator. Only the females of both species have incubation duties. The males bring food to the female who then parcels it out to nestlings. Though gregarious and often raucous at times, the adults of both species are usually silent near the nest.

So, the next time you see a flock of crows, if you're near the coast, they're almost certainly Fish Crows. Just the same, wait until you hear that familiar, "Uh, Oh" call to be sure. And if you're at Lake Woodruff, definitely wait to hear the birds. I've heard American Crows calling on one side of the parking lot and Fish Crows calling from the other at the visitor's center.

David Hartgrove
Conservation Chair



Fish Crow

by Chuck Tague

<http://web.me.com/kingrail/Natureobserver/Welcome.html>



American Crow

by Kevin Doxstater

<http://www.naturalvisionsphoto.com/>

News Roundup

Articles from other publications around the state and the nation

From National Public Radio

Weekend Edition host, Scott Simon speaks with NOAA meteorologist, Martin Hoerling, about this year's extreme weather and whether or not this is all part of the predicted climate change. Click on the following link. When the page opens, click on the "Listen to the story" link. <http://www.npr.org/2011/07/23/138635455/will-global-warming-cause-more-extreme-weather?ft=1&f=1025>

From The E Skimmer

The newsletter of Southeast Volusia Audubon Society

Red cedar

Past columns have focused on the smaller natives: flowers and shrubs. This month's subject, the stately red cedar, is a departure. Scientifically known as *Juniperus virginiana*, the red cedar—or juniper—is a common sight in our area. Evergreen red cedars are easy to grow in poor, sandy soil; they tolerate both salt and drought. Seedlings sprout readily and are easily transplanted. Their growth is slow, but over time they become massive specimens, reaching 30 feet or more. In winter, female red cedars produce bluish berry-like cones. Combined with the fresh cedar fragrance, the branches with their showy cone clusters make an ideal holiday decoration.

Native red cedars' cones provide abundant food for scores of species of wildlife and their dense branches offer protected habitat. Mockingbirds and other songbirds often shelter their nests deep inside these conifers; cedar waxwings get their name from their fondness for this tree.

During the warmer months, look closely and you will sometimes see thumbnail-sized butterflies resting on the branches of native red cedars. Called juniper hairstreaks, these mint green to brownish butterflies seek out juniper for their larval food plant. One subspecies, called Swadlow's juniper hairstreak, lives only in Florida, common only in coastal hammocks. Its numbers are dwindling rapidly because of habitat loss.

Credit note: Some information was taken from Doreen Cubie's "Backyard Habitat" article that appeared in the Dec/Jan 2006 issue of National Wildlife Magazine.

Donnadine Miller

Donnadine Miller was an active member of SEVAS and wrote for years for The Skimmer. She passed away April 7, 2008. This archived article is from The Skimmer, March 2006

News of "Hope"

from Bird Studies Canada

Regular readers will remember that in our Conservation Notes column in May we featured a piece about a Whimbrel named Hope. This bird was reported to have flown non stop for almost three days to cover the 1,850 miles between the Virgin Islands and Hope Creek, in the Virginia Coast Reserve. Hope had arrived in Virginia on April 8th and set about eating to gather fat reserves for the trip north to her breeding grounds along the MacKenzie River, in Canada's Northwest Territories. This is an area just south of the Beaufort Sea, near the Arctic Circle.

After nearly six weeks of rest and feeding on fiddler crabs she departed Virginia on May 22nd. She arrived on the breeding grounds three weeks later on June 14th. Since she was first fitted with the 1/4 ounce satellite tracking device in May, 2009, she's flown over 24,000 miles.

Funding has been provided by The Nature Conservancy, the Center for Conservation Biology, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the Toronto Ornithological Club, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, and the Northern Neck Audubon Society. To view updated tracking maps [select this link](#).

Information in the article above was gathered from an e-mail newsletter sent out by Bird Studies Canada, a partner with Birdlife International, <http://www.birdlife.org/>

Making Sense of Nutrient Standards

From the ECO-Voice Digest

There have been all kinds of reports lately in the press about the EPA cramming new Nutrient Standards down the throats of Floridians. The EPA has been unfairly attacked as being heavy handed and our own Congressman, John Mica has authored a bill to limit the EPA's power to enforce the Clean Water Act. The reason the EPA issued its new regulations regarding nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus from fertilizers) is because the state has no standards in place. Current language in state law says municipalities will manage discharges of nutrients into our waterways that will maintain "healthy well balanced systems." That kind of amorphous, nuanced language sounds good but doesn't provide a measurable standard that makes attaining clean water possible. The algae blooms that choke our waterways and our fish are directly tied to the vast amounts of nutrients pumped into our rivers and lakes daily. As Rae Ann Wessel, Natural Resources Policy Director at the Sanibel/Captiva Conservation Foundation said recently, "My definition of 'healthy well balanced' may not be the same as someone contributing significant nutrient pollution.

Links to other sites of interest

Local Audubon Chapters

[Flagler Audubon](#)

[Southeast Volusia Audubon](#)

[West Volusia Audubon](#)

Conservation Organizations

[National Audubon's Home Page](#)

[Audubon of Florida Home Page](#)

[Lyonia Environmental Center](#)

in Deltona, FL, Check the educational programs list

[Audubon of Florida Advocacy Center](#)

Sign up for environmental alerts and advocacy

Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary Nature Store

<http://www.corkscrewnaturestore.org/>

Members' Pages

David Baker

[Naturally Digital](#)

Kevin Doxstater

[Natural Visions](#)

Ken Hanson

[Hawks Ridge Images](#)

Chuck Tague

[Nature Observer's Journal](#)

National Park Sites

[Lake Woodruff NWR](#)

[Merritt Island NWR](#)

[Canaveral National Seashore](#)

National Park Service

[Canaveral National Seashore](#)

U S Fish & Wildlife Service

Florida State Parks

[Blue Spring State Park](#)

[Bulow Creek State Park](#)

[De Leon Springs State Recreation Area](#)

[Gamble Rogers Memorial State Recreation Area](#)

Florida State Parks, continued

[Hontoon Island State Park](#)

[Tomoka State Park](#)

[Washington Oaks Garden State Park](#)

[North Peninsula State Park](#)

Birding & Optics References

[Birding on the Net](#)

A wide variety of birding information

[North American Birds - Photo Gallery](#)

Peter LaTourette's gallery of bird images

Bird Brains List Serve Archives

<http://listserv.admin.usf.edu/archives/brdbrain.html>

Florida Birds List Serve Archives

<http://lists.ufl.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A0=FLORIDABIRDS-L>

Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology

<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/Page.aspx?pid=1478>

Patuxent Bird Identification Page

<http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/id/framlst/infocenter.html>

[The Binocular Site](#)

*independent guide to optics***

[All Best Binoculars](#)

*non-profit review of major brands***

** Opinions on these linked sites are those of the site owners.

Halifax River Audubon makes no recommendations on the brands or on the opinions expressed on these sites.

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The Pelican

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Vol. 57-No.3 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon August, 2011



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

thoughts from on high

With the exception of the first six years of my life, I've always felt that the new year begins in September. First it was going to school myself. Then my husband accepted a position as a sixth-grade teacher and our entire adult working life revolved around the school calendar. We moved to Florida two months after I retired. I joined Halifax River Audubon one month later and began to learn that a long tradition of many organizations in central Florida include a two- or three-month hiatus over the hottest summer months.

So let me be the first to wish all our members and chapter friends a "Happy New Year." After a two-month break, we begin our "new year" on September 19 at 6:30 p.m. We will again meet at Sica Hall, in Room B, which is the back half of the two rooms where we met previously.

Chapter members, County service specialists, a State Park ranger, local nature experts and a curator from the Museum of Arts & Sciences will make presentations on a variety of topics at monthly meetings. Field trips are scheduled to old favorite locations as well as to new hot spots. We have two overnight trips planned. Some trips require walking, many are mostly driving trips. Most trips are scheduled on Friday, Saturday or Sunday, but we have three week-day trips and one afternoon start time. The new schedule has something to please everyone, we hope. Printed hand-outs will be available for pick up at our monthly meetings. The full schedules are available now for review and download/printing at our website www.halifaxriveras.org.

We look forward to seeing everyone later this month. Please bring a friend, relative or neighbor who may enjoy listening to our speaker or who may be looking for a new activity or to meet new people.

Paula Wehr
President, HRA

Calendar

Program Meeting September 19, 2011

William Greening, Environmental Specialist with Volusia County, will speak at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, September 19, at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. He will address efforts to restore abandoned mosquito impoundments and dragline ditches to their original elevations to regain original habitat, restoration of oyster beds and projects which use stocking of native fish for biological control of mosquitoes.

Join us at 6:30 p.m. for light refreshments and socializing with members and guests. Please note that due to a bridge closure, Daytona Avenue cannot be accessed from LPGA Blvd. Use the Tenth Street entrance.

Fall Migration Count, Saturday, Sept. 17th

Once again it's time to do our part for citizen science. We have been participating in this count and the Spring Migration Count since 1994. We will meet at 7:00 am at the southeast end of the City Island parking lot at the Courthouse. There we will break up into teams to cover our territories. This is an excellent learning opportunity for those who want to hone their birding skills. This is an all day event but we can easily get you back to your car if you need to leave early. Contact David Hartgrove at 788-2630 or at birdman9@earthlink.net so that we can begin selecting teams. Many Thanks!

Audubon Assembly Oct. 14 & 15, 2011

This year's Audubon Assembly will be held in Lake Mary, just a 45 minute drive down I-4. There will be workshops on Florida's Special Places, field trips, a special kick off evening at the Bird of Prey Center on 10/13 and much more. The Orlando Marriott at Lake Mary will be headquarters for the event. There will be special recognition of West Volusia Audubon Society's 50th anniversary. Registration is now open. Check out the information here: <http://audubonoffloridanews.org/?cat=39> Be there or be square.

Conservation Notes

Regular readers of this column know that I've written in the past about Rodman Dam and the Cross Florida Barge Canal. Though this ill conceived project was first proposed by Phillip II of Spain in 1567, no one got serious about it until the 1930's. It wasn't until 1964, when President Johnson pushed a button in Washington symbolically setting off an explosive charge, that construction actually began.

There are three women named Marjorie whose contributions to Florida's history are entwined in its environmental well being too. Marjorie Stoneman Douglas is famous for her crusade to save the Everglades. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings wrote of the state's pioneer beginnings and was instrumental in saving much of the remaining long leaf pine and wire grass prairie habitat. Marjorie Harris Carr was the driving force in saving Florida from the ravages that would have resulted to the state if the Cross Florida Barge Canal had been completed. In 1971, thanks to her tireless efforts and those whom she helped organize, construction was halted. In 1991 the whole project was officially canceled.

Now it appears that there are those who prefer to ignore history, science and the state's environmental well being. In addition to the Port of Jacksonville, the Port of Tampa and the Port of Miami, the state now has a Port of Citrus. Where you might ask would this Port of Citrus be located? In land locked Citrus County of course. On July 12th the Citrus County Commission met for the first time as the Citrus County Port Authority. In an effort to breathe life into the now dead canal, Citrus County believes it can become a transportation hub for the container freight business. At this point the Citrus County Port Authority has declined to hire any employees and it exists essentially on paper only. But in the relaxed regulatory climate we're in now here in Florida who knows what wrong headed scheme will quietly be approved. We'll be keeping an eye on the situation. No doubt the Marjories, all of them, would ask nothing less of us.



Prothonotary Warbler, by Ken Tracey

From the Eco-Voice daily digest (<http://www.eco-voice.org/>) comes news that a 1,000 mile expedition will begin, organized by the "Florida Wildlife Corridor Initiative." The goal is to create awareness of the need to protect and restore connected landscapes down the spine of Florida: The centerpiece of this strategy is the Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition scheduled to launch January 17, 2012, and traverse the Everglades ecosystem into Big Cypress, over to the Everglades Agricultural Area, back to the Okaloacoochee Slough, across the Caloosahatchee, over to Babcock Ranch, back along Fisheating Creek toward Lake Okeechobee, up the Kissimmee River with excursions toward the Lake Wales Ridge, up the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes, east around Orlando into Ocala National Forest, and north along the O2O corridor (Ocala to Osceola) to Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. The trek will cover approximately 1,000 miles over 100 days. The goal: protecting and restoring connected landscapes from the Everglades to Georgia. You might consider learning more about this worthwhile effort at the [website](#). In addition, it's just been learned from Senator Bill Nelson's office that he met with a couple of Cabinet officers a few months ago to argue for conserving ranch lands north of the Everglades as part of the ongoing restoration efforts there. Due to those discussions, the USDA recently announced \$100 million in financial assistance to acquire permanent easements from eligible landowners in four counties and to assist with wetland restoration on nearly 24,000 acres of agricultural land in the Northern Everglades Watershed. This will go hand in hand with the efforts to establish the proposed Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge. It's great news for the state and its environment.

On a sad note, we mourn the loss of Kathy Marsh. Her's was the voice of reason and passion in fighting for the environment. She served as Group Chair and as Conservation Chair of the Volusia/Flagler Sierra Club. Born in Lakeland, her roots in Florida go all the way back to the Minorcan colonists brought over to what became New Smyrna Beach by Doctor Andrew Turnbull. I sat in many meetings with Kathy over the years and often sought her council on issues ranging from water quality to growth management. Along with Lee Bidgood, Conservation Chair of the Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, she was instrumental in getting the Tomoka River listed as an Outstanding Florida Waterway. As we face an uncertain future of relaxed growth management rules, Kathy's wise voice and sense of dedication will be sorely missed.

David Hartgrove,
Conservation Chair, HRA

Bald Eagles Will Be Nesting Soon

Official nesting season for Bald Eagles here in Florida is supposed to begin on October 15th. There's an old saying, "The birds don't read the books." So it's not uncommon for the birds to return to long established nest sites in September or even earlier. The pair of Bald Eagles that have nested successfully in Centennial Park, in Holly Hill, have returned. So far they've just been seen at or near the nest tree. Over the next few weeks they'll be working to refurbish the nest and reestablish the pair bond they maintain year after year. Pair bonding is done through elaborate courtship rituals which include truly amazing flight acrobatics. The birds will fly to a great height while appearing to chase one another. Then they lock talons and tumble downward separating at the last moment.

By early October they should have eggs in the nest, at least two, often three. Eggs are laid over several days, and so hatch at different times. The youngest bird often succumbs to nest fratricide when it's denied food by its older siblings. It's a rare event when three youngsters fledge from a nest. Incubation, carried on by both adults, though the female does the majority of it, takes roughly five weeks. The young fledge in two and a half to three months. By the time they leave the nest the young outweigh their parents. Once denied the nutrition the parents have been supplying, it's a tough world for the youngsters. Mortality in their first year is roughly thirty-five percent. Their diet is varied and consists of fish, birds, small mammals and carrion. One of the best places in Volusia County to see them is at the landfill, on Tomoka Farms Road. On a field trip there in January several years ago, I counted 56 in twenty minutes.

Bald Eagles have undergone major population fluctuations over the last two centuries. Early reports by explorers said the birds were abundant all along the eastern seaboard. In Alaska, which continues to host the largest population, the birds were long considered a nuisance and in 1917 a bounty of fifty cents was posted on the birds. In 1949 it was upped to two dollars. Finally, in 1952, federal regulation abolished the bounty system but the slaughter continued. By mid century the population had crashed due to human persecution and reproductive failure. The latter was attributed to the use of the pesticide, DDT. When this substance was banned in 1972, under the Endangered Species Act, the birds began to recover. There are now breeding populations in all but two of the contiguous states, all of the Canadian Provinces, and even in northern Mexico. Florida has the third largest population. Even when seen fighting with gulls over scraps at the landfill, these are spectacular birds. They continue to be an inspiring site wherever we see them.

David Hartgrove



Chapter member, Lori Staudt, took the photo at the right of one of the Bald Eagles which nest near her home in Port Orange. She reports that earlier this year she saw three juveniles in the area and that one had made several attempts at catching its own mullet.

Traveling For Birding Adventures

The Florida Keys Birding and Wildlife Festival will be held from September 21st through the 25th. This coincides with one of the largest raptor migration events in the state, which is held at Curry Hammock State Park, in Marathon. Nationally famous birders, Ken and Kim Kauffman will be keynote speakers. In addition to birding trips, there will be kayaking, bicycling and snorkeling opportunities and presentations on photography and the ecology of the Keys. For more information check out the website: www.keysbirdingfest.org

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The Pelican

We need to be the stewards of this world, not its destroyers

Vol. 57-No.4 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon October, 2011



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

thoughts from on high

October is often one of the more "perfect" months in central Florida- slightly cooler temperatures, bright blue skies and a seemingly unending variety of community events, wildlife festivals, outdoor art walks and charitable fund-raisers. Absent a tropical storm offshore, there is hardly a reason not to spend time outdoors.

Perhaps it is the very richness of all the opportunities we have here in Volusia & Flagler Counties that makes it important to me to think about those people and organizations that may be struggling.

October 22 is "Make A Difference Day"
<http://www.usaweekend.com/section/MDDAY/Make-A-Difference-Day>

This is the largest national day of service in the country. USA Weekend magazine was instrumental in launching this volunteer project which takes place on the fourth Saturday of October each year. In just one day, thousands of community projects are completed across the country. In previous years, my husband and I have painted classrooms for the PACE School for at-risk girls, landscaped an after-school program building in Bunnell and cleared brush to prepare for new landscaping at the ARC in Daytona. Our Board will discuss partnering with a local State Park or environmental group to adopt a project next year. We'll provide details about how HRA members can participate. In the meantime, keep your eyes open for local "Make a Difference Day" projects. To learn about ongoing volunteer opportunities, visit United Way of Volusia-Flagler Counties Volunteer Center
<<http://www.liveunitedinvolusiaflagler.org/>> .

Enjoy the upcoming month!

Calendar

Program Meeting October 17, 2011

Dan Gribbin, nature photographer and HRA member will speak at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, October 17th, at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. Dan will present a show of bird and nature photos and give tips on digital photography. Join us at 6:30 p.m. for socializing with members and guests. Please note that due to a bridge closure, Daytona Avenue cannot be accessed from LPGA Blvd. Access Daytona Avenue from Tenth Street.

Audubon Assembly In Lake Mary

The Audubon Assembly will be held Oct. 14th & 15th. It's not far away and it's a great opportunity to see what we're doing at the state level. Check the website for more information on this exciting event.

<http://www.audubonofflorida.org/>

West Volusia Audubon Society meeting

On Tuesday, 10/25, our own Chuck Tague, wildlife photographer and writer, will present "Caught In The Act: Birds In Action". It's sure to be a hit with the crowd. WVAS meetings are held at The Garden Club of DeLand 865 South Alabama Ave. at 6:30 pm.

WVAS Field Trips

Monday, Oct. 3rd, Washington Oaks State Park

Saturday, Oct. 29th, Blue Springs State park

Check the WVAS website for more information:

<http://www.westvolusiaaudubon.org/index.htm>

Watch this space in future for information on our sister chapters' activities in the Southeast Volusia and Flagler Audubon chapters.

Paw Paw Chapter/ Florida Native Plant Society

This month's program will be Butterfly and Hummingbird Gardening With Native Plants, presented by Kevin Bagwell. The meeting is on Tuesday, Oct. 18th, at 7:00 pm at Grace Lutheran Church, 338 Oceanshore Blvd., corner of Neptune Drive and A1A. See their website for more information:

<http://sites.google.com/site/fnpspawpawchapter/>

Field Trip Preview

A Synopsis of Where We Are Going and What To Expect....

Sunday, October 2, 2011 5:00 PM
Sunday, November 13, 2011 4:00 PM
Dunlawton Bridge

These outings, led by Liz Abrams and David Hartgrove, respectively, meet under the bridge by the picnic table overlooking the seabird rookery island. This is an easy outing and great for beginners and experts alike. The afternoon timing can lead to a spectacular avian show as the birds come in for the evening to roost.

Directions: East on Dunlawton, cross US1, right at Sea Bird Island, take left, follow narrow paved road to parking lot.

From A1A, go west on Dunlawton, over bridge, right at the bottom of bridge, take right and follow paved road into parking lot.

Friday, October 14, 2011 7:30 AM
Washington Oaks/Matanzas Inlet

Joan and Chuck Tague will lead this outing to birding spots along A1A. We will walk along the beach looking for shorebirds at the inlet and stop in across the highway at the Fort Matanzas Visitor Center to look for migrants. Our last stop will be at Washington Oaks State Park to explore the small maritime forest and gardens. We will also scope the intracoastal waterway while there. We will meet at Publix on Granada and Williamson. Pack a lunch. There is a fee to enter Washington Oaks SP.

Saturday, October 29, 2011 7:00 AM Lake Woodruff NWR

Meet on International Speedway Boulevard behind Krystal, in the International Square Parking lot. This will be a hike led by Chuck and Joan Tague around the impoundments of the refuge. Pack a lunch.

Plan ahead for the next trip - it should be very special!!!!

Saturday, November 19, 2011 St. John River Cruise with Blue River Heron Tours Charge - \$20.00. Make check payable to Halifax River Audubon. Checks can be sent c/o Chuck Tague, 1000 Walker Street #91, Holly Hill, FL. 32117

This will be a late afternoon, relaxing cruise around Hontoon Island and into the Hontoon Dead River. This is a new concession operating from Hontoon Landing just past the ferry port for Hontoon State Park. Many birds return to the river this time of year and the afternoon to evening light is wonderful for photography. The meeting place is the same as the Lake Woodruff trip.

The 2011/2012 Field Trip schedule is on-line and can be accessed at http://www.halifaxrivers.org/Field_Trips.htm.

Birds we hope to see on our field trips

Below are a two of the birds we hope to see on our trips. This first one, a Sora, has been heard calling from the cat tails in the pond at the Port Orange Bridge in the past.



Sora Rail, by Chuck Tague



Wilson's Plover, by Chuck Tague

Wilson's Plovers were named for Alexander Wilson, considered the father of American ornithology. Strictly coastal in nature, they nest here in Volusia County at Lighthouse Point Park, Smyrna Dunes Park and other suitable areas. They are easily identified by their heavy, dark bill and single dark breast band. That heavy bill comes in handy while dining on its prey of choice, fiddler crabs. When nesting, males seem to do most of the incubation at night while the females feed. She takes over at sunrise while he goes out to feed. The birds breed along the Atlantic coast from Virginia to the Dry Tortugas. Northern birds migrate to our area in winter and supplement our local, non migrant population.

Conservation Notes

by David Hartgrove

In May of this year I wrote about a Whimbrel named "Hope" that had been fitted with a tiny satellite tracking device. On her north bound migration this year she left St Croix, in the Virgin Islands, on April 5th and flew non stop for the next three days to cover 1,850 miles. She made landfall at the same tidal creek on the coast of Virginia where she was captured and fitted with the device on May 19th, 2009. Hope was one of four Whimbrels fitted with tracking devices as part of a program designed and monitored by researchers from The Center for Conservation Biology, The Nature Conservancy, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, The Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program, and The Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences. Now comes word of two more Whimbrels, whose fate was determined by a chance encounter with tropical storms and a need to rest.

"Machi" and "Goshen" had the misfortune to land on the island of Guadeloupe after encountering different storm systems. During her spring migration in 2010 Machi flew non stop for 3,400 miles, from the coast of Brazil to South Carolina. Earlier this month she was tracked as she flew into Tropical Storm Maria. After this encounter she landed on Montserrat and then flew to Guadeloupe on the morning of September 12th. "Goshen" was tracked as she flew through the east side of Hurricane Irene. She too landed on Montserrat, then spent a week on Antigua before flying to Guadeloupe on the morning of September 12th also. Both birds were shot by hunters at one of the most notorious "hunting swamps" in the Caribbean within a few minutes of arriving on Guadeloupe. Half of the birds being monitored were lost.

Guadeloupe, Martinique and Barbados all have what are called "shooting swamps." Some of these are artificial wetlands created for the purpose of attracting migrant shorebirds so they can be blasted out of the air. These birds are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. However Guadeloupe and Martinique are French overseas departments, part of the European Union and are not signatories to the treaty. Barbados was once a British colony but is now sovereign country. They too aren't bound by the treaty. Every year tens of thousands of shorebirds are slaughtered on just these three islands. This offers graphic proof of the necessity of having protection plans in place throughout the migratory path of these birds. All over the world shorebird populations are in severe decline. The good that we and our conservation partners in Canada, Chile, Argentina, Brazil and other countries do can be offset by the actions of a relatively small number of people on islands where no regulations exist. The last Eskimo Curlew known to science was shot on Barbados in 1963. Will the last Whimbrel known to science perish there in our lifetime? The groups mentioned above are working to at least establish some kind of hunting regulations on these islands but the "old boy network" is resistant to interference from outsiders.

So the next time you see a Whimbrel, a Red Knot, a Marbled Godwit or any of the other shorebirds whose populations are less than half what they were thirty years ago, count yourself lucky and savor the moment. We're working to help insure that it's an experience our grand children can have too.

Additional information: here's a link to a map showing Whimbrel migration routes:

<http://www.ccb-wm.org/programs/migration/Whimbrel/whimbrel.htm>

There is a somewhat disturbing video on You Tube that documents the behavior at one of these shooting swamps on Guadeloupe. Our board was divided on whether or not to provide the actual link. However, repeated attempts to locate the film via Google searches weren't successful. So those wishing to view the 6 minute video can click on the link below. Be warned, it is graphic.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWFC2fEqVfl>

Dry Tortugas Birding Trips

The Dry Tortugas, several islands located 70 miles west of Key West, offer some of the most spectacular birding in the country during Spring migration. Florida Nature Tours and its leader, Wes Biggs, has taken more people to this incredible spot than anyone else. If you've never been to the Dry Tortugas it's hard to describe just how special the place is. As the first spot of land migrating birds see as they transit the Gulf of Mexico, its water and food offer rest and nourishment. Fort Jefferson, located on Garden Key, is a spot that can be awash in tanagers, warblers, flycatchers and other species, many just a few feet away. For the 2012 season they have an ambitious schedule that offers the best in Florida birding and includes some trips that offer additional destinations. Prices are reasonable: The Dry Tortugas tour is \$1,100.00, with a \$250.00 deposit & the balance due 90 days prior to the tour. South Florida I & II are priced at \$850.00 in double occupancy with a single supplement of \$200.00, & a \$200.00 deposit. The Super Tour is \$1,250.00 with a single supplement of \$300.00, & a deposit of \$250.00. It is possible to combine tours. All fees are returned in the case of a true emergency. Forgetting your second cousin's wedding in East McKeesport is not an emergency.

Dry Tortugas I Friday April 13 - Monday April 16
South Florida I Monday April 16 - Friday April 20
Dry Tortugas II Friday April 20 - Monday April 23
Dry Tortugas III Tuesday April 24 - Friday April 27
Florida Super Tour Friday April 27 - Thursday May 3
Dry Tortugas IV Thursday May 3 - Sunday May 6
South Florida II Sunday May 6 - Thursday May 10
Dry Tortugas V Monday May 7 - Thursday May 10

Florida Nature Tours has a strong commitment to nature and in keeping with that thought, is putting its money where its mouth is. For every person going on the Dry Tortugas trips listed above, a 100.00 donation will be made in that person's name to the birding/conservation organization of their choice. The website is undergoing updates. Check it for the latest information soon. <http://www.floridanaturetours.net>

Chasing A First State Record

The phone rang around 3:30 Saturday afternoon. Wes Biggs had called to see if I was interested in running up to St George Island to see the first state record of an Inca Dove. John Murphy, a member of the Florida Ornithological Society's Records Committee, had found the bird the day before perched on a power line. In addition, the bird was heard calling. This indicated that it may be trying to attract a mate and that meant it may linger in the area a while. I told Wes that I was certainly interested in going. He called back around 6:00 pm to say that I should meet him at his house in Orlando. He and I and David Simpson were to leave around 12:30 am, drive all night, and be at the site where the bird had been reported by sunrise.

The Inca Dove (*Columbina inca*) is native to Central America and Mexico. It was first collected in Texas in 1866 near Laredo. Since that time it has been expanding its range northward, westward and now eastward. They have been confirmed breeders in Louisiana for some time. It has been assumed that sooner or later one would show up here in Florida. Doves, of any species, seem quite good at exploring new habitat and expanding their range. Eurasian Collared-Doves were first released in the western hemisphere in the Bahamas in the 1972. In 1973 a nesting pair in Florida City were mis-identified as Ringed Turtle Doves. When I was in Portland, Oregon last year, I saw Eurasian Collared-Doves there. In less than 40 years they've colonized much of the country. Now it appears that another dove species has decided to expand its range in the other direction and is moving east. Inca Doves were introduced to Florida in 1965 by an aviculturist living near a convent in Key West. A woman named Frances Hames, who lived nearby and was something of a legend in Florida birding circles, first reported these birds then. Descendants of these birds were last seen in the early 80's. So how can this bird found at St George Island be a "first state record?" Because this bird is assumed to have arrived here under its own power, as a consequence of its species' range expansion. Of course, until this record has been accepted and its provenance investigated by the FOS Records Committee, it will remain on the suspect list.

After a race across the darkened landscape of Florida we arrived in the lovely residential section of St George Island at 7:00 am. The sun was just breaking through dawn clouds on the horizon and it was going to be a beautiful Sunday morning. We walked around the unpaved streets while the neighborhood dogs barked at the strangers with binoculars around their necks. At 7:21 Wes Biggs heard the bird call from a small oak thicket in the front yard of a vacation rental house. By now we had been joined by Gallus Quigley, who had just driven in from Lake County, and Dave Goodwin and Ray Webb from St Pete. A few minutes later David Simpson saw the bird fly across the street and back to a telephone cable, where it perched for several minutes. Photos were taken and congratulations extended to one and all. By 8:55 we were sitting down to order a celebratory breakfast before driving back home. It was a great weekend.

David Hartgrove



Inca Dove, Photo by Jim Cavanaugh

Bird Watching Classes

Once again our chapter is offering bird watching classes. If you've ever looked out your window thought to yourself, "Wow, That bird's beautiful! I wonder what it is? We have the solution for you. Our own Ray Scory, long time president of the New Haven Bird Club, is again teaching our Beginning Bird Watching Class. Ray's patience and expertise has made him something of a local legend when it comes to introducing people to the joys of bird watching. There are 3 classroom sessions of 2 hours each, followed by 3 field trips a few days later to try out your newly acquired skills. Class room sessions are held at the Port Orange Library on Fridays with field trips set for the following Tuesdays. Classes begin on Friday, October 28th. Field trips will be to the Port Orange Bridge, one of the newest stops on the Great Florida Birding Trail; Spruce Creek Park, on US 1 south of Port Orange; and finally to Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, a premier winter birding destination that's world famous. The cost is just a 25.00 donation. For more information, check out this link: <http://www.halifaxriveras.org/Beginner%20class%20flyer.pdf>

There's no time to dawdle. We need your registration in by October 18th. As that commercial says, "Just do it!" You'll be glad you did.

Audubon Adventures

The start of the school year means we are now soliciting sponsors for the classroom sets of Audubon Adventures. If you have been a sponsor in the past you know how important this program is to Volusia County students. For some children it's their first exposure to learning about the environment, wild birds, and other animals.

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.

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.



Fran & John Carr Honored For Their Long Years of Service To Our Chapter

After our board meeting on Monday, September 12th, the board reconvened at Port Orange Causeway Park to dedicate the new bench that honors Fran and John Carr. For 14 years they worked every month assuring that the Pelican was written, proofread, pasted up, carried to the printers, picked up from the printers, had 600+ mailing labels attached, sorted by zip codes (as the Post Office requires), and delivered to the Post Office. It was a Herculean task by any measure and this bench is a small token of our gratitude for their dedication. Pictured are, from left to right: Peggy Yokubonus, Paula Wehr, Becky Schubert, Rachel Ramsey, John Carr, Fran Carr and David Hartgrove. Not pictured, since she was taking the photo, Treasurer, Susan Jarosik. Again, our sincere thanks to Fran and John for all they've done and continue to do for the chapter.

Willie and the Golden Dog

In 1998 a large man with an even larger heart joined the organization and immediately volunteered to be on the board. Willie Burns is a retired iron worker and biker who somewhat resembles "Hagar", of newspaper comics fame. He's also something of a tax wizard. So he came up with the idea of creating a non profit corporation called "Golden Dog Books." He has a passion for golden retrievers. The idea was to sell a popular line of books about Florida wildlife and have all of the profits go to the chapter. In the intervening years this enterprise has contributed over 15,000.00 to the organization. Eventually, the stock expanded to coffee, magnets and the infamous clocks.

Early last month Willie returned from visiting his daughter in upstate New York. Kitty Albee picked him up at the train station (Willie's other passion is trains) and thought he looked terrible. After arriving at the emergency room, an EKG revealed that he'd suffered a mild heart attack. Further blood work revealed that he is now battling leukemia. As I write this he's back in the hospital for another round of chemo therapy. Needless to say the Golden Dog has fallen by the wayside. So if you're planning on getting a pound of shade grown coffee from Willie at one of our meetings, or hoping to see his smiling face at one of the many events held around the area where we set up the Golden Dog sales table, you'll be disappointed. Willie has a long road to recovery and loads of good karma to help him along the way. Keep him in your thoughts and prayers. Like all of us, he needs all the help he can get.

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The Pelican

We need to be the stewards of this world, not its destroyers

Vol. 57-No.5 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
November, 2011



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Words from on high

Early in October a good friend sent an e-mail inviting me to share the bounty of warblers in her back yard. The timing worked out and I spent an hour watching Black-throated Blue, Palm, Black-and-white and Cape May Warblers work the giant oak tree before the no-name storm hit. Two weeks later we enjoyed another hour or so watching Prairie Warblers, Common Yellowthroats and Northern Parulas take a break on their journey south. Migrating tanagers, which had been present both times before I arrived, remained elusive during my presence. As we said good-bye, we both commented that it would have been nice to see the tanager (and perhaps identify whether it was a Summer or a Scarlet Tanager,) but we focused instead on the excellent views of beautiful birds which were present, the lovely weather and the opportunity to catch up with each other.

Maybe that's why we all love birding so much. There is always a bird that we missed seeing, but generally speaking, we'll have another opportunity to see it in a different spot or on another day. Knowing that the Red-necked Phalarope, which has eluded me on four separate trips to find it, will probably return to MINWR sometime in the future gives me just the excuse I need to get outside in the fresh air, focus on the beauty of nature all around us and enjoy the companionship of other like-minded people.

Enjoy this coming month; we all have many reasons to be thankful.

Paula Wehr

If you like what you read in The Pelican

There's a good chance someone else you know will too. Please feel free to forward this newsletter on to friends and family.

Our November Meeting Will Highlight The Christmas Bird Count

by Ray Scory

My Christmas Bird Count Program is a one hour, three part show explaining the origin of the Christmas Bird Count and the fun of a Christmas Bird Count day.

The first part is a narrative about Frank Michler Chapman's early birding life in Florida, a historical look at the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) and Frank Chapman's role in creating this count and why. Florida's list of natural wonders would be far shorter if not for the work of Frank Chapman. He is considered one of the greats of ornithology.

The second part is an audio/visual show featuring the excitement, dedication and fun that I have experienced on past Halifax River Audubon's Christmas Bird Counts. This show is dramatically illustrated with important Florida birds and Central Florida's semi-tropical landscape.

For the third part, David Hartgrove, the compiler of the Daytona Beach CBC, will explain how the Count works. This show will uncover the mysteries surrounding the how, when, where and whys of the Christmas Bird Count.

Audubon Adventures

The start of the school year means we are now soliciting sponsors for the classroom sets of Audubon Adventures. If you have been a sponsor in the past you know how important this program is to Volusia County students. For some children it's their first exposure to learning about the environment, wild birds, and other animals.

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.

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.

Conservation Notes

Yankeetown, in Levy County, due west of us on the Gulf Coast, has some of the strongest protections for its environment and quality of life of any municipality in the state. In 2008, having watched other parts of the state being paved over and over developed, the city leaders wrote some tough development rules and an even tougher comprehensive plan. The developers squealed like stuck pigs and raced off to court. Where they promptly lost, all the way to the First District Court of Appeals. Yankeetown's leaders then tweaked the nose of the development community further by adopting a version of Hometown Democracy. They put in place a law requiring a vote of the people for any changes in the comprehensive plan. Our state legislature, anxious to reward their paymasters in the development industry, passed the state Community Planning Act prohibiting communities from allowing local referenda. Yankeetown again filed suit over the legislation to uphold the rights of citizens to participate more fully in the local planning process. The suit is still pending. Because of their principled stand and enlightened attitude, 1000 Friends of Florida, one of the state's growth management watchdog groups, has awarded Yankeetown its "Better Community Award" for 2011.

Twenty people applied for the vacant position on the board of the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission. Two had previously served on the Commission, another was vice president of the Florida Wildlife Federation, another was the operator of an animal rescue group and former Humane Society investigator. The Governor passed over all of these obviously qualified applicants and selected Chuck Roberts, a paving contractor from Panama City. Other than being an avid quail hunter whose affluence affords him the luxury of owning his own bird hunting plantation, one wonders what possible qualifications he brings to the table. The FWC is under tremendous pressure now with withering budget cutbacks and a reduced work force. An experienced person would have been a better choice at this time.

Finally, there's a glimmer of good news from the Caribbean. In last month's issue of the Pelican I wrote of the fate of Machi and Goshen, two of the four Whimbrels that had received satellite tracking devices. They were both shot on the morning of September 12th at different "shooting swamps" on the island of Guadeloupe. International outrage over the incident has renewed calls for more controls on these places. As many as 45,000 Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Whimbrels, Pectoral Sandpipers and American Golden Plovers are slaughtered each year on the island of Barbados. Lures, caged birds and taped bird calls are used to entice the birds into these "sport shooting" sites. Often the birds are left to die where they fall. Now comes word that two former shooters have bought a parcel that will be converted to Packer's Conservation Wetland. Bird Studies Canada and Birdlife Caribbean have contributed additional funding for this new sanctuary. There's a long way to go and this spot is only 10 acres in size. But this is a good first step.

David Hartgrove

The Big Sit, 2011

By Ray Scory

Fog, ominous gray skies, hurricane force winds and driving sheets of rain pummeled Florida for three days. The storm without a name created havoc and destruction. Coastal towns and low lying communities flooded and felt the shearing power of wind. Surging ocean waters rushed at the coast showing no mercy. Beaches eroded, trees toppled and buildings collapsed. The Big Sit was right in the middle of it. For ten years I have sat The Big Sit under the Dunlawton Bridge and never on a day like this one.

Birds twisted and spun recklessly, speeding by, controlled by the force of the wind. The wind was too violent for a spotting scope and tracking a bird in the sky challenged the use of a camera or binoculars. Boaters did not venture out. No sunning in a lawn chair this day.

Our seventeen foot circle was located on the banks of the Halifax River and less than a mile from the roiled ocean waves. Daylight broke through about 7:15 AM and for the next hour I experienced one of my most exciting birding moments ever.

Without warning great numbers of Eurasian Collared-doves, Boat-tailed Grackles and Rock Pigeons swooped into the adjoining parking lot and surrounded our circle. A flock of Willet whirled overhead and a Bald Eagle appeared on a mid river oysterbar. My excitement level rocketed, a lone Magnificent Frigatebird sailed down the river, not far behind a Roseate Spoonbill, Peregrine Falcon and Merlin whizzed over a small barrier island where a Reddish Egret indifferently stood. A rousing hello to a storm laden day.

Early in the afternoon John Carr brought his expertise to the circle by spotting a Brown Booby that gave us ample time for a positive ID. Three Magnificent Frigatebirds flew down the river and again John Carr and I got good looks. An American Oystercatcher, reams of Laughing Gulls along with Royal, Caspian and Forster's Terns hosted our entertainment. David Hartgrove, who encountered us by accident, punctuated the end of the day with the discovery of a Lesser Black-backed Gull hiding among a flock of gulls and terns. Thirty-two species of birds were counted on this storm swept day.

We definitely will be back next year.



"The Under Bridge Team Sitters" - Ray Scory & John Carr

HRA Welcomes Our New Members

Linda Adams, Ann Alberti, Kathleen Andrews, Beth Barnes, Marion Barrett, Bonnie Berns, Alfred Blais, Joyce Carque, Pat Dbow, Dian Desantis, James Eden, Robert & Betty Edinger, Dianne Gracie, Roger Grubic, Eileen Gunderson, Marie Harrison, Sam Hook, John & Beatrice Johnson, Mary S. Jones, Karen Jorgenson, Bill & Janet Kappa, Virginia L. Klotz, Lynn Kruse, Kathy Moore, Sandra O'Rourke, Kelley J. Peterson, Olga Pocil, Kathryn Powell, David Romeo, Gordon Russell, Marion Schenkl, Avis Schonlau, George Severance, Linda Smarse, Karen Stone, Donald Versigghel, Sonia Walker, Arline Warwick, Carolyn West, Carolyn Williams, David Williamson, Virginia Young, Virginia Young-Carrasquillo.

We encourage you to join us at our monthly meetings, on one of our excellent field trips and to perhaps consider volunteering to serve on our board.

The Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival

One of the year's premier events is just a few months away and now is the time to make your plans to attend. This will be the 15th year of the festival and it's the biggest and best organized birding festival in the country. Online registration is open or you can print a registration form from their website. Some of the best field trip leaders in the country will be here and field trips will fill up fast. So now's the time to make your choices. And there's lots to choose from. In addition to field trips there are work shops on bird identification for beginners and more experienced birders alike, photography work shops taught by some of the best photographers in the country and other activities for history buffs and the non birders in your family. Check out the website for all of the information:

<http://www.spacecoastbirdingandwildlifefestival.org/>

Experience the Magic of the Dry Tortugas

And do something good for yourself and the environmental organization of your choice. The Dry Tortugas during Spring migration is one of the best birding experiences in Florida. Florida Nature Tours is scheduling a number of trips from Key West to this birding wonderland beginning in April, 2012. FNT will donate \$100.00 to the environmental organization of your choice when you book your trip. Check their website for all of the information: <http://floridanaturetours.net/>

Paw Paw Chapter Going to Turtle Mound

The Paw Paw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society will be taking a trip to Turtle Mound, at Canaveral National Seashore on Saturday, 11/12. They'll be searching for the rare, white plumbago. Lunch at JB's Fish Camp follows. Car pooling is encouraged. Contact Sonya Guidry 386-690-1797 or by e-mail: sonyaguidry@yahoo.com

Field Trips, Events, etc.

HRA Field Trip to The Port Orange Bridge: On Sunday, 11/13 we'll meet under the Port Orange Bridge at 4:00 pm. An easy walk to see the birds on nearby islands. Leader: David Hartgrove 386-788-2630

HRA Field Trip, St Johns River Cruise: On Saturday, 11/19. We will be going with Blue Heron River Tours. The cost is just 20.00 per person for this exciting and beautiful trip. We will meet at 1:30 pm in the parking lot of the International Square Mall, behind Krystal on Intrn'l Speedway Blvd. just east of I-95. Advanced reservations are required for this trip. Leader: Celine Sullivan, 386-257-1980

HRA Field Trip, Viera Wetlands: This is a rare Tuesday, 11/22 field trip to one of the area's birding hot spots. We'll meet at the Lowe's parking lot on Dunlawton, just east of I-95 at 7:00 am. Leaders: Chuck & Joan Tague, 386-253-1166.

HRA Field Trip, Lake Apopka: On Friday, 12/2 at 6:30 am we'll meet in the parking lot of the International Square Mall, behind Krystal on Intrn'l Speedway Blvd. just east of I-95. Leaders: Chuck & Joan Tague, 386-253-1166.

Information on all HRA field trips is on our website:

http://www.halifaxriveras.org/Field_Trips.htm

SEVAS Field Trip, Viera Wetlands: On Saturday, 11/19 meet at 7:00 am in the Market Square parking lot, southwest corner of US 1 and SR 442 (Indian River Blvd.) in Edgewater. Contact Gail Domroski, 386-428-0447

WVAS Field Trip, Lyonia Preserve Jay Walk & Presentation
On Thursday, 11/3, meet at the Deltona Library at 9:00 am for a presentation and hike through Lyonia Preserve, which hosts one of the largest populations of Florida's only endemic species, the Florida Scrub Jay. Call Arnette Sherman: 386-734-5840

WVAS Field Trip, Lake Apopka: On Saturday, 11/19, meet the West Volusia group at 8:00 am at the Post Office, 336 E. New York Ave. in DeLand. Trip leader, Harry Robinson, has been surveying the birds at Lake Apopka for years and probably knows the place better than anyone in the state. Contact him at 386-943-8342

Trail Walk With Don Spence: Sunday, November 13 - 10:00 a.m. Meet at Smith Creek Landing parking lot on Highbridge Road (NE corner of bridge; heading toward A1A) Free. Bring water, sunscreen, bug spray; wear comfortable walking shoes/hiking boots. Walk 2-3 hrs on dirt paths. Don will discuss plants/habitats along the trail. Questions: 386-441-3930 Hosted by Ormond Scenic Loop & Trail CME, Inc.

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The Pelican

We need to be the stewards of this world, not its destroyers

Vol. 57-No.6 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
December, 2011



Message from the President

Thoughts from on High

I don't know why, but when I searched my mind for a topic for December, the Christmas goose popped up. That led me to remember a column that I read in the Philadelphia Inquirer written by columnist Darrell Sifford shortly before he died in 1992. Titled, Lessons We Can Learn From Geese, it stated the following:

Fact 1: As each goose flaps its wings it creates an "uplift" for the birds that follow. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew alone.

Lesson: People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

Fact 2: When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. It quickly moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it. **Lesson:** If we have as much sense as a goose we stay in formation with those headed where we want to go. We are willing to accept their help and give our help to others.

Fact 3: When the lead goose tires, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies to the point position.

Lesson: It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership. As with geese, people are interdependent on each other's skills, capabilities and unique arrangements of gifts, talents or resources.

Fact 4: The geese flying in formation honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. **Lesson:** We need to make sure honking is encouraging. In groups where there is encouragement the production is much greater. The power of encouragement (to stand by one's heart or core values and encourage the heart and core of others) is the quality of honking we seek.

Fact 5: When a goose gets sick, wounded, or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it dies or is able to fly again. Then, they launch out with another formation or catch up with the flock. **Lesson:** If we have as much sense as geese, we will stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we are strong.

I can't vouch for the "facts," but this column made such an impact, that I kept the clipping for years. While searching for a digital copy online, however, I found a reference that claims it was written by Robert McNeish, former Assoc. Superintendent of Baltimore Public Schools in 1972. In order to give credit where it is due, I'm including both potential authors. Regardless of who originally wrote the article, the lessons are still worthy of learning.

Happy Holidays to All. Paula Wehr

Our December Meeting

James "Zach" Zacharias, Curator of Education and History for the Museum of Arts and Sciences, (and excavator of the recently discovered mastodon) will speak about the Museum's extensive permanent collection of authentic Audubon prints now currently on display in the MOAS Karshan Center for Graphic Arts. The presentation will also feature information about the naturalist's life and his visits to Florida from St. Augustine to the Dry Tortugas. **Join us at 6:30 p.m. for holiday cookies and beverages. Bring a plate of cookies to share. The Chapter will provide beverages.**

The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. And remember that the bridge is still out on Daytona Ave. So use 10th Street to reach Sica Hall.



Bald Eagle nest west of Williamson Blvd. & Willow Run Drive in Port Orange. Photo by chapter member, Nancy Creal.

Bald Eagles Are Nesting Now

Official Bald Eagle nesting season begins in Florida on the 15th of October. However, since the birds don't read the memos, they actually begin courtship and nest building as early as mid September. There are a number of active nests in our area. Here's a list of some that are easily viewable.

In Ormond Beach, across from 125 Live Oak Ave. is a large vacant lot. The nest is in a tall pine tree. Parking along this narrow road is tricky. So be careful.

Centennial Park, in Holly Hill- Look for the nest in a tall pine tree along the northwest side of the lake. This is the easiest nest to view.

Town Homes West, in Port Orange- This development is west of Clyde Morris Blvd, just north of Reed Canal Road. As you drive into the subdivision off Clyde Morris, look to the west for a large cypress tree behind 3540 Forest Branch Dr.

The nest pictured above is in a pasture located west of the intersection of Williamson Blvd and Willow Run Blvd. A word of caution, this is a dangerous intersection where traffic flows at 55+ miles per hour. Use extreme care when parking anywhere nearby or attempting to cross the streets.

The old "reliable", in New Smyrna Beach. The nest is located behind the Smyrna Motel, at 1050 N. Dixie Freeway, corner of Turnbull Bay Road. It's located in a large pine tree that's actually on the property of Sacred Heart Catholic School. This nest has hosted a pair of eagles every year for the past 15 or more years.

Each year the pair of eagles from the previous year (that is if they're both still alive) reclaim the nest, refurbish it with a fresh layer of branches and vegetation, and lay up to 3 eggs. Incubation takes about 5 weeks. The birds here locally have been incubating for several weeks already. So chicks should be in the nest by the 2nd week in December. Then the real work begins for the parents. The young fledge from the nest in 2.5 to 3 months and feeding those huge appetites takes a lot out of the adults. By mid January you should be able to see the youngsters perched in the nest. Fewer than 50% of fledglings survive their first year.



A Bald Eagle with a young Laughing Gull

photo by Michael Brothers

Eagle Watch, A Way To Help

Eagle Watch is headquartered at the Center for Birds of Prey, in Maitland. It consists of volunteers monitoring eagle nests all over Florida to see how many eaglets fledge each year. Eaglets can sometimes fall or be blown out of their nest, and have to be placed back in. If they sustain an injury, they are taken to Birds of Prey Center for medical attention.

I have been monitoring nests for the past fourteen years. When I was working I monitored six nests spanning from New Smyrna Beach to Palm Coast. Ironically, when I retired I found I had less free time than when I was working. I currently monitor three nests in Port Orange, South Daytona, and Daytona Beach.

Eagles are like snowbirds; they nest here from September to April. This summer, a fire at Rose Bay killed the pine tree housing a nest, and the nest fell to the ground. I wondered if the eagles would try to rebuild the nest as they had done twice before. I went by the old tree on September 4th and sure enough, the eagles had the nest about half way completed. One eagle was in the nest, and the other was on a limb above the nest. You never know what they might do, so keep your eyes on the trees and towers, as you may see an eagle. To volunteer with Eagle Watch, call Lynda White, Eagle Watch Coordinator, at 407-644-0190 or by e-mail: eaglewatch@audubon.org You can also go to the Center's web page listed below and click on the link to download a registration form.

http://www.audubonofflorida.org/who_centers_CBOP_eaglewatch.html

Tom Arbogast

Tom Arbogast has been a volunteer with Eagle Watch for 14 years. He was asked to write a short piece introducing you all to this volunteer opportunity. This is another citizen science project for which the major qualification is a desire to help. Ed.

Conservation Notes

At our November meeting, Ray Scory, who teaches our chapter's Beginning Birding class, spoke of the history of the Christmas Bird Count and its founder, Frank Chapman. In his presentation he spoke of Chapman's having seen a Bachman's Warbler. Now extinct, this gorgeous little bird once nested from Georgia to Virginia and migrated through Florida to Cuba for the winter. Watching Ray's presentation that night was the only person I can think of who might have seen a Bachman's Warbler before they disappeared into the mists of time and into specimen drawers in museums across the country.

John Carr, our Chapter Historian and jack of all trades, was born and grew up in eastern North Carolina. He began birding when he was just 10 years old. When he was 12 his grand mother took him to meet Archibald Rutledge, the Poet Laureate of South Carolina who was then living near McClellanville, SC. In addition to being a renowned man of letters, Mr. Rutledge was a birder. Young John was admiring an original Audubon print of a Wild Turkey hanging on the living room wall when Mr. Rutledge asked if he'd like to go see a Bachman's Warbler. They were already known to be disappearing then. John looked up the bird in his trusty Petersen's and accepted the offer. They drove out along the Santee River to a spot where the bird still thrived. After a few minutes Rutledge pointed into a nearby bush and there sat John's "life" Bachman's Warbler. In short order, another appeared, clinging to some dangling spanish moss. They were the only Bachman's Warblers John ever saw.

That wasn't the only brush John had with ornithological history. He also met T. Gilbert Pearson, a pioneering conservationist and one of the founders of what became the National Audubon Society. Pearson had collected specimens for Guilford College and some years later, while attending class there, John discovered some of them in a box in a basement at the school. I imagine his hands, in white cotton gloves, trembled with excitement while holding a pair of prepared Ivory-billed Woodpeckers and a pair of Passenger Pigeons. A little blob of green feathers was all that was left of what he assumed had at one time been a Carolina Parakeet.

Over the years John has participated in many Christmas Bird Counts and continues to do so. What began as an alternative to the annual slaughter known as the "Side Hunt", the Christmas Bird Count has morphed into a citizen science project whose impact is almost incalculable. As a history of the distribution and viability of bird populations across the country, the counts form the basis of a vast database that is used daily by ornithologists and biologists everywhere. There are multiple CBC's done here in Volusia and Flagler Counties and elsewhere around the state. There's no better way to get out and spend a day learning about birds and their behavior, while sharpening your birding skills, than to participate in a CBC. Look for information in our Calendar section on where and when to volunteer for counts locally. Your life will be richer for the experience. Just ask John.

David Hartgrove

Our Daytona Beach CBC will be held on Monday, 12/26/11. We'll meet at the Publix at Williamson & Granada at 7:00 am and regroup there for dinner afterward at the Royal Dynasty Chinese Restaurant. Contact me at 386-788-2630 or at birdman9@earthlink.net

Calendar and Events

Friday, 12/2: Chapter field trip to Lake Apopka. This is about as good as winter Florida birding gets. Meet at Int'l Square East, on ISB east of I-95, behind the Krystal's at 6:30am. Bring a lunch.

Friday, 12/9: Chapter field trip to Canaveral Marshes and Blue Heron Wetlands. You "might" need your "wellies" on this one. We meet at the Lowe's on Dunlawton Ave. east of I-95 at 7:00 am. Bring a lunch.

Friday, 12/16: Chapter field trip to Merritt Island NWR. Every year we do 2 trips to this excellent spot. Meet at 7:00 am at the Lowe's on Dunlawton, east of I-95. Bring a lunch.

Friday, 12/16: Flagler CBC. Those looking for some fun with our sister chapter to the north should contact Joe or Judy Dziak at jjdziak@att.net

Saturday, 12/17: Chapter field trip to Merritt Island NWR. Again, meet at Lowe's on Dunlawton, east of I-95 at 7:00 am and bring a lunch.

Saturday, 12/17: West Volusia CBC. Our sister chapter to the west will be doing their CBC and they get birds we rarely see on this side of the county. Contact David Stock dstock@stetson.edu

Monday, 12/26: Our Daytona Beach CBC. We'll meet at Publix at Granada & Williamson at 7:00 am. This is an all day event but we can work around that to fit your schedule. Contact David Hartgrove, birdman9@earthlink.net or 386-788-2630.

Monday, 1/2/12: Ponce Inlet CBC. This count, compiled by our sister chapter to the south, Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, is an excellent way to start the New Year. Contact Dick or Gail Domroski at rdomroski@cfl.rr.com or 386-428-0447

For those wishing to expand their horizons to other parts of Florida, the Florida Ornithological Society website has information on CBC's all over the state. Click on the link below <http://www.fosbirds.org/content/christmas-bird-counts-2011-2012> to see a list of CBC's statewide. Any of these counts would be happy to have you join them and lend your talents to their efforts and you'll get the added benefit of seeing new places.

Audubon Adventures

We are now soliciting sponsors for the classroom sets of Audubon Adventures. If you have been a sponsor in the past you know how important this program is to Volusia County students. For some children it's their first exposure to learning about the environment, wild birds, and other animals.

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.

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.

HRA Welcomes our New Members

Katheryn Brother, Diane Brown, Travis Brown, Arlene Cardone, Don Cardone, Clare Giles, Linda Kozak, Pauline Kurpinsky, Judy Langston, Barbara K. Mason, Ann Maze, Ellen O'Shaughnessy, James O'Shaughnessy, Tataina Potkul, Bunny Sands, Andrea Savoldi, Kenneth Smith, Ralph T. Smith, Margaret Sneddon, Sophia K. Szyndlar, Carl E. Thornblad, Teresa Vaccarino, Walter Weber, Helen A. Wessel, and Alice Winchester. Also, there's a correction to last month's list of new members. Our apologies for giving Penelope Young-Carrasquillo the wrong first name.

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Gulls and Terns in Edgewater

The Southeast Volusia Audubon Society will have its monthly meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 21st, at 7:00 pm, at the Edgewater Public Library. David Hartgrove will present a program on gull and tern identification. Refreshments will be served. The library is located at 103 Indian River Blvd. All are invited.

The following was first published in last month's e-Skimmer, the monthly newsletter of our sister chapter, The Southeast Volusia Audubon Society. It brought to mind an event I first witnessed when our chapter took a 10 day trip to the Canadian Maritimes in 2002. Ken and Beth Gunn spend a great deal of time in Canada and own a home in Alberta. Ed.

A Tidal Bore

Beth decided to join me for my annual pilgrimage to Prince Edward Island in mid-June, her first visit there. While I attended meetings, she explored the island. She now agrees, PEI is a jewel; plus we ate lobster every evening.

The morning after my meetings, we headed for Nova Scotia. The weather was cold, windy and rainy but did clear for us to see both shores as we crossed the eight-mile long Confederation Bridge to the mainland.

We wished to visit the Bay of Fundy to see the tides. As it was the worst possible time in the moon cycle we only expected to see a moderate buildup. We learned the most spectacular places to watch tides were in feeder rivers where the "Tidal Bore" turns the flow and actually causes the river to reverse direction. As we explored, we came to the Shubenacadie River and a sign saying that this was the site of the highest Tidal Bore ever recorded. The location and the river itself were impressive so we decided to do our watching there. We still had some time before the event so we continued on south. We crossed a wide, marshy flat and there, sitting on several posts, were Willets. One was even sitting on the power line. No self-respecting Willet would ever sit on a post on Bethune Beach, but there was no mistaking, these were real Willets. Amazing.

We drove on a few miles to where we were past the vast mud flats and could see the famous bay. We then returned to the Shubenacadie and walked to the well-built viewing platform over the river to await the big event. While waiting, I noticed several birds upriver and with my binoculars soon determined that there were upwards of a dozen eagles fishing. Apparently when the river returns to normal after a tide, pools are left where fish and other water life are trapped. The eagles have learned this is easy picking and have run all other predators off. We saw mostly Bald Eagles but there were at least two Golden Eagles in the mix and one Bald and one Golden were on nests directly across the river from our viewing platform.

Presently the Tidal Bore arrived. It appeared as a line coming around the bend downstream and quickly moved upriver toward us. As it came closer we could see it was actually a 6-inch wave-front moving over the surface of the river. At full moon this front is apparently a couple of feet high. The flow of the river did reverse and the current became very strong as the tide covered sandbars, flowed up the little tributary near us and climbed the bridge pillars. In the 45 minutes we watched, the river rose 8 to 10 feet under us. By the time we left, the tidal flow had slowed and the little tributary was flowing into the main channel again. We didn't wait to see the full return but, man, a Tidal Bore is some spectacle.

Ken Gunn

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