

# The Pelican

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

Vol. 58-No.7 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon  
January, 2013



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

### *Thoughts from on High*

Early in December, Michael Brothers posted this message on [BRDBRAIN](#), the online site to report bird sightings in Florida. "This afternoon, 12/7, the Marine Science Center received an immature Razorbill into our bird hospital. The bird was found washed up on the beach in New Smyrna Beach, Volusia County. What a totally cool bird to have alive in the hand!" Little did Michael know that birders from all over the state would be reporting Razorbill sightings over the next 10-12 days. By mid-December, Razorbills had been found on the gulf coast, in St. John's, Brevard and Volusia Counties and as far south as Miami and Ft. Meyers. [All About Birds](#), The Cornell Lab of Ornithology website, says "...the Razorbill can be found offshore in winter as far south as New Jersey, and occasionally Virginia." Razorbills are not normally expected here in central Florida.

There has been speculation that this irruption is caused by the lingering effects of Super Storm Sandy – perhaps a decline in food supply. Or maybe this is one of nature's mysteries. Some irruptions occur almost on schedule and others happen once in a decade or even once in a century. In any event, be sure to take your scope with you when you travel to the beach and be on the lookout for what is surely a "life bird" for many of us.

The Razorbill, *Alca torda*, is a 17-inch, handsome sea bird which lives in the icy waters of the north Atlantic and breeds on the steep cliffs and rock crevices in coastal Scotland, France, Norway, Canada and Maine. They have deep bills and long, pointed tails. Their heads are relatively large on top of thick necks. In flight, their bodies look streamlined showing black above and clean white below.

Visit [what-when-how](#) for more information on Razorbills and to see gorgeous photos of this pelagic species.

HAPPY NEW YEAR to everyone!

*Paula Wehr*

*Ed. Note:* In 2002 our chapter took a 10 day trip to the Canadian Maritimes. While there we went out to Machias Seal Island, off the coast of New Brunswick, to see the colonial nesting birds there. Though Atlantic Puffins were what most of us went to see, Razorbills made quite an impression too. The inside of the adult's mouth is yellow, **really** yellow. Like the yellow on a Yellow-throated Warbler. They too nest in crevices between large rocks. They return from the sea with their crops full of fish for the young. The puffins arrive with their fish (mostly anchovies) neatly lined up along the outer edges of those gaudily colored bills.

## Calendar & Events

**Date Change!!** Just a reminder, our regular chapter meeting will be on the 4th Monday, January 28th, due to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday holiday.

**"Birding Humor"**... Peer intently into your binoculars, cup your hands over your ears to strain to hear a distant chip note or song, search your memory as to the differences between a Greater and Lesser Scaup. Phew! Sometimes birding becomes really intense. Don Chalfant, retired educator and active naturalist, takes a slightly different approach as he discusses the light-hearted side of bird identification. You'll surely recognize someone you know (or maybe yourself) as Don talks about habits, eccentricities and foibles of birders. Join us at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill when the doors open at 6:30 p.m. The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m, followed by a brief business meeting.

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### HRA Field Trips

January will be a busy month for field trips for us

**Friday, 1/11**, Lake Apopka. Meet at International Square, behind the Krystal on Int'l Speedway Blvd., east of I-95 at 6:30 am. For information, call Chuck & Joan Tague, 386-253-1166

**Friday & Saturday, 1/18 & 1/19** This is the single best time to visit Merritt Island NWR since all of the migrant waterfowl are here now. On both mornings we'll meet at the Target auxiliary parking lot on Dunlawton, east of I-95, in Port Orange. Friday's trip will be lead by David Hartgrove. Call 386-788-2630 for info. Saturday's trip will be lead by Chuck & Joan Tague. For info call 386-253-1166.

**Friday, 1/25**, An evening hike at Tomoka State Park. Meet Chuck & Joan Tague at the park's camp store at 5:30 pm and discover what's out there in the dark. Low tide and a near full moon offer a chance to see the elusive Black Rail, along with several owl species. If the temperatures cooperate, Chuck may be able to lure in a variety of moths for an identification class on them too. This is sure to be a fun event.

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**Wednesday, 1/23 thru Monday, 1/28**, The 16th annual Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival, the largest festival of its kind in the country, will again be hosted at Brevard Community College, in north Titusville. Just half an hour south of us, the festival has all kinds of birding related exhibits, exciting field trips, all of the major optical manufacturers and up close and personal experiences with hawks and owls at the Raptor Project. Click [here](#) for all the information. See you there!

## Conservation Notes

As the New Year begins let's take a minute to review some of the challenges we worked on over the past year and look ahead to some of those we'll be involved with in 2013.

We signed on to a letter in a campaign organized by the Pew Research Center seeking catch limits on menhaden. This tiny fish is one of the cornerstone species in the food web of the entire Atlantic Ocean. Overfishing for cat food and fertilizer threatened to wipe out the species entirely. Millions of seabirds depend on this species for survival, as do game and commercial fisheries. On Dec. 14th the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission announced regulations that should protect the species well into the future.

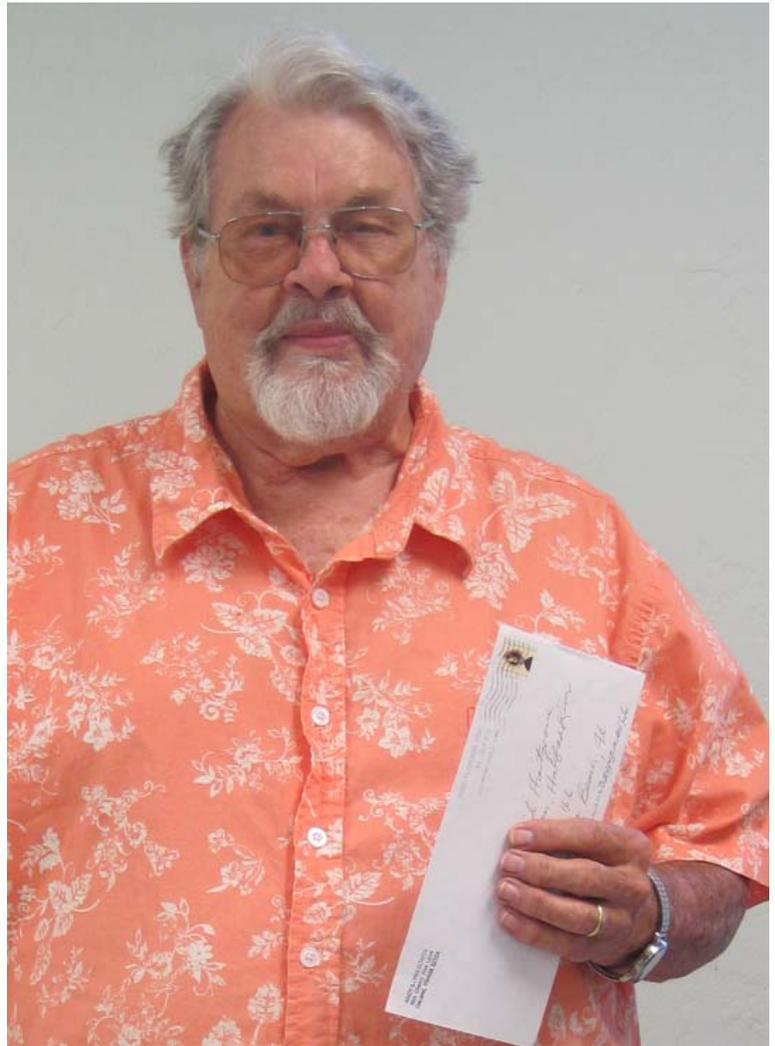
Progress is slow but steady on the proposal to establish our newest national wildlife refuge at Lake Apopka. In last month's Pelican I wrote about the St Johns River Water Management District's Governing Board voting on the possible surplussing of 594 acres along the northern border of the property at the Lake Apopka North Shore Restoration Area. The Board listened to the concerns of the 20+ people who spoke in opposition to the sale of this property since it would facilitate a planned expansion of a nearby airport. They voted to adopt a motion made by Board Member, Richard Hamman, that places a restriction on any land to be surplus and sold. The restriction states that, "future use of the property may not be incompatible with the conservation uses on the remaining land." This restriction may end up being challenged in court but it's a step in the right direction. We continue to monitor the situation.

Also in last month's Pelican I mentioned the plan to grab off part of Merritt Island NWR for a new, private, space launch facility. In a recent article in the News-Journal, District 3 Councilwoman Elect, Deborah Denys, praised the project as a positive step in getting Volusia County's economy revived. She met with the President of Space Florida, Frank DiBello. At the December meeting of Space Coast Audubon, he tried to paint a rosy picture of what could be done if his company were allowed to steal 150 acres of prime Refuge land for this venture. The fact that there are plenty of existing facilities at Kennedy Space Center going unused was glossed over. The main reason they want to build new launch facilities outside NASA's property is because those facilities at KSC are under the aegis NASA's safety regulations. These are far stricter than what they would operate under at a new facility. Those would be under the guidelines set out by the Federal Aviation Authority, whose experience with space launch safety and that of the nearby public is far less comprehensive. There's a reason NASA likes to have a considerable safety buffer zone between its launch facilities and residential neighborhoods. The chemicals in solid fuel rockets are extremely hazardous and could, in the event of an accident, kill hundreds, if not thousands. Somehow I doubt this point was brought up in Ms. Denys's meeting with Space Florida.

The Governor and his staff of misfits has been rearranging things to suit their friends in the polluting industries of the state. The Department of Environmental Protection handed out pink slips to 58 long time employees just in time for Christmas. We can't have those pesky inspectors going around finding leaky pipes that threaten the public health. The new DEP Secretary has staffed his office with people who've spent their entire working lives advocating for the state's worst polluters. It's James Watt and the Reagan Interior department all over again. When will they learn that profits at the cost of public health won't be tolerated?

*Continues on the following page*

## Meet Our Chapter Volunteer, John Carr



John Carr is something of a fixture at HRA meetings – he is always one of the first people to arrive, he knows almost everyone who comes through the door and he has been active with the chapter about as long as any current members can remember. He holds the elected office of Membership Secretary, with the thankless job of sorting through all the data to know how many official members are in our chapter and when their memberships expire. He also holds the elected office of Historian and is tasked with keeping records of chapter activities. Together with his wife, Fran, who was Newsletter Editor for about 14 years, they teamed up to create, edit, proofread and mail 500 to 600 paper newsletters each and every month until we changed to the electronic newsletter in 2011. In his spare time, John is also the chapter's unofficial mailman. He picks up the US mail from our PO box twice a month and brings it to our meetings.

Fran and John moved to Daytona Beach in 1996 from Harkers Island, N.C. Prior to retiring, John worked as a microbiologist at a Veteran's Hospital in N.C. They have been married for nearly 60 years and have three children.

When you see John at an upcoming meeting, be sure to say hello and thank him for all he does for our chapter. And don't be surprised if he has an amusing anecdote to tell you relating to whatever topic you may be discussing. His memory is legendary, and I think that most of his tales are true!

*Paula Wehr*

Finally, there's a move afoot to open Tiger Bay State Forest to off road vehicles. The wildlife out there isn't stressed enough and mixing people on horses with noisy ATV's is such a safe idea. So let's open the place up to dirt bikes and ATV's. It's hard to imagine a more destructive decision. This didn't stop the Daytona Beach City Commission from endorsing this lunacy at its meeting on October 3rd. And apparently several of our County Council members think this is a fine idea too. The Blue Ribbon Coalition, which states on its website that it's "Preserving our natural resources **FOR** the public instead of **FROM** the public" is helping push the issue. This national group is dedicated to opening all public lands to off road vehicles. It should come as no surprise that this "astroturf" grass roots group is funded primarily by off road vehicle manufacturers. Imagine standing in a pristine forest trying to listen to the soft and high pitched song of Cedar Waxwings over the high revolution whine of a 250 cc Suzuki with no muffler. 2013 is shaping up to be an interesting time.

David Hartgrove

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### We Welcome Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new members: Sophie Citrowske, Alicia Dana, Harry M. Demontmolin, Sharon Donohue, Joe Dowding, Marion Jacobsen, Doris C. Keene, Jeffery M. Kim, Jerry C. Krietzburg, Wilton Lisk, Kathlene Lowery, Carolyn Ricks, Genieveve Schwarz, Raymond Shaw, John W. Sheirich, Lucy Sroka, Terry Strickhouser, Lani Van Petten, Adam D. Warren, and Helen Whalen. We hope to see you soon at a meeting or on one of our great field trips.

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### Travel and Birding Opportunities

Florida Nature Tours has scheduled 3 trips to the Dry Tortugas beginning on April 11, 2013. These will depart from Fort Meyers Beach aboard the very comfortable "Ultimate Getaway." Cost is 1100.00 and birding doesn't get any better than the Dry Tortugas in April. Check the website [here](#) for all the details.

How about a trip to see some African birds? Ken Gunn and Tad Fyock, from Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, are putting together a trip to Kenya. The trip dates are March 13 to April 1st. Cost is 6500.00/7000.00, plus airfare. Depending on how many hot air balloon trips they take flying over the herds of migrating African mammals. Contact Tad at 386-426-8793 or Ken at 386-423-2334. Just imagine your life list after this once in a lifetime trip!

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### Audubon Adventures For Our Local Schools

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, Audubon Adventures is perfect for anyone looking for supplemental science activities for upper elementary students. See the link [here](#) for more information.

Donations from members fund this program. 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!

### Communication Towers and Birds

Every year, approximately 7 million birds die from collisions with communication towers in North America. In July, 2012, the Federal Aviation Administration proposed changes to tower lights requirements that will reduce impacts on migratory birds. The American Bird Conservancy, working with other environmental organizations like Defenders of Wildlife and National Audubon, spent 10 years researching possible solutions to the problem with those in the communications industry, federal agencies, and tower erectors. The Federal Communications Commission licenses towers. The lighting requirements are set by the Federal Aviation Administration. While all involved expressed concern for the levels of bird mortality, the primary concern was for aviation safety. Old habits die hard. The old style, red, incandescent lights that slowly pulsed from on to off had been doing a good job of warning pilots away from the structures for decades. Research into the problem showed that this type of light proved the most attractive to migrating birds. They can become disoriented in fog or rain at night when most birds migrate and collisions occur.

Finally, science and research prevailed and the outcome is good for all concerned. The new tower lights requirements that were approved by the FAA are less expensive, reduce tower energy costs, reduce tower maintenance costs and, most importantly, reduces bird collisions by a whopping 70%! Michigan State University was heavily involved in the research and has a [website](#) that offers lots more information.

David Hartgrove



Green Heron photo by Ray Scory

Green Herons, *Butorides virescens* (this one was photographed at MINWR) can be a difficult bird to find, especially when you're trying to find one to add to your list on a bird count. Old time names for the bird included "Green Bittern", "Poke" and my favorite, "Fly-up-the Creek." They are solitary feeders, often staking out a spot near flowing water and waiting patiently while frozen in place for fish to swim by. They have also been seen to use bait, like a feather or small twig dropped onto the surface of the water, to lure fish in closer. Its diet consists mostly of fish but like its larger cousins it will eat anything it can swallow. Unlike the other herons and egrets Green Herons tend to be solitary nesters, rather than in colonies. The male selects the nest site and begins construction. The female does the final work and incubation is done by both birds for about 3 weeks. At around 2 weeks of age the young begin climbing around the nest area and they fledge at just over 3 weeks. Two broods per year are not uncommon here in Florida.

David Hartgrove

*A Special Thanks To Our Sponsors*

**Florida Power & Light, Garden Club of the Halifax Country,  
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**Our mailing address is PO Box 166 Daytona Beach, FL 32115-0166**

**Our website is [www.halifaxrivers.org](http://www.halifaxrivers.org) For information on upcoming field trips, etc.**

**Contact Our Board Members**

Office	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
President	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.com">paulawehr@cfl.rr.com</a>
Vice President	Rachel Ramsey	673-1037	<a href="mailto:gmamimi@cfl.rr.com">gmamimi@cfl.rr.com</a>
Vice President	John Roessler	255-9826	<a href="mailto:birdman3651@bellsouth.net">birdman3651@bellsouth.net</a>
Treasurer	Susan Jarosik	676-0056 (ofc)	<a href="mailto:sjarosik@plantationrealtyservices.com">sjarosik@plantationrealtyservices.com</a>
Corresponding Sec.	Karen Mosher	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
Recording Sec.	Peggy Yokubonus	673-7619	<a href="mailto:pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com">pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com</a>
Membership Sec.	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@cfl.rr.com">jcarr14@cfl.rr.com</a>
Historian	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@cfl.rr.com">jcarr14@cfl.rr.com</a>
Past President	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
At Large 2015	Karen Moser	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
At Large 2015	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
At Large 2013	Willie Burns	386-405-4468	<a href="mailto:wwillie@juno.com">wwillie@juno.com</a>
At Large 2013	Becky Schubert	386-447-8916	<a href="mailto:bschub@earthlink.net">bschub@earthlink.net</a>
At Large 2014	Renate Calero	761-8179	<a href="mailto:renate_c@hotmail.com">renate_c@hotmail.com</a>
At Large 2014	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>

**Committee Members**

Committee	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
Bird ID Class	Ray Scory	763-4260	<a href="mailto:colors@cfl.rr.com">colors@cfl.rr.com</a>
Conservation	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
Education	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>
	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
Field Trips	Chuck Tague	412-841-8813	<a href="mailto:kingrail@mac.com">kingrail@mac.com</a>
	Joan Tague	253-1166	<a href="mailto:babyowl@mac.com">babyowl@mac.com</a>
Newsletter Editor	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a> or <a href="mailto:hrapelican11@earthlink.net">hrapelican11@earthlink.net</a>
Welcome	Jari Arbogast	761-2283	<a href="mailto:arbofish@att.net">arbofish@att.net</a>
	Celine Sullivan	257-1980	<a href="mailto:celinesul@aol.com">celinesul@aol.com</a>
Webmaster	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.com">paulawehr@cfl.rr.com</a>

# The Pelican

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Volume 58-No.8 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon  
February, 2013



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Thoughts from on High*

It's February. Love is in the air. Bald Eagles and many raptors have already hatched their chicks. Northern Cardinals, Pileated Woodpeckers and the ever-amorous Mourning Doves are feeling frisky, zipping around in the trees and shrubs as they chase each other. Seems like a good time for some tidbits on heart shapes in the natural world.



After a few cold spells and dry weather, some of the leaves on my seagrape tree are turning the most lovely colors. This is the back side (bottom) of the leaf.



Sea Grape is a briefly deciduous tree with heart-shaped green, leathery leaves. It partially loses its leaves at different times during the year. When visiting Sanibel Island last summer, I came across a story about early settlers in Florida using Sea Grape leaves as valentines. Winter cold spells turn the leaves red. As the story goes, the sender would write his/her romantic sentiments on the leaf and deliver it to the love interest. According to local lore, large Sea Grape leaves were also used as picnic plates and kooky hats. Our thanks to Elizabeth Smith [www.lizardart.com](http://www.lizardart.com) for permission to use her illustration of the Sea Grape leaf.

[Eastern Redbud](#) is a large deciduous shrub or small tree found throughout the eastern US. It has a short, sometimes twisted trunk and spreading branches. In spring, before the heart-shaped leaves appear, the half-inch pink/magenta flowers appear in clusters tight against the branches. In some parts of Appalachia, green twigs are used to season venison or possum entrees. Native Americans ate the flowers either raw or boiled and roasted the seeds.

Wild grape vines and morning glory tangles cover trees, posts and anything else that doesn't move along Florida's road sides. But the Air Potato (*Dioscorea bulbifera*) is pretty vine with shiny, dark green heart-shaped leaves. Unfortunately, it is a Category 1 invasive exotic from tropical Asia. That means the plant is altering native plant communities by displacing native species, changing community structures or ecological functions, or hybridizing with natives. Managers at parks, preserves and refuges spend an inordinate amount of resources on removal of this invasive.

*Paula Wehr*

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## Calendar and Events

**Monday, 2/18** "Protecting our Coastal Resources" Most of us who will attend the February membership meeting live at the beach or within a few miles of the coast. So we are all acutely aware of the fragility of the coastal habitat. Maia McGuire, PhD, Marine Extension Agent with SeaGrant Florida & University of Florida IFAS Extension, will discuss coastal resources, threats to the habitat and balancing human recreation with sensitive wildlife requirements. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. See you there!

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## Field Trips

**Thur. & Fri., 2/7 & 8** Kissimmee Prairie Preserve and Three Lakes WMA Join us for this overnight trip to some Florida's best and least known hot spots. Obviously time is of the essence if you want to go on this trip. Contact David Hartgrove for details: 386-788-2630.

**Wed., 2/20** Tosahatchee WMA This large tract of conservation land in east Orange County has diverse habitats and offers excellent birding opportunities. We'll meet at 7:00 am at the Target parking lot on Dunlawton east of I-95. Bring a lunch. Questions? Contact David Hartgrove, 386-788-2630.

**Wed., 2/27** Marl Bed Flats This property in east Seminole County has both wet pasture and oak hammock. So we can expect waders, shorebirds and warblers. We might also get our feet a bit damp. So bring boots if you have them and your lunch. We'll meet at the Target on Dunlawton east of I-95 at 7:00 am. Questions? Contact David Hartgrove, 386-788-2630.

**Fri., 3/8** Orlando Wetlands Park This property in east Orange County has hosted wintering Vermillion Flycatchers in the past and provides excellent birding. Bring your lunch and comfortable walking shoes for a somewhat longer hike. We'll meet at the Target on Dunlawton east of I-95 at 7:00 am. Questions? Call Peggy Yokubonus, 386-673-7619.

## Conservation Notes

First, an update on Space Florida's planned launch facility on our county's southern border. I recently received a forwarded e-mail that was from a realtor in New Smyrna Beach. He's pitching the idea of Space Florida purchasing something called the Highlander Airport. This property is located west of Oak Hill between Maytown/Osteen Road and the FEC railroad tracks. While this plan would leave the property at Merritt Island intact, it would shift the dangers associated with rocket launches even closer to the good people of Oak Hill. As I mentioned in last month's Pelican, rocket fuel is extremely toxic. Depending on wind speed and direction, a launch pad accident could kill or injure hundreds. While the safety of rocket launches has improved over the past several decades, we need only ask the people who've lived in Titusville since the 1960's how thrilling launches can be. There's a very entertaining documentary film from 1985 called, "Growing Up With Rockets", that shows rather graphically just how much of a threat a rocket launch can be. Several were blown up by range safety officers over the Banana River as they raced out of control toward Titusville. A great many more simply exploded on the launch pad.

At the December meeting of Space Coast Audubon, one of Space Florida's representatives made a point of saying that Space X, one their chief partners, is itching to get out from under the rules and restricted operating environment at the Kennedy Space Center. Space X is a private launch company founded by Elon Musk, the founder of Pay Pal and the Tesla Automobile Company. Mr. Musk has long been lauded for his willingness to take risks. Gambling with other people's money on the viability of an online payment system or the marketability of a high end electric car is one thing. Does this indicate that the company might gamble with the safety of an entire community in order to cut corners and offer a higher return to the investors when launching rockets? Who knows? When the company openly argues that one of the chief reasons for wanting separate facilities is its dissatisfaction with the restrictive environment at KSC, it seems a valid question to ask.

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On one of our recent field trips to Merritt Island NWR, we stopped at Stop #4 on Black Point Wildlife Drive. This is the one with the parking lot just around a curve in the road and where there are usually lots of shorebirds. In addition to a very cooperative American Bittern we found nearby, I found a banded Red Knot. On its left leg it carried a light green flag with the numbers "053". I was able to read these numbers using a spotting scope and also photographed the bird. I thought at the time that there was something familiar about that number. When I got home and was entering the banding information I looked up above my desk and saw that I have a photo of this same bird. So no wonder it seemed familiar. I failed to write any information on the back of the photo but I believe it was taken along the beach in Daytona Beach Shores in 2009 while doing the Fall Migration Count.

So twice now, as this bird has made its arduous 28,000 mile annual round trip migration between its nesting grounds in the high Arctic and Tierra Del Fuego, in southern Chile, it's been in my scope view. It was good to see that this long distance traveler is still with us and appeared to be healthy. A photo appears on the next page.

*David Hartgrove*



## MEET OUR CHAPTER VOLUNTEERS

Holly Zwart-Duryea

Holly is an At-Large Board member, recently re-elected for her second three-year term which expires in June 2015. She took on the responsibility of tracking the many volunteer hours donated by elected officers, committee heads and general members. She co-chairs the Audubon Adventures Committee which places educational kits in local elementary classrooms.

She was born in a suburb of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania but has spent her entire adult life in Florida. She moved to Gainesville in 1971 with her husband who was attending UF. Holly earned a BS in biology from Penn State University and worked in the Radiation & Biology Department at UF as a research assistant before moving to Ormond Beach where she spent her career in the Utilities Department for the City of Daytona Beach. She and her husband, Stephen, have one daughter who lives near Boston with her family, including Holly's only grandson.

Holly credits John Roessler for planting the seed of learning the identity of local birds. He sometimes came to her office to watch the birds outside her window. When she retired, she signed up for the HRA Beginner Bird ID Class, met some new friends and continued with learning about birds and enjoying the outdoors. She also enjoys kayaking all the local springs, rivers and the ICW with her husband. She continues to play tennis and golf with life-long friends. Be sure to say thanks to Holly when you see her at an upcoming meeting or on a field trip.

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Speaking of Audubon Adventures, it's not too late to send in your contribution to support this very worthwhile program. It's designed for 4th and 5th graders and provides valuable lessons on the natural world. 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.

## The Great Backyard Bird Count

After 15 years of success in North America, the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) will open up to the entire world for the first time in 2013. Anyone, from anywhere on earth, can participate by visiting [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org) and reporting the kinds and numbers of birds they see during the 16th annual count, February 15–18, 2013.

A joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, with partner Bird Studies Canada, the four-day count typically receives sightings from tens of thousands of people reporting more than 600 bird species in the United States and Canada alone. During the 2012 count, participants reported 17.4 million bird observations on 104,000 checklists.

“The GBBC is an ideal opportunity for young and old to connect with nature by discovering birds and to participate in a huge science project,” said Gary Langham, Audubon’s Chief Scientist. “This year, we hope people on all seven continents, oceans, and islands, will head out into their neighborhoods, rural areas, parks, and wilderness to further our understanding of birds across the hemispheres.”

Participating is easy. Simply watch birds for at least 15 minutes at the location of your choice on one or more of the count days. Estimate the number of birds you see for each species you can identify. You’ll select your location on a map, answer a few questions, enter your tallies, and then submit your data to share your sightings with others around the world.

The global capacity for the count will be powered by eBird, an online checklist program for all of the world’s 10,240 bird species. Participants will be able to view what others are seeing on interactive maps, keep their own records, and have their tallies recorded for perpetuity.

“The popularity of the Great Backyard Bird Count grows each year,” said Dick Cannings, Senior Projects Officer at Bird Studies Canada, “and with the new features, participation will be even more exciting.”

The Great Backyard Bird Count is sponsored in part by [Wild Birds Unlimited](#).

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## Razorbill Invasion A First In Florida

In the past 250 years of ornithological history of the state of Florida, about 12 Razorbills (*Alca torda*) have been recorded in the state. Nearly all of these were found singly and dead on beaches north of St Augustine. This year’s Miami Christmas Bird Count recorded over 600! They have been reported on the west coast as far away as Pensacola! This is a completely unprecedented event and no one knows quite why it’s happened. Theories abound. One is that since this year saw particularly strong nesting success, large numbers of young moved south when they were driven away from traditional feeding grounds by adults. Many of the birds seen have been juveniles. Another thought is that when Hurricane Sandy devastated the northeast coast, the pollution washed out to sea forced the birds to move to cleaner waters in search of food. Razorbills are known to be especially sensitive to pollutants in the environment. It may be a combination of these and other, as yet unknown, factors. Whatever the cause, birders from all over the country and the state have been flocking to both coasts hoping to see these birds in such unfamiliar waters. Whatever the outcome of the investigation, global climate change will certainly be a factor. Our planet faces an uncertain future and we owe it to future generations to do what we can to urge government leaders to move ahead with effective policy changes that address the situation. Procrastination simply isn’t an option.

David Hartgrove



Halifax River Audubon lost our loyal supporter and good friend, Willie Burns, on Sunday evening, January 20, at 10:13 p.m. A memorial service will be held to honor Willie on Saturday, February 9, at 11:00 a.m. at [Sugar Mill Gardens](#), 950 Old Sugar Mill Road, Port Orange. Meet at the bench we dedicated to Willie last year (near the bird feeders.)

**Directions:** When traveling from I-95, take the Port Orange exit ramp (exit 85), and go east on Route 421 to Route 5-A (Nova Rd). Turn north on 5-A, turn right on Herbert Street. The road will fork to the left and becomes Old Mill Road. Follow the signs to the gardens. When traveling on U.S. 1, go west on Herbert Street, which is one block north of Dunlawton Bridge, and follow the signs to the gardens. Though not the best photo of Willie, it shows him at his best, doing what he loved for the chapter. *Ed.*

\* \* \* \* \*

## We Welcome Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new members: Richard Bicknell, Robert Cronk, Christin Downs, Susan Goree, Juianna Kolarovski, Louise Montgomery, Wilfred & Katie Parsons, Melissa Ranley, Sang Roberson, Sigrid Smith, Margaret Snyder, Sandra Stuart, William Taylor, George & Martha Timm, Aliene Turner, Lonna Weiss, Elizabeth Wheeler. We hope to see you on a field trip or at an upcoming meeting.

\* \* \* \* \*



*A Special Thanks To Our Sponsors*

**Florida Power & Light, Garden Club of the Halifax Country,  
The Ormond Beach Garden Club and Colonial Colony**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Our mailing address is PO Box 166 Daytona Beach, FL 32115-0166**

**Our website is [www.halifaxriveras.org](http://www.halifaxriveras.org) For information on upcoming field trips, etc.**

**Contact Our Board Members**

Office	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
President	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.com">paulawehr@cfl.rr.com</a>
Vice President	Rachel Ramsey	673-1037	<a href="mailto:gmamimi@cfl.rr.com">gmamimi@cfl.rr.com</a>
Vice President	John Roessler	255-9826	<a href="mailto:birdman3651@bellsouth.net">birdman3651@bellsouth.net</a>
Treasurer	Susan Jarosik	676-0056 (ofc)	<a href="mailto:sjarosik@plantationrealtyservices.com">sjarosik@plantationrealtyservices.com</a>
Corresponding Sec.	Karen Mosher	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
Recording Sec.	Peggy Yokubonus	673-7619	<a href="mailto:pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com">pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com</a>
Membership Sec.	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@cfl.rr.com">jcarr14@cfl.rr.com</a>
Historian	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@cfl.rr.com">jcarr14@cfl.rr.com</a>
Past President	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
At Large 2015	Karen Moser	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
At Large 2015	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
At Large 2013	Willie Burns	386-405-4468	<a href="mailto:wwillie@juno.com">wwillie@juno.com</a>
At Large 2013	Becky Schubert	386-447-8916	<a href="mailto:bschub@earthlink.net">bschub@earthlink.net</a>
At Large 2014	Renate Calero	761-8179	<a href="mailto:renate_c@hotmail.com">renate_c@hotmail.com</a>
At Large 2014	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>

**Committee Members**

Committee	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
Bird ID Class	Ray Scory	763-4260	<a href="mailto:colors@cfl.rr.com">colors@cfl.rr.com</a>
Conservation	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
Education	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>
	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
Field Trips	Chuck Tague	412-841-8813	<a href="mailto:kingrail@mac.com">kingrail@mac.com</a>
	Joan Tague	253-1166	<a href="mailto:babyowl@mac.com">babyowl@mac.com</a>
Newsletter Editor	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a> or <a href="mailto:hrapelican11@earthlink.net">hrapelican11@earthlink.net</a>
Welcome	Jari Arbogast	761-2283	<a href="mailto:arbofish@att.net">arbofish@att.net</a>
	Celine Sullivan	257-1980	<a href="mailto:celinesul@aol.com">celinesul@aol.com</a>
Webmaster	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.com">paulawehr@cfl.rr.com</a>

# The Pelican

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

Vol. 58-No.9 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon March, 2013



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Thoughts from on High*

March Madness is nearly here. No, not the one associated with NCAA basketball. I'm talking about the squabbles that will take place as millions of birds seek the best territory they can find. A good territory must supply not only a sufficient amount of food for the adults and young, but the right type of food. The territory also needs to include nesting sites that provide protection from predation and materials to build the nest. Territory size varies widely by species with some birds needing large areas and others able to live nearly side-by-side with various species because the territory provides different food for different needs. Territory size can be dramatically increased during years of drought when food is scarce or reduced in times of abundance.

Migratory birds may begin to claim territory in early spring when males arrive from their wintering grounds. They want to find the best territory in hopes of attracting a mate. Year-round resident birds will begin re-defending their territory to alert newly-arrived migrants that "this space is taken."

Singing is the most common way that birds tell other birds that a territory is taken. Songs can carry quite a distance and birds perch near the edge of their territory to broadcast their claim. An added bonus is that loud song may also attract a mate. Woodpeckers and some game birds, like the Ruffed Grouse, claim territory by drumming instead of singing. The woodpeckers drum on hollow trees, telephone poles or the metal flashing on the side of a roof. Ruffed Grouse drum while standing on fallen logs or hollow stumps. They inflate their chest cavity with air and tightly grip the log or stump on which they're standing. This transmits the vibrations through their feet to the hollow log and it amplifies the sound throughout the forest. Here's a [link](#) to a You Tube video.

Some birds, like wrens, claim their territory by building multiple nests in various locations within the territory. Females look over the nests, make their selection, and often begin redecorating immediately. Aggressive species may take the direct route and chase the intruder out of the territory. This behavior is common when a dominant male is discouraging younger males from taking over an existing territory.

As time goes on, the madness increases—staking the territory, protecting the nest, feeding the family. Then the hatchlings leave home, the frenzy slows and birds begin moving toward wintering grounds. March Madness takes over birders, too, as we watch each cycle in the lives of the birds we love.

*Paula Wehr*

## Calendar and Events

**Our next meeting, Monday, 3/18/13** Join us at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill, on Monday, March 18, to learn about fish in central Florida. Jimmy Hull, owner of Hull's Seafood in Ormond Beach, will share his vast knowledge of local fish. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Field Trips, etc.

**Friday, 3/8/13**, Our field trip to Orlando Wetlands Park. This will be a good one. Recent sightings posted for the park include Vermillion Flycatcher, Purple Gallinule, Purple Martin and Least Bittern. Join Peggy Yokubonus for this trip, meeting at the Target parking lot on Dunlawton Ave., east of I-95 in Port Orange at 7:00 am. This trip involves a good hike and excellent picnic facilities. So bring your lunch. Questions, call Peggy at 386-673-7691.

**Wednesday, 3/13/13**, Ocala National Forest. Join John Roessler on a trip to this nearby treasure. We'll look for Florida Scrub Jays and Red-cockaded Woodpeckers among other avian treats. Meet at 7:00 am at the Publix at Granada & Williamson Blvds. in Ormond Beach. Bring a lunch. Questions, call John at 386-255-9826.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Other Field Trip Opportunities

Can't make our trip to Orlando Wetlands on Friday, 3/8? Then perhaps you'd like to join Southeast Volusia Audubon on a trip there the following day, Sat., 3/9. Or how about a trip to Peacock's Pocket and Biolab Road, at Merritt Island on 3/22? Click on this [link](#) for all the details.

On Thursday, 3/21, West Volusia Audubon will be taking a river trip on the Blue Heron. Our chapter has taken this boat out before and it promises to be a good trip. Call Eli Schaperow as soon as possible at 407-314-7965 for all the details.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Spring in the Dry Tortugas** can be as good as birding gets in Florida. Join Florida Nature Tours for an exciting adventure. Here's a [link](#) to their website. Due to price increases for the boat, the cost of next year's trips will probably increase by 200.00 per person. So now's the time to book your trip to this tropical paradise. One day on a trip last year we had 4 Black-whiskered Vireos in a single tree! There are Sooty Terns, Brown Noddies and Magnificent Frigatebirds galore and star gazing beyond compare. I'll be co-leading the 2nd trip, 4/26 through 4/29, though this is not a Halifax River Audubon sponsored trip. Don't miss out on this once in a lifetime experience.

*David Hartgrove*

## Conservation Notes

In January I wrote of the proposal to open Tiger Bay State Forest to off road vehicles. I've looked all over the internet for a copy of this proposal and been unsuccessful so far. As reported in the press, the proposal seeks access just 10% of the Forest property. The 10% they're seeking includes all of the roads and fire breaks. Since these roads and trails are how any and all current user groups access the property the request is really for access to all of the Forest. As the old saying goes, "I might have been born at night, but it wasn't last night."

The City of Daytona Beach has already written a letter to the state outlining their approval of this proposal. We were sort of blind sided by this since we didn't even know they'd been asked to support it. By the time we found out their letter had already been sent. Now they've sent another letter to the County Council asking them to come on board with this proposal. Of course, Tiger Bay State Forest is just that, it's a state forest and neither Volusia County nor the City has any power to open it to off road vehicles. The reason they're weighing in on the issue is because they've been asked to by the plan's proponent. When he approached the state with his proposal they were completely unreceptive. With a budget that barely allows for toilet paper to be kept in the restrooms, the last thing the Division of Forestry needs is to open the entire property to a group whose motorized equipment has the potential for environmental damage.

All of the local Audubon chapters have been in contact with each other on this issue. Stephen Kintner, Conservation Chair for West Volusia Audubon Society, has been asked to speak for us and to represent us on what we hope will be a moderated panel that will include all user groups when and if a decision is made to open some portion of Tiger Bay to off road vehicles. I've written to the Volusia County Council outlining our opposition to the proposal. In one of my e-mails to the Council I indicated that I saw this issue as being similar to the issue of jet skis having access to the beach. As taxpayers they should have access to the beach. But one group's activities can have damaging effects on the activities of others. As a result, jet skis are limited to certain sections of the beach. Perhaps such a compromise can be worked out for ATV users in Tiger Bay. We will continue to work with our sister chapters and the Volusia/Flagler Environmental Council to urge that any recommendations to the Governor's office and the Division of Forestry be the product of a moderated meeting where all user groups are represented.

\* \* \* \* \*

The State Legislature is in session again. So of course the loony legislation has already begun to surface. Perhaps the worst so far to emerge has been SB 584. Senator Alan Hays, from Lake County, is the author of this bill. It seeks to place the state in the position of having to sell off one park in order to establish another. It says that before the state can take ownership of any more land it must sell off an equal amount of the land it already owns. Apparently aimed at derailing the effects of any new land buying program, (like Florida's Water and Land Legacy amendment) the Senator said he was shocked at how much land the government now owns. With our population growing again we're going to need a lot of land for parks, recreation and water recharge in the future. We shouldn't have to sell off what we have already. Perhaps a respectful note to the Senator sent [here](#) will get him to remove the bill. It's worth a try.

*David Hartgrove*



## MEET OUR CHAPTER VOLUNTEERS

### Renate Calero

Renate is an At-Large Board Member, elected to her first three-year term in June 2011. She was born in Germany where she lived until she moved to England to study the language when she was 18. She next moved to Madrid to study Spanish for one year, later relocating to Paris to learn French. Three years later she returned to Spain where she met and married her American husband who was a career military man. They lived in Spain for 25 years, raising a son and a daughter. Renate worked as a trilingual executive secretary. She and her husband moved to Florida in 1989. In December 2002, Renate graduated Summa Cum Laude from UCF with a BA in Liberal Studies. Her husband passed away in 2001. Renate has three grandchildren – two in Ohio and one in Texas.

She learned to love all nature – trees, plants, birds, animals, insects – from her grandfather and continued studying field guides throughout her life. She learned about the local Audubon chapters, attended a few events, made friends and became active with our chapter, as well as participating in the West Volusia Audubon CBC. Renate attends yoga sessions and Wisdom in Senior Education lectures at Daytona State College. She is also interested in local history. Be sure to thank Renate for her contributions to our chapter when you see her at an upcoming meeting or field trip.



A big (24") Dusky Pygmy Rattler on the trail at Marlbed Flats

*photo by David Hartgrove*

## Teacher of the Year Has High Praise

### For Audubon Adventures

Laura Smith, voted Teacher of the Year at R. J. Longstreet Elementary, Daytona Beach successfully uses the Audubon Adventures materials to supplement her curriculum. She is a teacher of the fifth grade and this is what she has to say about the materials:

“The Audubon Adventures are well liked by the students. Each of the newspapers and the activities within are easily incorporated into different subject areas. They are wonderful resources for building vocabulary, learning about different ecosystems, practicing science skills such as observing, recording data, and analyzing data. They are a wonderful help in building reading skills such as cause and effect, compare and contrast, text features, etc. They have been an excellent resource for the students. I have used them in whole group discussions or as a center activity in science, reading, and social studies. The students enjoy them because the newspapers are colorful, have real life pictures, quick and fun activities, and are a change from reading textbooks.”

These materials are supplied to fourth and fifth grade teachers and students in thirty-one classrooms this school year through the generous support of our members. A donation of \$45.00 supplies one classroom with Audubon Adventures.

*Marion Monaghan*

*Editor's note:* For those who don't know, R. J. Longstreet was the founder of our chapter and of the Florida Audubon Society, in addition to being Principal of Seabreeze High School. Donations in any amount for Audubon Adventures are welcome. Please note on your check that the donation is for Audubon Adventures. Thank you.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Welcome to Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new members and to a few who were old members and are joining us again: Nancy Barber, Pat Bays, Junemarie Biege, Michael Carson, John Dicesare, C.W. Ebbert, Gina Holt, Reid Hughes, Janet Kappa, Mimi & Fred Mansour, Susan Taylor, Nicole Triantafellu and Irma Trovato. We hope to see you at a meeting or on one of our field trips.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Great Backyard Bird Count a Roaring Success

This year's Great Backyard Bird Count was the largest bird count in the history of the planet. Over 4 days birds were counted in 103 countries, including Argentina & Afghanistan, Italy & Iraq and Antarctica and Zimbabwe. Over 120,000 checklists were turned in, with 116,688 in the United States alone. 25.6 million birds were counted covering 3,144 species. With 5,414 reports, Florida ranked 4th among the states after California, 8,584; New York, 7,484 and Pennsylvania 7,000. The top 5 most reported species (reported on the highest number of checklists) were: Northern Cardinal, Dark-eyed Junco, Mourning Dove, Downy Woodpecker and House Finch. The top 5 most common birds were: Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Red-winged Blackbird, European Starling and American Coot. Thousands of photos have been submitted to the GBBC photo contest. Here's a [link](#) to view some of them.

## Riding Your Mouse To Adventure

No, we're not talking about a revival of Stuart Little novels or the movie. This about using your computer to follow the flights of a variety of interesting birds. The Avian Research and Conservation Institute, ARCI for short, has been tracking a number of bird species for the past 16 years. At first this was done using older radio technology, which has a relatively short range. New, miniaturized transmitters are now capable of using satellite based technology and have opened up a whole new range of options.

Our ARCI website just went through some major revisions (sorry it's not ready to view on a smart phone yet). The best addition is that we've now linked all of our satellite tracked birds maps with a mapping website called [seaturtle.org](http://seaturtle.org), so you can follow our birds in real time, and see maps of passed birds tracked too. Note that these maps do not show the fine-scale GPS data. Start with going to our website [here](#). Then, on the home page, scroll down to the Satellite Tracking link. Click here and get to our Tracking Studies page where you'll see sections on 7 different bird species we are tracking: Reddish Egret, Snail Kite, Magnificent Frigatebird, Swallow-tailed Kite, Great White Heron, Northern Harrier and Short-tailed Hawk. Each has a link to its own page on the Seaturtle site. From the Seaturtle site you'll see a list of all the birds we're tracking and a map of all of their tracks. Click on an individual bird and you can see its entire map, a zoomed in map, and even animation of the bird's route.

We hope you enjoy keeping up with our research, and the spectacular journeys these birds go through. We continue to learn so much from these birds and get more clues to answer conservation questions throughout their range.

*Gina Kent*

*Editor's note,* Gina is the Research Ecologist and Coordinator for the Avian Research and Conservation Institute in Gainesville, FL. She's been up many tall trees attaching tracking devices to young Swallow-tailed Kites. While you're visiting their [website](#), please consider making a much appreciated donation to this worthwhile group.

\* \* \* \* \*



American Swallow-tailed Kite

*photo by Joyce Stefancic*

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**Contact Our Board Members**

Office	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
President	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.com">paulawehr@cfl.rr.com</a>
Vice President	Rachel Ramsey	673-1037	<a href="mailto:gmamimi@cfl.rr.com">gmamimi@cfl.rr.com</a>
Vice President	John Roessler	255-9826	<a href="mailto:birdman3651@bellsouth.net">birdman3651@bellsouth.net</a>
Treasurer	Susan Jarosik	676-0056 (ofc)	<a href="mailto:sjarosik@plantationrealtyservices.com">sjarosik@plantationrealtyservices.com</a>
Corresponding Sec.	Karen Mosher	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
Recording Sec.	Peggy Yokubonus	673-7619	<a href="mailto:pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com">pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com</a>
Membership Sec.	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@cfl.rr.com">jcarr14@cfl.rr.com</a>
Historian	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@cfl.rr.com">jcarr14@cfl.rr.com</a>
Past President	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
At Large 2015	Karen Moser	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
At Large 2015	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
At Large 2013	Willie Burns	386-405-4468	<a href="mailto:wwillie@juno.com">wwillie@juno.com</a>
At Large 2013	Becky Schubert	386-447-8916	<a href="mailto:bschub@earthlink.net">bschub@earthlink.net</a>
At Large 2014	Renate Calero	761-8179	<a href="mailto:renate_c@hotmail.com">renate_c@hotmail.com</a>
At Large 2014	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>

**Committee Members**

Committee	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
Bird ID Class	Ray Scory	763-4260	<a href="mailto:colors@cfl.rr.com">colors@cfl.rr.com</a>
Conservation	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
Education	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>
	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
Field Trips	Chuck Tague	412-841-8813	<a href="mailto:kingrail@mac.com">kingrail@mac.com</a>
	Joan Tague	253-1166	<a href="mailto:babyowl@mac.com">babyowl@mac.com</a>
Newsletter Editor	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a> or <a href="mailto:hrapelican11@earthlink.net">hrapelican11@earthlink.net</a>
Welcome	Jari Arbogast	761-2283	<a href="mailto:arbofish@att.net">arbofish@att.net</a>
	Celine Sullivan	257-1980	<a href="mailto:celinesul@aol.com">celinesul@aol.com</a>
Webmaster	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.com">paulawehr@cfl.rr.com</a>

# The Pelican

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

Vol. 58-No.10 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon April, 2013



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

### *Thoughts from on High*

During a recent forum in Daytona Beach, Eric Draper, Executive Director of Audubon Florida spoke about a passage from a letter written by John James Audubon during his travels in what may have been Brevard County. Mr. Audubon wrote that when he rounded a curve in his boat and came upon an abundance of Roseate Spoonbills, Great Egrets and other plumed birds, the sight "made his heart soar."

That reminded me of my first trip to Forsythe NWR north of Atlantic City several decades ago. As we rounded a bend in the road, we were greeted by mud flats which looked as if they were covered with snow. It was late fall, when darkness begins to fall early in the north. As we neared the white area, the "snow" came alive and lifted off the ground in what seemed a single mass. The hundreds (or maybe thousands) of Snow Buntings flew into the slanted light of the lowering sun, gleaming a brilliant white. Just as quickly, they all turned as a single unit and nearly disappeared. It was a moment of heart-soaring beauty.

Much more recently, March 13 to be specific, our chapter went to a section of the Ocala National Forest on Route 19 in search of the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker. It was a cool, damp morning. We walked a hundred yards or so into the forest. The tall, old-growth pines further shaded the somewhat overcast skies. We heard the squeaking call of our target birds and spotted several flying from tree to tree. Our leader set up his scope on one bird who was working on enlarging the nest hole. At nearly that same moment, the sun broke through the clouds and shone like a spotlight right on the very tree where the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker was working. Unfazed by all the attentive eyes on his every movement, the woodpecker continued his work in the "spotlight" and unknowingly provided heart-soaring moments for everyone in our group.

I thank John Audubon for providing a name to the feeling we all experience many times as we pursue our hobby of watching birds. And I thank Eric Draper for relating the story and reminding me of these heart-soaring memories. Heart-soaring moments are not as rare as we may think. We have to go outside, keep our eyes and ears open and make ourselves available for the wonder of nature all around us.

*Paula Wehr*

## Calendar & Events

**Monday, April 15, Program Meeting,** David and Sharon Baker spotted one hundred seventy-five species of birds during their almost two-week stay in Montana in 2012, including 31 new life birds. David photographed Black-billed Magpies, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, an American Dipper and more. David will present a photo show of "The Birds of the Big Sky Country – Birding Western Montana" on April 15 at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. See you there!

### Field Trips, etc.

**Sunday, April 7,** Port Orange Bridge Walk, with Ray Scory. Meet at 3:00 pm under the west side of the bridge. Great Egrets have little ones in the nest already on Rookery Island. Questions? Call Ray at 386-763-4260

**Friday, April 12,** Wekiva Springs State Park, with Chuck Tague. Plan on a hike of a mile or so and some excellent Spring warbler viewing. Meet at International Square Mall, Blvd., behind the Krystal, 2550 Int'l Speedway Blvd. at 7:00 am. Bring your lunch. Questions? Call Chuck at 386-253-1166

**Friday, April 26,** Tiger Bay State Forest, with Ray Scory and Chuck Tague. This will be an easy hike that could find a muddy or wet spot in some places. Tiger Bay has excellent butterfly and bird watching and Bachman's Sparrows should be singing on territory by then. Meet at International Square Mall, Blvd., behind the Krystal, 2550 Int'l Speedway Blvd. at 7:00 am. Bring your lunch. Questions? Call Chuck at 386-253-1166 or Ray at 386-763-4260.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Also on April 7th:** The Palmetto Club was founded in 1894 and was the first building in Daytona Beach to have electricity. It has a long history of civic engagement and charitable work. They are hosting a unique fund raiser on Sunday, 4/7. At 1:00 pm there will be a luncheon and boutique at their clubhouse, 1000 South Beach Street in Daytona Beach. This will be followed by a tour of 4 historic homes, 3 of which are now operated as B&B's. You can get more information on their website [here](#) or by calling Diane Lessard, 386-760-9169.

### Volusia County Outdoor Learning Adventures

Bonnie Cary has been thrilling Volusia County school kids for years with her presentations on the tracks and scat of local animals. She's also leading a number of field trips focusing on bicycle and eco buggy tours of a number of state and county properties. Native plant expert, Ray Jarrett, will lead a trip at Hickory Bluff. Herpetology expert, Jim DUBY, will talk snakes at Deep Creek Preserve. The list of trips can be found [here](#) on the County's website. Come out and learn about places you may not have been to.

## Conservation Notes

By now you probably know that on March 21st the Volusia County Council voted 5 to 2 against endorsing the opening of Tiger Bay State Forest to off road vehicles. On behalf of our entire board I want to thank each of you who took the time to contact the Council members and express your thoughts on the issue.

The Council will be hearing from Space Florida and their plans to grab off 150+ acres of land from Merritt Island NWR for a totally unnecessary new launch facility. The proposed new facility will be located in extreme southeast Volusia County and one of the County Council's new members who represents that area, Deborah Denys, thinks this is a fine idea that will help kick start the County's economy. This will be the first item on the Council's agenda on Thursday, 4/4. We'll be there to let them know that not everyone thinks this is such a great idea.

Imagine trying to document every species of bird breeding in the entire state of Florida. That's what we tried to do with the first Breeding Bird Atlas, conducted between Jan.1, 1986 and Dec. 31, 1991. You can read about that effort [here](#). In that first BBA, 196 breeding species were documented. Last year, knowing that many changes have come to Florida in the intervening years, a new BBA was begun. The first one was done using field data cards. In 1988 not too many people had computers in their homes. Now, not only do people have them in their homes, they frequently have them in their pockets, in the form of smart phones. So this new effort allows direct input of data by the field volunteers. If you've ever entered your sightings in [e-Bird](#) then working with the new [BBA II](#) database will be easy for you. I can't emphasize too much just how important this citizen science project is to the environmental future of our state. If you'd like to participate (and this is a great way to improve your birding skills) please contact me. We really do need your help and I guarantee you'll have fun and learn a lot.

Finally, some sad news regarding the Bald Eagle nest in Holly Hill's Centennial Park. After the article in the News-Journal announcing that the nest had 3 chicks, the park was over run with photographers and some violated the space requirements that federal regulations mandate around active nests. So the City placed barricades and closed off much of the park until nesting was complete. This proved a minor inconvenience for local documentary film maker, Steve Brown. Steve has been in the park filming every day since the first chick hatched out. Several of the regular park visitors had decided to name the birds. They called the entire group, "The Hill Family." The female's name was to be "Holly." The male's name was never decided upon (I vote for "Hank") but the names for the chicks came easily, "Faith, Hope and Charity." I was with Steve one afternoon as we watched the young ones hopping around on the ground exploring their new world and looking for lizards. On Sunday, 3/24, Steve was there at sundown watching as the birds all flew into the nest tree. This created something of a traffic jam and Hope, the second chick, flew back, circled out over LPGA Blvd. and disappeared in the fading light. Steve assumed the bird flew back into the nest tree as he was leaving for the night. The following morning he arrived to find both adults and 2 of the young birds perched in a nearby dead oak looking into the water treatment plant and screeching like he'd never heard. Tragically, he then learned that Hope had been found drowned in one of the tanks at the water treatment plant. The bird will be sent to the USF&WS center in Colorado which supplies eagle feathers to Native American tribes. Steve says work on the film will continue.

*David Hartgrove*



## MEET OUR CHAPTER VOLUNTEERS

John Roessler

John has been chapter President for four years and a past Field Trip Chair. He is currently one of two chapter Vice-Presidents.

He was born and raised in Cincinnati. After receiving his draft notice in 1965, he selected the US Navy and signed on for four years. He did tours at sea and in Viet Nam. His tactical squadron was assigned to Cecil field in Jacksonville which brought John to Florida. He liked the weather and the beach and decided to stay after he completed his military duty. He held a variety of part-time jobs prior to joining the City of Daytona Beach in the mid-1970's. After 30+ years with the City in positions of increasing responsibility, he retired as Manager of Water & Waste Water.

John credits Lois Robinson (former chapter President) and John Carr (current chapter Membership Secretary & Historian) with teaching him how to identify birds. He attended their chapter bird ID class held at The Casements more than a decade ago. As an avid fisherman, he spent hours near the water and had been photographing birds long before he could identify them. The ID class gave him his start in official birding. Through lots of field work and studying field guides, John built his knowledge base and now assists Ray Scory in teaching our current Beginner Bird ID Classes each fall.

When he's not birding, John still spends time fishing with his daughter, an avid fisherwoman. His grandson is away at college and his pre-teen granddaughter lives with her mother in Daytona Beach. He plays golf several times a week. John has owned a motorcycle since he was 16 years old and still enjoys riding in and around the area. In the early 1970's he raced his motorcycle on the beach at Daytona Beach Shores.

Without our chapter volunteers, we could not provide all our current activities. Be sure to say thanks to John when you see him.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Welcome To Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new members and to a few old members who are joining us again: Frank Barr, Patricia Bays, Joseph M. Bierworth, Christine Dann, Deloris Dixon-Claus, Jim Evans, Deborah Green, Virginia Groh, Susan Haynes, Pam Heapley, Patricia Herold, Thomas R. Ingersoll, Donna Jordon McLachlin, Dale Meagley, Lisa Mickey, Patricia Monaghan, Ruth Scholl and Harry E. Thomas. We hope to see you all at our meetings and on our field trips.



## The Yvonne Scarlett-Golden Cultural and Educational Center

James Hanis, City Architect for Daytona Beach, designed and oversaw the construction of a beautiful new cultural and educational center at 1000 Vine Street. The building is built around a square, open-air amphitheater. Windows on all sides of the building overlook natural areas preserved from what was originally a treed retention pond. Mr. Hanis contacted our chapter in January to ask if we'd provide bird houses and feeders to support the existing resident birds and to attract other native species. In mid-March, two large platform feeders with squirrel/raccoon baffles were installed outside the classroom windows. Two songbird houses and an owl nest box were strategically placed on the grounds and a bat house, constructed by Shari Blissett-Clark of the Florida Bat Conservancy, was placed on the southwest corner. Shari told us that pregnant young female bats will be looking for new homes over the next few weeks, so there is a good possibility that we'll have a bat colony living in the house this spring. Keep your fingers crossed that one of our nest boxes will house a Great-Crested Flycatcher family over the next months.

An official grand opening of the facility will be held in the coming weeks. HRA is proud to partner with the City on this project. The classroom facilities are excellent. We look forward to participating in educational programs at the YSG Center in the future.

*Paula Wehr, who also took the photos*



## Audubon Adventures For Our Local Schools

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, Audubon Adventures is perfect for anyone looking for supplemental science activities for upper elementary students. See the link [here](#) for more information.

Donations from members fund this program. 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!

\* \* \* \* \*

## Opportunities To Help The Marine Science Center

And to have birding adventures too. The Marine Science Center is sponsoring another pelagic trip, this time to the far side of the Gulf Stream 100 miles out to a spot called the "Tuna Grounds." In 2011 this trip found White-tailed and Red-billed Tropicbirds Black-capped Petrels, all 3 species of storm petrel, all 3 species of jaeger and Brown Booby. The boat is the very comfortable and safe, Pastime Princess, from New Smyrna Beach. The trip will be on Sunday, May 19th and will leave the dock at 3:00 am, returning at 9:00 pm that night. Cost is 195.00.

If you've been seeing the notices in the Pelican about birding the Dry Tortugas with [Florida Nature Tours](#) next month, book your trip now through the Marine Science Center and they will get a donation from Florida Nature Tours. The dates for the Dry Tortugas trips are: Sat., 4/20 thru Tues., 4/23; Fri., 4/26 thru Mon., 4/29; and Thurs., 5/2 thru Sun., 5/5. All three trips have a few vacancies yet but they're filling fast. E-mail MSC Director, Michael Brothers [here](#) or call him, 386-304-5543, for all of the details.

\* \* \* \* \*



*photo by David Hartgrove*

This spectacular male Rufous Hummingbird was found at a home here in Daytona Beach. Though it's probably just a matter of time before this species nests somewhere in Volusia County, there's no evidence they are yet. This winter migrant has probably already headed back west. Twenty years ago Ruby-throated was the only hummingbird nesting east of the Mississippi. Rufous and Black-chinned have been found nesting in Florida's western panhandle in the past few years. Keep an eye out for these little guys.

*David Hartgrove*

*A Special Thanks To Our Sponsors*

**Florida Power & Light, Garden Club of the Halifax Country,  
The Ormond Beach Garden Club and Colonial Colony**

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**Our mailing address is PO Box 166 Daytona Beach, FL 32115-0166**

**Our website is [www.halifaxriveras.org](http://www.halifaxriveras.org) For information on upcoming field trips, etc.**

**Contact Our Board Members**

Office	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
President	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.com">paulawehr@cfl.rr.com</a>
Vice President	Rachel Ramsey	673-1037	<a href="mailto:gmamimi@cfl.rr.com">gmamimi@cfl.rr.com</a>
Vice President	John Roessler	255-9826	<a href="mailto:birdman3651@bellsouth.net">birdman3651@bellsouth.net</a>
Treasurer	Susan Jarosik	676-0056 (ofc)	<a href="mailto:sjarosik@plantationrealtyservices.com">sjarosik@plantationrealtyservices.com</a>
Corresponding Sec.	Karen Mosher	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
Recording Sec.	Peggy Yokubonus	673-7619	<a href="mailto:pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com">pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com</a>
Membership Sec.	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@cfl.rr.com">jcarr14@cfl.rr.com</a>
Historian	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@cfl.rr.com">jcarr14@cfl.rr.com</a>
Past President	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
At Large 2015	Karen Moser	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
At Large 2015	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
At Large 2013	Vacant		
At Large 2013	Becky Schubert	386-447-8916	<a href="mailto:bschub@earthlink.net">bschub@earthlink.net</a>
At Large 2014	Renate Calero	761-8179	<a href="mailto:renate_c@hotmail.com">renate_c@hotmail.com</a>
At Large 2014	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>

**Committee Members**

Committee	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
Bird ID Class	Ray Scory	763-4260	<a href="mailto:colors@cfl.rr.com">colors@cfl.rr.com</a>
Conservation	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
Education	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>
	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
Field Trips	Chuck Tague	412-841-8813	<a href="mailto:kingrail@mac.com">kingrail@mac.com</a>
	Joan Tague	253-1166	<a href="mailto:babyowl@mac.com">babyowl@mac.com</a>
Newsletter Editor	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a> or <a href="mailto:hrapelican11@earthlink.net">hrapelican11@earthlink.net</a>
Welcome	Jari Arbogast	761-2283	<a href="mailto:arbofish@att.net">arbofish@att.net</a>
	Celine Sullivan	257-1980	<a href="mailto:celinesul@aol.com">celinesul@aol.com</a>
Webmaster	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.com">paulawehr@cfl.rr.com</a>

# The Pelican

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

Vol. 58-No.11 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon May, 2013



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Thoughts from on High*

May. The days grow longer, the nights grow warmer, the air grows heavier with humidity. Especially after these long months of drought, we central Floridians are hoping for the rainy season to begin.

Our local amphibians rely on the coming summer rains to fill the swamps and lowlands in order to continue their species. We humans look forward to the nighttime chorus of tiny frogs. In southeastern Pennsylvania, I knew that warmer weather was on the way when I turned onto the narrow two-lane road leading to my home and heard the spring "peepers." Almost as soon as the ice melted, these tiny frogs began their nightly calling to attract a mate.

Although the volume made it seem that the ground must have been covered in layers of teeny frogs, in actuality the sounds dramatically underrepresented the numbers of frogs because only the males sing. Females and immature males are almost mute. Male frogs sing to attract a mate because it is the safest way to avoid predators. Displaying individually, as many other species do, would be very risky. Individual voices within the large chorus are more difficult for predators to locate and the combined volume carries farther to distant females. Mother Nature and the frogs apparently have thought this through very carefully as they continue to reproduce at an astonishing rate.

Frogs are also excellent natural barometers, reacting to changes in humidity. As rain approaches, some frogs celebrate by calling loudly even in the daytime. By the time the first few drops begin to fall, their frenzied calling reaches a pitch akin to the wild cheering at an international soccer match.

Let's keep our ears attuned to frog calls and document whether they are more accurate at predicting the weather than our local TV meteorologists.

*Paula Wehr*

\* \* \* \* \*

## Welcome to Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new members and some who were members in the past and have renewed their affiliation: Eugene Coe, Eleanor Cohan, Patti Gloekler, Wallace Gowett, ? Haig (obviously missing a first name here), William Kisbany, Richard Mabbott, Tom Massfeller, Nan Mather, Robert McCullan, Sharon McKelvey, Mary Jo Mercier, Joan Miller, Ohri Kul, Richard Peterson, Bruce Pyle, Barbara Scarcella, Dee Townsend and Janet Weibolt. We hope to see you all at a meeting or on one of our excellent field trips.

## Calendar & Events

**Monday, May 20th** Program Meeting, Spiders – the Original Web Masters. Hairy and scary? Or furry and friendly? At the May 20 meeting, retired park ranger Linda Chandler invites you to explore the world of spiders, useful and interesting creatures which, whether we see them or not, are all around us. She will introduce you to some of Florida's common spiders, their anatomy, habits and skills, and perhaps also dispel some myths. Joins us at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Linda's presentation begins at 7:00 p.m.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Field Trips

**Saturday, May 11th** Originally this was to be the Spring Migration Count. However, for a variety of reasons, this count is no longer being done. So we're off to the St Augustine Alligator Farm, one of the best places in Florida to photograph wading birds on the nest. We'll meet at Ormond Towne Square shopping center at Granada & Williamson Blvds., near the Publix and Chick Filet, at 7:30 am. Please bring exact change of 16.07 for the entrance fee. This is a significant savings off the regular price of 22.95 and is made available to us if we have at least 10 people going. Questions? Call David Hartgrove, 386-788-2630.

**Saturday, May 18th** Join West Volusia Audubon Society for a trip to Merritt Island NWR. Meet up at the NE corner of the Deland Post Office parking lot, 336 E. New York Ave., at 8:00 AM to arrange car pool. Drivers should receive \$4 from each passenger for this trip. There may be an extra charge for Blackpoint Drive. This is an all day trip so bring lunch and snacks to last. Questions, call Harry Robinson, 386-943-8342.

\* \* \* \* \*



## Refresh your birding skills or learn new ones

Three class workshops, three field workshops. Click [here](#) for details and the application.

## Conservation Notes

The Legislature in Tallahassee has almost completed their session and two of the worst bills filed were tabled in committee. SB 584 would have forced the state to sell off land equal to any it proposed purchasing. So if we wanted a new state park, we'd have to sell an existing one. This ill conceived piece of legislation was the brain child of Senator Alan Hays and was designed to limit any government agency, state or local, from purchasing land for conservation purposes. An avalanche of phone calls and e-mails to the members of the Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee convinced them that this was a bad idea and hopefully it won't see action on the Senate floor this session.

The other bad bill to die in committee, at least for now, was SB 1320. This one was designed to facilitate the spread of feral cat colonies. Why anyone would consider this a good idea is beyond me. Feral cats kill roughly 3 billion birds every year and they have been implicated in the extinction of 33 species of birds worldwide. Either of these bad bills could still suddenly be resurrected through the chicanery that takes place in the last 48 hours of every legislative session. Let's hope that doesn't happen.

From the "Birding Community E-Bulletin" comes news that 2 men have been convicted of killing endangered Whooping Cranes. In Texas, a 42-year-old man shot a juvenile Whooping Crane in January after mistaking it for a Sandhill Crane. He pleaded guilty on 6 March to one count of violating the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and was fined \$5,000, ordered to make a \$10,000 community service payment to the Friends of Aransas and Matagorda Island National Wildlife Refuges, and placed on probation for one year. In South Dakota, a man was sentenced in February for shooting an adult Whooping Crane in April of last year. The 26-year-old man was ordered to pay \$85,000 in restitution, placed on probation for two years, had his hunting rifle confiscated, and lost his hunting rights anywhere in the U.S. for two years.

Finally, the American Bird Conservancy has a list of ten things you can do to help birds in your yard this Spring. Check out the link [here](#) for all the information.

*David Hartgrove*

\* \* \* \* \*

## Hummingbirds At Home Has Fledged!

Audubon's first all-digital, mobile citizen science program will build a continent-wide network of citizen scientists to help uncover how hummingbirds are affected by climate change. Using a mobile-optimized web portal and smartphone apps, people from across the U.S. can report their hummingbird sightings using their computer or smartphone. The data collected will guide Audubon in devising actions to help hummingbirds thrive despite climate change and other threats. Click on this [link](#) to the website for all of the information. There are videos, apps for smart phones, etc. All of this is designed to help you help those marvels of avian architecture.

*Paula Wehr*



## MEET OUR CHAPTER VOLUNTEERS

Susan Jarosik

Susan holds the position of chapter Treasurer, responsible for tracking all our income, expenses and investments.

She was born in Iowa and moved around to several states during her childhood before ending up at Loyola University in New Orleans where she earned a BA in Communications. After graduation she moved to Florida with friends. She worked in advertising for a radio station and two different magazines. Most of her career, however, has been spent in real estate sales. She and her husband, Tom, currently own and operate Plantation Realty Services.

Her dad always liked birds and kept his binoculars handy so he could watch birds in the backyard or at the feeders. In 2007 Susan traveled to the Amazon with chapter member and friend, Ann Collins. Seeing all the exotic birds on that trip piqued her interest and she began birding in earnest when she returned to Florida.

In her limited time off from work, Susan loves to travel, read, cook and socialize. She looks forward to the day when she can spend more time birding. She has fantastic eyes and can spot movement at good distances. She can see the bird clearly, but what is difficult, she says, is quickly sorting through all the possibilities in her head to select the correct species. Don't we all have that problem!

We thank Susan for all she does to ensure the success of our chapter.

Chapter Field Trip Co-Chair, Chuck Tague, has a [blog](#) where his excellent writing informs his readers on a variety of natural subjects. In December of last year he wrote of Piping Plovers. Our thanks for his permission to include a portion here. Editor.

## Piping Plovers

### A genuinely rare bird

The sea air was warm yet crisp; the wind calm. A shadow appeared to float ahead of the waves as the surf rolled gently across the sand. With my binoculars I saw it was a Piping Plover, a shorebird that resembles a sand-colored tennis ball with short, orange legs and a pigeon's beak. A white collar circled its neck.

The plover's legs scissored frantically to stay ahead of the water. When the surf retreated, the plover stopped and waited as a wet, glass-like film formed across the beach. The bird skidded onto the wet sand then stopped abruptly. It extended its right foot, tapped rapidly on the beach, tilted its head slightly, hopped forward three steps and tapped again.

I watched the plover for five or six minutes. It pecked the sand a dozen times or so, but if it caught anything it was too small for me to see. Something spooked the gulls and terns loafing a short distance away. They circled and when they landed the plover was gone.

There are three distinct breeding populations of Piping Plovers. Those that nest on the Atlantic coast from North Carolina to Newfoundland are listed as threatened, as are the plovers that breed in the midwestern prairies. The endangered population around the Great Lakes declined drastically during the Twentieth Century. Historically Piping Plovers bred in all the Great Lake states and provinces. Several pairs nested on Presque Isle in Erie County through the late nineteen-fifties. Their breeding range is now limited to northern Lake Michigan. The plover's main threats are habitats lost to coastal development and disturbance by beach-loving humans. In 1986 there were only 17 breeding pairs in the Great Lakes region. By 2011 there were 54 pairs. Because their population is so small, nest predators -- raccoons, snakes, gulls, dogs and feral cats -- have a disproportionate effect and the nests require constant monitoring and protection. Although conservation efforts have increased the Great Lake population the plovers have a long way to go before they are no longer endangered. Piping Plovers are not unusual along Florida's Atlantic coast, but I seldom see more than a few at a time. Birds from all three populations migrate to the Gulf and the southern Atlantic coasts and mix freely during the winter. I wondered where the bird with pattering feet came from.

On October 27th, 2012, Hurricane Sandy passed by Daytona Beach on her way to the shores of the northeast US coast. I met my friends, Ken & Patsy Hunter, for a walk along the wind swept Ponce Inlet shoreline. Among the birds we saw was a Piping Plover sporting several colored bands and a red flag on the bird's left tibia. I carefully noted the color combination and sent it off to the bird banding clearing house in Patuxent, MD. They forwarded the information to the bander, Alice Van Zoeren. She sent the following reply: *Thank you for taking the time to report your sighting of a Piping Plover from the Great Lakes population. The plover you saw and photographed was hatched in 2009 on North Manitou Island in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore and banded as an adult last summer (2012) at Gulliver, MI along the north shore of Lake Michigan in the upper peninsula.*

It was from one of the Great Lakes plovers on its fourth journey to Florida -- a rare bird indeed.

Chuck Tague



*Lunar high tide & Hurricane Sandy's waves over wash the Ponce Inlet Jetty*



*From the Upper Peninsula to a Ponce Inlet beach. A long flight for a truly rare bird.*

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**Florida Power & Light, Garden Club of the Halifax Country,  
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**Contact Our Board Members**

Office	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
President	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.com">paulawehr@cfl.rr.com</a>
Vice President	Rachel Ramsey	673-1037	<a href="mailto:gmamimi@cfl.rr.com">gmamimi@cfl.rr.com</a>
Vice President	John Roessler	255-9826	<a href="mailto:birdman3651@bellsouth.net">birdman3651@bellsouth.net</a>
Treasurer	Susan Jarosik	676-0056 (ofc)	<a href="mailto:sjarosik@plantationrealtyservices.com">sjarosik@plantationrealtyservices.com</a>
Corresponding Sec.	Karen Mosher	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
Recording Sec.	Peggy Yokubonus	673-7619	<a href="mailto:pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com">pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com</a>
Membership Sec.	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@cfl.rr.com">jcarr14@cfl.rr.com</a>
Historian	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@cfl.rr.com">jcarr14@cfl.rr.com</a>
Past President	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
At Large 2015	Karen Moser	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
At Large 2015	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
At Large 2013	Vacant		
At Large 2013	Becky Schubert	386-447-8916	<a href="mailto:bschub@earthlink.net">bschub@earthlink.net</a>
At Large 2014	Renate Calero	761-8179	<a href="mailto:renate_c@hotmail.com">renate_c@hotmail.com</a>
At Large 2014	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>

**Committee Members**

Committee	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
Bird ID Class	Ray Scory	763-4260	<a href="mailto:colors@cfl.rr.com">colors@cfl.rr.com</a>
Conservation	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
Education	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>
	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
Field Trips	Chuck Tague	412-841-8813	<a href="mailto:kingrail@mac.com">kingrail@mac.com</a>
	Joan Tague	253-1166	<a href="mailto:babyowl@mac.com">babyowl@mac.com</a>
Newsletter Editor	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a> or <a href="mailto:hrapelican11@earthlink.net">hrapelican11@earthlink.net</a>
Welcome	Jari Arbogast	761-2283	<a href="mailto:arbofish@att.net">arbofish@att.net</a>
	Celine Sullivan	257-1980	<a href="mailto:celinesul@aol.com">celinesul@aol.com</a>
Webmaster	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.com">paulawehr@cfl.rr.com</a>

# The Pelican

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

Vol. 58-No.12 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon June, 2013



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

### *Thoughts From On High*

Happy Father's Day to all our members for whom this wish is appropriate. Some human father's truly earn the "World's Best Dad" accolade, other fathers sit idly by watching the family interactions from their recliners and an unfortunate few completely abdicate their paternal responsibilities. Avian fathers, too, run the gamut. Male birds can do all the same tasks involved in raising the family, except laying the eggs. As a result, many males are very involved in building the nest, incubating the eggs, and feeding the family.

The [Rhinoceros Hornbill](#) takes his responsibilities to the extreme. Before laying her eggs, the female enters a tree cavity and, with the help of the male, essentially seals herself inside leaving a small slit, through which the male provides all her food while she incubates the eggs for 40 days. After the chicks hatch, both she and the babies are completely dependent on the father to provide all their food. When the chicks are large enough to leave the nest, the father assists the female in chipping away at the entrance. Even after the hatchlings leave the nest, the father continues to bring food for the mother and chicks.

Male sunbitterns, members of the rail family found in Central and South America, gorge themselves prior to the egg hatching because after the chick is born, he/she receives the majority of the food foraged by the father. The parents don't eat until the chick is full.

And everyone who has seen the documentary "March of the Penguins" knows that the Emperor Penguin may win the Father of the Year award. In autumn, all the penguins age five and over leave the ocean to walk inland to their ancestral breeding grounds which is about 60 miles from the coast. Following courtship on the breeding grounds, the female lays one egg, after which she returns to the ocean, leaving the father with sole responsibility for incubating the egg, which is balanced on top of his feet and burrowed under his feathers. For the next two months all the fathers group together in a huge circle, constantly moving, so that each bird takes a turn at being near the center of the circle where it's the warmest and moving outward to the edges and then back toward the center. Males endure temperatures of -80°F with howling winds, relying on the snow to provide the only water they will drink in the months they are on the breeding grounds. They don't eat and by the time the chicks hatch, the males have lost nearly half their weight and eagerly await the return of the females so they can walk back to the ocean to fatten up before making the trek again to ensure the safety and care of the chicks until they are old enough to fend for themselves.

*Paula Wehr*

## Calendar & Events

**Monday, 6/17/13 Chapter Meeting,** Don't miss the final meeting prior to our summer break. We are ending our fall through spring session with a presentation from Chuck Tague about the Life of Butterflies. Chuck received rave reviews in April from the Ormond Beach Garden Club after they enjoyed his gorgeous photos and educational commentary. Chuck begins his presentation at 7:00 p.m. at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for socializing. As usual, we'll have an assortment of donated books, chapter logo tee shirts and note cards for sale.

We'll also be voting to elect officers and Board members. The slate of nominees is:

President – Paula Wehr

Vice President – John Roessler

Treasurer – Rachel Ramsey

Recording Secretary – Peggy Yokubonus

Membership Secretary & Historian – John Carr

At-Large Board Member, Class of 2016 – Dan Gribbin

At-Large Board Member, Class of 2016 – vacant

Please contact Paula Wehr at 386-673-5332 if you'd like to volunteer for the vacant At-Large position. The three-year term begins immediately following the election and expires after the election in June 2016.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Other Happenings

With our sister Audubon chapters on summer hiatus here are a few items you may want to put on your agenda in the near future.

**Wed., 6/5** The Paw Paw Chapter of the Native Plant Society has their regular monthly meeting. Tonight's topic is one we can all use: "Removing Invasives From Your Yard." A presentation by Wes Winters. Paw Paw Chapter meetings are held at the James Street Youth Center, 1700 James St., South Daytona at 7:00 pm.

**Tues., 7/9** Note the special day for this special meeting. The Paw Paw Chapter presents Dr. Walter Kingsley Taylor, author of several books of Florida wild flowers. Dr. Taylor will be introducing his newest book, "*Florida Wildflowers, A Comprehensive Guide.*" This meeting will be held at the Piggott Center, 504 Big Tree Road, in South Daytona, at 7:00 pm. Here's a [link](#) to their new website.

## Conservation Notes

Prior to Monday, April 22nd of this year, there had only been four records of a Bahama Woodstar (*Calliphlox evelynae*) having been seen in the United States. All four were from here in Florida. The most recent being in 1981. So when one was photographed at Delmas and Ruth Witmer's feeder in Denver, Pennsylvania on the morning of April 22nd, it set off alarms all over the country. You can see photos of the bird [here](#). The bird was captured, measured and banded by Sandy Lockerman. At that point many thought the bird was some kind of Broad-tailed hybrid mix. When she sent the information off to other banders, Bob Mulvihill in Pittsburgh was the first to raise the question of this being a Bahama Woodstar. The bird was last seen around noon on April 24th. So if you have a feeder up, keep an eye out for this wanderer. He may be working his way back to the Bahamas.

\* \* \* \*

September 1, 2014 will be the 100th anniversary of the death of Martha, the last known Passenger Pigeon. In 1866 a flock seen in southern Ontario was estimated to be a mile wide and 300 miles long. It took 14 hours for this flock to fly past and it was estimated to contain 3.5 billion birds. Forty-one years later, in 1907, Martha and her two male companions in the Cincinnati Zoo, were the last of their species. Some of the steep decline in this species was due to loss of habitat. Much was due to hunting on a scale hard to imagine now. Passenger Pigeons probably nested twice a year. Though that's just a guess since no written records were kept of their nesting efforts. They were found to be a cheap source of protein for slaves and the poor. So unlimited numbers of hunters went after the birds with every imaginable technology available then. Young birds were simply knocked out of the nests with long sticks. Large pots of boiling sulphur were placed under the roost trees to daze the birds and make them easier to capture in nets. And of course many were shot. The slaughter went on unabated. One of the last large nestings of passenger pigeons occurred at Petoskey, Michigan, in 1878. Here 50,000 birds per day were killed and this rate continued for nearly five months. When the adult birds that survived this massacre attempted second nestings at new sites, they were soon located by the professional hunters and killed before they had a chance to raise any young. There were voices raised in protest at the time but they were drowned out by the voices of greed and self interest. One valuable result of the extinction of the birds was a raising of public awareness and an increase in calls for conservation laws.

Now comes news that a creative team is working on a documentary film about these once numerous birds. "From Billions to None" is scheduled to be released next year. It should be a fascinating film.

\* \* \* \*

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada has added the Bank Swallow to an ever growing list of endangered insectivores. Barn Swallow, Eastern Whippoorwill, Common Nighthawk, Chimney Swift and others have all seen precipitous declines in their populations in recent years. Bank Swallows have declined an astonishing 98% since 1970. Here, you just have to go outside on a Spring evening to know that our own Chuck-Wills-Widows and Common Nighthawks have become anything but "common." Hopefully, the efforts being conducted now by the volunteers on the Florida Breeding Bird Atlas II will show that things aren't as dark as they appear.

Our thanks to the Birding Community E-Bulletin and the Bird Studies Canada newsletter for the information herein.

*David Hartgrove*



## MEET OUR CHAPTER VOLUNTEERS

### Rachel Ramsey

Rachel is currently one of our two chapter Vice Presidents and has held the position of Treasurer for six years. Although technically not a Florida native (she was born in Baltimore and moved to Florida at age three), Rachel was raised in the Jacksonville area. Following high school, she attended Orange Memorial Hospital School of Nursing (now Orlando Regional Medical Center) where she earned an RN degree. During her nursing career, she worked in the recovery room, the OR, and IV therapy in the hospital. She had a short stint in private practice, working in a med/surg doctor's office.

In 1964 she married Ron and they raised two children. Son Darren and his family live in North Carolina with their two children and daughter Brooke and her family recently relocated back to Florida from Chicago with their two children. Husband Ron worked for GE which took the family to California and Texas for eleven years. Ron and Rachel lived in Florida the remainder of their lives.

Rachel returned to birding in 1997 when her brother Frank and his wife, Linda, invited her to go to Trinidad & Tobago. The trip reignited her interest in birds that had been dormant during many of her working years. She joined Audubon and has been an active chapter leader and field trip participant ever since. She also enjoys walking, reading and 'putzing' in the yard. She is active with her church and volunteers at Halifax Urban Ministries once a month. In prior years, she was an administrative volunteer at the Museum of Arts & Sciences. She participated in educational nature trips sponsored by MOAS under the leadership of Michael Brothers. She has completed two of the Florida Master Naturalist modules. Be sure to thank Rachel for all her service to our chapter when you see her at an upcoming meeting or field trip.

*Paula Wehr*

## NEW FEATURE

West Volusia Audubon Society has a new feature in their newsletter called "Volusia Special Places," an adaptation of Audubon Florida's "Special Places" theme. We think it is a great idea and want to copy it. So we need your help. You are invited to write a short article for publication about your special place to commune with nature. Your special place can be your backyard, a local park or trail, a stretch of beach or a thicket along a stream. Tell us about the wildlife, plants and/or birds that you see there. Include a photo or two if you can. Don't be intimidated with the words "write a short article." If you don't have a computer, a hand-written submission is fine. Or call me or David with your notes/thoughts and together we can put something into writing. Remember that what is seemingly ordinary to one of us may be unique and exciting to someone else. Our newsletter can only get better with a diversity of authors. We look forward to hearing from you.

*Editor*

\* \* \* \* \*

## Audubon Adventures

Even though school is out, we still need to collect funds for this exciting program. Audubon Adventures helps engage kids in the natural world around them. Ranked as one of the most popular environmental education curricula in the country, Audubon Adventures is perfect for anyone looking for supplemental science activities for upper elementary students. See the link [here](#) for more information.

Donations from members fund this program. 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!

\* \* \* \* \*

## Welcome To Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new members and to those renewing members who've been with us for some time: Edna Andee, Stephen & Elizabeth Brown, Kenneth Bunzel, Jane Dunkin, Sherry Frost, William A Henderson, Sarah Ira, Pauline Kurpinsky, Shirley Lieberman, Colleen Maines, Marie Morrison, Alexis Robinson, Gerald Spies, and Susie Williams. We hope to see you at one of our meetings or on one of our exciting field trips.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Grand Opening Celebration

**Saturday, June 8th, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm**

Join HRA Board members Saturday, June 8th, as we help celebrate the grand opening of the Yvonne Scarlett-Golden Cultural & Educational Center, 1000 Vine Street, in Daytona Beach. The City of Daytona Beach reached out to our chapter for advice on environmental issues and on how to create bird friendly habitat at the new facility. Built for the incredibly low price of just 2.5 million dollars this environmentally sensitive new building will serve as a beacon for the entire community. With multiple and flexibly arranged classrooms, a performing arts venue and sports complex this unique building has much to offer all of our citizens. It's a masterpiece of engineering and esthetically pleasing too. The April issue of the Pelican had an article with photos of the new building. Join us on Saturday, June 8th, to tour the new facility.

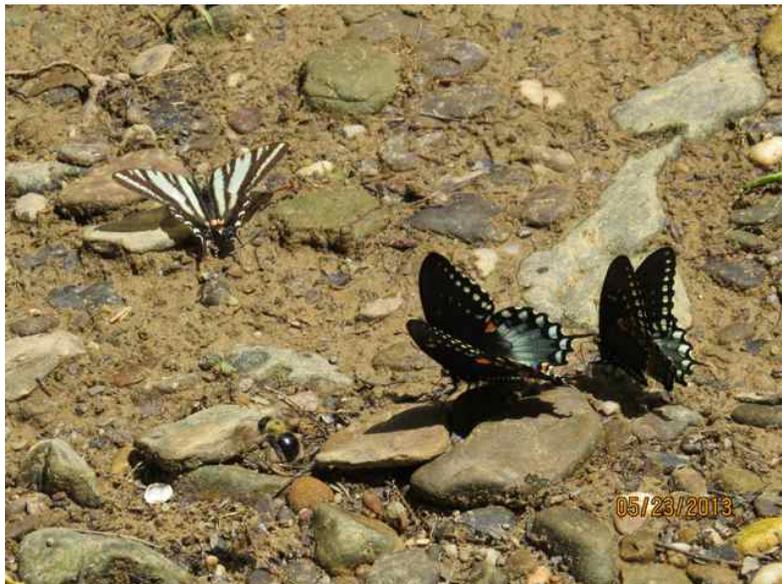
## A Butterfly Primer

Since our next meeting on June 17th will have Chuck Tague's presentation on butterflies, here are some photos taken last month along the shoreline of the Red River, in eastern Kentucky.



*Photo by David Hartgrove*

These Eastern Tiger Swallow-tails have recently emerged from their chrysalis and are in need of minerals which they can't obtain from flower nectar. Sipping moisture from the wet river bank sand provides these essential nutrients.



*Photo by David Hartgrove*

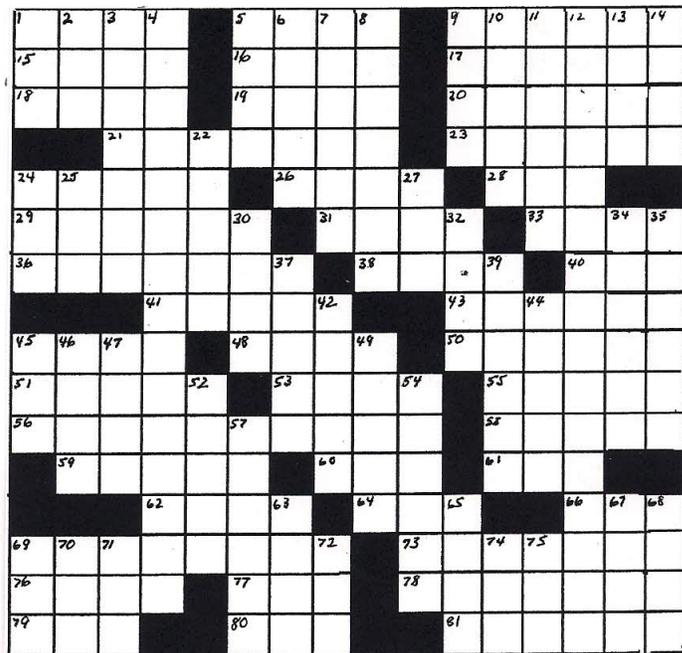
Here, two Spicebush Swallow-tails and a Zebra Swallow-tail are also sipping the moisture from the wet sand along the river shore.

In the course of researching these butterflies I spoke with Chuck in order to assure correct identification. Chuck said that only the males engage in this behavior of seeking specialized nutrients in wet places. Apparently, the males need the nutrients for sperm production. Which of course helps guarantee another generation of these amazing creatures. Be sure to come to the meeting on Monday, June 17th, to learn more.

*David Hartgrove*

Chapter member, Eileen Pazos, enjoys puns, puzzles and the English language. She combines all three interests by creating crossword puzzles. This month she provided a special feature for The Pelican by creating a crossword puzzle containing clues relating to birds specifically and to nature in general (with just enough "filler" clues to ensure that all the answers fit together.) Print a copy and try your hand at solving the puzzle. Answers will appear in next month's Pelican. *Ed.*

## GOOD WORDS FOR BIRDS



### ACROSS

- 1 Female of the species, colorwise
- 5 Kagan or Ginsburg's garb
- 9 Long-toed, lily pad walker
- 15 \_\_\_ war
- 16 Jack in the pulpit type plant
- 17 Protective tooth covering
- 18 Where Muscat is
- 19 "\_\_\_, Feathers and Death" (Wolk book)
- 20 River in SW FL that's a top location for bird watching
- 21 Wandering or gray-tailed \_\_\_
- 23 Menagerie occupant, perhaps
- 24 "Common" marsh bird
- 26 What hawks and kites do best
- 28 Kind of protein
- 29 Coal miners' bird
- 31 Freudian \_\_\_
- 33 Sci. dealing with biodiversity
- 36 How some like their eggs
- 38 Ste. Jeanne \_\_\_
- 40 \_\_\_ we there yet?
- 41 "Chicken Little" et. al.
- 43 Ahmadinejad et. al.
- 45 \_\_\_ Le Pew (cartoon skunk)
- 48 Church rows
- 50 TV spokeslizard, et. al.
- 51 Pile up
- 53 Anti-fur group
- 55 Central part of plant stem
- 56 Hooded waterfowls
- 58 Cop's stunner
- 59 Internet source of wildlife videos

- 60 Place
- 61 Retired flier
- 62 \_\_\_ lamp
- 64 Vietnamese New Year
- 66 "Golden Age" film studio
- 69 Part of a duck's wing
- 73 Rump
- 76 Bird parasites
- 77 Modern greeting or gesture
- 78 Vacant acre for a game?
- 79 Ending with Mao or Tao
- 80 Ornith. Org.
- 81 Birds smaller than "lessers"

### DOWN

- 1 Dental health plan
- 2 Male sheep
- 3 Mallard's "tribe" (Lat.)
- 4 Famously named seabirds
- 5 White waters conveyance
- 6 Grad student hurdles
- 7 red-tailed or red-shouldered hawks' family
- 8 FL Keys Cuban \_\_\_
- 9 Safari vehicle
- 10 \_\_\_ fabalis (sci. name for the bean goose)
- 11 \_\_\_ egret (common in FL)
- 12 Rusty-backed falcons common throughout USA
- 13 Russian river
- 14 Thanks \_\_\_

- 22 \_\_\_ firma
- 24 \_\_\_Engineers (Ormond-based eng./construction co. concerned with conservation)
- 25 Casual turndown
- 27 Coastal inlet
- 30 Sound from a litter
- 32 Prude
- 34 Its nest is a basket
- 35 \_\_\_ Yellowlegs
- 37 Orca's domain (with the)
- 39 Pileated woodpeckers have big ones
- 42 Chimney \_\_\_
- 44 Play the role of
- 45 Cooking spray
- 46 Big bird from Down Under (var.)
- 47 Section
- 49 It might be part of a mating ritual
- 52 \_\_\_ Point. Great FL birding area at Wekiva River sanctuary
- 54 Fall flowers
- 57 Mountain bluebird state
- 63 Stately steed
- 65 Blue or green-winged \_\_\_
- 67 Red or Great \_\_\_ (sandpiper family bird)
- 68 Doppler imaging med. Tests
- 69 FL Keys black cuckoo
- 70 Greek letters
- 71 Old communications giant
- 72 Wellness facility
- 74 Chem. Ending
- 75 Info on a vitamin pill bottle

*A Special Thanks To Our Sponsors*

**Florida Power & Light, Garden Club of the Halifax Country,  
The Ormond Beach Garden Club and Colonial Colony**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Our mailing address is PO Box 166 Daytona Beach, FL 32115-0166**

**Our website is [www.halifaxriveras.org](http://www.halifaxriveras.org) For information on upcoming field trips, etc.**

**Contact Our Board Members**

Office	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
President	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.com">paulawehr@cfl.rr.com</a>
Vice President	Rachel Ramsey	673-1037	<a href="mailto:gmamimi@cfl.rr.com">gmamimi@cfl.rr.com</a>
Vice President	John Roessler	255-9826	<a href="mailto:birdman3651@bellsouth.net">birdman3651@bellsouth.net</a>
Treasurer	Susan Jarosik	676-0056 (ofc)	<a href="mailto:sjarosik@plantationrealtyservices.com">sjarosik@plantationrealtyservices.com</a>
Corresponding Sec.	Karen Mosher	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
Recording Sec.	Peggy Yokubonus	673-7619	<a href="mailto:pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com">pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com</a>
Membership Sec.	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@gmail.com">jcarr14@gmail.com</a>
Historian	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@gmail.com">jcarr14@gmail.com</a>
Past President	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
At Large 2015	Karen Moser	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
At Large 2015	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
At Large 2013	Vacant		
At Large 2013	Becky Schubert	386-447-8916	<a href="mailto:bschub@earthlink.net">bschub@earthlink.net</a>
At Large 2014	Renate Calero	761-8179	<a href="mailto:renate_c@hotmail.com">renate_c@hotmail.com</a>
At Large 2014	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>

**Committee Members**

Committee	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
Bird ID Class	Ray Scory	763-4260	<a href="mailto:colors@cfl.rr.com">colors@cfl.rr.com</a>
Conservation	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
Education	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>
	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
Field Trips	Chuck Tague	412-841-8813	<a href="mailto:kingrail@mac.com">kingrail@mac.com</a>
	Joan Tague	253-1166	<a href="mailto:babyowl@mac.com">babyowl@mac.com</a>
Newsletter Editor	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a> or <a href="mailto:hrapelican11@earthlink.net">hrapelican11@earthlink.net</a>
Welcome	Jari Arbogast	761-2283	<a href="mailto:arbofish@att.net">arbofish@att.net</a>
	Celine Sullivan	257-1980	<a href="mailto:celinesul@aol.com">celinesul@aol.com</a>
Webmaster	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.com">paulawehr@cfl.rr.com</a>

# The Pelican

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

Vol. 59-No.1 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon July, 2013



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Thoughts from on high*

It is often stated that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. I hope that News-Journal columnist Mark Lane believes this sentiment because I'm going to copy one of his favorite formats – the three-dot column. It's July, and after an exhaustive five-minute internet search, I couldn't come up with any interesting facts about how birds were relevant to the birth of our nation on July 4 – except perhaps for the fact that they were on the menu for many of our troops (and I didn't want to go there.) So here are some completely unrelated facts about Florida in July.

\* \* \*

On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was approved by the Continental Congress, starting the 13 colonies on the road to freedom as a sovereign nation. Florida was not one of the original thirteen. Native Americans inhabited the Florida peninsula as early as 14,000 years ago, leaving behind artifacts and archeological evidence. Juan Ponce de Leon arrived in 1513, marking the first settlement by Europeans. Florida was under the rule of Spain and Great Britain during the 18th and 19th centuries before becoming a territory of the United States in 1822. Florida was admitted as the 27th state in the union in 1845.

\* \* \*

Birding on land in July can get pretty hot and the number of species seen can be fairly low, but birding out in the ocean can be exciting. The Gulf Stream flows from the Caribbean north, past the Florida coastline and brings a variety of pelagic species that are rarely seen from shore: tropicbirds, petrels, shearwaters, boobies, Bridled Terns and Brown Noddies, among others. Summer is a good time for a pelagic trip because the seas are generally calmer (barring a tropical storm or hurricane.) Summer also provides an opportunity to view marine mammals, flying fish, sharks and turtles. The problem, of course, is getting out to the Gulf Stream which may be 50 miles off shore from Volusia County. The Friends of the Marine Science Center have resolved the issue of how to get there by sponsoring a boat trip on July 21. See the trip information in the next column.

\* \* \*

Happy July 4 to everyone. Enjoy time with family and friends. Ride your bicycle on the beach, take a picnic lunch to your favorite park, read a book on the lanai and try to stay awake to see the fireworks.

*Paula Wehr*

## We're on our annual summer hiatus

**We won't have any meetings or field trips until September**

**That doesn't mean there aren't things to do.**

\* \* \* \* \*

## Pelagic Birding Trip Sunday, July 21, 2013

Sponsored by the Friends of the Marine Science Center

Join us for another public exploration offered off the east coast of Florida that will explore the entire width of the Gulf Stream and the 3000' deep canyons up to 100 miles offshore.

"The Pastime Princess" is a 100-foot, all-aluminum boat with excellent observation areas on the upper deck, bow and stern. Meet for this exciting trip at 3:00 a.m. at the Dolphin View Restaurant and Marina on Riverside Drive near Canal Street in downtown New Smyrna Beach. Return is at 9:00 p.m. The trip leaves from the New Smyrna side of Ponce de Leon Inlet, travels out nearly 100 miles, crosses the entire Gulf Stream, past the east wall of the Gulf Stream into the area known as the "Tuna Grounds." This trip holds high probability of encountering exciting pelagic species. We will be in the Gulf Stream at one of the best times to find White-tailed Tropicbird. There is also a good chance of also finding Black-capped Petrels.

Potential Species include (\* indicates good probability):

Black-capped Petrel\*; Cory's Shearwater\*; Great Shearwater\*; Audubon's Shearwater\*; Wilson's Storm Petrel\*; Leach's Storm-Petrel; Band-rumped Storm-Petrel\*; Brown Booby\*; Masked Booby; White-tailed Tropicbird\*; Red-billed Tropicbird; Sooty Tern\*; Bridled Tern\*; Brown Noddy

Participants should bring: food and beverages, seasickness medicine, sunscreen and personal items. Food service will be available on the boat for breakfast, lunch and dinner at moderate prices. COST: \$235/person. Maximum 55 = (minimum of 30 people for the trip to go) Call or email NOW to reserve your space. Additional information and available accommodations will be forwarded to participants. DON'T MISS this exceedingly rare opportunity to bird in almost unexplored state waters, with the chance at seeing some of the rarest birds in Florida!

To sign up, call Michael Brothers, 386-304-5543 or e-mail him at [mbrothers@volusia.org](mailto:mbrothers@volusia.org) Please make checks payable to:

Friends of the Marine Science Center

c/o Marine Science Center

100 Lighthouse Drive

Ponce Inlet, FL 32127

## Conservation Notes

On Tuesday evening, June 25th, the Brannon Center, in New Smyrna Beach, was almost standing room only for state Senator Dorothy Hukill's Public Information Meeting: Space. The Senator and Volusia County Councilwoman, Deborah Denys, organized this meeting to hear from citizens on the proposed new space launch facility that Space Florida wants to construct on land that is now part of Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. While they no doubt knew that there would be some voices raised in opposition, I don't think they were ready for what greeted them as soon as the floor was open to public comment. Many of the local fishing guides who work in areas of Mosquito Lagoon and the Indian River rose to ask what was wrong with the existing, now underused, facilities at Kennedy Space Center? They're concerned that this new launch facility will cause safety closures of the areas where they now take clients fishing and ruin their business. In an obvious shock to those sitting on the dais, a number of retired NASA engineers rose to voice their concerns about the safety of this proposal and its potential effects. Time and again they mentioned that using the existing facilities at KSC was the only smart thing to do. Councilwoman Denys had spoken at the outset of the meeting about a recent trip to Washington that she and Senator Hukill had taken to speak with the Volusia Congressional Delegation about this issue. Though all three of our local Audubon chapters were represented in the audience, only Stephen Kintner, Conservation Chair for West Volusia Audubon Society, was chosen to speak. He asked why, if these folks want our cooperation, was no one from the environmental community invited to go along on this trip? His question was greeted with an uncomfortable silence. As was mentioned in the meeting, this is just the beginning of a long process. The Environmental Impact Statement is expected to take 18 months to complete and will offer ample opportunities for public comment. We'll be there for every meeting.

It would be hard to find a more politically influential or well connected bunch than the Carlyle Group. This private equity firm partnered with a Jacksonville company, Hassan & Lear Acquisitions, to purchase nearly 1,600 acres of pine plantation adjacent to Jennings State Forest under the corporate name of Highlands Ranch. The plan was to turn this into a wetlands mitigation bank and sell the mitigation credits to developers and road builders. When these groups have plans that call for destruction of wetlands they can purchase mitigation credits to offset the destruction. When the St Johns River Water Management District report showed far less of the acreage as qualifying for credits than the company wanted, they appealed and lost. So they next tried to get the Department of Environmental Protection to give them what they wanted. The Highlands Ranch attorney even wrote new protocols for the DEP staff to use. His qualifications for this weren't mentioned. This was where DEP wetlands expert, Connie Bersok, became involved. The company was asking that she classify as wetlands land that wasn't and had never been, wet. When she wrote a memo to this effect she was placed on administrative leave and threatened with loss of her job. DEP officials then approved the permit giving Highland Ranch all it wanted. The Florida Wildlife Federation filed a legal challenge. In April a judge in the Department of Administrative Hearings issued an opinion that the permit was issued based on faulty science and must be denied. It also took to task DEP Deputy Director, Jeff Littlejohn, for using such an unscientific approach in granting the permit. On June 14th DEP Secretary, Herschel Vinyard, Jr., issued a 113 page letter denying the permit. Sometimes it's "might makes right." Once in a while common sense and a good Administrative Law Judge work to set things right.

*David Hartgrove*



## MEET OUR CHAPTER VOLUNTEERS

Peggy Yokubonus

Peggy is currently serving her third term as Recording Secretary for our chapter. She keeps the minutes of our Board meetings and records decisions and actions of the chapter.

She was born in Columbia, South Carolina, and moved to Florida in 1972 to marry her husband, Chuck, a longtime Daytona Beach resident. Peggy worked for the Daytona Beach News-Journal for 15 years, leaving her job to manage the office for her husband's commercial painting company. On behalf of HRA, she volunteers her time at Volusia County Environmental Learn & Serve where she educates high school students from the honors, advanced placement and baccalaureate programs about native plants and local birds in and around Spruce Creek Park. Peggy and David Hartgrove were honored for their work with students at our June 2012 meeting.

Peggy began birding in the 1980's with Michael Brothers who was a director at the Museum of Arts & Sciences. She joined HRA 6 or 7 years ago and has been an active field trip participant and field trip leader. She was Field Trip Chair for Sierra Club in the 1980's.

Her other interests include antiques and gardening (her back yard is beautifully landscaped with native plants.) She is a member of the PawPaw Chapter of Native Plant Society, has completed all three modules of the Florida Master Naturalist Program and taken both 5-day adult educational day-camp programs based at the GTMNERR classroom in Marineland. She also holds a B.A. in English from University of South Carolina.

As an all-around naturalist, be sure to talk to Peggy when you have questions about native plants or wildlife.

## Feather Identification Made Easier ?

The answer to that question is complicated. Have you ever found a feather and wondered what species it came from? In the interest of keeping things legal I should say right here that under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, having a feather in your possession is probably a violation of the law. Even if you found it while walking down a trail. According to the US Fish & Wildlife Service website, "The possession of feathers and other parts from MBTA-protected birds without a permission is prohibited. The only exceptions are the feathers of legally-hunted waterfowl or other migratory gamebirds, which may be possessed by hunters. ***This prohibition extends to molted feathers and to feathers taken from road- or window-killed birds.***" (Bold italics ours)

If that last sentence has you scratching your head and asking what the reason could possibly be, it's simple. How would a wildlife officer know where or how you came to have a feather in your possession? For all he or she knows, you're some troglodyte survivalist trying to revive the plume trade and you've been out blasting away at anything in flight. As it happens, there are precious few wildlife officers enforcing our nation's regulations on hunting, fishing and trapping. So the chances that someone in a uniform will come knocking on your door because you found a beautiful feather while out walking are pretty slim.

The USF&WS Forensics Laboratory maintains a feather atlas webpage that's fairly easy to use. Begin by clicking on this [link](#). That will take you to a page showing examples of feather patterns: barred, spotted, two-toned, etc. Find the pattern that best matches your unknown feather and check that box on the page. Then scroll down a bit to select the dominate color and select that option. Then click on the "Find Similar Feathers" button. Depending on your selection criteria you can end up with a large number of options. For instance, if your choices are "mottled, brown" you'll get back 75 choices to peruse. At this point it's time for some "probability birding." What are your most likely choices, based on where you found the feather? If you were walking a trail at Tiger Bay State Forest in early June, I think it's safe to rule out Hawaiian Hawk and Long-eared Owl. Though there have been 2 records of Long-eared Owl in Florida. It's much more likely that your feather came from a Great Horned Owl or a Chuck-Wills-Widow since both species nest in Tiger Bay State Forest. The scale along the left side of each group of photos is in centimeters. Based on the length of your feather, it's now possible to begin the process of eliminating the species that aren't a match for what you have. There's no guarantee that you'll find a definite match and be able to identify your feather. But at least you'll have fun trying.

David Hartgrove

\* \* \* \* \*

## Beginner Bird Watching Class

Though it doesn't start until November, it's not too early to be thinking about our chapter's bird watching class. Ray Scory and John Roessler will have you identifying birds much more easily than you ever thought possible. There are three class room sessions held at the Port Orange Library and three field workshops that travel to spots offering some of the best in local birding. Click on this [link](#) to print out the registration form. The class is limited to 24 persons. The cost is just 25.00 and you're sure to agree that it's money well spent.

## An Enchanting Encounter

Dan Gribbin

This little rail practically walked between my legs down at the tidal pool at Lighthouse Point Park the other day. I caught sight of her as she was following the water line on the east end of the diminished pool. She entered the mangrove thicket and worked her way through it, emerging right next to me, as I held my breath not to disturb her trip around the periphery. She caught a crab and ran off with it but returned momentarily and continued the circuit, finally disappearing into the weeds across from me, perhaps the location of her nest. There are plenty of more spectacular birds in our area, but an encounter with a rail always fills me with delight.



Clapper Rail

photo by Dan Gribbin

\* \* \* \* \*

## Tea Anyone ?

Though the chapter is on its summer hiatus, Welcome Committee member, Celine Sullivan, has arranged a "high tea" at a lovely bed and breakfast. [The River Lily Inn B&B](#) is just the spot for this. On Tuesday, Aug. 6th, at 2:00 pm you can join Celine and others from our chapter at Polly's Tea Room in this lovingly restored, 1905 riverfront home, located at 558 Riverside Drive, in Holly Hill. You'll be treated to tea, soup, sandwiches, sparkling wine and pastries in a setting sure to take your breath away. To make your reservations for this exciting event, call the B&B at 386-253-5003 or call Celine at 386-257-1980. The cost is \$27.64 per person, including tax and should be paid by 7/23/13. As Julia Child would say, "Bon appetit!"

\* \* \* \* \*

## Welcome To Our New Members

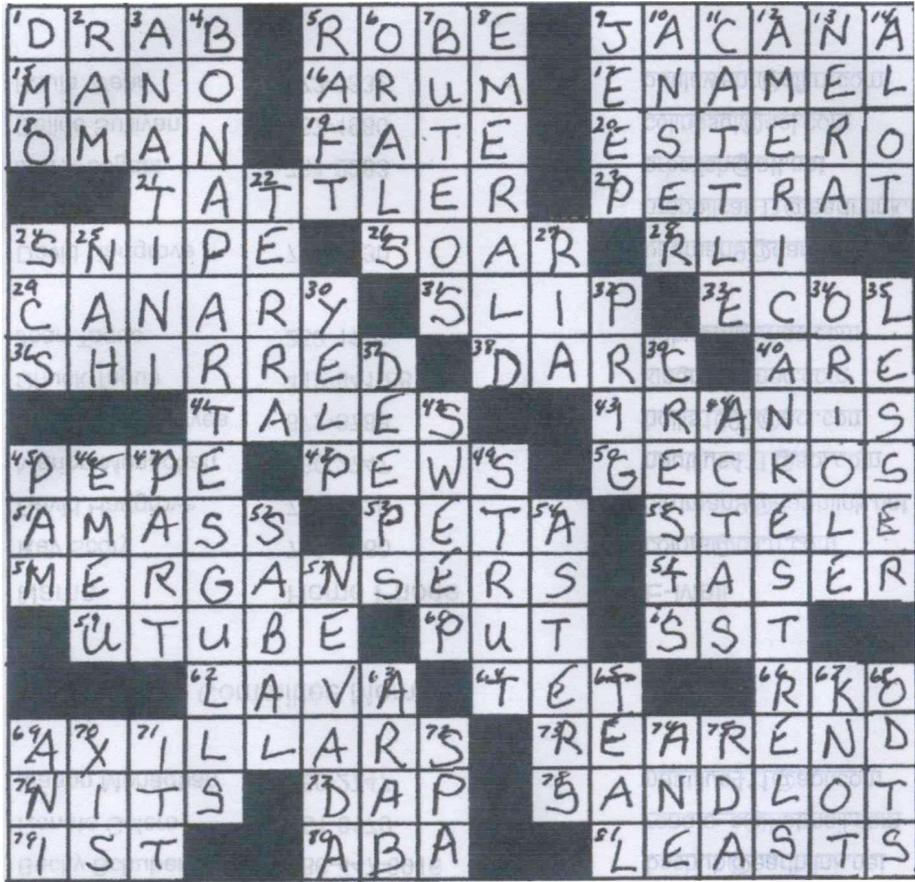
We extend a warm welcome to our new members and to those who are rejoining us again: Gregory Dudley, Patsy Jensen, Trish LaMadenie, Foxie Odom, Timothy O'Keefe, Adrienne K. Remer, Richard Shelly, Phoebe Smith, Heidi Steinhauer, Norma Washburn, and Edwin M. Welch. We hope to see you in September when our meetings and field trips resume.

\* \* \* \* \*

"There is nothing in which the birds differ more from man than in the way in which they can build and yet leave a landscape as it was before."

Robert Lynd, American sociologist

As promised, here's the solution to last month's crossword puzzle. Our thanks to chapter member, Eileen Pazos, for her work in creating this little brain teaser.



## Bats Under The Bridge

In 1980 it was time to rebuild the Congress Avenue Bridge in Austin, Texas. The first bridge across the Colorado River at this spot was a pontoon toll bridge built in 1869. Over the next 100 years several structures of wood or iron were built at this location with the final design opening 1910. Seventy years later it was time to rebuild the bridge. The new bridge was to be concrete and the design utilized created crevices that it turned out were just what bats were looking for in a colonial nest site.

The Mexican free-tailed bat (*Tadarida brasiliensis*) is one of the most numerous mammal species in the western hemisphere. In spring the pregnant females migrate north to roosting sites all across the southwestern United States. When the newly rebuilt bridge was finished in 1980 it became a magnet for the bats because of its design. This was not a welcome outcome for many in the Austin area and initially there were calls to have the entire colony destroyed as a public nuisance. Bat Conservation International mounted a campaign to educate the public about bats. Steeped in centuries ignorance and superstition, the public's general knowledge of bats was minimal at best. Once it began to sink in that bats are one of nature's marvels and that they do an amazing job of eating insects that have long been health and agricultural pests, attitudes began to change. A recent study estimated that tourists coming to see the bats contribute 8 to 10 million dollars annually to Austin's economy.

The colony is almost entirely female and they begin arriving in early April. By early June most have given birth to a single pup. These are left behind each evening as the adults fly out to gorge themselves on mosquitoes and other insects. Every night it's estimated they consume between 5 and 15 tons of insects! They return nurse their young and within 4 to 7 weeks the young are weaned and on their own. The colony under the recently renamed "Ann Richards Congress Avenue Bridge" (Richards was the 45th Governor of Texas and a long time resident of the Austin area) is the largest urban bat colony in the world. The largest known colony in North America is also in Texas, in Bracken Cave, north of San Antonio. It's believed to host 20 million bats. The fungus disease called "white nose syndrome", which is decimating bat populations in many other parts of the country, can't tolerate temperatures above 68 degrees F. So for now, these bats seem safe.

David Hartgrove

\* \* \* \* \*

## Audubon Adventures

Even though school is out, we still need to collect funds for this exciting program. Audubon Adventures helps engage kids in the natural world around them. See the link [here](#) for more information.

Donations from members fund this program. 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!



As many as 1.5 million Mexican free-tailed bats swarm out nightly from beneath the Congress Avenue Bridge in Austin, TX. Thanks to Pamela Phillips for this photo.

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**Florida Power & Light, Garden Club of the Halifax Country,  
The Ormond Beach Garden Club and Colonial Colony**

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**Our mailing address is PO Box 166 Daytona Beach, FL 32115-0166**

**Our website is [www.halifaxrivers.org](http://www.halifaxrivers.org) For information on upcoming field trips, etc.**

**Contact Our Board Members**

Office	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
President	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.com">paulawehr@cfl.rr.com</a>
Vice President	John Roessler	255-9826	<a href="mailto:birdman3651@bellsouth.net">birdman3651@bellsouth.net</a>
Treasurer	Rachel Ramsey	673-1037	<a href="mailto:gmamimi@cfl.rr.com">gmamimi@cfl.rr.com</a>
Recording Sec.	Peggy Yokubonus	673-7619	<a href="mailto:pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com">pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com</a>
Membership Sec.	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@gmail.com">jcarr14@gmail.com</a>
Historian	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@gmail.com">jcarr14@gmail.com</a>
Past President	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
At Large 2014	Renate Calero	761-8179	<a href="mailto:renate_c@hotmail.com">renate_c@hotmail.com</a>
At Large 2014	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>
At Large 2015	Karen Moser	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
At Large 2015	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
At Large 2016	Deborah Green	407-625-1390	<a href="mailto:skylarkfolkart@gmail.com">skylarkfolkart@gmail.com</a>
At Large 2016	Dan Gribbin	760-8226	<a href="mailto:bluzeman1@hotmail.com">bluzeman1@hotmail.com</a>

**Committee Members**

Committee	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
Bird ID Class	Ray Scory	763-4260	<a href="mailto:colors@cfl.rr.com">colors@cfl.rr.com</a>
Conservation	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
Education	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>
	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
Field Trips	Chuck Tague	412-841-8813	<a href="mailto:kingrail@mac.com">kingrail@mac.com</a>
	Joan Tague	253-1166	<a href="mailto:babyowl@mac.com">babyowl@mac.com</a>
Newsletter Editor	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a> or <a href="mailto:hrapelican11@earthlink.net">hrapelican11@earthlink.net</a>
Welcome	Jari Arbogast	761-2283	<a href="mailto:arbofish@att.net">arbofish@att.net</a>
	Celine Sullivan	257-1980	<a href="mailto:celinesul@aol.com">celinesul@aol.com</a>
Webmaster	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.com">paulawehr@cfl.rr.com</a>

# The Pelican

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

Vol. 59-No.2 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon August, 2013



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

### *Thoughts From On High*

If you've never watched a meteor shower, you have missed a magical display which was not produced by the Disney Corporation, although there are times when it looks as though it may have been. One of the few good memories I have of living in the frozen north was sitting neck deep in 102°F water in our hot tub on the back patio watching stars 'shoot' across the dark winter sky. We were lucky enough to live in a relatively dark area, free of ambient lights from street lamps and commercial buildings.

Our next opportunity to view a meteor shower will be after midnight on August 11 and 12. A meteor shower is a spike in the number of meteors that streak through the night sky.

"Most showers are spawned by comets. As a comet orbits the sun, it sheds an icy, dusty, debris stream along its orbit. If Earth travels through this stream, we will see a meteor shower. Although the meteors can appear anywhere in the sky, if you trace their paths, the meteors in each shower appear to rain into the sky from the same region. "Most showers are named for the constellation that coincides with this region in the sky, a spot known as the radiant. For instance, the radiant for the Leonid meteor shower is in the constellation Leo. The Perseid meteor shower is so named because meteors appear to fall from a point in the constellation Perseus." \*1

The meteors we'll see on August 11 and 12 are coming from the Perseus constellation which lies in the northern sky. Ptolemy, a Greek astronomer, first catalogued the constellation in the second century and named it for Perseus, a hero in [Greek mythology](#). Follow the link to read the full story of Perseus.

Mark your calendar now to take your beach chair or blanket, find a dark spot and look up into the sky to watch this yearly summer light show.

Paula Wehr



## Calendar & Events

**First, a reminder, we have no meeting this month.** Our next regular meeting will be Monday, Sept. 16th, at Sica Hall.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Volusia County Land Management:** Hiking, biking and eco buggy tours. Join long time local naturalist, Bonnie Cary, for any or all of the following **free** events:

**Aug. 7th, 9:00 am to 11:00am,** Longleaf Pine Preserve Eco-buggy Tour. Take an eco-buggy tour of Longleaf Pine Preserve. Participants will experience pine flatwoods, cypress domes and swamps on a riding tour with exploratory stops along the way. This trip requires advanced reservations. See info below.

**Aug. 10th, 9:00 am to 11:00 am,** Hike a beautiful 1 mile trail in Doris Leeper Spruce Creek Preserve

**Aug. 16th, 9:00 am to 11:00 am,** Take an eco-buggy tour of Deep Creek Preserve and learn about the forestry, agricultural history, and plant communities that make up this 8,000 acre site. This trip too requires advanced reservations.

**Aug. 17th, 8:00 am to 10:00 am,** Take a guided hike around Lyonia Preserve, where Scrub Jays flourish. Participants can tour the Lyonia Environmental Learning Center afterward.

**Aug. 29th, 9:00 am to 11:00 am,** Bicycle the newly opened first segment of the East Central Florida Rail Trail and experience the natural world along the way. Participants will bicycle the multi-use paved trail approximately 5.7 miles from Green Spring Park to State Rd. 415 then return (11.4 miles total). All ages and abilities are welcome. Bike helmets are required. Please register.

**Aug. 31st, 9:00 am to 11:00 am,** Hike the trail along Lake George through several plant communities and learn about the flora and fauna of the site.

To register for one or more of these activities and to learn more about the "where and what", call Bonnie Cary at (386)-736-5927 x 21263 or her cell: (386) 804-0437. By e-mail, send her a note to [bcary@volusia.org](mailto:bcary@volusia.org)

\* \* \* \* \*

**Sept. 28th, 9:00 am to 10:00 am, Hands Across The Lagoon.** The Indian River Lagoon is in serious trouble. No doubt you've seen the reports that so far this year 112 manatees, 52 dolphins and 300+ Brown Pelicans have been found dead in the Lagoon. In 1989 the first Hands Across the Lagoon event drew thousands of supporters. The event is an opportunity for the public to show support for maintaining the health and integrity of this unique and incredibly diverse ecosystem. In the next issue of the Pelican we'll give more details on how you can help out with this important project. It's just one hour and you can help make it a success. For a start, you can "like" them on Facebook [here](#). Stay tuned.

## Conservation Notes

First things first. There's nothing any Florida voter can do that would be more important for conservation efforts than to sign the Florida's Water & Land Legacy petition. This is an effort to secure reliable funding for the state's environmental lands program through an amendment to the state's constitution. We wouldn't have to resort to this type of move if our legislators would not spend so much time trying to think up new ways to avoid carrying out the wishes of those who elected them. The amendment, if adopted, will set aside 1/3 of the funds collected from documentary tax stamps for conservation lands purchase. It means no new taxes and will represent less than 1% of the state's annual budget. Still, it will mean wonderful things for those of us working to try to save what's left of Florida before it disappears under asphalt and concrete. Some of you may have already signed a form at our chapter meetings or in one of the many settings around the state where volunteers were collecting signed petitions. If so, thank you! If not, there's a way to print a copy of the petition yourself. It involves a few easy to follow steps and if you haven't signed already I implore you to click on this [link](#) and do so right now. Once you've printed the petition form, sign it and mail it in to the address provided. Please, this really is important.

In Florida, water can be a big problem. Sometimes there's not enough of it to go around. In years like 2013, there's way too much in some places. The Indian River Lagoon is in trouble, in part because of the flood control systems designed to protect agricultural lands and ever burgeoning populations of coastal residents south of its watershed. This summer's record rainfall has caused Lake Okeechobee's levels to rise to 15.63 feet above sea level. That's 3.5 feet higher than this time last year. If the level reaches 17 feet, the Army Corps of Engineers considers the lake to be in serious danger of breaching the Herbert Hoover Dike. Built in the 1930's in response to several flooding incidents in the previous decade, the dike is currently undergoing its first major renovation. Due to the increased lake levels, billions of gallons of nutrient and pesticide laden water are being dumped every day into the St Lucie and Caloosahatchee Rivers. The St Lucie feeds into the Indian River Lagoon from the St Lucie Canal via the St Lucie Lock and Dam. Last Friday, July 26th, the brown, putrid water was flowing into the river at a rate of 11,000 cubic feet per second. The Caloosahatchee empties into San Carlos Bay near Fort Myers. That estuary too is suffering major water quality problems.

There is a solution to this problem. Some may remember Gov. Charlie Christ's "River of Grass" plan. This involved the state purchasing 53,000 acres in the Everglades Agricultural Area and converting the land into marshes to clean the water before it flows into the Everglades and on south to Florida Bay. Governor Rick Scott and the collection of dull witted ideologues he's placed in positions of regulatory authority continue to oppose implementation of the River of Grass plan. Aided by a legislature anxious to do the bidding of their sugar industry paymasters, the Governor and his group continue to say that all is under control and going well. Sugar industry commercials tout that we're in the "final phase" of Everglades restoration. It's a cruel joke, and we and our way of life bear the brunt of it. We, the people of Florida deserve better. Or we would if we stopped electing environment wrecking bozos like those in office right now. At a recent meeting facilitated by the Army Corps of Engineers, Marty Baum, the Indian Riverkeeper, asked, "Why are sugar fields more important than the lives and health of our citizens?" A show of hands from those who think he got a real answer?

*David Hartgrove*



## MEET OUR CHAPTER VOLUNTEERS

Marion Monaghan

Marion is a member of a rare species – a true native Floridian. She was born in Jacksonville and moved to Daytona Beach with her family at the age of two weeks. She attended Mainland High School which was located on Bay Street at the time. She earned a BA in English Education after attending University of Florida and University of Central Florida. She earned an MA in American Studies at Stetson University. She spent her entire career at Seabreeze High School – 17 years in the classroom teaching basic and AP English and 18 years as Assistant Principal.

In retirement Marion enjoys spending time with her son, Rod, who is a local endodontist and his family which includes 4 grandchildren. The basketball and volleyball games of the two high school and two collegiate grandchildren keep her occupied and entertained when she is not birding, meeting with the lunch-bunch or volunteering as a guardian ad litem for abused and neglected children who need an advocate in legal proceedings.

Becoming an active member of Audubon was on Marion's 'bucket list' as a result of watching her mother feed House Sparrows. She saw the flyer for Ray Scory's "Beginner Bird Watching Class" and began her learning journey which has taken her on most of the chapter's local field trips as well as to Ohio, New Jersey, Panama, Ecuador and, Costa Rica. She is 'looking hard' at a trip to Africa to continue to add new species to her life list.

Marion and Holly Zwart-Duryea (spotlighted in our February newsletter) provide Audubon Adventures kits to fourth-grade teachers in elementary schools in Volusia County with Marion handling the Daytona Beach and Port Orange areas.

We thank Marion for her contributions to the success of our chapter.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Florida Keys Birding and Wildlife Festival

Mark your calendars for next month's festival. From Mon., Sept. 23rd thru Sun. Sept. 29th the Keys will be humming with activity such as guided bird walks, boat and kayak trips and snorkeling expeditions that are sure to amaze and educate. This year's festival highlights the Florida Keys Hawkwatch. Rafael Galvez, Hawkwatch Director, will be the keynote speaker and will lead several bird walks. Also on hand will be Pete Frezza, from Audubon's Tavernier Science Center and Mark Hedden of Florida Keys Audubon. See White-crowned Pigeons, Black-whiskered Vireos and Mangrove Cuckoo, among others. Check the link [here](#) for all of the information.

Barbara Hoelscher is Librarian and Outreach Coordinator at the [Enchanted Forest](#) in Titusville. She wrote the following piece.

Early this morning a movement at the front of the front yard called my attention, so I walked forward on the veranda. Four or five vultures walked, jumped and bounced around. Looking further, I spotted a little lump on the street. Grabbing binoculars, I saw that it was a Bobcat. I shrieked to myself, ran into the house, put on some jeans and went back outside, striding toward the street. A car slowed and stopped, but saw me coming and drove on. A lady with her two large dogs stopped and expressed concern.

The victim was a Bobcat kitten, likely hit no more than an hour or two earlier. It was dead, or nearly so. I brought it up to a wooden table near the verandah, its foot-long body stiffening, legs and huge feet still and in fixed positions. My eyes scanned and searched for some movement, some hair twitch, some ever-so-light breathing. Nothing. Still warm, still soft. Eyes open, face peaceful. So beautiful. Over the next hour I left messages for Florida Wildlife Hospital, our own beloved Enchanted Forest, and finally reached the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Helpfully, they listened to my report. When I asked about taxidermy and having the kitten be a display ambassador at the Enchanted Forest Sanctuary in Titusville, they thought that was a good idea and told me to proceed (just no selling it).

Outside my office window a movement turned my head and there, walking forward toward the front of the house, tail straight down, was the Mother. She walked slowly and determinedly, sitting for a moment among palm trees, looking toward the street and toward the wooden table. She trotted off toward the wetlands next to the house and disappeared among the plants and grasses.

Two of the vultures were still hanging out in the swale with their wings outstretched, collecting the sun's warming rays. What Mother Bobcat thought as she saw them we'll never know. Little One is wrapped in a bag and lays in the freezer. Next is to identify a fine taxidermist and hope he/she will prepare him/her for the Forest. Maybe the vultures needed to eat. Maybe we and the next life-long learners will honor Little One forever.

Barbara Hoelscher

If you know of a taxidermist willing to mount this bobcat kitten as a donation or at a reduced rate, please contact Barbara at [bhoelscher@cfl.rr.com](mailto:bhoelscher@cfl.rr.com) Thank you.

\* \* \* \* \*

**We Welcome Our New Members**

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Julie Carter, Linda McQuaig, Gwen Mugg, Lesley Nace, Trish Reonas, and The Thompsons. We hope to see you at a meeting or on a field trip when our regular schedule resumes next month.

\* \* \* \* \*

**The Tea Is Canceled**

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the high tea/luncheon planned for [Polly's Tea Room](#) on Aug. 6th has been canceled.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Springtime In The Dry Tortugas**

Birding in the Dry Tortugas in Spring is really exciting. Florida Nature Tours is your ticket to excitement. See the info [here](#).

Field Trips Co-Chair, Chuck Tague, maintains and outstanding and very informative [website](#). His Nature Observer's Journal entry from July 7th introduces us to the Glassy-winged Sharpshooter.



**Stranger In A Strange Place**

Several weeks ago I planted some basil seeds and ended up with all the potted basil my herb garden could hold plus many surplus plants. To see if basil could survive as a window plant I brought one into my office. It survived although it's far from thriving. Two days ago I noticed a leaf-hopper like insect on its stem. It blasted off as I examined it. This morning I noticed it was back. It was more tolerant of me as I photographed it with a flash and macro lens. It had huge eyes and red spots on clear wings. With the "Field Guide to North American Insects" (Eric Eaton) I identified it as Glassy-winged Sharpshooter, *Homalodisca vitripennis*. I confirmed it on [Bugguide.net](#). It's called Sharpshooter, because it expels liquid with enough force to shoot it a fair distance. In its native range, the southeastern US and Mexico, it poses no problem to humans and their crops. I have plenty of basil and it's welcome to some of the juices. However, it was introduced to California and became a major vineyard pest as a vector of destructive bacterium.

Chuck Tague

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**Peregrine Falcon Sets New Record**

A recent post on the Tennessee birding list serve, TN-Bird, tells of a new record for the oldest Peregrine Falcon known. Alix Parks, a wildlife rehabber in the Chattanooga area, received an injured Peregrine Falcon from the Chattanooga Zoo. The bird appeared to have flown into a window and was not too badly injured. She saw that the bird was banded. She called the [Bird Banding Laboratory](#) and was told that the bird was banded in Binghampton, NY on June 3, 1986, making the bird 27 years old. The previous record for a banded Peregrine Falcon was 19 years and 6 months. The plan is to release the bird at the Chickmauga Dam. This was long the site of one of only 2 known Peregrine Falcon nests in Tennessee. Roi, a male who went through several female partners, nested at the site for over 10 years and died after a similar window collision accident in 2007. Here's a [link](#) to the story of Roi.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Remember the Centennial Park Bald Eagles?**

If you went to the park last year to see the nesting Bald Eagles you probably saw film maker, Steve Brown. He hopes to have a short preview of the film ready for our September meeting.

*A Special Thanks To Our Sponsors*

**Florida Power & Light, Garden Club of the Halifax Country,  
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**Our mailing address is PO Box 166 Daytona Beach, FL 32115-0166**

**Our website is [www.halifaxriveras.org](http://www.halifaxriveras.org) For information on upcoming field trips, etc.**

**Contact Our Board Members**

Office	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
President	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.com">paulawehr@cfl.rr.com</a>
Vice President	Rachel Ramsey	673-1037	<a href="mailto:gmamimi@cfl.rr.com">gmamimi@cfl.rr.com</a>
Vice President	John Roessler	255-9826	<a href="mailto:birdman3651@bellsouth.net">birdman3651@bellsouth.net</a>
Treasurer	Susan Jarosik	676-0056 (ofc)	<a href="mailto:sjarosik@plantationrealtyservices.com">sjarosik@plantationrealtyservices.com</a>
Corresponding Sec.	Karen Mosher	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
Recording Sec.	Peggy Yokubonus	673-7619	<a href="mailto:pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com">pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com</a>
Membership Sec.	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@gmail.com">jcarr14@gmail.com</a>
Historian	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@gmail.com">jcarr14@gmail.com</a>
Past President	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
At Large 2014	Renate Calero	761-8179	<a href="mailto:renate_c@hotmail.com">renate_c@hotmail.com</a>
At Large 2014	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>
At Large 2015	Karen Moser	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
At Large 2015	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
At Large 2016	Deborah Green	407-625-1390	<a href="mailto:skylarkfolkart@gmail.com">skylarkfolkart@gmail.com</a>
At Large 2016	Dan Gribbin	760-8226	<a href="mailto:bluzeman1@hotmail.com">bluzeman1@hotmail.com</a>

**Committee Members**

Committee	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
Bird ID Class	Ray Scory	763-4260	<a href="mailto:colors@cfl.rr.com">colors@cfl.rr.com</a>
Conservation	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
Education	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>
	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
Field Trips	Chuck Tague	412-841-8813	<a href="mailto:kingrail@mac.com">kingrail@mac.com</a>
	Joan Tague	253-1166	<a href="mailto:babyowl@mac.com">babyowl@mac.com</a>
Newsletter Editor	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a> or <a href="mailto:hrapelican11@earthlink.net">hrapelican11@earthlink.net</a>
Welcome	Jari Arbogast	761-2283	<a href="mailto:arbofish@att.net">arbofish@att.net</a>
	Celine Sullivan	257-1980	<a href="mailto:celinesul@aol.com">celinesul@aol.com</a>
Webmaster	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.com">paulawehr@cfl.rr.com</a>

# The Pelican

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

Vol. 59-No.3 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon  
September, 2013



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Thoughts from on High*

September marks the beginning of a new year – the birding year, that is. Many species of far northern breeders are already winging their way south. Shorebirds have begun to show up along Biolab Road, Black Point Drive and other areas of Merritt Island NWR.

The annual Autumn Hawkwatch at Hawk Mountain, Kempton, PA begins on August 15 and runs through December 15. Bald Eagles, American Kestrels and Ospreys are among the first migrants. Broad-winged Hawks will peak in mid-September at the same time that the first migrating Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks will be spotted. [Hawk Mountain Sanctuary](#) was founded in 1934 by conservationist Rosalie Edge to stop the shooting of hawks migrating along the Kittatinny Ridge.

Migrating raptors sometimes form kettles (groups) that seem to float in circles overhead rather than flying on a direct course. They are actually conserving energy by riding air thermals. Wind following a cold front blows from the northwest and strikes the geographic line of mountains (like the Appalachian Range which runs north and south along the eastern US) at a nearly 90° angle. This pushes the breeze upward, creating lift along the ridges that the hawks follow during migration. Raptors soar on this rising air, spiraling ever downward until they catch another pocket of rising air and repeat the procedure, essentially flying from one hot air bubble to another.

The best hawk watching in Florida is at Curry Hammock State Park, on Marathon, in the Florida Keys. The Florida Keys Hawkwatch has all of the information on their [website](#).

*Paula Wehr*



*Paula and her sister, Jayne, on Kittatinny Ridge. Photo taken on Paula's phone by another birder who also happened to be there.*

## Calendar & Events

**Monday, Sept. 16, PROGRAM MEETING** Ray Scory found himself evolving into a suburban birder and photographer. He enjoys searching the nooks and crannies of his immediate environment, anticipating the surprise of a spectacular birding experience. His efforts yielded a collection of interesting bird images which were photographed along city streets, parking lots, neighborhoods and backyards – all close to his home. Join us on Monday evening, September 16, at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill to see Ray's presentation of "Birds Near By." Doors open at 6:30 p.m. The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. Guests & visitors are welcome.

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## Field Trips and More

**Fri., Sept. 20,** We start our new field trip season with what we're calling, "The Shorebird Chase." Basically, this means we're off to wherever the birds are found when we scout the areas earlier. Meet at 7:00 am, International Square, 2500 West Intn'l Speedway Blvd., behind the Krystal restaurant. Bring a lunch.

**Mon., Sept. 16,** A special night for a special meeting of the Paw Paw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. A presentation on Coastal Wetlands, Wetland Plants and Seagrass Beds will be held at 7:00 pm at the Piggotte Center, 504 Big Tree Road, in South Daytona. Refreshments will be served. Doors open at 6:30 pm. Check out their [website](#) for lots more information.

## Field Trips With Others

**Flagler Audubon Society** Here's a [link](#) to the field trips page on the Flagler Audubon Society's website. Their first trip is on Oct. 5th to Washington Oaks Gardens State Park. Meet at 8:30 am in the parking lot adjacent to the Friend's Gift Shop in the park, 6400 N. Oceanshore Blvd., Palm Coast, FL

**Volusia County Land Management** Join County Naturalist, Bonnie Cary, and other staff members on a variety of interesting and informative field trips to the County's environmental treasures. There are hikes, bicycle rides and eco-buggy tours showcasing spots you may not be aware of. Click the link [here](#) for all the info.

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## Landscaping For Birds Seminar

**Sat., Sept. 7,** "Birdscaping" is what master gardner, Kevin Bagwell, calls it. Join Kevin at his nursery, Full Moon Natives, for a lesson in how and what to plant in your yard to attract our feathered friends. It's **free** and light refreshments will be provided. Call 386-212-9923 or [e-mail](#) your reservation. Attendance is limited. The address is 1737 Fern Park Drive Port Orange, FL 32128. That's about 6/10's of a mile west of I-95 off Taylor Road.

## Conservation Notes

In late March of this year an invitation soliciting comments for an event called the "Rocketman 2013 Triathlon" went out to various members of the environmental community. The event was scheduled for May 5th. So there wasn't a lot of time to think about the implications. The route for the race included SR 406, the Max Brewer Memorial Parkway, which runs past the entrance to Black Point Wildlife Drive at the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. The majority of the route was actually along roads through Kennedy Space Center property. I thought it over and came to the conclusion that since the event was being held in May, when the bird population at MINWR was considerably less than it is in January, there would be little if any disturbance to the birds and other wildlife. I was joined in this opinion by members of Orange Audubon and Audubon Florida, among others. It was about this time that the Law of Unintended Consequences made itself felt.

Earlier this month Layne Hamilton, Refuge Manager at MINWR, sent me a copy of the post event report she compiled. The event was nothing short of a disaster for the refuge. Roads used by regular visitors to the Refuge were closed for the event. So those who weren't aware of the road closures were inconvenienced by having driven there only to be turned away or faced with a 30 mile detour. Fire protection, which is a 24/7 duty on the Refuge, was impacted because 12 wildfire personnel and 4 engines had to be relocated to a Brevard County facility in Mims since the road closure prevented access to the Refuge's Fire Dispatch Center. This came at a time when the area was in extreme fire danger due to the lack of rain. If a fire had occurred response times would have been significantly increased. A request from a local Boy Scout troop for a camping permit was denied due to limited emergency access with the Titusville Bridge closed for the event. Finally, there were the impacts to wildlife. It turns out that there have been numerous studies showing that birds are very much effected by bicycle traffic. So have 1,400 of them whizzing by at various intervals was a major disturbance indeed. Due to the frequency with which motorized vehicles go by the road side impoundments, the birds become habituated to their presence. A car is like a mobile blind and the birds often pay little attention, unless the vehicle stops and people get out slamming the doors. Bicycles, because of the extra motion involved and the fact that they aren't seen often by the birds, create disturbance and cause stress.

So it's time for a mea culpa on my part. Making a decision with few facts and a what turned out to be a bad hunch means dining on crow. And I hate that. They're some of my favorite birds.

A depressing 50th anniversary milestone comes up this month. On September 4th, 1963, the last known Eskimo Curlew was shot on Barbados. This news arrived via the monthly Bird Studies Canada newsletter. There's an excellent article online [here](#) that tells the tale. Regular readers will remember that I wrote in the past of the notorious "shooting swamps" on several Caribbean islands where satellite tagged Whimbrels were shot in 2011. Thanks to a massive outpouring of letters and support for controls on the activities at these places, the French government has begun tentative steps to curb the slaughter on islands where they have jurisdiction. You can read the news [here](#) on the World Waders Blog.

Finally, if you ever went to southeast Arizona for a birding trip, you probably found yourself in Mrs. Paton's backyard at some point. It's one of the most famous spots in the country to see hummingbirds. Now that she and her husband have passed on, the American Bird Conservancy, Victor Emmanuel Nature Tours, and Audubon chapters all over the country are banding together to purchase the property. They need our help. Click [here](#) to donate.

David Hartgrove

## Meet Our Chapter Volunteers

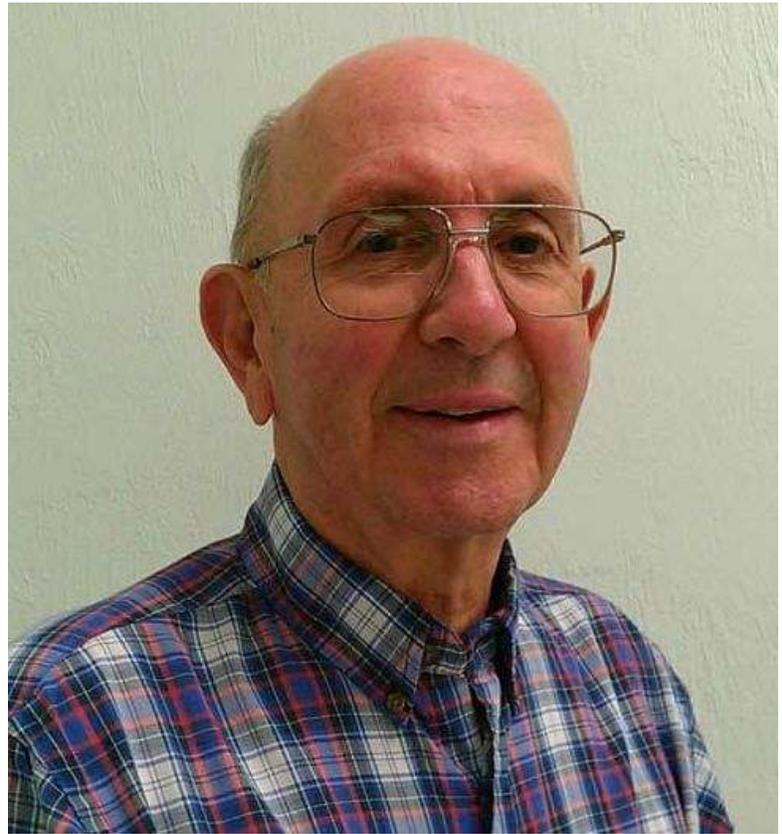


photo by Paula Wehr

Ray Scory discovered his passion for photography when he was in college at the University of Connecticut. Two days after arriving at Fort Dix for US Army basic training, he met up with an old fraternity buddy who just happened to be the man to know in a place like that. He assigned Ray to Fort Lee, Virginia as an Army photographer and what had been an avocation soon became his life's love and work.

After his tour of duty he returned to Waterbury, Conn. and went to work at Industrial Photo Service. He bought the business a year later and began a 40 year career providing photographic services to industrial and commercial clients all over the northeast. He also met and married his wife, Jane, a high school art teacher. They had two children, John and Shelby, who went on to give them several grand children.

Ray has received far more awards for his work than we have room here to list. He taught photography at several colleges and served on the boards of numerous professional photography organizations. He also served as President of the New Haven Bird Club for several years. He has served as a volunteer ranger at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, is an official photographer for the Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival and has taught our Beginning Birding class for the past 10 years. So if you see Ray on a field trip, patiently teaching someone the finer points of warbler identification, be sure to say thanks.

David Hartgrove

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## Audubon Assembly – Boots on the Ground

Join Audubon members from around the state for our annual celebration. Get inspired and get involved in citizen science, habitat stewardship, and grassroots advocacy. This year's exciting event will be held at the beautiful Innisbrook Resort and Golf Club in Palm Harbor, Florida – about 30 minutes from downtown Tampa. Click [here](#) for all the details.

## Come Out And Support These Events

**Sat., Sept. 21** The Natural History Festival at the Museum of Arts and Sciences. This event is part of the "Septembers With The Smithsonian" program. This is an event for the whole family. There are hands on activities for kids, presentations like the one by Dr. Rachel K. Wentz, "How Fire Has Transformed Civilization" and much more. The fun begins at 10:00 am and is Free for Museum members or with paid admission.

Come out and spend an hour to help our Indian River Lagoon.

**Hands Across the Lagoon**

**September 28, 2013**  
9:00–10:00 a.m.

**South Causeway (SR 44)**  
New Smyrna Beach, FL

Parking available on Canal St., Palmetto St., Live Oak St., the Brannon Center and at Callalisa Creek

Hands Across the Lagoon events are occurring in all five lagoon counties to call attention to the declining condition of our Indian River Lagoon and to ask our leaders to make the health of the lagoon a top priority.

Devastating algae blooms in 2011 and 2012 destroyed 60% of the lagoon's seagrasses. Since the fall of 2012, and continuing this year, the lagoon's wildlife is under threat, with the unexplained deaths of many brown pelicans, manatees and dolphins.

Join your friends and neighbors in standing up for lagoon protection and restoration. At 9:45 a.m. participants will join hands for 15 minutes to show that we care about the lagoon and want to see it restored to a healthy condition.

Sponsored by:

- MDC
- Marine Science Center
- Volusia County
- Indian River Lagoon
- Indian River Lagoon Program
- 321-722-5363
- khill@sjrwm.com
- UCF
- UF Florida
- Indian River Lagoon News and Events

For additional information, contact:  
**Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program**  
321-722-5363  
khill@sjrwm.com

### Indian River Lagoon News and Events

As you can see, we're one of the sponsoring organizations. This will be a fun way to start your weekend and do something positive to raise awareness about this major water quality issue. We hope to see you there.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Take Two Minutes To Help Save Our Parks

In yet another example of just how out of touch with their constituents our state Legislature is, they have directed the Department of Environmental Protection to survey all of its land holdings to see what there is to be surplussed and sold off to the highest bidder. Here in Volusia County there are 4 parcels on their list: a small part of Tomoka State Park, a strip of land near Blue Springs State Park that the County plans to include in its bike trails program and 2 small parcels near Lake George State Forest. Across the state there are far larger parcels, including a 400 acre tract adjacent to Wekiva Springs State Park and a 150 acre site in Oleta River State Park in Miami. We have a program here in the state called "Florida Forever", which is designed to fund the purchase of environmentally endangered lands. The Acquisition and Restoration Council will meet in Tallahassee on Friday, Sept. 13th to discuss this issue. Here's a [link](#) to send them an e-mail. Let them know that "forever" means just that.

David Hartgrove

## Tomoka Eagle Scout Project Partnership

Cody Carrier, a 9th grade IB student at Spruce Creek High School and a Boy Scout with the rank of Life, is working toward the highest rank of Eagle Scout. In order to attain this rank, he is required to plan, develop and lead a service project that benefits a non-profit organization. He selected Tomoka State Park. His project proposal has been approved by Park officials and the Boy Scouts.

His project will upgrade the Boardman Pond wildlife observation platform built a number of years ago by Scouts and Halifax River Audubon. To visit the platform, take North Beach Street/Old Dixie Highway north from the Tomoka State Park entrance. Turn right onto Walter Boardman Lane. You'll see the tidal pond on your left. Continue past the pond to the small parking area on the right. The trail to the platform is on the left; walking only, no cars permitted.

He will also clear vegetation from the trail and coordinate the design, manufacture and installation of a color wildlife interpretive panel. Total cost for the project is about \$2,000. He has raised a little less than half the money already. Our HRA Board voted to provide up to \$600 to match future donations he will raise.

Cody is requesting individual donors to contribute to his fundraising efforts. Send a check, payable to Friends of Troop 403, Cody Carrier Tomoka Eagle Project, to Cody Carrier, 18 Cameo Circle, Ormond Beach 32174.

The interpretive panel will be tamper-proof with a 10-year warranty, will meet requirements of the American Disabilities Act and will be designed to highlight the importance of this salt marsh to the many species of local and migratory birds that depend upon its continued existence. The current platform will be repaired, cleaned and treated with sealant.

Paula Wehr



This photo (taken by his Dad, Phil) shows Cody standing on the existing observation platform.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Video Links

Below are two links to beautiful and interesting videos online. The first was sent to me by our Membership Chair and Historian, John Carr. It's a lesson about hummingbirds and how they're able to get nectar. They're even more amazing than we thought. Here's the [link](#).

The other one came to me from Capt. Jim Boyle, who's often been so helpful when doing bird surveys along the Halifax River. This one has some amazing photography of flowers, accompanied by beautiful music. Here's its [link](#). Both are just a few minutes in length and are guaranteed to brighten your day.

Ed.

This month we begin a new column. Every other month Ray Scory, who teaches our *Beginning Birding* class, will contribute an article.

## A Mockingbird's Song

an *Everyday Birding* close by message...

by Ray Scory

She fed the birds and planted honeysuckle along side the open porch, because they smelled nice and attracted the hummingbirds, too. She had my father put a bird box on a pole outside the kitchen window and bluebirds nested there. He also had to trim the two cedar trees in the small front yard so we could see the birds nesting and watch the young ones fly away.

This all began just before the War, when my mother and father first moved into their little bungalow in a neighborhood where everyone worked in the factories. She fed the birds with stale bread and tied suet to the grape arbor poles when times got better.

For fifty years, she watched the birds on this small plot of land in a neighborhood of small white houses set side by side. She didn't stop until the day we drove her away to the rest home where she sat in a wheel chair in her special world and always liked to watch the birds. I don't think she knew the names of all of the birds that came into the yard or even cared, but she liked looking at them. She didn't keep a yard list or have a lot of bird books and who knew about video tapes in the nineteen forties, but because my mother watched the birds in the yard, her young son watched, too.

A few years before she left her home she would open her front porch door and a Mockingbird would appear on top of nearby hedges and they would talk to each other. The Mockingbird would then deftly dance closer from branch to branch and they would talk again. I'd like to think that the Mockingbird was thanking my mother for taking care of the birds all those years and thought she was quite special.

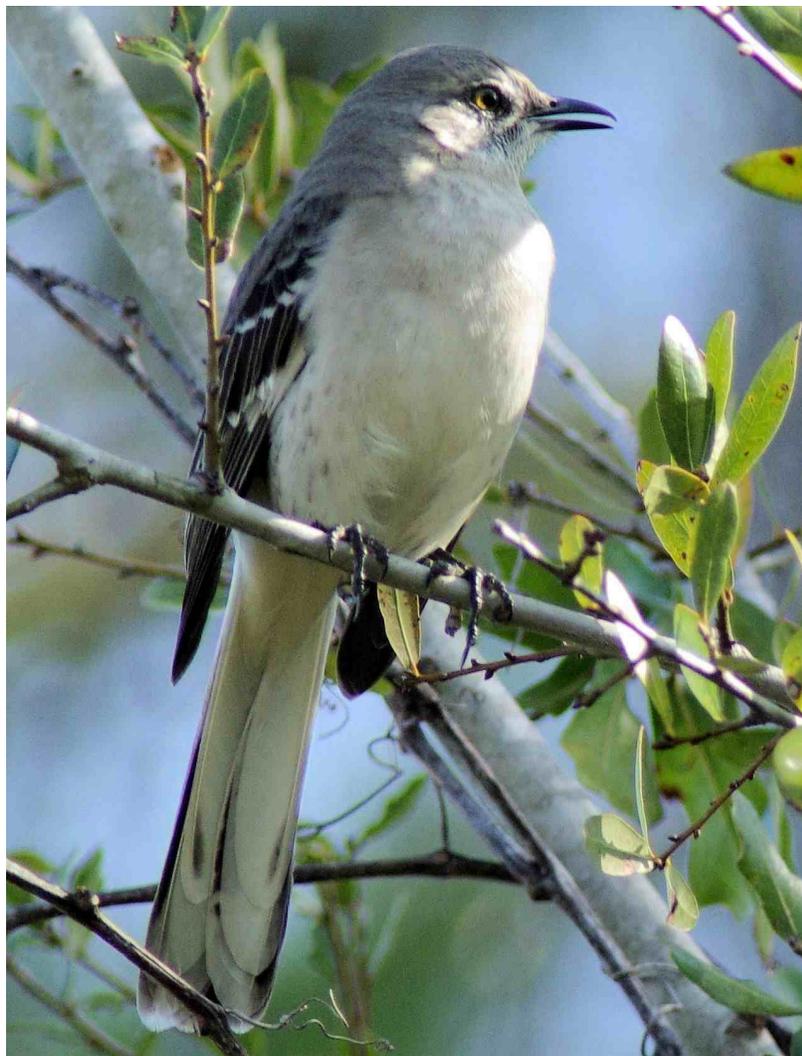
In loving gratitude to my mother and in memory of all the other nice people who inspired us to watch the birds. I dedicate to them my first *Everyday Birding* message printed in the Halifax River Audubon newsletter.

Postscript: This column was published (September 1997) as my first President's Message in the Chickadee, the New Haven Bird Club newsletter. I have altered some sections to bring it up to date. At the request of Paula Wehr, our president and David Hartgrove, our editor, I will begin to write a column in our newsletter featuring everyday birds that are familiar to us but may be an exciting "first time seen" bird for visitors to our area. This first time column will coincide with our chapter's first monthly presentation of our new year in September 2013. The presentation is called, "Everyday Birding, close by."

\* \* \* \* \*

## Help Save Florida's Environmental Heritage!

The Florida's Water & Land Legacy Amendment campaign has just under 3 months to gather half a million signed petitions to get on the ballot in 2014. With your help that goal can be achieved. Halifax River Audubon, our sister chapters locally, Audubon Florida, the League of Women Voters and all of the state's environmental groups are working hard to see that this initiative is successful. If you haven't signed already, here's a [link](#) to the website. You can download and print a copy for mailing and even donate to the cause. This is without question the single most important action you can take to help save what's left of Florida's environmental beauty.



Northern Mockingbird, *photo by Ray Scory*

\* \* \* \* \*

## Welcome To Our New & Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new members and to those who are rejoining us again: Suzanne Allen, Toby L. Begger, Courtney Benford, Rebekah Berman, Renee Burson, Betty Buss, Dearcey Campbell, Joe Cappetta, Penny Crouch, Mildred Drogowski, James Drummond, Robert Edinger, H.L. Funkhouser, C. Gagnon, Ethelyn Gass, John Green, Antonio Haselman, Josephine Kerrigan, Frances Larsen, Lorraine Lee, Donald Leroy, Jane Lingenfelter, Dave McGan, Vivian S. McLellan, Linda McQuaig, Howard Newton, Mary Nilsson, Violet Nolte, Dorothy Orton, Rose F. Patterson, Penney Peirce, Margaret F. Pfoutz, Katie Rodgers, Harry L. Ruppenthal, William Ryan, Eda Shlyam, Frederick J. Steger, Ronald Strain, Shoshannah Tempest, Doug Traver, Mark J. Vogenitz, Linda Vosbury, Kimberly Wallace, Mary Wender, Luise West, Laurie White, Melanie R. Whyte.

We hope to see you at our meetings or on one of our field trips.

\* \* \* \* \*

## A Pelagic Birding Trip At The End of the Month

The Marine Science Center is sponsoring another pelagic birding trip aboard the "Pastime Princess." We leave the dock in New Smyrna Beach at 4:00 am on Sunday, Sept. 29th and return at 7:00 pm. This your chance to see birds like Cory's, Great and Audubon's Shearwaters; Wilson's and Leach's Storm Petrels; phalaropes, jaegers, and more. You can bring a small cooler and the boat's galley has sandwiches, burgers, etc. Cost is 195.00 per person. Contact Michael Brothers [here](#) or call him at 386-304-5543 for complete details.

*A Special Thanks To Our Sponsors*

**Florida Power & Light, Garden Club of the Halifax Country,  
The Ormond Beach Garden Club and Colonial Colony**

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**Our mailing address is PO Box 166 Daytona Beach, FL 32115-0166**

**Our website is [www.halifaxriveras.org](http://www.halifaxriveras.org) For information on upcoming field trips, etc.**

**Contact Our Board Members**

Office	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
President	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.co">paulawehr@cfl.rr.co</a>
Vice President	John Roessler	255-9826	<a href="mailto:birdman3651@bellsouth.net">birdman3651@bellsouth.net</a>
Treasurer	Rachel Ramsey	673-1037	<a href="mailto:gmamimi@cfl.rr.com">gmamimi@cfl.rr.com</a>
Corresponding Sec.	Karen Mosher	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
Recording Sec.	Peggy Yokubonus	673-7619	<a href="mailto:pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com">pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com</a>
Membership Sec.	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@gmail.com">jcarr14@gmail.com</a>
Historian	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@gmail.com">jcarr14@gmail.com</a>
Past President	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
At Large 2014	Renate Calero	761-8179	<a href="mailto:renate_c@hotmail.com">renate_c@hotmail.com</a>
At Large 2014	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>
At Large 2015	Karen Moser	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
At Large 2015	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
At Large 2016	Deborah Green	407-625-1390	<a href="mailto:skylarkfolkart@gmail.com">skylarkfolkart@gmail.com</a>
At Large 2016	Dan Gribbin	760-8226	<a href="mailto:bluzeman1@hotmail.com">bluzeman1@hotmail.com</a>

**Committee Members**

Committee	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
Bird ID Class	Ray Scory	763-4260	<a href="mailto:colors@cfl.rr.com">colors@cfl.rr.com</a>
Conservation	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
Education	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>
	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
Field Trips	Chuck Tague	412-841-8813	<a href="mailto:kingrail@mac.com">kingrail@mac.com</a>
	Joan Tague	253-1166	<a href="mailto:babyowl@mac.com">babyowl@mac.com</a>
Newsletter Editor	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a> or <a href="mailto:hrapelican11@earthlink.net">hrapelican11@earthlink.net</a>
Welcome	Jari Arbogast	761-2283	<a href="mailto:arbofish@att.net">arbofish@att.net</a>
	Celine Sullivan	257-1980	<a href="mailto:celinesul@aol.com">celinesul@aol.com</a>
Webmaster	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.com">paulawehr@cfl.rr.com</a>

# The Pelican

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

Vol. 59-No.4 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon October, 2013



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

### *Thoughts from on High*

Every October for more than 20 years, volunteers around the country unite in a common mission to improve the lives of others. October is also the month when Audubon Florida holds its annual meeting. This year's Audubon Assembly focuses on Florida's inspiring grassroots citizen scientists and volunteer conservation efforts. So it seems fitting that we should highlight our chapter volunteers this October.

During our fiscal year (July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013,) we had 22 members contribute an amazing 3,100 volunteer hours to further official activities of Halifax River Audubon. A short list of these activities includes creating and distributing materials about how to help conserve birds and wildlife, installing nest boxes, teaching a bird identification class, removing and safely disposing of used monofilament fishing line from receptacles at local piers, attending local government meetings and advocating for wildlife and habitat and writing letters to the editor on environmental issues. Volunteers researched locations, scouted the areas and led 31 official field trips which were attended by 410 members and guests. Volunteers participated in bird counts for the Florida Shorebird Alliance, Eagle Watch, and Jay Watch as well as the Annual Christmas Bird Count for Volusia and surrounding counties. Members are up early in the morning to gather data for the new Breeding Bird Atlas which will cover the entire State of Florida. Chapter members manned tables and booths at numerous local birding and environmental festivals.

Our chapter purchased Audubon Adventure kits for 31 elementary school classrooms. Volunteers visited school rooms to make presentations or assist teachers 25 times. They led 32 field trips for 1,458 students in Volusia County schools. These visits may be the first real contact a child has with nature.

2013-2014 brings new and exciting projects. We have begun working with Mrs. Belsky at Tomoka Elementary School to upgrade the existing butterfly garden to include bird habitat too. As noted in the September issue, we are assisting Cody Carrier to complete his Eagle Scout project of refurbishing the Boardman wildlife viewing platform.

I'm proud to be associated with this group of dedicated, knowledgeable and enthusiastic members. Well done to all!

*Paula Wehr*

## Calendar & Events

**Monday, Oct. 21** Program Meeting – Beneficial Bats- Shari Blissett-Clark presents an introduction to bats, outlining their contribution to a healthy, balanced environment and debunking common myths which give rise to unfounded fear of these flying mammals. She will discuss basic bat biology, rabies, and conservation efforts during the program. Join us at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. followed by a brief business meeting.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Field Trips and Other Fun Opportunities

**Friday, Oct. 4** A1A North Run Field Trip. This will be a trip to points north, like Washington Oaks, Matanzas Inlet and Gamble Rogers State Park. Meet at the Publix Shopping Center at Granada Blvd. & Williamson Blvd. near the Chick-Fil-A at 7:15 am. Bring a lunch. For info, call Joan Tague, 286-253-1166.

**Saturday, Oct. 12** Lake Woodruff/Heart Island. Ducks, shorebirds, warblers and more are possible on this trip. There's a bit of easy walking. Bring a lunch. For info, call Joan Tague, 386-253-1166.

**Friday, Oct. 18** Guana River Preserve in Ponte Vedra Beach is our destination. We'll meet at the Publix Shopping Center at Granada Blvd. & Williamson Blvd. near the Chick-Fil-A at 7:00 am. Bring a lunch. For info, call Joan Tague, 286-253-1166.

## Field Trips With Other Groups

**Saturday, Oct. 5** Join Flagler Audubon at [Washington Oaks Gardens State Park](#), 6400 N. Oceanshore Blvd., Palm Coast, for what they're calling their "Big Sit, Stand & Walk." Meet the group at 8:30 in the parking lot next to the Friend's Gift Shop. Groups will move to selected spots, take up seats provided by the park and await the arrival of the birds. With over 100 species recorded in the park a good day should be had by all. Bring a picnic lunch to enjoy in this beautiful spot. Here's a [link](#) for more info and to the chapter's entire list of field trips for this year.

Volusia County Land Management has some excellent field trips planned for October. You can hike, bike or ride on the "eco-buggy" with County Naturalist, Bonnie Cary, to some beautiful places and learn all kinds of cool things. Here's a [link](#) to their list of fun activities for October.

\* \* \* \* \*

Our friends in the Paw Paw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society have a full month of activities planned, including an over night trip to [Gold Head Branch State Park](#). Participants on this trip are limited to around 10 persons unless you're planning to camp in the park's lovely campground. Here's a [link](#) to the chapter's calendar page with all of the information on October's events.

## Conservation Notes

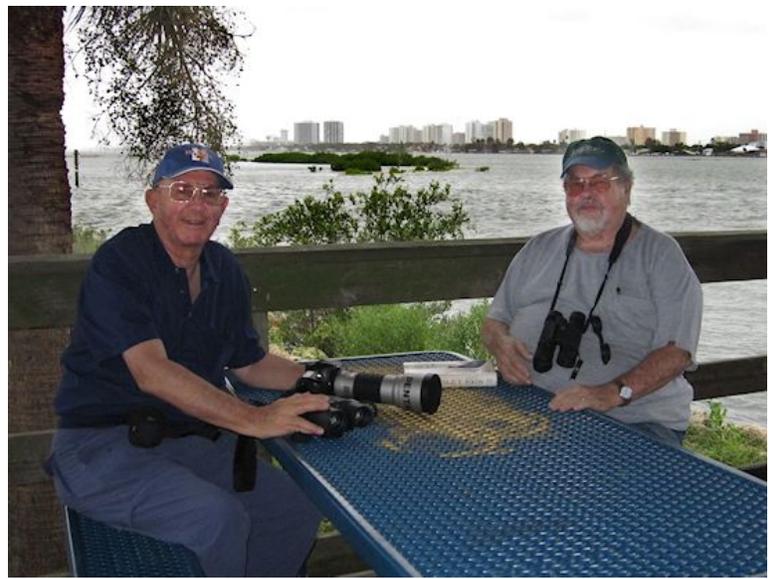
Many people are familiar with the plight of the Red Knot. This robin sized shorebird annually migrates an amazing round trip of 28,000 miles. From the Canadian Arctic to Tierra Del Fuego at the southern tip of South America and back. They can be seen here in Florida nearly any month of the year but they're only migrating through. About 10 years ago there was considerable press coverage of the plight of these birds as they reached the shores of the Chesapeake Bay and the Delmarva Peninsula and found that the horseshoe crab eggs they had long gorged themselves on each year were depleted from over harvesting. On September 27th, the U. S Fish & Wildlife Service, in response to a court ordered deadline, proposed listing the Red Knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*) as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act. This will be a major step in the hoped for recovery of a species whose population has declined by 75% in the past 30 years. As required by the ESA, the Service plans to publish a separate proposed rule identifying critical habitat for the Red Knot before the end of 2013 and expects to make a final decision on both rules in 2014. The public comment period extends through November 29th and if I can decipher the arcane maze of the regulatory comments process, I'll enter a comment on behalf of the chapter online. Fortunately there's also a way to use regular mail.

For a variety of reasons our chapter will now be affiliated with two Regional Conservation Committees. The Central Florida RCC, to which we've been affiliated since Audubon Florida proposed these entities. And the new Indian River Lagoon RCC, the inaugural meeting of which I attended in Fellsmere recently. We are certainly involved in the issues at Lake Apopka and in the efforts to establish the North Shore Restoration Area as a new national wildlife refuge. There are a number of other issues which the CFRCC works on that we follow too, including water quality issues in our springs, growth management, etc.

The monumental problems facing the Indian River Lagoon have been growing worse with each passing year. The environmental community has been sounding the alarm for at least 25 years. Regulatory agencies listened. However, with their enforcement budgets being slashed nearly every year by the local, state and federal governments, they could do little more than document the slide into the catastrophe we see now. Over 300 Brown Pelicans, at least 71 dolphins and 115 manatees have died in the Lagoon over the past 12 months. Our state Legislature would dismiss those as "collateral damage" in their insane drive to slash taxes and the regulatory authority of the agencies that are supposed to monitor water quality. Now however, the sport fishing industry is screaming about the collapse of its future. Worse yet, the real estate industry has to Photoshop images of the water in front of those multi-million dollar mansions they're trying to sell. They are reluctant to show potential customers that what should be a pristine shoreline is now littered with masses of dead fish and murky water which has been posted as unfit for human contact by local health departments. It was to better address these and other environmental issues that the new RCC was proposed. The original CFRCC was too large geographically to easily facilitate meetings, even when we moved to a quarterly schedule. It is our choice to maintain a presence in both RCC's.

The Hands Across The Lagoon event that was mentioned in last month's Pelican was a rousing success, in spite of rain that arrived just as the 250 + participants were exiting their cars to walk up onto the bridge. Our own Dan Gribbin joined in the festivities down on the river in his kayak and other members and those from our sister chapters stood on the bridge as the sun broke through and a small rainbow was seen in the west. Let's hope government at all levels was watching.

*David Hartgrove*



## The Big Sit

The Big Sit is a different kind of birding challenge. Non competitive in nature, it originated with the New Haven Bird Club in Oct., 2002. This will be the 13th year that our team of John Carr and Ray Scory (a past President of the NHBC) will sit together in Port Orange Causeway Park, under the west side of the Dunlawton Bridge. The rules state that you must stay within a circle 17 feet in diameter. Any bird seen or positively identified by sound from within the circle counts. In 2002, when Ray arrived in the park before first light, he heard the courtship of two Great Horned Owls. In 2011, while the "No Name" tropical storm lashed the coast with 40 mph winds and the rain blew sideways, Ray and John had 4 Magnificent Frigatebirds and a Brown Booby fly by just a short distance away! This year, on Sunday, 10/13, Ray and John will spend all day trying to get a higher tally than they have previously. If you'd like you can drop by for a while to help out. There's no limit to the number of participants. They just have to be inside the circle.

At the beginning I said this isn't competitive. There is a reward though for a team that finds the "Golden Bird." What is the Golden Bird? After all of the Big Sit! results are tabulated nationwide, a bird species will be selected by random drawing from the total list of all species seen in North America. All of the circles that listed that bird will be put into another random drawing. The randomly selected winning circle wins the Golden Bird prize of \$500. The winner is required to choose a non-profit, environmental organization to receive the \$500, donated by Swarovski Optik. Those qualifying can include bird clubs, Audubon chapters, land trusts, etc. Bird Watcher's Digest sponsors the Big Sit!. Here's a [link](#) to more information.

*David Hartgrove*

\* \* \* \* \*

## Audubon Adventures For Our Local Schools

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, Audubon Adventures is perfect for anyone looking for supplemental science activities for upper elementary students. See the link [here](#) for more information.

Donations from members fund this program. 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!

## Gainesville Birding Trip, December 4th & 5th

This year's overnight birding trip will be to Gainesville. Fans of other schools, whether located in Tallahassee, Tuscaloosa, Athens or elsewhere need not feel disloyal. We're going for the birding, not the football. Alachua County offers some of the best birding in the state. So the idea of spending an extended visit there seemed like a good idea. We have what we think is an ambitious, though relaxed schedule. We'll depart for Gainesville on Wednesday, 12/4, from the parking area near the Publix on Granada & Williamson Boulevards at 8:30 am. We'll arrive in Gainesville just before noon and have lunch. Afterward we'll head to the Hague Dairy. This is a teaching farm that is part of the University's IFAS program. It's famous for the diverse bird species it attracts in the winter months. Around 4:30 we'll head to our hotel, where we'll be staying both nights, the [La Quinta Inn](#). We have a block of rooms reserved at a very reasonable price of 64.80 plus tax. Dinner that night will be on your own. There are a number of good restaurants located near the hotel.

The hotel offers a free continental breakfast beginning at 6:00 am. We'll rendezvous at 7:30 and head out to bird the north end of the La Chua Trail. Around noon we'll have a picnic lunch at Boulwer Springs Park and then head over to the University. Dr. Andrew Kratter, Ornithology Collections Manager at the Florida Museum of Natural History, will give us a behind the scenes tour of the collection. This will provide a fascinating look at aspects of birding and ornithology many of us have only guessed about. Sunset on December 5th will be at 5:30 pm. Since we'll be on the campus already, we'll head over to the bat house. This structure is home to over 100,000 bats of two species. Brazilian free-tailed bats and Southeastern bats, which are outnumbered by their Brazilian cousins 1,000 to 1. They fly out each evening around sundown to feed and as you can imagine, it's quite a sight. After this we'll head back to the hotel and dinner. The following morning we'll meet at 8:00 in order to give everyone time to check out. Then we'll go to San Felasco Hammock State Park for a morning of birding before heading home. Hotel reservations are on your own. Call 1-352-332-6466, and tell the reservations person you're with the Halifax River Audubon group. The cut off date for reservations is Nov. 13th. We're limiting participation to 24 people. For questions about the trip, call David Hartgrove, 386-788-2630.

*David Hartgrove*



*photo by David Hartgrove*

This young White-tailed Tropicbird defied the statistics by surviving rehab to be released back into the wild. Here he's about to be released by volunteer, Tim Durst, while on the pelagic trip sponsored by the Marine Science Center, 9/29/13.



*photo by Brian O'Connor*

A sure sign of Fall migration is the sight of American Avocets in Florida waters again. Brian, took this photo at Fred Howard Beach, in Pinellas County. You can just barely see one on the right still clinging to the remains of his alternate plumage. And notice the bird in the center of the photo has a more pronounced recurve in her bill. That's a field mark of females.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Welcome To Our New & Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new members and to those who are rejoining us again: Bernadette Devery, Edward Flanagan, Karen Wilkie, Elmore Haynor, Corliss Lawrey, Janice Lowry, Robert Morgan, Kathleen Prastitis, Elezebeth Reed, Walter Snell, Mary Snow and Joyce Stringer. We hope to see you at our meetings or on one of our field trips.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Plan to Attend the Audubon Assembly

This year's Audubon Assembly will be held at Innsbrook Golf and Spa Resort, in Palm Harbor. Dr. Reed Bowman, of the Archbold Biological Station, will be the keynote speaker. Several HRA board members are going and you can join us for this fun and educational weekend. There will be interesting field trips, discussion groups on a variety of important issues and of course, a banquet dinner. Tickets are available through [Ticketleap](#) and all of the information is available at this [link](#) to the Audubon of Florida website.

*A Special Thanks To Our Sponsors*

**Florida Power & Light, Garden Club of the Halifax Country,  
The Ormond Beach Garden Club and Colonial Colony**

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**Our mailing address is PO Box 166 Daytona Beach, FL 32115-0166**

**Our website is [www.halifaxriveras.org](http://www.halifaxriveras.org) For information on upcoming field trips, etc.**

**Contact Our Board Members**

Office	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
President	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.co">paulawehr@cfl.rr.co</a>
Vice President	John Roessler	255-9826	<a href="mailto:birdman3651@bellsouth.net">birdman3651@bellsouth.net</a>
Treasurer	Rachel Ramsey	673-1037	<a href="mailto:gmamimi@cfl.rr.com">gmamimi@cfl.rr.com</a>
Corresponding Sec.	Karen Mosher	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
Recording Sec.	Peggy Yokubonus	673-7619	<a href="mailto:pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com">pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com</a>
Membership Sec.	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@gmail.com">jcarr14@gmail.com</a>
Historian	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@gmail.com">jcarr14@gmail.com</a>
Past President	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
At Large 2014	Renate Calero	761-8179	<a href="mailto:renate_c@hotmail.com">renate_c@hotmail.com</a>
At Large 2014	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>
At Large 2015	Karen Moser	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
At Large 2015	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
At Large 2016	Deborah Green	407-625-1390	<a href="mailto:skylarkfolkart@gmail.com">skylarkfolkart@gmail.com</a>
At Large 2016	Dan Gribbin	760-8226	<a href="mailto:bluzeman1@hotmail.com">bluzeman1@hotmail.com</a>

**Committee Members**

Committee	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
Bird ID Class	Ray Scory	763-4260	<a href="mailto:colors@cfl.rr.com">colors@cfl.rr.com</a>
Conservation	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
Education	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>
	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
Field Trips	Chuck Tague	412-841-8813	<a href="mailto:kingrail@mac.com">kingrail@mac.com</a>
	Joan Tague	253-1166	<a href="mailto:babyowl@mac.com">babyowl@mac.com</a>
Newsletter Editor	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a> or <a href="mailto:hrapelican11@earthlink.net">hrapelican11@earthlink.net</a>
Welcome	Jari Arbogast	761-2283	<a href="mailto:arbofish@att.net">arbofish@att.net</a>
	Celine Sullivan	257-1980	<a href="mailto:celinesul@aol.com">celinesul@aol.com</a>
Webmaster	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.com">paulawehr@cfl.rr.com</a>

# The Pelican

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

Volume 59-No.5 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon  
November, 2013



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Thoughts from on High*

In June 2013, George Monbiot, writer and political activist, gave a TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) Talk about rewilding. One of the primary goals of rewilding is the mass restoration of ecosystems. Animals at the top of the food chain can affect processes all the way down that chain, including change in the land as well.

The classic example that Monbiot discussed is the reintroduction of wolves into Yellowstone National Park in 1995, 70 years after they had been exterminated. When only a few wolves were placed in the park, the deer population went down, so riverbanks and the sides of streams began to flourish without the constant browsing from the deer population. Trees on the riverbanks quadrupled in height in just six years. Aspen and willows repopulated previously barren valleys. Birds returned. Beavers built dams and created habitats for other mammals, fish, lizards and reptiles.

Unexpectedly, the wolves altered the rivers themselves. The tree roots reduced the rate of erosion and narrowed the width of the streams which allowed for diverse pools and eddies. Native vegetation regrew on hillsides, further enhancing the habitat for other native species. The wolves in Yellowstone seem to have demonstrated that a single species can transform an entire ecosystem, if allowed to pursue the natural behavior of that species.

Monbiot contends that the benefits of rewilding go beyond the reintroduction of native species. He speaks about experiencing nature all around him, getting outside and reintroducing himself to "...that high, wild note of exaltation after a drought of sensation that had persisted since early adulthood." Rewild, says Monbiot, and "our silent spring could be replaced by a raucous summer."

Read [more](#) on the TED Blog, posted by Thu-Huong Ha, June 11, 2013. Listen to the full 15-minute TED presentation [here](#).

*Paula Wehr*

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## Member Contact Information

Each September we send, via US mail, a quick reference card to all chapter members which lists the monthly speakers and field trips. Routinely about 2-3 dozen are returned to us as "undeliverable" for a variety of reasons. This costs us in so many ways. Please notify John Carr, [jcarr14@gmail.com](mailto:jcarr14@gmail.com), regarding the alternate address and the dates when you'll be gone. That way members will be sure to receive the quick reference card and the chapter will efficiently utilize our postage budget. We thank you for your assistance in keeping us notified.

## Calendar & Events

**Monday, Nov. 18th Program Meeting – The Plight of the Florida Grasshopper Sparrow** The Florida Grasshopper Sparrow is a federally endangered bird found nowhere else in the world. Despite the efforts of public land managers, the population of this flat-headed, short-tailed little sparrow of the fields continues to decline, even on the very lands where it should be thriving. Join us on Monday, November 18, at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill when Dr. Paul Gray, Audubon Florida Okeechobee Science Coordinator, will discuss species history, predation and current strategies for restoration. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; presentation begins at 7:00 p.m.

### Field Trips

**Fri., Nov. 15th** Join us for the first of our trips to Merritt Island NWR. Ray Scory will lead us down to see the wintering treasures this beautiful spot has to offer. Recent sightings have included a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher! Meet at 7:00 am at International Square, on US 92, east of I-95, behind the Krystal Restaurant. Bring lunch.

**Sat., Nov. 16th** For those who couldn't join us on the 1st trip, this one to MINWR, this one will lead by Chuck & Joan Tague. Again, we'll meet at International Square, on US 92, east of I-95, behind the Krystal Restaurant. Bring lunch. On both of these trips we'll have several spotting scopes so everyone can get good looks at all of the birds.

### Field Trips With Others

**Sat., Nov. 16th** The same day we go for our 2nd trip to MINWR, Flagler Audubon will be going to [Payne's Prairie State Park](#) in Alachua County. Meet at the Winn-Dixie parking lot on SR 100 east of I-95. Bring lunch. Questions? Contact Pres., Linda White at [lwhite1230@gmail.com](mailto:lwhite1230@gmail.com)

**Fri., Nov. 22nd** Join our friends from Southeast Volusia Audubon Society for their trip to MINWR. Meet at Market Square, on SR 442 (Indian River Blvd.) & US 1, at 7:00 am, between the Dunkin' Donuts and Chick-Fil-A. Again, bring lunch. Questions? Contact Dick Domroski 386-428-0447 or [rdomroski@cfl.r.com](mailto:rdomroski@cfl.r.com).

**Sun., Nov. 3rd** Join the Paw Paw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society for their field trip, "A Walk In The Park." If you're not looking forward to those early wake up calls, this might be the trip for you. Meet the group at 12:15 pm near the Publix at Granada & Williamson Blvds., in Ormond Beach. They'll car pool up to [Palm Coast Waterfront Park](#), have a picnic lunch and then take a 2 mile walk on the trails and boardwalks. Questions? contact Sonya Guidry, 386-690-1797. One more thing, bring a folding chair.

\* \* \* \* \*

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

*Rev. Henry Ward Beecher*

## Conservation Notes

Fall migration is just about over for another year. There are still ducks working their way south and the masses of Yellow-rumped Warblers and American Robins we see each winter have yet to arrive but they'll be here. This year has brought a bumper crop of birds that normally winter in other areas to our state. Every year for the past decade or so a few errant flycatchers are reported from around the state. In Astatula, northwest of Lake Apopka, on Ranch Road, a Say's Phoebe has been a wintering star of its own show for birders from all over the country for at least the past eight years. At Orlando Wetlands Park a Vermillion Flycatcher has been the center attraction for the past few years. And around the state reports of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, Western Kingbirds and several other unknowns, like Brown-crested, Ash-throated and La Sagra's Flycatchers have had birders arguing over the extent of rufous coloration in a bird's tail and the shape and thickness of its bill.

This year promises to be even more lively. It's only late October and already there are multiple reports on birding list serves and Facebook pages of both Scissor-tailed and Vermillion Flycatchers in various parts of the state. Is this because there are more of these birds flying east, rather than south, from their usual nesting grounds out west? Or have there always been a number of these birds here and it's just that now there are more people in the field with binoculars to see them? That's a question that will need a bit more research to answer. However a possible clue comes from an unlikely source, Britain and Ireland.

It seems our fellow birders, or "twitchers" as they're known across the pond, are being treated to an invasion of American birds unlike any known before. So far this fall they've had the following: Cape May Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, multiple Yellow-rumped Warblers, Blackpoll Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Kingbird, Mourning Dove, multiple Gray-cheeked Thrushes, Hermit Thrush, Cedar Waxwing, multiple Red-eyed Vireos, Northern Harrier, Sora, Ovenbird, multiple American Pipits and Baltimore Oriole. They've also seen numerous American shorebird species such as Baird's, Upland and Semipalmated Sandpipers. Already there's speculation that this unprecedented movement is caused by climate change. But that's all it is for now, speculation.

\* \* \*

Finally overwhelmed by the flood of complaints from his constituents, State Senator Joe Negron, whose district includes the coastal portions of Indian River, St Lucie and Martin Counties, earlier this month held a well publicized hearing on the conditions in the Indian River Lagoon. The Senator was quick to reveal his almost total lack of a grasp of the situation. He constantly interrupted speakers to ask, "What can I do in the next 90 days to help the situation?" As I've pointed out in numerous columns over the years, this is a situation that has developed over a long time and it doesn't lend itself to quick fixes. And of course the Senator wasn't about to let the hearing turn into an examination of the idiotic policies of the current administration. So no one was allowed to ask questions like why Florida has, with the EPA's blessing, adopted a water quality rule that was written by lobbyists for the state's largest polluters. A rule that leaves two thirds of the state's flowing waters with no limits on pollution. As long as the state's largest polluters are allowed to skip out on paying for the cleanup of their mess, we tax payers will continue getting stuck with the bill. The plan first put forward by Charlie Crist to purchase the lands owned by US Sugar and convert them to fresh water reclamation areas was also all but ignored. Once again, the longer the problems are ignored, the worse they'll become. Where's a guy like Teddy Roosevelt when we need him?

*David Hartgrove*



*photo by Paula Wehr*

## MEET OUR CHAPTER VOLUNTEER

Deborah Green is one of two newly-elected At-Large Board Members, beginning her first three-year term in June 2013. She is a fifth-generation Georgian, born in Savannah. However, she and her family moved to northwestern New Jersey where she lived until leaving for college. She attended University of Vermont, New School for Social Research in NYC (where she received a BS in biology) and University of Miami (where she earned an MBA.)

While living in NYC she was a professional dancer with small modern dance companies and also taught dance part-time. Her dream came true, though, when she landed a position at Sea World in the Aviculture Department where she was involved with husbandry, guest interactions and travel interships, including the fun and exciting Project Puffin in Maine. Deborah moved back to Ormond Beach about 2.5 years ago.

With a little more leisure time following retirement, she joined our chapter and enrolled in Ray Scory's beginner bird identification class to reacquaint herself with our local and migratory wild birds. Deborah believes that the little things add up. She tries to make environmental contributions close to home, like removing turf grasses which require irrigation and planting a native garden. She is delighted with the diversity and numbers of butterflies in her new landscape. She is becoming active with the Pawpaw Chapter of Florida Native Plant Society, too, to learn more about local vegetation. Be sure to welcome Deborah to our chapter when you see her at a meeting or field trip.

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## The Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*)

a feature of Everyday Birding

by Ray Scory

When the mockingbird sings, listen to the mockingbird. Listen to its performance of various sounds, bird songs and whistles. A fortunate listener has even heard one sound like a fire engine's siren. My wife, Jane, says what fascinates her about the mockingbird's song is that some can sound either like an opera star or a jazz singer. She also observes that all mockingbirds don't sound the same, some are dazzling singers, while others are not as accomplished. Each has its own unique voice. One favorite singing mockingbird of ours had perfect pitch. "Every note was right on," she said.

Harper Lee, author of "To Kill a Mockingbird" wrote, "it is a sin to kill a mocking bird," mockingbirds never hurt other living creatures. "They don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us." Truly, the beauty of the mockingbird is not in the color of its plumage, but in the quality and variety of its unique song.

On my walks through Countryside, I am always alert to the antics of the Northern Mockingbird and generally stop to watch. Bold, active, very protective of its territory and flashy. Dive bombing intruders and chasing larger birds, including hawks, seems to be its favorite sport. The Northern Mockingbird is easily identified. No subtle markings or bold colors here. Just extraordinarily active behavior - always busy. Quick, rapid wing beats, flashing white wing patches and an explosive landing identifies this robin-sized gray bird. Wagging its long, white-edged tail, pumping it up and down and whirling it round-about is a classic display.

The Northern Mockingbird ranges over all continental USA extending its range from the USA/Canada border to the southern border of Mexico, including Nova Scotia and the Caribbean Islands. Short USA southerly movement during harsh weather has been observed. Sightings in Europe are sparse. In their specific geological range, they raise their young and feed on both insects and fruit. The mockingbird favors urban and suburban settings for their home leaving the forests to other birds. They are not intimidated by human beings, co-habiting readily with them. Exuberant, energetic, actively alive, colorful in behavior and song - The Northern Mockingbird is truly a master of song and avian entertainment.

The Northern Mockingbird is the state bird of Florida... and Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee and Texas. Thomas Jefferson had a pet mockingbird named "Dick." They were sold as cage birds in the 19th century. Once called "mocker birds", *mimus polyglottos* translates as "of many tongues mimic."

## The Big Sit

by Ray Scory

Our "Big Sit" day began before sunrise on October 20th at Port Orange Causeway Park, under the Dunlawton Bridge. It was a winner! A spectacular sunrise supported by a temperate ocean breeze forecasted good things to come. As it happened, there were lots of outdoor activities to nurture active minded people - birders included. The various, ongoing activities at the bridge were a kaleidoscope of busy events suitable for spectator entertainment. Now plunk down a seventeen foot diameter circle occupied by four dedicated birders into this swirl of blistering excitement and you have the makings of a very memorable day.

The day began by watching an estimated count of over eight hundred White Ibis leaving Rookery Island, just south of the bridge at sunrise. A "WOW" kind of phenomenon. Observing a House Wren clandestinely skip through the mangroves waist high just outside our circle certainly heightened my appreciation for the stealth of birds. On the other hand, to watch a Brown Pelican smash into the water attests to the power of birds and the hovering of a Belted Kingfisher, uniquely special to a few birds until Mr. Sikorsky came along, are remarkable avian feats. Worthy of our attention.

The water was high this day. Consequently, the oyster bars hardly peeked above the surface, even during low tide. Therefore, the usual numbers of shorebirds were absent, forcing raptors to find other feeding grounds. However, a commendable range of species, from the diminutive House Wren to the graceful Bald Eagle; the easily defined shape of Brown Pelicans and the powerful flight of a Peregrine Falcon satisfied our appetite for interesting sightings.

My thanks to Joan and Chuck Tague and Barbara Loomis for stopping by and finding other birds for The Big Sit list. Our 40 specie count was very acceptable for this waterside location. Wonderful Florida weather was a plus. I will be back next year - at the bridge - for The Big Sit.



Joan Tague, Ray Scory and Chuck Tague

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## A New Delivery Option

In an effort to streamline our production efforts your next issue of the Pelican should arrive via Mail Chimp. This is an e-mail marketing provider that offers free services to users with fewer than 2,000 clients. That "marketing" part doesn't apply to us however. Your address will **NOT** be used by Mail Chimp or anyone else to send you marketing materials or spam. *Editor*

## Welcome To Our New & Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new members and to those rejoining us again: Phillip Carrier, The Charles Family, Betty Cook, Kate Counts, George & Diane Farinick, Sharon Fulton, Kathy Hawkins, James Hunt, Evelyn Lamotte, Mark Janker, Richard & Ermine Masters, Michael Piers, Joanne Rider, Kathleen Scarboro, Leslie Thackston, David Thorp, Sandra Walters and Alice Wing. We hope to see you on one of our excellent field trips or at our monthly meetings.

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## Audubon Adventures For Our Local Schools

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, Audubon Adventures is perfect for anyone looking for supplemental science activities for upper elementary students. See the link [here](#) for more information.

Donations from members fund this program. 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!

\* \* \* \* \*

## Experience The Dry Tortugas

Our friends at [Florida Nature Tours](#) have an ambitious schedule set for Spring of 2014. There will be five trips out to the Dry Tortugas and one South Florida land tour that can be coupled with one of the Tortugas trips. The first trip begins on Thursday, April 10th and each trip lasts four days. The schedule is as follows: Day 1 we explore the southern Keys and Key West hot spots looking for birds like White-crowned Pigeon, boarding our boat just after supper. Day 2 begins early as the boat leaves the dock around 5:00 am for the trip out. We'll look for pelagics as we cruise the Gulf Stream on our way. We arrive by noon and after lunch explore Garden Key and Fort Jefferson looking for those trans Gulf migrants that arrived overnight. Day 3 we're on the dock early to look for what the winds have delivered during the night. Then we'll cruise over to Hospital Key to check out the Masked Booby colony and with a bit of luck find a Black Noddy among the thousands of Brown Noddies. Day 4 we have an hour or so on Garden Key for one last search of the fort's grounds for birds like Black-whiskered Vireo before heading back to Key West. Our boat, the MV Spree, is perhaps the finest craft sailing out of Key West. It's clean as a pin and the food will have you begging for the recipes. And, if you don't want to drive back after being on the water all day, you can sleep aboard the boat the night we return, saving you another hotel bill. I'll be a leader on 2 of the trips and it's the best birding deal you'll ever get.

*David Hartgrove*

Scarlet Tanager photo taken at Fort Jefferson on the last Dry Tortugas trip, 4/28/13. photo by David Hartgrove



## Photography Tips From A Pro

Once again we've received a list of suggestions from wildlife photographer, Jeff Parker. This time he's talking photographing birds in flight. His [website](#) is also full of gorgeous images and lots of good information.

1. Use a gimbal head. For flight photography, hand-held provides the ultimate flexibility; however, since I use a 13-pound 600mm, shooting hand-held isn't realistic! If you're like me—and many others who use big lenses for birds-in-flight photography—I suggest mounting your camera to the tripod with a gimbal, which supports big lenses quite well and keeps them steady. I prefer a gimbal to a ball head because when you let go it stays in place. A ball head, on the other hand, flops over. With a bit of practice (see tip #7) you'll learn to track moving objects nearly as smoothly as if you were hand-holding your camera. If you find yourself struggling, double-check that your camera is balanced properly on the plate that came with your gimbal head.

2. Make it manual. Relying on semi-automatic modes such as shutter or aperture priority causes exposure to change as your background changes. Start with an exposure about +1 2/3 stops from the sky then check your histogram after the first couple of shots to fine tune. As long as the ambient light doesn't change your exposure will remain correct regardless of whether the bird flies in front of backgrounds of sky, mountains, or foliage.

3. Set your focus limit switch. Most lenses have a switch to limit the range of focus. Set that switch to the far range. This limits the amount of hunting the lens does as it tries to acquire focus. In other words, you'll focus on your bird a lot quicker! Pre-focusing will also help with initial focusing. Start out with your focus near the start of the infinity mark on your lens. If you have time, you can even manually turn the focusing ring to get the bird fairly sharp before you start up the auto-focus.

4. Keep that shutter speed up! To stop flight action you'll need a minimum of 1/500th of a second. Don't be afraid to bump up the ISO to get it; with modern DSLR's, you can pull off bumping ISO higher than ever before. But, if you just don't have enough light to get a good exposure with a high shutter speed, embrace the conditions. Go ahead and let the shutter speed drop to 1/60th or 1/30th of a second and pan with the birds (see tip #6). If you can get good focus on the head and match your pan speed to flight speed, the result will be a motion blur showing the movement of the birds. Obviously, this will only work if they are passing from side to side in front of you.

5. Adjust focus-tracking sensitivity. This seems counter-intuitive, but with birds-in-flight photography you'll typically adjust focus-tracking to the slow side. The reason is that, while it doesn't seem to affect your initial focus acquisition, it does buy precious time if your focus point slips off the bird or something momentarily comes between you and the bird while panning with it.

6. Pan faster. It may seem obvious, but this one simple rule is the one most often overlooked: your tracking speed must match the speed of the bird. Those new to flight photography often make the mistake of panning too slowly.

7. Practice on moving objects. Head to a busy roadside or a bike trail to practice photographing objects that move quickly. Zooming cars, bustling bicyclers, and runners all make great subjects for practicing your flight-photography skills. That way when time comes to take the shots you really want they won't get away!

*Jeff Parker*

Our thanks to Jeff for offering his expertise. His photography [workshops](#) offer excellent opportunities for further learning. Ed.

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The Ormond Beach Garden Club and Colonial Colony**

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**Our mailing address is PO Box 166 Daytona Beach, FL 32115-0166**

**Our website is [www.halifaxriveras.org](http://www.halifaxriveras.org) For information on upcoming field trips, etc.**

**Contact Our Board Members**

Office	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
President	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.co">paulawehr@cfl.rr.co</a>
Vice President	John Roessler	255-9826	<a href="mailto:birdman3651@bellsouth.net">birdman3651@bellsouth.net</a>
Treasurer	Rachel Ramsey	673-1037	<a href="mailto:gmamimi@cfl.rr.com">gmamimi@cfl.rr.com</a>
Corresponding Sec.	Karen Mosher	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
Recording Sec.	Peggy Yokubonus	673-7619	<a href="mailto:pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com">pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com</a>
Membership Sec.	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@gmail.com">jcarr14@gmail.com</a>
Historian	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@gmail.com">jcarr14@gmail.com</a>
Past President	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
At Large 2014	Renate Calero	761-8179	<a href="mailto:renate_c@hotmail.com">renate_c@hotmail.com</a>
At Large 2014	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>
At Large 2015	Karen Moser	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
At Large 2015	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
At Large 2016	Deborah Green	407-625-1390	<a href="mailto:skylarkfolkart@gmail.com">skylarkfolkart@gmail.com</a>
At Large 2016	Dan Gribbin	760-8226	<a href="mailto:bluzeman1@hotmail.com">bluzeman1@hotmail.com</a>

**Committee Members**

Committee	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
Bird ID Class	Ray Scory	763-4260	<a href="mailto:colors@cfl.rr.com">colors@cfl.rr.com</a>
Conservation	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
Education	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>
	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
Field Trips	Chuck Tague	412-841-8813	<a href="mailto:kingrail@mac.com">kingrail@mac.com</a>
	Joan Tague	253-1166	<a href="mailto:babyowl@mac.com">babyowl@mac.com</a>
Newsletter Editor	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a> or <a href="mailto:hrapelican11@earthlink.net">hrapelican11@earthlink.net</a>
Welcome	Jari Arbogast	761-2283	<a href="mailto:arbofish@att.net">arbofish@att.net</a>
	Celine Sullivan	257-1980	<a href="mailto:celinesul@aol.com">celinesul@aol.com</a>
Webmaster	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.com">paulawehr@cfl.rr.com</a>

# The Pelican

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

Volume 59-No.6 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon  
December, 2013



## Message From The President

### *Thoughts from on High*

Ten years ago I participated in my first field trip with HRA – the first week-end in December was the traditional back-to-back Friday/Saturday trips to Black Point Drive at Merritt Island. I can't remember whether it was John Carr or Willie Burns who led the trip. We had moved into our new home only three weeks earlier and didn't know anyone in Florida. I read about the field trip in the News-Journal, showed up at the parking lot and introduced myself. Lois Pauchey, Rachel Ramsey and Barbara Kieran immediately took me under their wings, inviting me to ride with them in Lois's van.

Back in 2003, our chapter held a holiday pot-luck dinner at the December general meeting, and Lois, Rachel and Barbara made sure I knew I was welcome to attend. After chatting with a number of members before we began the meal, I realized how comfortable I felt. In a room full of strangers, I immediately felt at home – people were talking about birds, the outdoors, the environment. NPR was mentioned several times – and everyone knew that it meant National Public Radio. It may have been the first time I'd ever been with a large group of people who were concerned about the same issues that mattered to me.

While giving John Carr my membership application and check, I mentioned that I'd be willing to get involved with the organization if they needed assistance. The very next day, he called to ask if I'd be willing to handle hospitality. Little did I know that by accepting that responsibility, I'd be a 'Committee Chair' and was invited to the next Board meeting. Was this great, or what! I hadn't even been in Florida for two months, and already I was on a Board and had new friends.

The rest, as they say, is history. Over the past decade I've become a better birder, participated in local and national bird counts, learned how to advocate on behalf of birds and the environment, attended numerous city commission and county council meetings on a variety of topics, participated in Audubon Assembly and interacted with our hard-working and knowledgeable staff of Audubon Florida and met more dedicated, caring and interesting people than I can count. And all of this happened, in part, because my original interaction with the members of Halifax River Audubon was so welcoming and positive.

To all Audubon members—local, state and national—who shared their friendship, knowledge and time, I say thank you. To all the new members, visitors and guests who attend our meetings and field trips—WELCOME! We hope you'll be able to write a similar story in another ten years.

Happy Holidays and Best Wishes for the New Year.

*Paula Wehr*

## Calendar & Events

**Monday, Dec. 16th Program Meeting- Music & Birds** Chapter member, folk singer, guitarist, song-writer, photographer – Dan Gribbin is a man of many talents. Join us for a special holiday meeting on Monday evening, December 16, when Dan will entertain us with songs about birds. No, he won't be imitating bird songs, he'll be telling stories about birds set to music. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. Dan's presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. A brief business meeting will follow.

### Field Trips

Our overnight trip to Gainesville (12/4 & 5) is full. We'll give a report in next month's Pelican.

**Sunday, Dec. 15th** Join us at the Dunlawton Bridge for a walk around Port Orange Causeway Park. With our scopes in hand we'll look for wintering shorebirds, gulls and any raptors that may be in the area. We'll meet at 3:30 beneath the bridge on the west side. Questions?, call David Hartgrove, 386-788-2630.

**Saturday, Dec. 28th** Please note this is a change in the original date. Join us for our annual Christmas Bird Count. Meet at the Publix parking lot at Granada & Williamson Blvds. at 7:00 am. Please call David Hartgrove if you wish to participate so he can organize teams, 386-788-2630. More on the Christmas Bird Count on the next page.

### Field Trips With Others

**Wednesday, Dec. 4th**, Join our friends from West Volusia Audubon Society for a trip to Merritt Island NWR. Meet at the NE corner of the Deland Post Office parking lot, 336 E New York Ave., at 8:00 AM to arrange car pool. Questions? Call Eli Schaperow at 407-314-7965

**Saturday, Dec. 14th**, Southeast Volusia Audubon Society is going down to Viera Wetlands. This is a great spot for Crested Caracara, Least Bittern and all kinds of wintering ducks. Meet in the Market Square parking lot in Edgewater, (at the corner of Ridgewood Ave and Indian River Blvd) between Dunkin Donuts and Chik-Fil-A at 7:00 am and bring a lunch. Questions? Call Pres. Don Picard at 386-957-1886.

**Friday, Dec. 20th**, Flagler Audubon Society will be holding their Christmas Bird Count and they can use your help. Contact Linda White at [lwhite1230@gmail.com](mailto:lwhite1230@gmail.com)

**Saturday, Dec. 21st**, West Volusia Audubon Society will hold its Christmas Bird Count and they too can use your help. Call Harry Robinson, 386-943-8342, for more information and to get on a team.

**Wednesday, Jan. 1st** Join Meret Wilson at Tomoka State Park for an hour long bird walk from 10:00 to 11:00 am. This is limited to 20 participants. Phone 386-676-4050 for reservations.

## Conservation Notes

This Christmas Bird Count, number 114, will see over 7,000 volunteers count birds in nearly 2,400 circles. All CBC's are done in a 15 mile in diameter circle. It was first proposed in 1899 by Frank Chapman, an ornithologist with the American Museum of Natural History, as an alternative to what was called the Christmas side hunt. It's hard to imagine now that people engaged in such a barbaric activity. Often participants were fathers and sons, along with other family members, who squared off against each other in a contest to see which team could kill the most birds and often other animals. While some game birds may have been taken, the "rules", such as they were, made no distinction between that which could be eaten at that which just figured in the tally at the end of the day. It was mass slaughter for bragging rights. Fortunately we don't do that kind of thing any longer. Teams spread out over a designated area and count any birds seen or heard. Some folks count from home by doing a feeder count. It's all good and we welcome participants no matter how they want to help. Many counts are followed by a gathering to compile the tally. Ours is held at the Royal Dynasty Chinese Restaurant. I usually have the duck.

While the Congress is trying how to find more ways to look like they don't have a clue they do find ways to pay back their campaign donors. Case in point, [HR 1965](#). This piece of political payback of course has a very innocent sounding name: The Federal Lands Jobs and Energy Security Act. What it does is substitute state regulations for federal protections on all federal lands subject to fracking. Since in most cases there are no state regulations or if there are, they're poorly enforced, this is a little gift to Exxon, Shell, BP and those other folks we all love. Of course you wouldn't have learned of this from any of the TV news channels. They're too busy chasing the smoke and mirrors of the debt ceiling debate. And yes, our Congressmen, both Mica and DeSantis, voted for this piece of garbage. Fortunately, this bill should die a well deserved death in the Senate.

The National Audubon Society put its money where its mouth has been since last year. They contributed 100,000.00 to the Florida's Water & Land Legacy campaign. Audubon of Florida chapters, including ours, have worked tirelessly to collect signed petitions to put this amendment on the ballot next year. This donation will help fund the paid petition gatherers who will put us over the top. Audubon of Florida Executive Director, Eric Draper, was happy to post the notice of this donation and as I write this there are just a few days left to collect petitions.

A planned wind farm on the edge of the Everglades, in western Palm Beach County, is now a dead issue. Audubon sent a letter to DEP stating opposition to the issuance of the permit, and requesting to be kept informed of any further developments-including any attempts to transfer the permit to other entities. They also stated the need for DEP to develop clearer procedures in the future to balance the development of green energy with the protection of birds and other wildlife. The plans called for 114 500 foot turbines. The company seeking the permit estimated that 3 to 4 birds would be killed annually at each turbine. That's over 500 birds per year. When we're talking about Wood Storks, Bald Eagles and other birds on, or recently on, the Endangered Species List, that presents a serious challenge to granting a permit. In spite of the threat to the birds, the permit sailed through the Palm Beach County Commission. However, they were only one body having a say in the process and the permit was ultimately pulled by the project managers due to what they said were economic conditions. That's code for, "right now there's too much cheap, natural gas." Of course there's so much cheap gas because of fracking and its environmental costs have been shifted from producers to land owners. Thanks to the secret meetings Dick Chenny had back in 2001.

*David Hartgrove*



## Meet Our Chapter Volunteer

Dan Gribbin lived in Toledo, Ohio where he remembers spending time with his aunt who birded in nearby parks. At age 12 he moved to Florida with his family. The boy who sat behind him in seventh grade lived on the edge of Harry P. Leu property in Orlando, so Dan and his friend had the run of the woods throughout the property and onto Lake Rowena where he learned to troll for bass. Completing his outdoor indoctrination, he spent time living with his grandmother on Lake Erie.

As a young adult, he focused on his first teaching job in the Blue Ridge Mountains. He and his wife Martha built a home in the woods south of Roanoke where one of his few outdoor outlets was watching the Dark-eyed Juncos, Tufted Titmouse and Pileated Woodpeckers at the backyard feeder.

Dan and Martha vacationed in Daytona Beach, with a goal to return to the area permanently in the future. Martha loves the beach and now walks it most mornings and watches the turtles. After moving to Daytona Beach, Dan was offered a one-year position teaching high school. He began writing songs about birds as a way to relax after work. He began singing on Friday nights in Eustis. About this same time he was approached by UCF to take a four-year visiting instructorship, teaching folk music, folk lore and freshman composition at the Daytona Beach and Orlando campuses.

Dan was recently elected to a three-year term as At-Large Board member (2013-2016.) In addition to being an accomplished singer-songwriter, Dan is an artistic photographer and sells note cards, calendars and the like at our chapter meetings. We are glad Dan chose HRA when he was looking for an environmental community.

*Paula Wehr*

## Two Stories In Two Photos

On a recent pelagic trip, sponsored by the Friends of the Marine Science Center, we had one of the best “jaeger days” I ever remember. Pelagic birding off the Florida coast isn’t like it is off the coast of Maine or central California. There simply aren’t as many birds out there to be seen and they’re more widely scattered over that big ocean. We keep going out each time the trips are offered in order to experience days like we had for on November 16th. Jaegers are the air borne pirates of the waves. They patrol the edges of flocks of pelagic birds looking to harass and steal any food obtained by the other birds. As a result they’re often seen at a distance while bouncing along over the sea. The photo below shows 3 Pomarine Jaegers and shows how close they came to us. Note the tails of 2 of the birds show the classic “spoons” or twisted tail feathers of breeding adults. The bird in the middle may just be further along in its post breeding molt.



photo by Michael Brothers

Our second story is about an interesting little shorebird. Each year for the past 10 years or so 1 or 2 Purple Sandpipers have spent the winter in Ponce Inlet. This year there are at least 3. Several more have been reported from points both north and south of us. Purple Sandpipers have long been known to winter farther north than any other shorebird. However, some years ago they began experiencing a population increase. Could their increased numbers explain why we now see them wintering as far south as Florida? The answer to that question eludes us for now. Perhaps some enterprising ornithology student will tackle the problem in the future. For now we just have to enjoy the fact that they’re here.

David Hartgrove



photo by Michael Brothers

## It’s Festival Time Again!

The [Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival](#) is the largest birding festival in the nation and it takes place just 30 miles south of us in Titusville. This is the 17th year for this premier event and you should be making your plans right now to attend. Some field trips already have waiting lists. It’s the perfect place to upgrade those old binoculars your father left you or to jump out there and buy a spotting scope. Every optics manufacturer in the world will have representatives there and there are usually special festival sale prices. Headquartered in the gymnasium at Eastern Florida State College, the exhibits, from the Raptor Project (where falcons, eagles and owls are just feet away) to all sorts of birding and outdoor related activities await your participation. So don’t dawdle. Click on the link above and start planning your fun in January.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Welcome To Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to all of our new and returning members: Carlos Boss, Kathryn Brother, Dorothy Kinney, Christine LaVoie, Laura Morganstern, Clinton Peddy, David & Teresa Perry and Bob & Penny Scott. We hope to see you at our monthly meetings or on one of our field trips.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Volusia County Offers Some Fun Activities

**Saturday, Dec. 7th at Lyonia Preserve** Plant Exploration hike from 12:00-1:30 p.m. Ray Jarret, Senior Biologist with the Natural Lands and Urban Forestry Programs Department at University of Central Florida, will lead participants on this plant identification hike. Ray will also discuss some land management techniques and some challenges that come with maintaining healthy scrub habitat. This program is free. Information on more events at Lyonia Preserve are at this [link](#).

**Friday, Dec. 13th** Join Volusia County Land Management Naturalist, Bonnie Cary, for Blue Grass music, a hike and picnic. Take walking and riding tours of the Lake George Forest and Wildlife Management Area. This is at 998 Nine Mile Point Rd. in Pierson. Participants will experience and learn about the conversion of an industrial pine plantation to a more environmentally friendly forest. Blue Grass pickers will play at the park site while participants eat their lunch. Bonnie says, “I’ve always wanted to get music onto our conservation lands and Blue Grass is made for that. This is the first try--I hope it grows.” Bring your lunch, a blanket to sit on and if you’d like--a Christmas dessert to share. For more information on this and other activities, click on this [link](#).

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## Join Florida Nature Tours In The Dry Tortugas

Our friends at [Florida Nature Tours](#) have an ambitious schedule set for Spring of 2014. There will be five trips out to the Dry Tortugas and one South Florida land tour that can be coupled with one of the Tortugas trips. Cost is 1195.00 per person for 4 days in paradise. Our boat, the MV Spree, is perhaps the finest craft sailing out of Key West. It’s clean as a pin and the food will have you begging for the recipes. And, if you don’t want to drive back after being on the water all day, you can sleep aboard the boat the night we return, saving you another hotel bill. Click on the link above for all of the information.

\* \* \* \* \*

“The early bird who catches the worm works for someone who comes in late and owns the worm farm.”

Travis McGee

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**Contact Our Board Members**

Office	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
President	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.co">paulawehr@cfl.rr.co</a>
Vice President	John Roessler	255-9826	<a href="mailto:birdman3651@bellsouth.net">birdman3651@bellsouth.net</a>
Treasurer	Rachel Ramsey	673-1037	<a href="mailto:gmamimi@cfl.rr.com">gmamimi@cfl.rr.com</a>
Corresponding Sec.	Karen Mosher	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
Recording Sec.	Peggy Yokubonus	673-7619	<a href="mailto:pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com">pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com</a>
Membership Sec.	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@gmail.com">jcarr14@gmail.com</a>
Historian	John Carr	255-9360	<a href="mailto:jcarr14@gmail.com">jcarr14@gmail.com</a>
Past President	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
At Large 2014	Renate Calero	761-8179	<a href="mailto:renate_c@hotmail.com">renate_c@hotmail.com</a>
At Large 2014	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>
At Large 2015	Karen Moser	322-3790	<a href="mailto:frederickmosher@att.net">frederickmosher@att.net</a>
At Large 2015	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
At Large 2016	Deborah Green	407-625-1390	<a href="mailto:skylarkfolkart@gmail.com">skylarkfolkart@gmail.com</a>
At Large 2016	Dan Gribbin	760-8226	<a href="mailto:bluzeman1@hotmail.com">bluzeman1@hotmail.com</a>

**Committee Members**

Committee	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
Bird ID Class	Ray Scory	763-4260	<a href="mailto:colors@cfl.rr.com">colors@cfl.rr.com</a>
Conservation	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a>
Education	Marion Monaghan	760-2747	<a href="mailto:nautilus411@aol.com">nautilus411@aol.com</a>
	Holly Zwart-Duryea	672-8788	<a href="mailto:hollis1000@aol.com">hollis1000@aol.com</a>
Field Trips	Chuck Tague	412-841-8813	<a href="mailto:kingrail@mac.com">kingrail@mac.com</a>
	Joan Tague	253-1166	<a href="mailto:babyowl@mac.com">babyowl@mac.com</a>
Newsletter Editor	David Hartgrove	788-2630	<a href="mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net">birdman9@earthlink.net</a> or <a href="mailto:hrapelican11@earthlink.net">hrapelican11@earthlink.net</a>
Welcome	Jari Arbogast	761-2283	<a href="mailto:arbofish@att.net">arbofish@att.net</a>
	Celine Sullivan	257-1980	<a href="mailto:celinesul@aol.com">celinesul@aol.com</a>
Webmaster	Paula Wehr	673-5332	<a href="mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.com">paulawehr@cfl.rr.com</a>