

The Pelican

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

Volume 60-No.7 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
January, 2015



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thoughts from on High

So, what's new for 2015? NOAA recently announced a final agreement for Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS Fisheries Plan: Bluefin Tuna Management. Read more about this subject elsewhere in this issue.

Connie Mahon, Audubon Policy Office, Director, Grassroots Outreach, sent us a copy of the final letter addressed to and personally delivered to Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewell, commending the Department of Interior for recognizing the urgent need for rapid, meaningful, landscape-scale sage-grouse conservation actions. National Audubon Society led the way by first identifying iconic sage habitats in Wyoming. Working with the State of Wyoming, NAS showed how saving this habitat is good for all sage-dependent species, not just for sage-grouse. The letter is signed by 160 NAS Chapters from 35 states (including HRA, SEVAS and 11 other chapters from Florida), which together represent 96,048 members. In addition to laying out a plan of recommended actions, the letter recognizes that all stakeholders should be welcomed in the decision making process before the USFWS makes its final determination in September 2015.

Jonathan Steverson, Executive Director of the Northwest Florida Water Management District, was appointed by Gov. Scott as Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection, replacing Herschel Vinyard who resigned in late November after serving for four years. Following confirmation by Cabinet members, Secretary Steverson and his staff will take a major role in implementation of Amendment 1, the constitutional measure passed in the November 2014 election which earmarks one-third of the revenue from document stamp revenue to be spent on water and land conservation and preservation. Audubon Florida supports the appointment of Mr. Steverson.

Best wishes to everyone for a safe, healthy, successful and happy New Year. If you are looking for something "new" for 2015, please attend an upcoming HRA monthly meeting, field trip or community project.

Paula Wehr

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Welcome To Our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Joan Asnip, Geraldine Babbitts, Kathleen Brown, Anne Burns, Betty Butcher, Cynthia Humphrey, Theodore Konovitch, John Morris, Leslie Nixon, Carolyn Riley, Paul Ross, Dan Spangler and Carole Zink. We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting or on one of our excellent field trips.

Calendar & Events

Monday, January 26, 2015- Program Meeting: "Birding with Greg Miller". Join us on Monday evening, January 26, when Greg Miller, "one of the guys" from The Big Year will talk about his adventures in birding. The doors open at 6:30 p.m. at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. Our speaker begins at 7:00 p.m. A brief business meeting follows. **NOTE: The January meeting is held on the 4th Monday (not the usual 3rd Monday) due to the MLK holiday.**

Friday, Jan. 9th- Merritt Island NWR Join us for a trip to MINWR to see the wealth of birdlife there in winter. Meet at 7:00 am in the Target parking lot, behind Panera Bread on Dunlawton Ave. east of I-95. Bring lunch for a picnic. Questions? Call David Hartgrove, 386-788-2630 or e-mail: birdman9@earthlink.net

Wednesday, Jan. 14th- Gull Watch Each winter the beach in Daytona Beach Shores hosts the largest concentration of gulls in the western hemisphere. Join us to learn more about gull identification and witness this magnificent natural spectacle. Meet at 3:30 pm at Frank Rendon Park, 2705 S. Atlantic Ave. in Daytona Beach Shores. Questions? Call David Hartgrove, 386-788-2630 or e-mail: birdman9@earthlink.net

Friday, Jan. 16th- Marlbed Flats This property is owned by St Johns River Water Management District and includes both oak hammock and wet prairie. So there's a slight chance for damp feet. We'll walk at least 1.5 miles and see a variety of species. Bring lunch and meet at International Square behind the Krystal Restaurant on Int'l Speedway Blvd., east of I-95. Questions? Call David Hartgrove, 386-788-2630 or e-mail: birdman9@earthlink.net

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Field Trips With Others

Our sister chapters, the West Volusia Audubon Society and the Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, both have an extensive offering of field trips. Below are links to their field trip schedules. The [WVAS schedule](#) includes a Saturday trip to Lake Apopka lead by Harry Robinson. The [SEVAS schedule](#) also has some Saturday trips listed for those of you unable to attend weekday offerings.

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Chances To Volunteer And Make A Difference

Volusia County offers us a variety of opportunities to volunteer and make a difference in our community and its environmental heritage. The [Marine Science Center](#) and the [Marine Discovery Center](#) both have extensive volunteer programs and they give training to help you help make a positive contribution to our area. You can help with bird rehab at the MSC or help restore wetlands at the MDC. There are lots of other opportunities at these locations to. Take a positive step in the New Year and get involved. You'll be glad you did.

Conservation Notes

The failure of the launch of an Antares rocket off Wallops Island, VA on October 28th may have dealt a death blow to Space Florida's plans for a new and completely unnecessary launch facility in Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge at what's called the Shiloh Site. The Antares rocket that was lost uses a relatively harmless kerosene/liquid oxygen fuel for its first stage. Its second stage booster however is powered by the solid fuel nitrogen tetroxide. This is some very dangerous stuff. Suppose there was an active Shiloh Site in operation and a similar accident occurred. That second stage full of nitrogen tetroxide could have been blown up over Mosquito Lagoon dumping this toxic substance into the area that produces our seafood. On July 24th, 1975, three American astronauts were injured when an accidental leak of a tiny amount of nitrogen tetroxide occurred in their space craft as it prepared for reentry. One astronaut was rendered unconscious and all three spent 14 days in the hospital with chemically induced pneumonia. Let's hope that 2015 brings an end to this project.

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Another project further south is still in the long range planning stage but could have profound impacts to the Everglades. A new airport in Hendry County northwest of Lake Okeechobee could become the hub for all kinds of perishable cargo that now arrives from points south into Miami International Airport. "Airglades" is the name for now and it could provide hundreds if not thousands of jobs in an area sorely in need of economic stimulus. Of course there will impacts to the environment but if done with sensitivity to the unique location, this could be a positive project. Time will tell.

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Information from e-bird entries and a [report](#) from the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology indicate that we may be in for another invasion of Snowy Owls this winter. So far a number of owls that were captured last winter and fitted with solar powered data loggers have suddenly been heard from as they arrive within range of cell phone towers again. One female that was tagged last year has already shown up in Delaware. Technological developments of the past 20 years have revolutionized bird study and these new data loggers give ornithologists information they could only dream of a short time ago.

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Finally, the election in November gave a reason to celebrate as a whopping 75% of Florida voters approved Amendment One. Now we have to see how the Legislature deals with the issue since there's still room for all kinds of chicanery on their part. It should be simple. The people spoke with their votes in support of the ideals embodied in the text of the Amendment. Unfortunately, past experience shows us that there are those in the Legislature whose contempt for the electorate can be easily measured by the wealth in their campaign accounts. Much of that contributed by those who are more interested in quick profits than in quality of life or a sustainable environment.

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One of my favorite films on the subject of Florida and its environmental battles is called "Sunshine State". Written and directed by John Sayles, and starring Timothy Hutton, Edie Falco, Angela Bassett and others it delivers a story that's both funny and serious. It's one of the last screen performances by comedian, Alan King, and his brief appearances offer acidly funny excerpts. Released in 2002, it's available from Netflix and in our local libraries. Here's wishing you all a very Happy New Year from our entire board in Halifax River Audubon.

David Hartgrove

NOAA Announces Amendment 7 Rule Finalized

After [many years of development](#), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Service recently released implementing regulations for Final Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan.

The [Amendment 7 Final Rule](#) for the U.S. Atlantic bluefin tuna fishery includes a suite of management measures that work together to protect areas of high bluefin abundance, significantly reduce and control incidental catch of bluefin overall, and improve data collection and monitoring of the U.S. Atlantic bluefin fishery. The only real downside to the rule is that the agency is also providing the surface longline fishery with additional bluefin quota at the expense of other more selective fisheries.

NOAA Fisheries has created a strong and balanced Final Rule that will reduce the waste of bluefin and support the long-term sustainability of the U.S. Atlantic bluefin fishery. This Pew [web feature](#) provides a quick overview of the rule and why it's such a big step forward. A summary document outlining key measures included in the rule and the deadlines for their implementation is available online at <http://ow.ly/FfvZh>

Cameron Jaggard

Note from HRA President: Cameron Jaggard, Sr. Associate, US Oceans, at The Pew Charitable Trusts (and our speaker in September 2014) states that this victory would not have been possible without the support of Halifax River Audubon and other chapters around the state.

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New Signs Along Central Park Trails

On Thursday, December 11, 2014, the City of Ormond Beach held the official ceremony for the bird identification signs installed along G.F. Althouse Trail in Central Park. Chuck Tague worked with Ms. Meri Albert's second grade gifted class at Pine Trail Elementary School to create these signs. They complement the plant identification signs which were created by the 2013 gifted class and installed last year. Chuck will continue working with the class next year to create additional interpretive signs.



Designed to withstand the elements, here's one of the signs.

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Old Birds and Birders

A recent issue of Audubon magazine profiled Chandler Robbins, a long time researcher in bird population dynamics. Here's a [link](#) to an online article about a bird he banded in 1956 on the island of Midway. Thanks to board member, Marion Monaghan for sending out this information. Ed.

Below is another in the series "Everyday Birding"

Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*)

Text and photos by Ray Scory

Time stands still when you look at a Wood Stork. No jerky movements here, no dashing about. Just stationary, like a royal guard at the entrance to Buckingham Palace. Unpretentious, reminds me of an old-timer sitting on a park bench just watching the world go by. A bird of deep wisdom appears the stoic Wood Stork. Yes, I can look at this bird and see a prehistoric creature, standing four feet erect, snow white with a long, eleven inch gray beak extending down from a featherless gray face and head. Expressionless.

I stop in my tracks to watch this bird, to observe a beautiful moment. One of tranquillity. A time when beauty and wonder fill my thoughts. I wonder at the thrill of past experiences, the closeness of loved ones, friends, surprises, adventures, accomplishments and awareness. A high speed progression of images flash through my mind. I am in a different space - short in time but long in memories. Yes, all this because of the sighting of a Wood Stork.

The Wood Stork inhabits a wide range of locations on our planet, but only breeds in the USA. It ranges in the western Hemisphere from Canada to lower parts of South America, mainly residing along all of coastal Mexico, our lower southern states up to the bottom edge of North Carolina. Wood Stork sightings have been numerous throughout the United States but they save Florida for raising their family. The Wood Stork is a full time breeding resident of Florida. Their nesting area is normally near water where they favor high trees in a cypress swamp. They breed late in winter to take advantage of the lack of rain. As the pond and swamps diminish in size the fish are concentrated into smaller quarters making it easier to capture them and feed their young. It is estimated that a family of four needs four hundred pounds of fish during one breeding season.

I have followed three Florida scientists into an active breeding Wood Stork site in Florida to study their breeding behavior. The place was a fortress. High cypress trees topped with large shabby stick nests and knee high water dominated my impression of the place. The water was shoe polish brown in color making it impossible to see to the bottom, which was covered by broken, submerged branches, knocked down trees and soft spongy plant material. The fear of falling was always present during this treacherous, slippery walk. The Wood Stork will travel 50 miles to gather food and has been observed flying as high as 6000 feet. After such energetic activity, the Wood Stork needs a rest and they do so in a unique and singular fashion. They simply squat vertically down collapsing their legs accordion style. While it may look comical and uncomfortable, it must not be. I have seen them resting this way for long periods of time without moving. The Wood Stork is a unique waterbird deserving its time honored existence.

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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 2015. There will be four trips out to the Dry Tortugas (one is already sold out) 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.



Adult Wood Stork photo by Ray Scory



Resting in a position that only they use photo by Ray Scory

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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. Please specify on your check that your donation is for Audubon Adventures. And thank you!

HRA Goes To Cuba

As many of you know, our chapter sponsored a birding trip to Cuba. Fourteen people met in Miami at a Sleep Inn on the night of November 30th. We had arranged to leave our cars there instead of the airport parking lot. The following morning we flew off to Havana. Walking out into the parking lot at the Havana airport was like walking onto a used car lot in 1960. There were Packards, Hudsons, Mercurys and even Edsels everywhere. All dating from the late 40's through the 50's and early 60's. I'll be putting together a presentation about our trip for future exhibition at one of our meetings. For now, here are a couple of the birds we saw. *David Hartgrove*



The Red-legged Thrush in a tree outside our first hotel.



A young male Bee Hummingbird. That wire is slightly thicker than the diameter of a number 2 pencil.



The Blue-headed Quail Dove all photos by David Hartgrove

Classifieds

We have another quality optical offering this month. The Nikon ED III A is an excellent scope. This one comes with a 20x30x38 wide angle eye piece, a Manfrotto tripod and fluid, quick release head. The asking price is 1150.00. Contact Chris Reinhart by e-mail at ChrisReinhart@gmail.com



Nikon ED III A scope w/ wide angle eye piece and tripod

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It's Time For The Birding Festivals

Beginning this month it's the largest birding festival in the country and it's just 35 miles south of us in Titusville. The **Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival** begins on Wednesday, January 21st and runs through Monday, January 26th. Here's a [link](#) to their website. The Festival headquarters, at Eastern Florida State College, on US 1 in Titusville, is **the** place to look for birding optics, information on birding tours and the not to be missed Raptor Project. Every year Jonathan Wood brings an awesome collection of owls, falcons and hawks and you're right there with them. The address is 1311 North U.S. 1, Titusville, FL.

In February, Palm Coast will host its first ever birding festival. "Birds of a Feather Fest" will run from Friday, February 6th through Sunday, February 8th. Here's a [link](#) to their website. Headquarters for the festival will be at the Hilton Garden Inn at 55 Town Center Boulevard in Palm Coast. There will be field trips, presentations and talks and Greg Miller will deliver the keynote address. Please come out to support this new festival here in our area.

Finally, down in Hendry County, it's the Big "O" Birding Festival. The Big "O" refers to Lake Okeechobee, our state's largest fresh water lake and one of the largest in the US. The Big "O" Festival has field trips guaranteed to please and with some birds we rarely, if ever, see in this area. Birds like Snail Kite, Purple Swamphen and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher are seen regularly down there. Here's a [link](#) to their site. It's well worth the trip down.

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**

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

Our website is www.halifaxriveras.org For information on upcoming field trips, etc.

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Volume 60-No.8 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
February, 2015



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thoughts from on High

In Pennsylvania we had a saying that "February is the cruelest month." Even though it is the shortest month, at 40.3956°N latitude, it is often the coldest, dampest, dreariest time of the year. The days are still short and darkness comes early. Year-end holidays are long past, and it's still too early to think about gardening and other outdoor activities. Even here in the Sunshine State, we have cooler temperatures and it's often not yet bathing suit weather. What are we to do??

One excellent, and free, activity is to visit Daytona Beach Shores near Frank Rendon and Van Avenue Parks to watch the spectacle of thousands of gulls returning to the beach in late afternoon and into dusk. Gulls spend the night out on the ocean in large flocks. As the sun rises, they take off in search of food – many flying west toward the Volusia County Solid Waste Treatment Facility (aka "the dump.") Each evening, they fly east to gather on the beach before returning to the water to sleep.



photo by Paula Wehr

As wave after wave of gulls fly onto the beach, the sand becomes nearly covered with birds for more than a 2-mile stretch. We have five species of gulls in Volusia County: Laughing Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull and Lesser Black-backed Gull. The first three species will be represented by thousands of individual birds. The last two will be seen in far fewer numbers, but are still common. Add in the small numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls which visit our County every winter, and you've covered all the usual suspects.

The real fun in walking among all the birds is looking for the rarities. So far this winter, we've had a good variety of rare visitors. First cycle (born this year) Franklin's Gulls were reported near Van Avenue Park as late as December 5. While closely related to the Laughing Gull, and looking very similar, it is possible to identify Franklin's Gull by the wing pattern, extensive dark hood, smaller bill and broad white eye-arcs.

A first cycle Thayer's Gull (a bird which generally winters on the west coast of Canada) was first documented south of Frank Rendon Park on December 9. Several additional Thayer's Gulls have been seen since that first spotting. This bird looks like a

continued below on page 2

Calendar & Events

Monday, February 16th: Program Meeting, "Migration: Spring Warblers & Songbirds". Join us on Monday evening, February 16, when Joan and Chuck Tague will talk about the brightly-colored, often tiny, warblers and songbirds which pass through central Florida during their spring migration to breeding grounds. The doors open at 6:30 p.m. at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. A brief business meeting follows.

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Field Trips

Friday, February 6th: Orlando Wetlands. Join Bob North as he leads us on a trip to this location in east Orange County. This site has hosted Vermillion Flycatchers for the past few years and is one of the few sites where Purple Martins nest in natural cavities. We'll meet at 7:00 am at the Target on Dunlawton, east of I-95 in Port Orange near Panera Bread. Bring lunch and wear comfortable shoes. This is a good hike over flat ground. Questions? Call Bob at 352-302-3510.

Friday, February 13th: Lake Apopka. Join us for a visit to one of Florida's most diverse birding locations. This is primarily a driving trip where we'll stop and walk short distances. We'll meet at International Square - East of I-95 on International Speedway Boulevard behind Krystal 6:30 am. Bring lunch. Questions? Call David Hartgrove, 386-788-2630.

Wednesday, February 18th: Gull Watch. In winter, the beach in Daytona Beach Shores attracts the largest concentration of gulls in the western hemisphere. No one is sure why but we're taking full advantage of the situation. Join us for a walk along the beach to learn the vagaries of identification and to look for rarities. See the article in the column to the left for more information. We'll meet at Frank Rendon Park - 2705 S Atlantic Ave. at 3:30 pm. Questions? Call David Hartgrove, 386-788-2630.

Friday, February 20th: Viera Wetlands. This is another trip where walking is at a minimum but the birds can be incredible. Located west of Melbourne this is a real birding hot spot. We'll meet at 7:00 am in the parking lot of Target - East of I-95 on Dunlawton Ave behind Panera Bread. Bring lunch. Questions? Call David Hartgrove, 386-788-2630.

Friday, February 27th: Oklawaha. Join Paula Wehr and John Roessler for a trip west on SR 40 to look for warblers, the Swallow-tailed Kites that should be back here by then, and others. We'll meet at Ormond Town Square - Granada & Williamson Blvds behind Chick-fil-A. Questions? Call Paula, 386-673-5337.

This is another request for content. If you have photos you'd like to see in the Pelican or if you'd like to write a short piece (500 words or so) for publication, please send it to me.

Thanks!

Editor

first cycle Herring Gull but is noticeably smaller. In his post on [Brdbrain](#), a website hosted by USF to share information on the status of migrating, wintering and breeding birds, Michael Brothers described the field marks as follows: "The bird is medium brown with dark brown primaries that had thin whitish edges. The head was gently rounded. The bill was solidly black. The legs were rather short. In flight, the Thayer's Gull shows the classic Venetian Blind effect in the primaries caused by pale inner webs and dark outer webs to the outer primaries. In addition, the underside of the primaries and secondaries were very pale with slight dark terminal tips to the underside of the outer primaries."

A Sabine's Gull was found about a quarter mile off the north jetty at Ponce Inlet on January 10. The Sabine's Gull lives full time on the ocean when not breeding in the tundra. Its size is similar to a Bonaparte's Gull but the wings are longer and broader based. The bill is shorter.

Last winter we had reports of Glaucous and Iceland Gulls on the beach at Frank Rendon Park. Even though the Glaucous Gull is fairly large and nearly all white, I was never able to spot one during multiple walks up and down the beach on late afternoons. It's quite like finding the needle in the haystack, except that the needle (different gull species) is in a constantly shifting mass of "ordinary" gull species. However, it is the very act of looking for that one different bird that helps us hone our identification skills. Plus it gets us outside in the fresh air and away from the TV, couch and salty snacks. Celebrate the mildness of our southern winter and take a trip to the beach to look for gulls. For more information and photos of gull species, visit [The Cornell Lab of Ornithology All About Birds](#) on the web. Enter the species name into the search bar and press "Find."

We have one more Gull Watch scheduled at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 18. See our [website](#) for details.

Paula Wehr

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The Great Backyard Bird Count

Friday, February 13th through Monday, February 16th

"This count is so fun because anyone can take part -- we all learn and watch birds together -- whether you are an expert, novice, or feeder watcher. I like to invite new birders to join me and share the experience. Get involved, invite your friends, and see how your favorite spot stacks up." -Gary Langham, Chief Scientist, National Audubon Society

Join birders from all across the country, and around the world, for the Great Backyard Bird Count, an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations. All you have to do is count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or longer if you like) on one or more days of the event. Then report your sightings online at [www.birdcount.org](#). Everyone from beginning bird watchers to experts can now participate from anywhere in the world.

It's free. It's fun. It's easy. Each checklist submitted during the GBBC helps researchers at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society learn more about how birds are doing and how to protect them and the environment we share.

Begin by registering online. Then count the birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the GBBC. Enter your numbers online. Instructions, a "how to" slide show, FAQs and Help information are all available at [www.birdcount.org](#). Visit the website now.

Paula Wehr

The fight for Amendment One isn't over yet. Just because 75% of the voters on November 4th of last year voted to approve it, its implementation is full of all kinds of opportunities for mischief. The State Legislature is set to decide how and where the money will be spent. All kinds of characters are suddenly interested in helping make the decisions. Associated Industries of Florida is an innocent sounding lobbying group that represents the largest developers and businesses in the state. Those groups are looking at the money that will be generated by Amendment One and trying to figure out how to get their greedy fingers onto as much of it as possible. Since they make large campaign donations to our legislators, their wishes are often turned into policy. They've hatched a plan that will have the money we voted to spend on land preservation instead spent on construction of water treatment plants. That may sound like a good idea. However, under current regulations, developers have to fund, at least in part, these treatment plants in order to get new developments approved. If AIF and its members get their way, we would end up helping fund the destruction of the land we thought we were voting to protect by underwriting the cost of the treatment facilities that will serve new developments. Members from our chapter and from Southeast and West Volusia Audubon will be going to Tallahassee to lobby for our side of the issue and to keep our Legislators on the right track.

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In 2013 a group tried to get the Volusia County Council to sign off on their plan to introduce off road vehicles (ORV's) to all of Tiger Bay State Forest. There are currently 52 miles of roads available and open to the public for access by 'street-legal' vehicles. Tiger Bay State Forest is comprised of 60% wetlands and over 800 acres of the sensitive scrub ecosystem. In addition, there are 10+ miles of horse trails. Now we learn that our own State Representative, Dwayne Taylor, has introduced a bill, HB416, that will open all of the trails and roads in the forest to 'all vehicles', which will include ATV's, motocross dirt bikes, high speed dune buggies, etc. The bill does say that trails designated as "equestrian" trails will remain closed to vehicles. However once these vehicles are allowed on the property incidents involving horses and dirt bikes are far more likely to occur when reckless riders end up where they don't belong. I sent Rep. Taylor an email outlining our objections to this very bad idea and requesting that he withdraw the bill. There's been no response yet but we'll keep on the case.

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In 1929 President Herbert Hoover signed into law the Migratory Bird Conservation Act to authorize the purchase of wetlands and other habitat. The law did not provide a recurring funding source for the purchase of these lands however. So in 1934, President Roosevelt (himself an avid birder) signed into law the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act. Now called the Duck Stamp, this little piece of adhesive backed paper is the single most important funding source for all of our national wildlife refuges. We birders use the same areas used by hunters. They've been supporting these areas for many years through the purchase of these stamps and through the fees paid for their hunting licenses and the taxes on the much of the equipment they use. If we want to have a say in how these areas are managed we need to step up and spend a little money too. The price of a Duck Stamp was 15.00 and 98% of the purchase of every one of those stamps goes directly to support the wildlife refuge system. The Federal Duck Stamp Act of 2014 was signed into law on December 18th of last year. It will increase the price of the stamp from \$15 to \$25, with the increased \$10 dedicated to providing easements to enhance the National Wildlife Refuge System. It has been estimated that this increase could result in an additional \$16 million per year for the system.

David Hartgrove

It's Festival Season

First up is the Birds Of A Feather Fest, in Palm Coast from **February 6th through the 8th**. This is Palm Coast's first birding festival and it promises to be an annual event. Greg Miller, who graced our chapter's meeting last month as speaker, will be the keynote speaker and will lead several field trips. He was one of the characters in the book, "The Big Year" and its movie adaptation. In the movie his character was played by Jack Black. Headquarters for the festival will be at the Palm Coast Community Center, 305 Palm Coast Parkway NE. Here's a [link](#) to their website.

Next up is the 15th annual Orlando Wetlands Festival. This year's festival will be held on **Saturday, February 21st**, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. For those who don't like the long hikes usually needed to see this park there will be tram tours, all kinds of family friendly activities and lots of things to see and do. Here's a link to their [website](#).

Finally, from **March 11th through the 16th**, down in Hendry County, it's the Big "O" Birding Festival. The Big "O" refers to Lake Okeechobee, our state's largest fresh water lake and one of the largest in the US. The Big "O" Festival has field trips guaranteed to please and with some birds we rarely, if ever, see in this area. Birds like Snail Kite, Purple Swamphen and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher are seen regularly down there. Here's a link to their [website](#). It's well worth the trip down.

* * * * *

Mixing Birds & Technology

Board member, Marion Monaghan, has been surfing the web and found the website for the Manomet Center for Conservation Science. On it there's a remarkable story of the first Semipalmated Sandpiper to have been recaptured with a geolocator on its leg. Geolocators have revolutionized the field of ornithology. Through advances in the miniaturization of electronic devices, they've been made smaller and smaller until they can now be used on these tiny birds and not over burden them on the migratory pathway. Semipalmated Sandpipers weigh just 25 grams. That's about 9/10's of an ounce. Data from the geolocator, which records light levels, show that this tiny bird flew non stop for 6 days and covered 3,300 miles in that time. He left the US from about Long Island, NY and didn't see land again until he arrived 6 days later on the northeast coast of Venezuela! Here's a [link](#) to an article that explains how geolocators work. And here's a link to the [story](#) itself. Our thanks to Marion for sending this along.



© Arthur Morris / Birds As Art

Semipalmated Sandpiper, from BNA Online

More Photos From Cuba

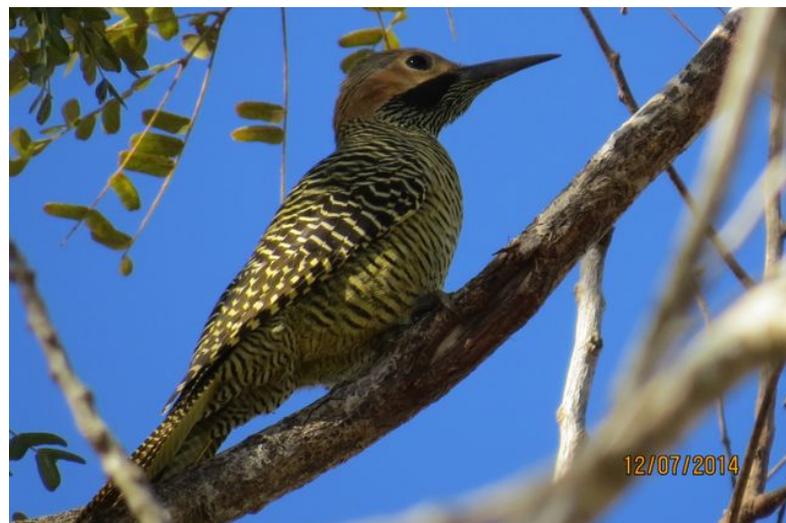
Below are three more photos of Cuban endemic species taken on our trip there in December of last year.



Here's the Bare-legged Owl. It's about the size of our Eastern Screech Owl.



Here's the Cuban Green Woodpecker. It's slightly smaller than our Red-bellied Woodpecker.



This handsome fellow is a Fernandina's Flicker. It's slightly larger than our Northern Flicker. I'll be putting together a presentation on the trip together for showing at a meeting sometime next season, after September.

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**

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

Our website is www.halifaxriveras.org For information on upcoming field trips, etc.

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The Pelican

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

Vol. 60-No.9 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon March, 2015



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thoughts from on High

Chasing birds. To some this phrase evokes a mental picture of a dog flushing ducks from a marsh or a child running through a crowd of gulls loafing on the beach. To many birders, the phrase means jumping in the car to look for a rare bird which has been spotted outside its usual territory. Like the Snowy Owl that vacationed at Little Talbot Island State Park, near Jacksonville, during the winter of 2013-2014. Another birder may think about chasing that nemesis bird by visiting a local site multiple times because the bird is just never there when the birder is.

That was the case of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak, a relatively large, strikingly plumaged bird common to the area of southeastern Pennsylvania where I lived. It should have been easy to find and it was a disappointment that I never saw one for years after starting my life list. But it became really annoying when people who didn't know a Robin from a Blue Jay would tell me about this bird they saw at their feeder, describing it as having a white breast with a bright pink bib. My sister lived in a 200 year old settlement house in an undisturbed forest and had the Rose-breasted Grosbeak visit her feeder daily. She and I sat on her back porch for several hours on a Saturday afternoon, listening to the grosbeaks call from the woods, but not one bird showed up at her feeder. I finally gave up and drove home. This was long before cell phones were invented, so I had to wait until I got home 15 minutes later to hear the voice message that the birds had come to the feeder within minutes of my car disappearing from her lane. I was really beginning to take this personally!



A Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Paula's sister's yard. Paula's article continues below on page 2. *photo by Jayne Swavely*

Calendar and Events

Monday, March 16th, Program Meeting: "Birding Arizona" Join us when David Baker, Southeast Volusia Audubon Society member, will share his birding discoveries from a trip to Arizona in 2014. The doors open at 6:30 p.m. at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. A brief business meeting follows.

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Field Trips

Wednesday, March 11th, Blue Heron Boat Trip Join us for this popular excursion. This is a popular RESERVATION ONLY event, and space is limited. Contact Joan Tague at babyowl@mac.com or 386-253-1166 to reserve a spot on the boat. Provide your name, the number of seats required and a phone number where you can be reached should we have to cancel due to weather. Also let her know where you will meet the group, either at the ISB group meeting place (see details below) or at the dock at Hontoon Landing Resort & Marina, 2317 River Ridge Road, Deland. Your seats are **not** saved until you receive confirmation back from Joan that she received your reservation.

We will meet for car pools at the International Square Shopping Center behind Krystal Restaurant on International Speedway Blvd in Daytona Beach at 2:00 pm. If you wish to meet at the Blue Heron Dock, arrive no later than 2:45 p.m. We will board the boat as soon as it docks from the afternoon trip (around 3pm) and return to the dock at sunset. The rate for the trip per person is \$20.00. We ask that you bring that amount in correct change to the boat on the 11th. We will collect the money at that time.

Friday, March 20th, Tosohatchee Join David Hartgrove for a trip to this place in east Orange County. We'll look for early migrants as well as resident birds like Wild Turkey, Bald Eagle and others. We'll meet at 7:00 am at the Target on Dunlawton, east of I-95, behind Panera Bread. Bring lunch. Questions? Call 386-788-2630.

Friday, March 27th, Ocala National Forest Join Paula Wehr and John Roessler for a trip to see Florida Scrub Jays, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and others. We'll meet at Ormond Town Square at Granada & Williamson Blvds. at 7:00 am behind Chick-Fil-A. Questions? Call Paula at 386-673-5332.

Field Trips With Others

Saturday, March 14th Orlando Wetlands Park Join our friends from Southeast Volusia Audubon Society for a trip to this spot in east Orange County. Look for Vermillion Flycatcher, Least Bittern and others, including Crested Caracara. Meet in the Florida Shores Plaza parking lot in Edgewater, (at the corner of Ridgewood Ave and Indian River Blvd), south of the new Dunkin Donuts building. Bring lunch and plan on a bit of walking. Questions? Call Gail Domroski at 386-453-1211.

Conservation Notes

A week or so later, I went to Cape May for a birding weekend. While chatting with some friends at the Northwood Center, a brilliant male Rose-breasted Grosbeak began singing from the wire, posing to allow me (and everyone else) to have long, satisfying looks. Finally! The curse was broken, but only partially, because it was several years before I saw another.

My sister and I stayed with a friend in Cape May one weekend in early March to attend the Dance of the Woodcock Workshop. During early spring, the male woodcock performs an amazing ritual to lure females. In open fields, he begins calling a rhythmic "peent" sound about 40 minutes before dark. As the calls come closer and closer together, he shoots 50 feet or so into the air and flutters back down while singing an incredibly sweet song. His hope is to find a female waiting for him on the ground. If no females appear, he repeats this exercise until a female does appear or darkness falls and he waits until dusk the next day to try again. Following the classroom presentation, we ventured out into suitable habitat and waited – and waited. We didn't hear a "peent" anywhere. Struck out again. Back at home the following Wednesday evening, I was driving to my weekly tennis match and decided to stop at a marshy field along the way. As I stood in the dusk beside my car, I heard the first "peent." In moments I saw the bird shoot upward and flutter down while singing. He performed several more times before going quiet for the night. As darkness had fallen, I couldn't tell if he'd found a mate or if he, too, had struck out. So after driving 150 miles to the workshop, I found the bird 4 miles from home. A video of a displaying American Woodcock can be seen at this [link](#).

Sometimes birders get lucky and see a life bird twice. We met up with Harry Robinson on our recent chapter field trip to Lake Apopka. He told us where the White-faced Ibis had most recently been seen. When we arrived, there was a dark ibis at the exact corner he described. Sure enough, it had a distinct red eye and red legs. Yea! Life Bird! Our trip leader got a scope on the bird and everyone saw it and the Glossy Ibis for comparison. After a number of years, it becomes more difficult to add a life bird without traveling, so I was excited to add to my life list. Unfortunately when I opened my book I noted that I had seen a White-faced Ibis in Texas in 1998. Darn, my life list number stays the same. But after 17 years, it was almost like a life bird. I guess the moral of this story is that like the Woodcock, we birders just keep on trying.

Paula Wehr

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Welcome To Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Ann Anderson, Debbie Bastian, Laura Bloom, Danny Cain, Donna Colby, Carol Colucci, Lisa Davids, Julia Davis, Harry Demontmollin, Susan Dodge-Donnino, Joseph Donald, Gregory Dudley, Susan Fitzgerald, Susan Fox, Lorraine Freeman, Frances Fries, Pam Goeman, Randal Green, Joan Grennan, Robbin Hammonds-Durde, Cathy Jackson, Tina Jacobs, Melissa Koenke, Francesca Knutson, Jennifer Lastinger, Donna Lovelace-Flora, Amber McAndrew, Sunnie Merrel, Deon Myers, Barbara Northrup, Kim Perry, Leticia Roman, Linda Ross, Andrea Savoldi, D. Scardigno, Jenna Schuld, Monica Sherewin, Jennifer Smith, Mary Spearman, Teri Stamper, Deborah Treur, Joyce Turner, Steve Waterman, Ann Weikel and Sue Youthers. We hope to see you all soon at a meeting or on one of our excellent field trips.

Well friends, it appears the seemingly endless supply of bad ideas affecting the environment really is endless. First, there's HB 419, introduced by Rep. Dwayne Taylor, that would open Tiger Bay State Forest to off road vehicles. I wrote about this in last month's Pelican and it continues to advance in Tallahassee. Fortunately, there's no companion bill in the Senate and Senator Dorothy Hukill has said she has no intention of introducing one at this time. We're working to defeat this bad bill and we'll keep you apprised of our progress.

The Volusia County Council is asking the cities to declare their support for using Amendment 1 funds for infrastructure upgrades. They're asking the municipalities in the County to lobby the state legislature to spend Amendment One money on sewage and water systems rather than land acquisition. While these improvements are needed the money from Amendment One is supposed to fund land acquisition for parks and conservation. Not be a slush fund for pork barrel projects that allow more land to be developed when sewage systems are upgraded to allow for more users.

A presentation was made to the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council asking their endorsement of a plan to spend 25 million dollars to install 3 large culverts to connect Mosquito Lagoon to the ocean. The idea, according to the applicants, is to improve water clarity and reduce salinity in the Lagoon. Just how this last goal would be accomplished by more directly connecting it to the ocean wasn't made clear. Apparently there's been no science based research on the advisability or efficacy of this plan. Maybe it would turn out to be a good plan. It could also turn out to be a disaster. Something of this magnitude needs to be fully vetted by all of the agencies involved and extensive scientific research to back up the assumptions before approval of anything like it goes forward.

David Hartgrove

* * * * *

A Birding Trip To Portugal and Spain

Ken Gunn, of Southeast Volusia Audubon, is arranging a birding trip to Portugal for the last half of April, 2016. The current low exchange rate for the Euro and the depressed economy in Southern Europe make this an ideal time to see an entirely new list of species. The tour will be operated by Birds and Nature Tours Ltd. of Lisbon and is planned for 13 days in country. Birds and Portugal's wonderful network of protected natural areas are the focus of the trip, but the route will pass through beautiful countryside, with hills and valleys, bluffs, beaches, Cork and Holm oak and Olive plantations, and will overnight in historic cities, some founded by Phoenicians, Romans or Moors.

The trip will start with a tour of the beautiful city of Lisbon where the group will spend the first night. From there, it will visit the nearby Tagus Estuary and the Sado Estuary on the Atlantic coast. Next we'll be inland to the granite hills of Castro Verde and Gadiana Valley National Park then south to bird coastal Algarve, situated on one of Europe's major migratory flyways. Finally, the tour will cross into Southern Spain to bird the Coto Doñana, considered one of the world's most valuable wetlands. It is expected that more than 180 species will be seen. My target birds for the trip are Azure-winged Magpie, Great Bustard, Red-necked Nightjar and Eurasian Eagle Owl. There's also a possibility of an extension of the trip to see points in Catalonia.

A more detailed account of the trip can be accessed on the SEVAS [website](#). For more information, contact me at this email address: gunnatbeach@cfl.r.com It's going to be a great trip.

Ken Gunn

Dunlawton Bridge, Port Orange Bridge

On a bright, sunny day at high noon during an absolute low tide at the Dunlawton Bridge in Port Orange, I decided to test my bird watching theory. That is - during any one and a half hour time period, on any given day, in any given week, in any given month, in any given year, twenty to thirty bird species will be there for your bird watching pleasure.

The first hint that the Dunlawton Bridge location might be a good place to observe various land and water birds close to home occurred on a mild day in October, 2001, shortly after I moved to Florida. An hour before daybreak, I drove below the bridge to begin my first time observation of birds for an international bird count called "The Big Sit". Upon arriving I heard the back and forth dialogue between two Great Horned Owls. For one hour before sunrise I was enchanted by their behavior - flights between the bridge stanchions, staying close together, touching, looking and calling to each other. Then they quietly disappeared from the bridge. Excited, you bet. I was ready and willing to begin my bird watching odyssey at the bridge. Other birds counted that day for "The Big Sit" were a Northern Harrier, Reddish Egret, 42 American Oystercatchers, 56 Willets, Belted Kingfishers and one Red-winged Blackbird for a total of 36 different species of birds counted.

John Carr and I sat "The Big Sit" a few years back during the "The Hurricane with No Name". The sky was dark and the wind howled, driving the rain in horizontal sheets. Our optics were pelted by stinging rain drops and standing upright was impossible. Not an easy day for birding but the birds were there. Not only were the regular assortment of birds swirling about but our enjoyment was fueled by surprise visits from Magnificent Frigatebirds, Roseate Spoonbills, American White Pelicans and a Brown Booby.

When I bring groups of birding enthusiasts, beginners or advanced, or talk to interested people at the bridge, I like to guarantee that we will find at least twenty different bird species within an hour and a half time period. The bridge has not disappointed me yet. In fact, I have never missed on this guarantee. After endless birding excursions to the bridge in the past fifteen years, I might consider changing my theory to a reality.

A wooden bridge, connecting the Port Orange mainland to the beach peninsula, was privately built about 1906. A hurricane destroyed the bridge in 1930 and a wooden drawbridge was constructed in 1951. The drawbridge proven impractical for the increasing traffic and a high rise concrete bridge was erected over the Halifax River in 1990. Other interesting birds that have used this year-round, birding hotspot have been Black-throated Blue Warblers, Pectoral Sandpipers, American Avocets, Hooded Mergansers, Common Loons, Forster's Terns, Red Knots, American Oystercatchers, Buffleheads and the ever entertaining and rambunctious Boat-tailed Grackles.

I use the Dunlawton Bridge for a quick birding fix, to bring me back, to relax away from time. Time stands still at the bridge. I'm at a different level here. Images through my eyes feast my mind. I enjoy my endless time at this marvelous birding hot spot.

Ray Scory

* * * * *

Bird Trips To The Dry Tortugas

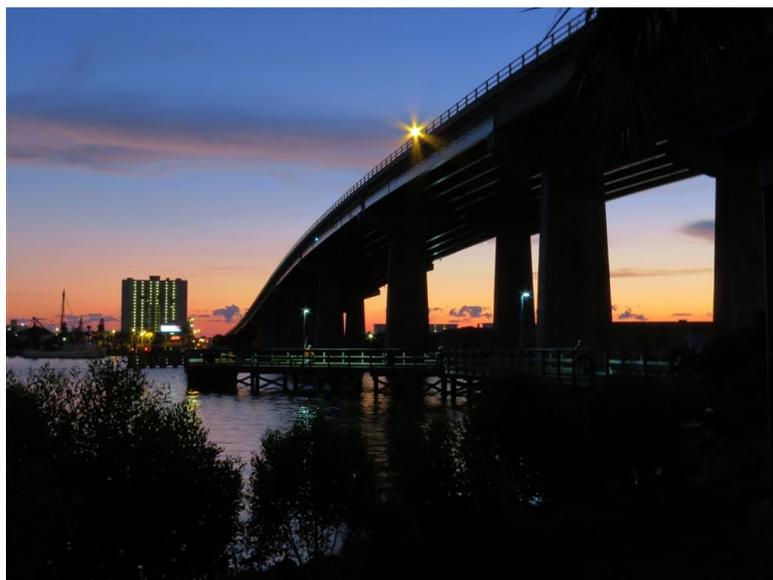
There's still time to book a trip to one the best birding spots in Florida with Florida Nature Tours. April and early May are the times to go. Click on this [link](#) for all the information.



Great Egret chick, perhaps 36 hours old, in the nest. Notice the still unhatched nearby. *photo by Ray Scory*



An American Oystercatcher, which has been described as a bird wearing a tuxedo and smoking a carrot. *photo by Ray Scory*



The Dunlawton Bridge at sunrise. *photo by Ray Scory*

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The Pelican

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

Volume 60-No.10 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
April, 2015



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thoughts from on High

David Yarnold, CEO of National Audubon, recently wrote about the Board of Director's meeting held on Feb 6 in Amelia Island. He mentioned Audubon members being "...among the most vocal and effective advocates to get Florida's Amendment One on the ballot and passed...." He spoke of his excitement about Audubon's momentum and how members are seeing connections along the flyways and acting in partnership with one another to get things done.

The "[President's Report to the Board of Directions](#)" can be accessed by clicking the link. Inside you'll find summaries of environmental successes, information about funding for climate initiatives, and bar charts showing the numbers of chapters around the county working on key Audubon initiatives like identifying and saving Important Bird Areas, community education, saving coastal habitats and creating bird-friendly communities. One of the most impressive graphics is one showing 36,771 Audubon volunteers who donated 904,847 hours of their time in 2014 for a total value of \$20,404,300. Audubon volunteers worked at 723 outreach events and engaged 225,326 children in environmental education and/or projects. Four hundred three citizen science projects were reported throughout the country, including 398 chapters involved in Christmas Bird Counts, 298 chapters participating in Great Backyard Bird Counts and 31 chapters reporting on Hummingbirds at Home. Halifax River Audubon was involved in many of the initiatives targeted by National Audubon for inclusion in the report.

In June, we'll be electing chapter officers and two At-Large Board members. Vacancies remain for some positions. Please contact me at 386-673-5332 to join our Board and become one of the reasons that Halifax River Audubon will go forward as a strong and vibrant organization, ready to lead in the next challenges to our environment.

Paula Wehr

* * * * *

Welcome To Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Scott Burdick, Harold Butts, Laurie Dusen, Patti Godwin, David Hess, Karen Madigan and Debra Sanfilippo. We hope to see you all at one of our upcoming meetings and or on one of our excellent field trips.

Calendar & Events

Monday, April 20th, Program Meeting: The Evolution of Birds from Dinosaurs Scientists have mapped how a group of massive dinosaurs evolved and shrank down to the size of robins and hummingbirds. Join us at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill on Monday evening, April 18, to hear Dr. Fred Mosher explain how this seemingly impossible transformation took place. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. A short business meeting follows. Guests and visitors welcome.

* * * * *

Field Trips

Friday, April 3rd, Buschman Park Join Peggy Yokubonus for a walk around one of our area's better spots for Spring migrants. We'll meet at 8:00 am at the park, 4575 Spruce Creek Road, Port Orange, and be finished by 11:00 or so. Questions, call Peggy at 386-673-7619.

Friday, April 17th, Tiger Bay State Forest Join David Hartgrove for a trip to look for Bachman's Sparrow, Brown-headed Nuthatch and other birds of the southeastern pine lands. Meet at 7:30 am at International Square - East of I-95 on International Speedway Boulevard behind the Krystal Restaurant. Bring lunch. Questions, Call David at 386-788-2630.

Friday, April 24th, A1A Run, Spring Join Paula Wehr and John Roessler for this dash up the coast to some of our favorite spots for migration. We'll meet at Ormond Town Square - Granada & Williamson Blvds, behind Chick-fil-A to form a car pool. Bring lunch. Questions, Call Paula, 386-673-5332.

These are our last field trips for the 2014/2015 season.

* * * * *

Field Trips With Others

Saturday, April 18th, Migration Count Join our friends from West Volusia Audubon Society for their Spring Migration Count. You don't have to be an "expert" and this citizen science field work is one of the best ways to improve your birding skills. To get on a team, call Harry Robinson, 386-943-8342. Bring a lunch and Harry will advise you where to meet your team mates.

Monday, April 27th, St Augustine Alligator Farm Join West Volusia Audubon Society for this photo safari and birding trip. This is a fund raiser for WVAS and pre registration is a must. The cost, including your admission to the Alligator Farm, is 25.00 per person. If you haven't experienced the wonders of this place during nesting season you're in for a treat. Herons, egrets, spoonbills and Woodstorks are all nesting now and often their nests are too close to use binoculars. So imagine the photos you can get. Questions, call Eli Schaperow, 407-314-7965. Mail your check, made out to West Volusia Audubon, to Eli at 902 Sweetbrier Lane, Deltona, FL 32725.

Conservation Notes

Last November Florida voters approved Amendment One by a 75% majority. The language in the amendment is pretty straight forward and seemed to those of us who voted for it to be clear in its goals. It's no secret that some members of the Legislature were dead set against the amendment and openly voiced their displeasure at its passage. The Legislature is given the task, by the Constitution, of appropriating state funds. So we knew they were going to be making decisions on how the money generated by Amendment One would be spent. In spite of my many years of watching the Legislature cheat, lie and rob us time and again, I was blown away by the level of deceit and petty vindictiveness we've seen since this legislative session began.

Senator Alan Hays (R-Umatilla) managed to get himself onto the Senate Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation. He did this because he's an ideologue whose views on the environment seem to be from the James Watt school of environmental policy. He was a big proponent of the idea of selling off parks and other environmental lands last year. So you can imagine his views on Amendment One. He and some of the other anti environment, brain dead, tea party darlings in Tallahassee have come up with a budget that demonstrates just how much contempt they have for Florida voters and their ideas on land preservation and good government.

When you voted for Amendment One, did you mean to send 25 million of those dollars to the Department of Transportation for arterial roads? Did you expect the Legislature to dump the entire system of paying state employee salaries from general revenue and move that over to Amendment One funding? Would you believe there's only 2 million in there now for land acquisition? How about using Amendment One as a vehicle to stamp out over 50 years of very effective land buying programs, like CARL, which allowed Florida to have one of the best state park systems in the country? All of these nit wit ideas are in the current budget proposals of the House and Senate and will need to be sorted out by the responsible leaders still in Tallahassee when the budget conferences begin. As usual, it will come down to the final 72 hours of the legislative session when, in the dark of night, the sleazy deals are cut. Then we'll see just how much our votes mean to the people we send to Tallahassee.

One item that should be funded is the purchase of thousands of acres of US Sugar Corporation land on which state has a purchase option. The option runs out later this year and it was originally meant for this land to be a new treatment area to store polluted water from Lake Okeechobee. Water dumped from the lake over the past 2 years is a big source of the pollution in the Indian River Lagoon and San Carlos Bay. Seven years ago, when USSC was about to go bankrupt, then Governor Charlie Crist rode to their rescue with his plan to save the Everglades. He bought some USSC land and optioned the rest with a 7 year option. Late last year USSC and Hilliard Brothers (another agribusiness giant) announced something called the Sugarhill Sector Plan. Instead of selling the land to Florida for Everglades restoration, they want to build 18,000 homes and 25 million square feet of retail and industrial space. This explains why our representatives in Tallahassee are falling all over themselves trying to prevent the purchase of the land we have an option on for Everglades restoration. This is the type of purchase for which Amendment One was written. The tax payers of Florida get a good deal, Everglades restoration moves forward and large areas with impaired water quality are on the road to recovery. So of course, our elected representatives are trying every tactic in the book to scuttle the deal. Please, contact [Senator Hukill](#) and Senate President, [Andy Gardiner](#). Ask them to honor the will of the voters of Florida when dealing with Amendment One issues.

David Hartgrove

"The good thing about science is that it's true whether or not you believe in it." So said Neil DeGrasse Tyson. The February issue of [National Geographic](#) contained an article about climate change and its potential effects on Miami and Florida. Below is a piece sent out by Audubon Florida on the subject. Ed.

Become a Climate Change Messenger For The Birds

Sea level is rising along Florida's coastline – the experts agree. With a rise of 9 inches over the past 100 years we're seeing more frequent inundation and more rapid erosion of barrier and mangrove islands and coastal beaches that provide nesting grounds for colorful American Oystercatchers and Black Skimmers, Roseate Spoonbills and Brown Pelicans, plovers, gulls, terns and many other species of wading birds. We're watching mangroves migrate into salt marshes and salt marshes migrate landward. And Florida's iconic Everglades ecosystem is threatened with saltwater intrusion if restoration plans aren't kept on track to increase freshwater flow southward to keep the rising saltwater at bay.

The special places where Florida's coastal birds now nest, feed, and rest are some of our state's most important "climate strongholds". If birds aren't protected where they nest now, their populations will continue to decline as sea level rises leaving them little capacity to adapt to future changes in habitat, temperature, and rainfall conditions.

Given the uncertainty around projected timing and magnitude of future sea level rise, and the focus of local and regional agencies on protecting the human-built environment from erosion and inundation, we call on our chapter members to get involved locally in public discussions focused on protecting coastal and tidally-connected freshwater habitats from rising sea levels.

What can you do to help?

View and download the three short videos (scroll to bottom on the page) at [FloridaClimateMessenger.com](#)

View and download the short PowerPoint slide presentation (scroll to bottom on the page) at [FloridaClimateMessenger.com](#)

Put these climate change messages (featured in the videos) into your own words so you'll be ready to talk to anyone who will listen:

Learn more about coastal birds and wildlife and how to protect their habitat (climate strongholds) as sea levels rise.

Recognize that Everglades restoration – increasing freshwater storage and flow within the Everglades - will defend against sea level rise.

Plan for climate change and make sure our response to sea level rise helps - rather than harms - Florida's coastal habitats.

Join chapter leaders to help identify and meet in person with local agency and government decision makers to whom we can deliver our messages.

* * * * *

An Eagle Is Faithful 100%

That headline reminds me of the old Dr. Seuss book about Horton the Elephant. Horton appears in two of the Dr. Seuss books: Horton Hatches The Egg, published in 1940 and Horton Hears A Who, published in 1954. It's Horton's dedication to his task from the first book that applies here. The Pennsylvania Game Commission has a nest cam on a Bald Eagle nest in Condorus State Park, near Hanover, PA. Here's a link to [some photos](#) of Mom before the eggs hatched. And here's a [link](#) to the live feed. The little ones appear to be no more than a week old.

David Hartgrove

Take A Camera & A Spotting Scope

Then add the eye and knowledge of an experienced photographer and you get images like these below. Chapter member, Robert Wilson, retired after a 30 year career as an industrial photographer. He shot images of all kinds of exotic things like rocket motors and engine parts. Once he retired he joined his wife, Tobey, in her pursuit of birds to photograph. Though he still has the big lenses and cameras used by many, his interest in digiscoping has blossomed into an avocation. He helped organize the first World Digiscoper Meeting that was held in conjunction with the recent Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival and sponsored by Swarovski Optik. Thanks Robert!



Robert Wilson
PHOTOGRAPHY

American Kestrel



A Pair of Wood Ducks

Digiscoped images by Robert Wilson

Volunteers Needed

Okay, don't all of you jump forward at once. Wait until you hear what you're volunteering for. Volusia County, in cooperation with the [Florida Shorebird Alliance](http://www.floridashorebirdalliance.org), has posted signs and a string fence on Disappearing Island. We will need volunteers to monitor the area in case the Least Terns that attempted to nest there last year return again this year. Jennifer Winters, Coordinator of the County's Habitat Conservation Plan, has asked us to look for people willing to put in a few hours at a time to help these threatened birds. Disappearing Island lies at the west side of Ponce Inlet and is the big sandbar visible from both Lighthouse Point and Smyrna Dunes Parks. You would need to have transportation to the island, like a boat, canoe or kayak. So we realize this limits the pool of volunteers. There is a possibility that we can arrange something for those without their own water craft but that's still being worked out. Please contact David Hartgrove at home: 386-788-2630 or birdman9@earthlink.net if you're willing to help.



Disappearing Island with the Lighthouse in the background



Least Tern on the nest last year. *Photos by Jennifer Winters*

There's no guarantee that the birds will return this year since they were unsuccessful last year. We're just trying to get ahead of the game and have people ready if the birds do show up.

David Hartgrove

Endangered Woodpecker Gets A Helping Hand

Danny Bales is a Titusville based photographer whose work has graced a number of publications, including ours. The following story was written as a post on [BRDBRAIN](#) and appears here with permission. Ed.

It's that time of year again for my work at Hal Scott Preserve with the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker. I started working this year getting ready for breeding season around the 5th of March. [Hal Scott Preserve](#), in Orange County, is exploding with the singing birds. I've seen all the regulars, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Bachman's Sparrow, Brown-headed Nuthatches, Eastern Bluebirds, Eastern Towhees, Meadow Larks, and Pine Warblers. Even Wild Turkey are moving around. On one of my trips I noticed that one of the male breeder Red-cockaded Woodpeckers had an extremely swollen foot. The bird was captured, and taken to a veterinarian. It was discovered that it had a broken foot, and had to be put in a cast. Since RCWO's don't do well in captivity he suggested the bird be released, and captured again in 2 weeks to remove the cast. He said it had a 50/50 chance. It's getting near time to remove cast so we had to see how it was doing. I located it this morning, and it appears to still have most of the cast on. However it pecks at it a lot, and has unraveled some of the cast. I took numerous videos of the bird, and some still shots. I think it's going to make it. I've been doing this job for 9 years now, and this is a first for me.

And now an update. The bird we had with a cast on his broken foot had been caught, and his old cast was replaced with a new one. His foot wasn't healed yet so he has to wear it for another 2 weeks.

Danny Bales

Below are links to several of Danny's videos and photos.

www.flickr.com/photos/mudhen/16876692595

www.flickr.com/photos/mudhen/16667559077

www.flickr.com/photos/mudhen/16839732855

* * * * *

A Birding Trip To Portugal and Spain

Ken Gunn, of Southeast Volusia Audubon, is arranging a birding trip to Portugal for the last half of April, 2016. The current low exchange rate for the Euro and the depressed economy in Southern Europe make this an ideal time to see an entirely new list of species. The tour will be operated by Birds and Nature Tours Ltd. of Lisbon and is planned for 13 days in country. Birds and Portugal's wonderful network of protected natural areas are the focus of the trip, but the route will pass through beautiful countryside, with hills and valleys, bluffs, beaches, Cork and Holm oak and Olive plantations, and will overnight in historic cities, some founded by Phoenicians, Romans or Moors. The trip will start with a tour of the beautiful city of Lisbon where the group will spend the first night. From there, it will visit the nearby Tagus Estuary and the Sado Estuary on the Atlantic coast. Next we'll be inland to the granite hills of Castro Verde and Guadiana Valley National Park then south to bird coastal Algarve, situated on one of Europe's major migratory flyways. Finally, the tour will cross into Southern Spain to bird the Coto Doñana, considered one of the world's most valuable wetlands. It is expected that more than 180 species will be seen. My target birds for the trip are Azure-winged Magpie, Great Bustard, Red-necked Nightjar and Eurasian Eagle Owl. There's also a possibility of an extension of the trip to see points in Catalonia.

For more information, contact me at this email address: gunnsatbeach@cfl.rr.com It's going to be a great trip.

Ken Gunn

SALT MARSH RESTORATION WORK TO BEGIN ADJACENT TO SMITH CREEK LANDING AT NORTH PENINSULA STATE PARK

Nature Trail will be Temporarily Closed

ORMOND BY THE SEA- Work is set to begin phase 4 of the salt marsh restoration project at North Peninsula State Park in Volusia County. Mobilization began the week of February 23rd. During phases of the project the park's 'Coastal Strand' nature trail will be closed. Notices will be posted on site to keep visitors informed of the status of the trail.

The work will take place along the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) west of A1A and north of the Smith Creek Landing use area at the park. Initially the access road will be improved on the north side of Highbridge Road. Contractors will then begin restoration of another eighteen acres of historic salt marsh that was filled with spoil material during the dredging of the ICW in the early 1900s.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's North Peninsula State Park continues its partnership with the St. John's River Water Management District and the Floridan Resource Conservation and Development Council on this project. This work, funded by a grant from a NOAA Coastal Habitat Restoration Program and the St. John's River Water Management District begins the project's fourth phase.

The salt marsh restoration project at North Peninsula State Park began in September 2009. Phases one and two, completed in November 2011, are located along the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway north of Highbridge Road and west of A1A. Phase 3 of the project along John Anderson Drive south of Highbridge Road was completed in 2014. Phase 4 will complete the saltmarsh restoration along John Anderson Drive and also restore 23 acres of saltmarsh north of North Peninsula State Park's Smith Creek Landing to complete the project. The restoration effort will remove fill which was placed on pristine saltmarsh habitat while dredging what is now the Intra Coastal Waterway. The goal of this restoration is to create a healthy, productive saltmarsh habitat connected by tidal creeks to the open estuary, benefiting an extremely wide range of plants and animals, including critical fish nursery and bird habitats. Additional benefits include increased recreational opportunities including scenic overlooks for hikers, increased recreational fishing opportunities, birding opportunities and educational opportunities for local students.

During the project, heavy equipment will be brought in to clear existing vegetation and assist in the removal of spoil material. Once the area is graded to match elevations in adjacent marshes, revegetation will begin and native vegetation will be reintroduced into the restoration area. The park will enlist volunteer assistance in the planting activities of the project. For further information, Gamble Rogers Memorial State Recreation Area at (386) 517-2086 or visit www.FloridaStateParks.org.

Paul Haydt, SJRWMD & Barbara Roberts, FDEP

* * * * *

Proof That Spring Is Here

A friend sent me this link to a [short video](#). The male Sharp-tailed Grouse on the grass lands of Montana are showing signs of raging hormones. They do so by trying to impress females with their dancing ability. Enjoy!

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**

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

Our website is www.halifaxriveras.org For information on upcoming field trips, etc.

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The Pelican

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

Volume 60-No.11 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
May, 2015



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thoughts from on High



May means Mother's Day. The Mute Swan, an introduced species from Europe, is not mute but has a hoarse and much quieter voice than that of native swans. The graceful neck, brilliant white feathers, orange bill and black facial skin make this female a very photogenic mother. Mute Swans have been introduced into park and estate ponds for their ornamental beauty. In some areas, they've become common enough to be considered pests. They feed mostly on plant material by dabbling at the surface, dipping the head and neck underwater or by upending with the tail up and head extended to the pond bottom. They also graze on land.

Pairs form at about 2 years of age, with first nesting usually taking place at 3-4 years. Pairs conduct courtship by facing one another and turning their heads from side to side in unison. Nests are on small islands, shorelines or mounds built up in shallow water. The male helps to gather nesting material but the female builds the nest. The female does most of the incubating of the 5-7 eggs. Both parents tend the young. As seen in the photo, it is common for very young birds to be carried on the adult's back.

Tiny Piping Plover mothers have a very tough life. The number of Piping Plovers of both sexes has been reduced due to habitat loss until the species has been listed as Threatened in Florida and Endangered in many other states. They are one of the smallest plovers at 7.25 inches and weighing just under 2 ounces. Their backs and wings are nearly the color of sand and they lay their eggs in a small scrape on the open beach where they have little protection from the weather, predators from the animal world and the chance of being stepped on by human beach visitors. Males perform display flights over breeding territory. On the ground, *Continued on page 2 below*

Calendar & Events

Monday, May 18, 2015- Program Meeting: "Human Impact on the St. Johns River". Join us on Monday evening, May 18, when Quinton White, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Marine Science Research Institute and Professor of Biology & Marine Science at Jacksonville University will discuss the impact humans have made on the St. Johns River – both good and bad. The doors open at 6:30 p.m. at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. A brief business meeting follows.

Field Trips With Others

Our chapter's field trips are over until next September. West Volusia Audubon Society still has two more scheduled in May.

Saturday, May 9- Bicycle birding at Lake Apopka. Pump up your tires and join our friends from WVAS for this fun outing. Meet at 7:30 am at Magnolia Park, 2929 S. Binion Rd. (CR 437), Apopka. The ride will be on the Lake Apopka Loop Trail, beginning at Magnolia Park and going along the NE shore of Lake Apopka. This is an excellent location for finding a wide variety of bird species. Bring lunch. Questions, call Eli Schaperow, 407-314-7965.

Friday, May 15- Audubon Park in Deltona. Meet at 8:00 am at the park, corner of Doyle Road and Lush Lane. Bring your binoculars and lunch. Questions? Call Harry Robinson, 386-801-4472.

Programs Of Interest

Friday, May 22- Blue Spring Alliance Public Forum. Hear from community leaders about the threats to Blue Spring, the region's water supply and what the community is doing to address these threats. Also learn about the new Springs Council and ProjectH2O – new, local initiatives to protect our water resources. The public is encouraged to attend and ask questions, give input and participate in the Blue Spring Alliance Forum. Join your neighbors and members of local government at the Wayne G Sanborn Activity Center, 815 South Alabama Avenue, DeLand. The forum will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 23- "John James Audubon: The Artist Scientist in Florida" presented by James Zacharias, Museum of Arts & Sciences. As part of the "Discover Our History" Lecture Series presented by Ormond Beach Historical Society at Anderson-Price Memorial Building, 42 N. Beach Street, Ormond Beach. Zach will recount the story of Audubon's travels to St. Augustine, Bulowville, the St Johns River, Key West and the Dry Tortugas. Refreshments served at 9:30 a.m.; the presentation is from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. Free admission. Questions: 386-677-7005. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Do **not** park on the church property; your car will be towed. Limited parking is located behind the Anderson-Price House, across the street at Bailey Riverbridge Gardens or behind the City Hall/Public Library.

Conservation Notes

males approach the female, stand upright and stretch their necks out while rapidly stamping their feet. Both parents incubate the 2-4 eggs for 26-28 days. The downy hatchlings are ready to walk and leave the nest within a few hours of hatching. Hatchlings feed themselves immediately. Parents protect the youngsters until fledging. The female often deserts the family a week or so after the eggs hatch, leaving the male to care for the young which are ready to fly 3-5 weeks after hatching.

Paula Wehr



A Piping Plover at Lighthouse Point Park

photo by Dan Gribbin

* * * * *

One Less Species Soon?



Common Redpoll

photo by Sharon Watson

Hoary Redpoll

photo by Chris Wood

The American Ornithologists' Union, along with professional ornithological societies around the globe, determines what constitutes a species and what they're to be called. Long time birders will recall that the name of the Common Gallinule was changed some years ago to Common Moorhen. Now, after genetic testing, it's back to Common Gallinule again. To avoid confusion with a European cousin.

Now comes word that listers, those birders among us who count each and every species and keep meticulous notes on the total of their life list, are about to lose a checkmark on those lists. Hoary Redpolls are mostly white and live in extreme conditions near the Arctic, seldom straying south of the Canadian border. Common Redpolls are slightly larger, darker and are regularly seen in the northern U.S. in winter. Here's a [link](#) to an article on the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's website that announces that the latest genetic testing shows that these two species are essentially identical. The next revision of the AOU's taxonomy listing could be a source of disappointment for those listers among us.

In last month's issue I wrote of the shenanigans going on in Tallahassee. These annual exercises in malfeasance and bad governance are what we get when the bozos we elect get settled into their plush offices and start taking phone calls from their corporate sponsors. One of those phone calls apparently was about how wonderful it would be if we could just open up our state parks to farming. Florida's state parks are some of the best in the country, or were. But large donors to legislative races have plans to plow profits out of our state lands. SB 7086 directs the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (a name that's quickly turning into a cruel joke) to allow "low impact farming" in state parks, state forests and wildlife management areas to help assure these places pay their way. HB 7135 allows adjacent landowners to lay ownership claims to state parks, forests, and wildlife management areas. The bill appears to be a special favor to a big dairy producer that has been after a piece of the Withlacoochee State Forest. Florida's poor soils don't produce that kind of forage that dairy cows need to be big producers of industrial milk, so feed and fertilizers would be needed. Nutrient management plans for dairies do not prevent groundwater contamination. So we lose a section of a state forest that currently belongs to all of us; a big time corporate donor gets to pollute more ground water with his industrial dairy operation on what used to be our land and meantime, state park biologists' positions are cut as a cost saving measure. Clearly, the contempt our legislators have for us and our agenda of land preservation knows no bounds.

It appears all but certain that we'll see Florida's black bears being hunted sometime later this year. The reasoning is that by reducing the population of the state's bears we'll reduce the interactions between people and bears which often end with the bears being relocated or shot as nuisance bears. "A fed bear is a dead bear", so say signs in many state and national parks. Still, there are people who live in areas frequented by bears who think they're doing the bears a favor leaving dog food out at night for them. There's an old saying that "the road to hell is paved with good intentions." Putting up a bird feeder is one thing. Feeding an animal that can and will eat your neighbor's poodle is just plain irresponsible.

Hopefully, the appearance of President Obama on a walk along the Anhinga Trail, in Everglades National Park to mark Earth Day, didn't send the tea party folks into paroxysms of foaming at the mouth and screeled screaming at their television sets. Or give them another reason to delay Everglades restoration. In a bit of irony, his visit coincided with the opening day of public hearings on a proposed expansion of Florida Power & Light Company's Turkey Point Nuclear Plant. They want to add two new reactors and extend three new transmission lines across the edge of Shark River Slough, part of Everglades National Park. In addition, the plant is adjacent to Biscayne National Park. Current plans call for the use of treated waste water for cooling the reactors. This means the household chemicals, hormones from prescription medications and other substances which aren't effected by current treatment facilities will be aerosolized and carried up in the massive amounts of steam to be deposited in both national parks. This plan is in the very early stages of development and environmental groups down south are working on modifying it. We'll be alert to ways we can help.

It appears that the bill to open Tiger Bay State Forest to off road vehicles will die in the Agriculture Committee where it's been since soon after it was filed. Representative Dwayne Taylor (who's term limited out of office after this session) has filed to seek the position of Volusia County Council Chair. He was hoping to rally support for his election bid from that bill's supporters. I think he was surprised at how unpopular the idea was.

David Hartgrove

Elections Will be Held At Our Annual Meeting

Monday, June 15, 2015

By-laws for our chapter state in Article IV Officers, Section 1: "The officers shall be elected at the annual meeting of members, occurring in odd years, and assume their duties immediately following the close of the meeting. They shall hold office for two years."

Following are candidates who have volunteered to stand for election at our June meeting:

President – Jim O’Shaughnessy

Vice-President – David Hartgrove

Treasurer – Betty Butcher

Recording Secretary – Peggy Yokubonus

Membership Secretary – John Carr

Historian – John Carr

At-Large Board Member (Class of 2018) – Holly Zwart-Duryea

At-Large Board Member (Class of 2018) – Celine Sullivan

Nominations will be accepted for all positions, providing the nominee has been asked and accepts the nomination.

* * * * *

Florida Forage Fish

Last year Halifax River Audubon joined a birder sign-on letter in support of the [Florida Forage Fish Campaign](#) which was sponsored by Pew Charitable Trust, US Oceans. The Pew organization is putting together a logo mosaic that will feature logos from our 150+ partners so it can be presented to Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission leadership at a meeting with them in Tallahassee in April. HRA’s logo will be included.

Our Pew contact, Senior Associate Cameron Jaggard (speaker at our September 15, 2014 chapter meeting) reports that FWC has agreed to include a discussion of forage fish management and monitoring during their public meeting June 23-25 in Sarasota. This meeting could be a huge turning point for the campaign. In preparation for that meeting, Pew is working to get 10,000 people to sign the Florida Forage Fish pledge by June 1. If you have not already signed the pledge at our April chapter meeting, please visit www.FloridaForageFish.org to sign the pledge online. Feel free to forward this information to friends and neighbors who may also want to protect forage fish in our local waters. Cameron is also encouraging folks to print and collect signatures on paper copies of the forage fish pledge. Contact [Paula Wehr](#) for a PDF copy of the pledge and mailing info on where to send your signed pledges.

* * * * *

Welcome To Our New & Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Chuck Bachstein, Dorothy Viola Berry, Alicia Dana, Robert & Danielle Neetz, Joan & Nile Harter, Kathryn Hood, Clara Loesch, Lelia Matson, Terry Purcell and Norma Washburn. We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting or on one of our excellent field trips, which will resume next September.

Good Things Happen To Good People

And sometimes they happen out of the blue, when we least expect them. In the last issue of the Pelican I ran a short piece about member, Robert Wilson, and his passion for digiscoping. This is the use of a spotting scope, an adapter (though that’s not always necessary) and a small digital camera to photograph objects at a distance. It’s a practice that has revolutionized bird and wildlife photography, especially in the hands of someone who was an expert to begin with.

Robert was recently contacted by Kowa America, manufacturers of some of the finest optics in the world. They had seen his work and asked him to represent them at four large birding festivals, beginning with "[The Biggest Week In American Birding](#)." Held in Magee Marsh and Black Swamp, in northwest Ohio, this annual event is warbler heaven as the birds stage for their flight across Lake Erie. Robert and Tobey will be there, hobnobbing with America’s birding elite and showing them how to capture great images of the birds. Two of Robert’s recent images are below.



Anhinga chicks begging for food from Mom



Digiscoping isn’t just for larger members of the animal kingdom. Here’s a female four spotted pennant dragonfly. Congratulations Robert ! You’re in for an interesting year.

David Hartgrove

Chipping Sparrow

A chipping sparrow. A what? A chipping what? I never heard a bird's name like that, how it stuck in my mind. Always chipping - there in my mind - randomly appearing throughout my lifetime to remind me of this tiny sparrow with a chipping name.

This light breasted bird, cloaked sparrow-like in black and brown markings, has held its position in my mind since the first day I spotted it. There they were one a day when I was chasing birds in a familiar grassy field that I used as a required habitat for the purpose of attaining the Bird Study merit badge from the Boy Scouts of America. They were seemingly huddled in some open patches of the field anxiously pecking away at invisible seeds. I had never seen such tiny birds feeding on the ground at such a rapid pace - poking, poking always active, always moving, hopping to a new spot, continuously poking, poking, always poking, feeding.

Checking my recently purchased Petersen Field Guide, I discovered I was looking at a small flock of Chipping Sparrows. I was elated, I made a bird identification. I was star struck. It was the year 1948 and I was beginning the year to study birds for my merit badge.

What was to become of this bird study and would my fascination with the Chipping sparrow stay focused during the coming years? It is now the year 2015 and I don't have a bird study merit badge to achieve anymore, but those Chipping sparrow are still with me in my Florida backyard. I am elated. After all these years, I am still star struck.

During a lifetime of change, I found them from Maine to Connecticut to Virginia out to Colorado and California and now to Florida where they visit my humble feeding station every winter. Long before daybreak, they are the first at my feeder, disappear when it gets light, show up for moments throughout the day and appear at the end of day staying until dusk, still feeding, poking and moving. I like to watch them change positions dropping from feeder to the ground and back again, always busy, searching and moving.

A strong, black eye-line, a white supercilium and a grayish breast and rump are diagnostic features that distinguish breeding Chipping Sparrows from similar sparrow species. The female breeding specie is slightly more subtle in appearance. The non-breeding species are even more subtle in appearance sporting a more brown cap and a pink bill. The juvenile wears soft dark breast stripes.

Ranging from Alaska to Mexico, some of the Caribbean Islands and from east to the west coasts, the Chipping Sparrow is wide spread and relatively tame. Their song is a sweet one note trill.

Take some time to watch this tiny, discreet sparrow and its highly charged feeding behavior. They are not easy to spot, because their brown, black, and gray colors blend nicely with the open grounds and fields that they like to find their seed oriented nutrition. I am glad the Chipping Sparrow has stayed with me all these years. It a real neat bird.

Ray Scory

* * * * *

Viewing A Virginia Rail

Mark Vance is a photographer whose work has appeared in these pages before. Rails are notoriously difficult to see, let alone photograph. Here's a [link](#) to a short video Mark shot at the Celery Fields, a refuge developed by Sarasota Audubon. In the background, listen for the sounds of a calling Limpkin.



A Chipping Sparrow in winter plumage



A Chipping Sparrow in breeding plumage

* * * * *

Slightly Used Binoculars

If you're in the market for a backup pair of binoculars or some to keep in your car, these might be just what you're looking for. Kathy Winter has a pair of AMC 7x35 wide angle binoculars she'd like to sell for just 35.00. They're in like new condition and come with the original case. Call her at 386-615-9198.

* * * * *

A Real Citizen Science Opportunity

The [Florida Breeding Bird Atlas II](#) is entering its fourth year and we need your help. Do you like birding in your neighborhood, in a local park or in areas you're not familiar with but you can read a map? Then you can make a considerable contribution to the data base of bird knowledge and have fun too. It's easy, we can teach you what you need to know in a morning and you'll be doing real citizen science. If you're interested contact me at 386-788-2630 or by e-mail: birdman9@earthlink.net. You'll be glad you did.

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**

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

Our website is www.halifaxriveras.org For information on upcoming field trips, etc.

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The Pelican

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

Volume 60-No.12 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
June, 2015



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thoughts from on High

News flash: Business can be successful AND environmentally sensitive.

Craig Weyandt, Superintendent at the Moorings Yacht & Country Club in Vero Beach proved this case when the golf course was temporarily closed in May 2003 to create a drainage plan. When working on the master plan, he realized that with a greater vision he could remove invasive plants, introduce native plants and create a habitat for wildlife while improving the visual impact and the playing enjoyment of the golf membership. Sounds like a win-win! Lisa Mickey, Audubon member and Kayak Tour Guide/Eco Narrator at [Marine Discovery Center](#), provides details about this project in an environmental story she wrote for the US Golf Association. It is the first installment of ten case studies being examined nationwide on golf courses looking at their sustainability practices and new efforts to become more environmentally responsible. Click [here](#) to read the article. Thanks, Lisa, for sharing this good news.

Abe Ng, CEO of Sushi Maki, agrees. "When your business relies on Mother Nature's bounty, you come to the realization that you have to protect nature to stay in business." His company sells more than 2 million pounds of fish a year, employees nearly 250 people and operates in 16 locations in south Florida. Several years ago he and his management team decided to elevate protecting the environment to the level of being a "guiding principle" for the company. In 2012, they earned the Marine Stewardship Council certification, making Sushi Maki the first chain sushi restaurant in the US to earn that designation. To maintain certification, they commit to tracking the purchase, receipt and delivery of MSC certified seafood in every store. They have opened their records to third-party verification. Mr. Ng realizes that not every company has the resources to make this level of commitment and states his company has also made simple changes like replacing old equipment with energy-efficient models and using recycled materials in their packaging. Click [here](#) to read more.

We can all help business owners to understand that making a profit and operating in an environmentally-sensitive manner are not mutually exclusive. When you note a business wisely using natural resources, compliment the owner or manager and let him/her know that you'll be back because you want to support environmentally-friendly businesses. If you choose one business over another because of their environmental practices, be sure to let the salesperson know why you chose their company. Positive feedback from customers reinforces management's decision. And to paraphrase Martha Stewart, that's "a good thing."

Paula Wehr

Calendar & Events

Monday, June 15, Program meeting "Terns in Volusia County"
Join us on Monday evening, June 15, when Michael Brothers, Director of the Marine Science Center, will show us how to identify the various terns which live in Volusia County and what rarities may visit us. The doors open at 6:30 p.m. at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. A brief business meeting follows.

We will also be collecting donations for the Marine Science Center. Following is a list of items used by staff to assist in the rehabilitation of marine and avian patients. Bring your donations of the following items to the meeting.

Food items: high quality dry dog food, high quality wet cat food, Hill's Prescription canned A/D Diet, wild bird seed, meat baby food (Gerber or Beechnut) Pedialyte and Ensure nutritional shakes.

Cleaning supplies: Multi-purpose cleaners and disinfectants, like Simple Green, Roccal, or bleach, dish soap, paper towels, brooms, scrub sponges and brushes, trash bags of various sizes.

General items like rakes, hose nozzles, pet carriers (all sizes), blankets, sheets and towels, Rubbermaid bins and lids (all sizes).

REMINDER: Elections Will be Held at this Meeting, June 15

The following are candidates who have volunteered to stand for election at our June meeting:

President – Jim O'Shaughnessy

Vice-President – David Hartgrove

Treasurer – Betty Butcher

Recording Secretary – Peggy Yokubonus

Membership Secretary – John Carr

Historian – John Carr

At-Large Board Member (Class of 2018) – Holly Zwart-Duryea

At-Large Board Member (Class of 2018) – Celine Sullivan

Nominations will be accepted from the floor for all positions, providing the nominee has been asked and accepts the nomination.

All members in attendance on June 15, 2015 are eligible to vote.

* * * * *

Welcome To Our New Members

We welcome our new and returning members: Christine Castle, Sandra Gostomsk, Larry Morgan, Carol Rojas, Michael Smith, Fredrick & Frances Sorensen, Stewart Spar and Helen Wessel. We hope to see you at our next meeting or in September when meetings and field trips resume for the new season.

Conservation Notes

The headline above the article in the News-Journal said, "GOP criticizes new wetlands rules." The new rules are designed to give guidance to those working around wetlands and to help insure safe drinking water for 117 million Americans. So what could the Republican Party find to criticize about guaranteeing safe drinking water for half of our citizens? Once again we find the influence of tea party extremists pushing otherwise good folks into positions they probably wouldn't take under any other circumstances.

Florida Agriculture Commissioner, Adam Putnam, who has been influential in helping negotiate several beneficial conservation easements, was quoted as saying that the new rules, "rob Florida's leaders of the ability to make the best decisions for our distinct bodies of water." Was he referring to the "leaders" who rigged the rules and passed a special exemption to allow Georgia Pacific to continue dumping millions of gallons of dioxin contaminated waste water into the St Johns River? Could he have been referring to the members of his party who just voted to prohibit the gathering of data on contaminated water dumped in to Lake Okeechobee? These criminal clowns who pass for "leaders" in our state will have us drowning in putrid effluent if left to their own devices. We need all the federal regulation we can get if we're to be saved from the ravages of a group bent on profits for the few at the expense of the multitudes.

The Clean Water Act is all that stands between us and the environmental degradation that led to its passing. Richard Nixon may have done a lot of things wrong but the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act are three things he got right. While these vital laws were the result of legislation introduced by Democrats, they were embraced by Nixon and other GOP members because they realized that, left to its own methods, big business would trash the environment in order to squeeze a few more cents out of every opportunity.

There is currently a concerted effort by GOP senators to wreck the Endangered Species Act. Senator Rand Paul has introduced a bill (S. 855) that would strip all protections from any species that exists only in one state, like the Florida Scrub Jay. Another bill (S. 736), introduced by Wyoming Senator, Mike Enzi, would require the use of data submitted by a state, tribal, or county governments when determining the status of a species in question. So, science be damned, if the feds want to protect the Greater Prairie Chicken from being wiped out by pollution and the damaged landscape associated with fracking, they have to include junk "science" from industry flacks in the decision making process.

The local PBS station has been rerunning the Ken Burns film, "The Roosevelts, An Intimate Portrait". While Teddy may have had his eccentricities and championed the idea of our country maintaining a colonial empire, he was perhaps the greatest advocate of the environment ever to sit in the White House. For those who don't know, he proclaimed all of the area around Ponce Inlet a national wildlife refuge in 1908. This designation was later overturned by Congress when it was seen to be an impediment to development in the area. What happened to the party of Theodore Roosevelt? The one that saw a value in nature beyond the squeezing of every nickel out of every square inch of land regardless of the environmental cost. Why have they declared a war on science as it applies to things like population control, global climate change? The challenges we face in the future require forward thinking problem solvers who can make the hard decisions that will guarantee a future for our children and their offspring. One with a clean, healthy environment. The tea party sees no value in that.

David Hartgrove

Pelagic Birding On The Far Side of the Gulf Stream

The Marine Science Center is sponsoring another pelagic trip on Sunday, June 7th. We have a long way to go, so we're leaving the dock at 2:00 am, returning at 9:00 pm that night. Our destination is a spot called the tuna grounds and we're hoping for good looks at birds like jaegers, shearwaters, Black-capped Petrel, Leach's, Wilson's and Band-rumped Storm Petrels and White-tailed and Red-billed Tropicbirds. Cost is 235.00 per person. Contact Michael Brothers, mbrothers@CO.VOLUSIA.FL.US, to let him know you're planning to attend. Send your check, made out to the Friends of the Marine Science Center, (in the note section write "pelagic trip") to: Friends of the Marine Science Center, 100 Lighthouse Drive, Ponce Inlet, FL 32127.

* * * * *

Lisa Mickey is an HRA member and works at the Marine Discovery Center, in New Smyrna Beach. Below is her story of how she came to be holding a young Brown Pelican.



One of the guests on my Monday eco-tour boat trip took this photo of me rescuing a baby pelican that had fallen out of its nest on the bird rookery island off the North Causeway. I observed the bird over two hours and never saw an adult with it, and on the second time around, I observed that it was bloodied and standing on the shoreline away from the other nests & birds.

So, the captain moved the boat up to the island's shoreline, where I slid off and walked over to the bird. This little guy squawked a bit, but let me take it to the boat. Thirty minutes later, I drove him to the bird rehab center in Ponce Inlet, where the vet tech informed me this little bird was about three weeks old and had a broken wing.

On another trip, I had to cut free an adult pelican that was tangled in monofilament. The pelican has a hook in its mouth, but at least I was able to cut it free from the mangrove trees and it flew away. I had just finished telling the boatload of school kids about the detrimental effects of monofilament line on wildlife when I saw the snagged pelican and asked the captain to circle over to it. The kids got to see a happy ending this time.

Lisa Mickey

Amendment 1 Needs Implementation

As corresponding secretary for the Environmental Council of Volusia & Flagler Counties, I was asked to write a letter on the Council's behalf regarding Amendment 1. It was sent individually to the entire Volusia/Flagler legislative delegation.

Dear Senator,

We at the Environmental Council of Volusia/Flagler are appalled at the cavalier manner in which you and the rest of your colleagues have ignored the wishes of the voters of our state. Amendment 1 was passed with 75% of the votes cast on November 4th of last year. It was meant to restore funding for Florida Forever, to purchase lands necessary for Everglades restoration and to guarantee secure funding for future land acquisition for parks, wildlife, water quality, hunting and fishing.

As one who has sworn to uphold and defend the state constitution, it's incumbent upon you to abide by all of its articles and amendments. Even the ones with which you may not agree. We therefore expect you to honor your oath and to vote to fully fund Florida Forever during this upcoming special session.

We trust that you will lobby your fellow senators to reach an agreement to exercise the option for the purchase of land for the completion of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. This 7 year option expires in a few months and a golden opportunity will be lost. Your fiduciary responsibilities as a member of the Senate require that you find the most cost effective method to accomplish this task. Failure to act to purchase these lands, that have been optioned to the State of Florida since 2008, will mean much higher costs for future taxpayers.

We trust that you will see the wisdom of Florida's voters. Please, honor your oath and their wishes as expressed in the wording of Amendment One. Thank you.

Voters in Florida have seen their votes on issues like the class size amendment and the use of Lottery funds turned on their heads or simply ignored for too long. These people take an oath when they take office. It should mean something.

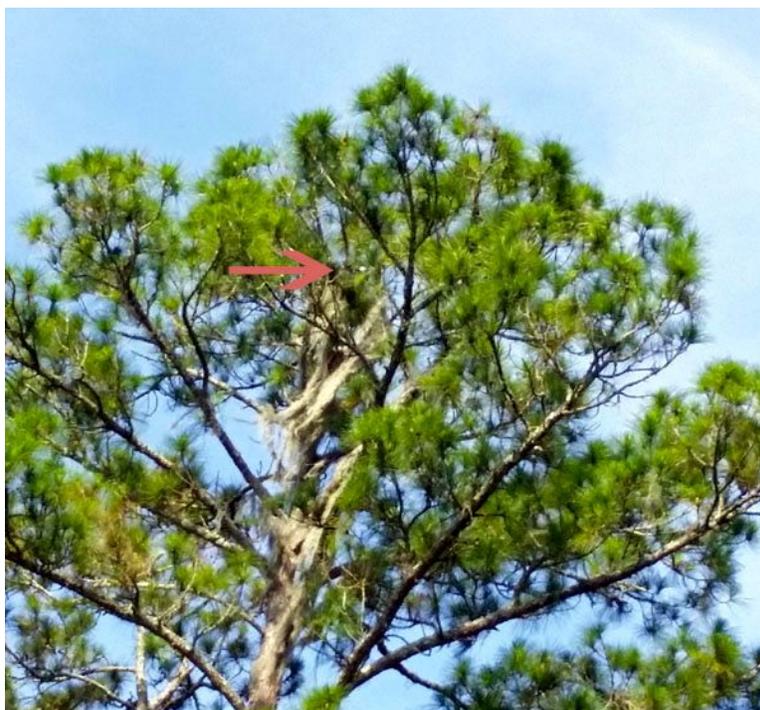
David Hartgrove

* * * * *



Tom Dunkerton's composite photo of a young Florida Scrub Jay is disturbing because it seems to show that this bird has avian pox. This highly contagious disease eventually causes death. The photo was taken at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. Treatment options are limited to say the least.

Swallow-tailed Kites On The Nest !



The white dot pointed to by the arrow is the head of one of the young kites. photo by Paula Wehr

The week before Easter, Sue Donnino noticed several Swallow-tailed Kites flying over the fairway on Hole 6 at Halifax Plantation Golf Course. On March 29 we watched two kites soaring over the tall pines lining the fairway. One kite was carrying something – nesting material or a gift of food. A second kite began circling and lit on a bare branch of a nearby snag. Soon the first kite joined the second and mating began. Then they flew off, circling the area until one kite flew into a large section of Spanish moss hanging in a pine tree 75-80 feet above the ground. Had we not seen the bird disappear into the moss, we would never have found the nest.

Over the next month Sue watched the nest every time she passed in the golf cart. She knew the nest was viable because one kite continued to hunt in the area, and sometimes she could see the long black tail sticking out of the moss curtain as the female incubated the eggs. The chicks apparently hatched while Sue and her husband Joe were on a trip, sometime the first week of May.

Today, May 26, Sue and I walked the fairway and saw the heads of two chicks – nearly full grown. We saw wings being stretched and tails twitching. With first flights taking place 5-6 weeks after hatching, perhaps these two nestlings will have taken their maiden voyages by the time this article appears in the newsletter.

Paula Wehr

* * * * *

A Real Citizen Science Opportunity

The Florida Breeding Bird Atlas II is entering its fourth year and we need your help. Do you like birding in your neighborhood, in a local park or in areas you're not familiar with but you can read a map? Then you can make a considerable contribution to the data base of bird knowledge and have fun too. It's easy, we can teach you what you need to know in a morning and you'll be doing real citizen science. If you're interested contact me at 386-788-2630 or by e-mail: birdman9@earthlink.net. You'll be glad you did.

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**

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

Our website is www.halifaxriveras.org For information on upcoming field trips, etc.

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The Pelican

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

Volume 61-No.1 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon July, 2015



President's Message

Thoughts and concepts

This is my first column as the newly elected President of the chapter. So I thought I'd write about a little adventure I had.

I was intrigued by the photo in the May 26th Daytona Beach News Journal of the Wilson's Plover chicks being spotted on Bethune Beach. The next morning I headed down there to see for myself. I have not been that far south in New Smyrna Beach for several years and was struck by the amount of development that has taken place. I drove to the only public parking area that I remembered from several years ago. I was certain that I would meet someone who would give me directions to the nesting area. I was wrong! There was not one person in sight. After waiting for a number of minutes I decided to head south because it appeared a little more isolated than the northern direction.

I walked at least 30 minutes before seeing anyone. Then I spotted three turtle volunteers hard at work. I asked about the plover nesting area and they immediately told me that I had walked in the wrong direction, that the nesting areas were north of the parking lot. I trudged back to where I had begun my beach walk and then headed north. Within minutes I came to a roped area in the dunes with a sign indicating "flightless chicks". An adult Wilson's Plover was within the roped area surveying the beach. I watched for a while and no other plovers were visible. I finally walked further north to the second roped area and was disappointed that no activity was evident. I then walked back south, past the first roped area that I had encountered and the lone adult was still checking things out. Shorebird network volunteers can erect signs and rope around nesting areas but once the chicks hatch the family becomes more mobile and can wander from the "protected" zone. Within seconds, a chick scampered out of the dunes, then another, then another. In all four chicks appeared followed by another adult. The six-pack family headed to the ocean for morning activities. The adults kept a careful eye on the chicks as they flirted with the incoming waves. The chicks would head too far north, or south on the beach only to be quickly herded back to the area where they were being carefully supervised.

Suddenly, another adult plover, I guess from the north roped area, appeared. The two parents immediately and unequivocally made it clear that he was not welcome. The interloper quickly disappeared. After 30 to 40 minutes observing this wonderful family outing, all by myself, the six quickly headed into the dunes and were gone out of sight. What a wonderful experience I had. Nature gives us little shows like this all the time. All we have to do is take the time to look for them.

I look forward to meeting many more of you when our chapter meetings resume in September. Have a safe, happy summer.

Jim O'Shaughnessy

Calendar & Events

While our chapter, like other Audubon chapters, takes its regular summer hiatus from field trips and meetings, other groups find summer a fine time to look for their special interests:

Saturday, July 11th, 9:00 am- Spruce Creek Paddle Join our friends from the Pawpaw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society for a fun outing on one of Florida's Outstanding Waterways. The July field trip will be a paddle along upper Spruce Creek with options afterwards for a tour of the Gamble Place. Participants can also enjoy their picnic lunch at Cracker Creek picnic pavilion. Meet at Cracker Creek, 1795 Taylor Road, Port Orange. Bring your own paddlecraft or rent a canoe or kayak at our departure point, [Cracker Creek](#). Two hour rental rates:

Single kayak - \$24

Double kayaks - \$36

Canoe - \$36;

Single Hydrobike - \$30

Tandem Hydrobike- \$40

After the paddle trip, Cracker Creek's owner will arrange a tour of the historic (late 1800's) Gamble Place and the charming "Snow White Cottage" built in 1938 to entertain young Gamble heirs. Tour fee: Adults \$6; Seniors \$5.

Field Trip Contact: Sonya Guidry

Email- guidry.sonya@gmail.com

Cell: (386) 690-1797

Monday, July 13th, 7:00 pm- The Pawpaw Chapter has their regular monthly meeting at the Piggotte Center, 504 Big Tree Road South Daytona. Kevin Bagwell of Full Moon Natives (& Pawpaw chapter member) will present "Natural and safe solutions for your yard & garden". Doors open 6:30 pm, Program at 7pm, followed by the business meeting.

* * * * *

Saturday, July 20th, 9:00 am, MINWR Butterfly Survey- July may be too hot for much birding but the butterflies are out and about and here's your chance to participate in some citizen science and learn a bit more about these dainty and resilient flyers. Join volunteers & Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge staff in participating in a butterfly survey. No experience necessary. Bring water, snacks & insect repellent and wear closed shoes and long pants. Call 321-861-5601 to make reservations.

* * * * *

Welcome To Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Elaine Bohn, Patricia Lensmeyer, John McNeill, Jennifer Petruccianni, Susan Plimpton and Jeannie Young. We hope to see you in September when our meetings and field trips resume for the new season.

Conservation Notes

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), at its meeting in Sarasota on June 24, 2015, voted to allow bear hunting in the state for the first time in 2+ decades. There have been increasing numbers of incidents between bears and people in neighborhoods over the past 5 years. This is in part due to our having allowed development in areas traditionally used by bears. It's also due to an increase in the number of bears in the state. The rationale put forth by the Commissioners was that opening a hunting season would reduce the excess bear population and reduce the numbers of unwanted incidents between bears and people. If the hunting was to be allowed in the neighborhoods where these incidents have taken place this rationale might have some validity. The idea that allowing bear hunts in Ocala National Forest will reduce these incidents is ludicrous. Reducing the population of bears that feed regularly on the natural foods they normally eat will not encourage bears that have acquired a taste for Oreos and Alpo to relocate. When people continue to roll their garbage laden cans out to the street the night before pickup day, cans that are simple for bears to eat from, the bears will remain in the area. The same goes for leaving dog food accessible. We need to employ a variety of methods for reducing incidents between bears and people in neighborhoods. There are tried and true methods out there but they aren't cheap. To simply slaughter bears in the misguided assumption that once there are fewer bears in the natural areas, the neighborhood bears will relocate is not the answer.

The Legislature has done its foul deeds for the year and gone home. Many of them were openly hostile to Amendment 1 before its passage. When they got to Tallahassee in early March to begin the session, one of the first things they did was to transfer the funding for all state parks and forests from the general fund to Amendment 1. Florida voters did not approve Amendment 1 just to reorganize bookkeeping on conservation spending. Then the Governor, just before signing the budget, used his power of line item veto to eliminate more than \$400 million. Among the vetoes were \$5 million for best management practices to protect springs and \$2.5 million for Regional Planning Councils. If your campaign contributors are just waiting to start bulldozing what's left of the state's environmental lands, you don't want those pesky Planning Councils around to get in the way.

And then there's the new Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Jon Steverson is a 4th generation Floridian but that apparently doesn't translate into a respect for the state's history of caring for its state parks system. Having organized the decimation of the state's 5 water management districts, the Governor thought this guy was perfect to replace his predecessor, Hershel Vineyard. Vineyard's term was remarkable for its scandals, like the firing of the DEP's top wetlands specialist after she refused to sign off on a contested development and an attempt to sell off park properties. One of Steverson's first moves was to order a study called "Optimized Land Management and Cost Recovery". Steverson, told state legislators he wants to make the park system pay for itself. To that end, he said, he wanted to rent out parts of the parks to ranchers to let their cattle graze there, and to timber companies to harvest trees from the forests. His "optimization" plan also calls for opening parks to hunting as a revenue generator. Our state park system has been recognized 3 times, more than any other state park system, for the beauty and excellence of our parks. They attract millions of visitors a year, both from in state and out of state. In my opinion this guy's not fit to hold the office he's been appointed to. Here's a [link](#) to the DEP's Customer Survey. Why not spend a few minutes to let them know what you think of this plan to "optimize" your park experience. You'll be doing the parks and yourself a favor.

David Hartgrove

Audubon Assembly in October

The Audubon Assembly is Florida's premiere conservation event. Join friends - old and new - for two days of informative workshops, exciting guest speakers, and unforgettable field trips. The keynote speaker will be Rafael Galvez, naturalist, artist and founder of the [Florida Keys Hawk Watch](#). One of his illustrations, "Wood Stork: Everglades" appears below. Dates for the



Assembly will be Friday and Saturday, October 23rd & 24th. The host hotel will be the Sheraton Orlando North, in Maitland. We'll have updated information as it becomes available.

* * * * *

Pollinators Program at Tomoka State Park



Bird bander, Meret Wilson, gives a demonstration

photo by Aggie Armstrong

Our chapter was well represented at the Pollinators Program, held at Tomoka State Park on Saturday, June 20th. Meret had her banding station set up outside while Chuck Tague and I held down the fort in the air conditioned meeting hall. Also on hand were bee keeper, Jack Dunlop and the Pawpaw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. One of their members, Paul Rebmann, (also an HRA member) lead a plant walk. Chuck gave presentations on both the importance of pollination and on butterflies. I had our information table set up and was able to answer some bird questions. It was an informative way to spend the last day of Spring.

David Hartgrove

Below is another installment of "Everyday Birding"

from Ray Scory

Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*)

They stay around my house. They are beautiful. Their behavior is energetic and explosive. They remain all year long whether at my home in Connecticut or my present home in Florida. I have observed them at my feeders in the most bitter cold of the year and during the sweltering heat of summer. They are there every day - feeding, colorful, impressive.

Impressive, yes. They are spectacular visitors to my yard and to my feeder. They even like the food I put out for them, which is store bought "no melt" suet cake and black oil sunflower seeds. How can I not like them. When they bring their fledglings to the feeder, it is icing on the cake. A very nice treat.

My description above for this quality bird does not come with color, size, body shape or shape of the bill. However, for me, it describes the Red-bellied Woodpecker. I like tagging some of my favorite birds with personal characterizations so I might reach deeper into my admiration for their unique occurrence in our worldly landscape.

I have heard them called Red-headed Woodpeckers, which is quite understandable. However, the Red-headed Woodpecker's head is completely covered in brilliant red. While the Red-bellied Woodpecker has a strip of fiery red extending from its nape up and over its crown down to its bill. This is the male. With the female, the red does not extend down to the bill. Both male and female have no red on their faces. Their faces are a soft gray/buff color, while the Redheaded Woodpecker's face is entirely colored red.

Watching the adult birds feed seeds to their same size juvenile is eye-stopping. The difference in looks is no more than the gray head of the juvenile versus the red swatch over the adults' head. However their drumming behavior is equally as fascinating. In Florida, when the sound of "rat-a-tat-tat-tat" cascades down my metal capped chimney, I know that the Redbellied Woodpecker's breeding season is about begin. In all its repetitive glory, this behavior will last for one to two weeks. Delightful music it is. At my Connecticut home they had the habit of drumming on the side of my house. Other birders said they have experienced the same pounding on their homes. I have heard it said the woodpeckers are searching for and getting bugs from the wood. In my experience I never found any bugs in the wood. I suspect the birds have found another fun sounding board to usher in a magnificent time of their lives.

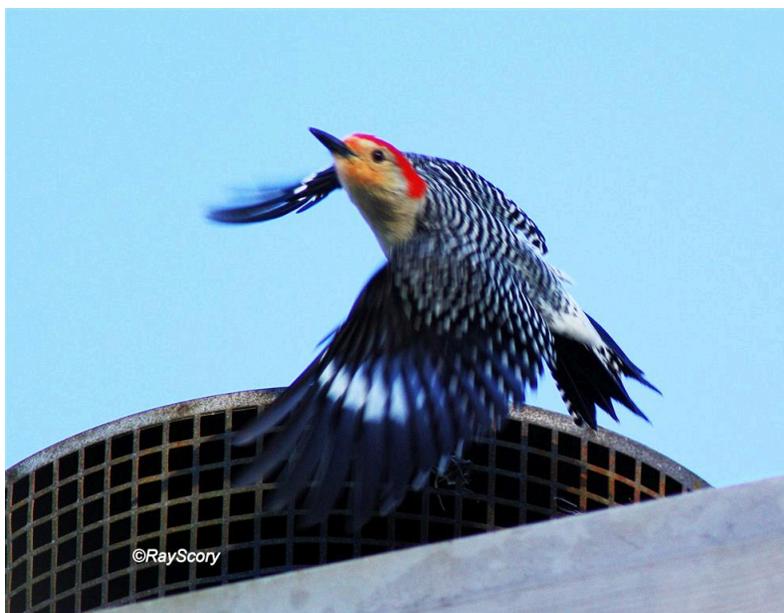
Watching birds is a never ending experience in astonishment. Last week I was working out on the treadmill on the third floor of the cardio rehab unit at Halifax Health. As I looked out the window, I observed a Red-bellied Woodpecker fly up to the window and cling with its zygodactylous feet (two toes pointing forward, two pointing backward) to the corner of the stone block casement. It began to peck away at the stone, remained for sometime and then flew off, leaving me dumfounded. "What was that all about", I thought?

They are called Red-bellied Woodpeckers. But unless they are clinging to glass, you will probably not see the belly, which normally is flat against some opaque structure. However, to see the soft reddish wash located on a sea of soft, buff colored breast feathers again continues the awesome show offered by the Red-bellied Woodpecker.

Ray Scory



Red-bellied Woodpecker on a feeder



Flying away after a drumming session on the chimney

photos by Ray Scory

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Good Things Happening To Good People

Many of you may know Maia McGuire, Florida Sea Grant agent for UF/IFAS Extension in Flagler and St. Johns counties, and the chair of the National Sea Grant Education Network. She has been named the Florida Wildlife Federation's 2015 Conservation Educator of the Year. She has given programs at our chapter meetings, developed course materials for school students and taught high school science for two years. When asked about her experience she said, "As a scientist who has been a classroom teacher, I felt that I could help teachers by providing them with educational resources, based on the marine environment, that addressed science standards along with standards for reading, writing and math," she said. "The feedback that I have received from teachers has been that I have achieved this goal. The students enjoy learning about 'charismatic megafauna' like manatees or whales, and they are eager to complete the lessons even if they require reading, writing, math or science skills." We send our congratulations to Maia for receiving an award so richly deserved.

Ed.

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 For information on upcoming field trips, etc.

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The Pelican

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

Volume 61-No.2 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
August, 2015



The President's Message

Thought and concepts

Maybe it's because I was born in New York City, or the fact that I'm currently staying in upstate New York or maybe because I'm a long time Audubon supporter, in any case I was recently drawn to a New York Times article entitled, "Wild in the Streets". You may be surprised that there is anything natural remaining in 21st-century New York City. Surely, you'd think, what the earliest Americans didn't hunt to extinction, European settlers would have finished off. After all, we are talking of a city of some eight and a half million inhabitants that was founded almost 400 years ago. In spite of this, a natural world is drifting alongside, burrowing beneath and flying above our nations most populated city. Five birds that we are familiar with in Florida are described in this article. Before revealing them, let me mention some other creatures that abound in this most unlikely environment.

Ctenophores are non stinging jellyfish like animals. By night, many species are wondrously bioluminescent. One of the more common is the Leidy's comb jelly, found along shorelines particularly in Jamaica Bay. About the size of a lime, they spend their lives adrift among plankton. At night when they are abundant and light up, a walk along the shore may seem like a hike among the stars. By day they are easy to capture in a jar. They have an ethereal, ghostly appearance, their only color is the rainbow refracted as they navigate through the water.

Katydid are usually heard, not seen. Well camouflaged, these insects are best located by their distinctive chorus. They reside in all five boroughs. The American Leech is an excellent swimmer and is often found in muddy-bottom freshwater ponds. The Virginia Opossum is found in several New York City parks. They are the only marsupial found in North America and famous for playing dead when frightened. They feast on the ticks that carry Lyme disease. The Southern Black Widow Spider is one of the cities rare venomous animals. It is the female that bears the red hourglass on her abdomen. Coal black and a little less than an inch long, her bite is rarely deadly, though it is certainly worth avoiding. The spider's venom is estimated to be 15 times more toxic than a rattlesnake's! This spider is often found in vacant lots. The Diamondback Terrapin are the only turtles that live exclusively in brackish waters. They are found in Jamaica Bay and along the shorelines of Brooklyn and Queens. I found it interesting that the male terrapin never returns to land after hatching. Females though face danger as they cross roads, and hopefully avoid predators as they venture to sandy nest sites. Their numbers have sadly diminished over the years. Other creatures inhabiting the city include fireflies, coyotes, moths and in summer months Finback Whales are often seen in New York harbor and off the beaches of the Rockaways.

Continued below on page 2

Calendar & Events

While our chapter, like other Audubon chapters, takes its regular summer hiatus from field trips and meetings, other groups find summer a fine time to look for their special interests:

Monday, Aug. 10th, 7:00 pm- The Paw Paw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society will hold their monthly meeting at the Piggott Community Center, 504 Big Tree Rd. South Daytona, FL. Jay Thurrott will be speaking to the Pawpaw Chapter on Native Bromeliads and the threat posed to them by the Mexican weevil. Doors open 6:30 pm, program at 7pm, followed by refreshments & business meeting.

Sunday, Aug. 16th, 8:00 am- Join our friends from West Volusia Audubon Society for a field trip to [Audubon Park](#), in Deltona. The park is located at the corner of Doyle Road and Lush Lane. Meet the group at the park entrance. For information, call Harry Robinson, 386-801-4472.

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Cuban Parrot, *photo by Kirsten Snyder*

Just one of the birds featured in the presentation on our chapter's trip to Cuba last December. It'll be shown at our next meeting on September 21st. We hope to see you there.

Now to the birds. The Barn Owl can be found in all five boroughs. Sometimes called the monkey-faced owl, these nocturnal birds eat rats and other rodents. They do not hoot and have an unusual rasping voice. The many bridges of the city offer ideal roosts for the Peregrine Falcon. These incredibly fast birds will attack pigeons and ducks but specialize in hunting shorebirds and follow migrations along the Atlantic flyway through New York City in midsummer. The Snowy Egret can be found in the summer in the waters throughout the city. These easily identified wading birds were almost hunted to extinction to supply feathers for elaborate hats. They hunt fish, frogs and invertebrates generally near shallow waters. The Black Crowned Night Heron can be found through the city and can be identified by their loud quack as they fly. These birds have broad tastes eating fish, small mammals, snakes, insects and just about anything that moves. Lastly, the Black Skimmer can be seen along the shorelines of Staten Island, Brooklyn and Queens. This long winged coastal bird is the only bird to have a lower mandible longer than the upper and is exciting to watch as it hunts skimming along the water with its long lower bill tracking a fine line through the shallows.

When I am fortunate enough to see these birds in our Florida waters this coming winter I plan to ask if they visited New York City before heading south. I hope you're all enjoying your summer. I look forward to seeing you in September.

Jim O'Shaughnessy

* * * * *

Video Links For Your Viewing Pleasure

Each of these linked videos is fairly short and very interesting.

Endangered Woodpecker Gets A Helping Hand

If you're thinking to yourself that you've seen this headline before, you're right. It ran above a story in our April issue earlier this year. Now it's time for an update. Titusville photographer, Danny Bales, first noticed the bird's injury and alerted the folks at the St Johns River Water Management District. This [link](#) will tell you the rest of the story.

Big Changes In Yellowstone

When wolves were reintroduced into Yellowstone National Park in 1995 everyone expected to see changes. No one predicted this much positive change. See the story [here](#).

Birds Of Prey In High Resolution

Here's a short [video](#) that can also be a good chance to brush up on your raptor identification skills.

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You're Invited To The Audubon Assembly

It's that time of year again! The 2015 Audubon Assembly will be held on October 23-24 (Friday-Saturday) in conveniently located Maitland, Florida - just 10 minutes north of downtown Orlando. [And you are invited to attend!](#) The theme for this year's Assembly is "Parks: The Heart of Natural Florida." Audubon Assembly attendees will participate in interesting workshops with leading guest speakers, join local Audubon chapter leaders for field trips to their special places.

The host hotel is the Sheraton Orlando North. You must book your hotel room separately. Click [here](#) to reserve online or call 1-407-660-9000 (mention you are with Florida Audubon) and book by October 1, 2015 to reserve your room. Group rate is \$109 a night. We hope to see you there!

Our state's much beloved park system is under attack. In last month's issue of the Pelican I wrote that DEP Secretary, Jon Stevenson, had ordered a study of something he called "Optimized Land Management and Cost Recovery". Under this innocuous sounding plan areas of our state parks would be opened to cattle grazing, timber sales and hunting. What this boils down to is renting out parts of our park system to private operators. Private cattle ranchers have already been invited to meetings with state officials on how and where to run cattle on Payne's Prairie Preserve State Park, as well as Myakka River State Park. Alachua Audubon Board member, Rex Rowan, had this to say, "Forbidding certain sectors of publicly-owned land to the general public, while allowing a small subset of the public to use those sectors for individual profit, is not what the State Parks were created for, but it seems to be what the current administration has in mind."

Jim Stevenson, the retired Chief Naturalist of the State Park system, has written about the plans Governor Scott and his staff of slash and burn thugs have for our beloved parks. Hershel Vinyard, the former DEP Secretary, told his deputy secretary that he wanted to privatize the entire state park system. The deputy advised against it, knowing there would be a huge public outcry. So this devious bunch of weasels set about wrecking the system in the following ways. First, exploit the natural resources through hunting, cattle grazing and timbering which will require "private" contractors and further crush morale of the Park Service staff. Next, starve the parks by eliminating more staff and funding each year including professional biologists and education staff. DEP has recommended cutting 209 Park Service positions during the Scott administration. Instead, the Legislature cut 78 positions. In the absence of adequate staff and funding, the parks won't be able to get their job done. Then Gov. Scott will increase "Free Days", which reduces revenue while park managers are struggling to increase revenue. This will cause the parks' facilities and resources to deteriorate and the politicians (some of whom are in this plan up to their beady little eyeballs) will criticize the poor management. Since the Park Service will not be able to maintain the resources, DEP is justified to "privatize" the state park system. The weasels get what they wanted all along.

This is wrong on so many levels. Unfortunately, there are people out there who see undeveloped spaces, like parks, refuges, etc. as just so much wasted opportunity for a fast buck. Birds, wildlife, fragile ecosystems, to these folks it's just so much fodder to be plowed under by the sharp steel blades of "progress" and profit. Even more unfortunate, a number of these people have managed to insert themselves into positions of power. And if we sit back and allow their plans to proceed we won't be able to hold our heads up. Imagine, it'll no longer be Tomoka State Park. It might be "Tomoka State Park, Sponsored by Budweiser". Chief Tomokie's statue will be razed in order to install a water slide. Gone will be the tasteful signs pointing to the picnic areas. They'll be replaced with neon signs pointing to the new beer hall and grill since there's not enough money in offering picnic facilities. It's too hard to charge people for the pleasure of watching a quiet sunset across a marsh. So of course there'll be an arcade filled with flashing lights and the annoying sounds of all those games kids can stuff quarters into.

You might think I'm exaggerating the implications of this evil plan. I can only say that this is the most serious challenge I've seen yet to the places and ideals I and the members of our group hold dear. Write or call the Governor's office, our state legislators and the Cabinet members. These people have further political ambitions and if we put enough heat on them they'll have to back off these plans to wreck our parks. We owe it to our offspring to give them a better world than we're on course to hand them now.

David Hartgrove

Anis Show Up At Loxahatchee NWR

A pair of Smooth-billed Anis has been hanging around down in Palm Beach County at Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. Their presence has created quite a stir in Florida birding circles. Once more common in Florida, they've become quite rare here. After our experience with the one that showed up at Lake Apopka last year, I thought we'd all like a little more information.

Mention an Ani, and most people aren't familiar with that species of bird. I've described them to non-birding friends as a cross between a raven and a cuckoo. Kenn Kaufman's "Lives of North American Birds" adds the puffin's bill into the "looks like" mix. Both the Grove-billed and the Smooth-billed Ani are stocky black birds, like Ravens, although much smaller. The Groove-billed Ani weighs about 3 ounces and averages 13.5 inches with a 17-inch wingspan. The Smooth-billed Ani is only one inch larger and weighs about 3.5 ounces while a Common Raven weighs in at 2.5 pounds with a 53-inch wingspan. Both Anis have long tails and an upright stance on the branch, like Cuckoos. Both species are relatively shy birds preferring to sit deep in the brush. They often look disheveled, with drooping wings and spread-out tail feathers. And, of course, their bill is large with a big hump, like some puffins. See additional photos and read [more...](#)

Paula Wehr



Smooth-billed Ani, *photo by Kirsten Snyder*

* * * * *

Welcome To Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our two new members this month: Vickki Hicks and Leslie Kolleda. We hope to see you in September when our meetings and field trips resume for the new season.

Kites In The Air



Swallow-tailed Kite pair, *photo by Robert Wilson*

Our own digiscoping wizard, Robert Wilson, has been at it again and sends this image shot last year. Swallow-tailed Kites have a wide ranging palate that obviously includes amphibians. By now they've finished nesting for the year and nightly gather in large, communal roosts. The largest in our area is on the northwest side of Lake Woodruff NWR. It may have as many as a thousand birds and is accessible only by boat. Each morning they wait for the sun to dry their wings from the previous night's dew and to begin to warm the land, creating updrafts. Then they lift off and fly west looking for food. Many can be found lazily coursing over the Lake Apopka North Shore Restoration Area swooping down to feast on the wing on dragonflies they catch in mid-flight. Others gather over melon fields in Sumpter County to feast on stink bugs. By early September they'll be gone. They winter in western Brazil and will again grace our skies in February when they return to start the cycle all over again.

Now we learn that several of these roosts are imperiled and this does not bode well for the birds. Even though the roost at Lake Woodruff is difficult to access, that hasn't prevented a growing number of people from going out for a visit. If they maintain a respectful distance and remain quiet, their visits do no harm. After all, fishermen have been running boats past the roost for years with no effect. Dr. Ken Meyer, Director of the Avian Research and Conservation Institute and the recognized authority on the birds, reports that, "there are concessions and entrepreneurs providing rental boats and guided tours." This new activity has the potential for serious harm. Most birders and photographers are respectful of the birds and their need for rest and down time. However there are a few who won't be satisfied with seeing birds at rest. They have a limited amount of time and they want to maximize their opportunity. So they may approach too close or cause the birds to flush in order to get that "special" in flight shot.

Dr. Meyer says that Lake Woodruff is one of the three largest roosts his group monitors and these three roosts contain 81% of all of the Swallow-tailed Kites nesting in North America. Causing these birds to flush robs them of vital energy needed for the 5,000 mile migration they're about to undertake. To make matters worse, the even bigger roost down in Glades County at Fisheating Creek has experienced a loss of half its cypress trees. The cause is unknown but the effect will be less room for roosting kites. Another large roost on private land was emptied of birds by low flying helicopters. It would be nice if the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission could monitor these sites. However, with the current administration in place, that's not a possibility. We're in danger of loving these birds to death. We need to police ourselves.

David Hartgrove

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The Pelican

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

Volume 61-No.3 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
September, 2015



The President's Message

Thought and concepts

In this article, and the one in next month's Pelican, I'd like to tell you about a book that I just finished and found so educational and interesting. It is "GIFTS OF THE CROW, How Perception, Emotion and Thought Allow Smart Birds to Behave Like Humans", written by John Marzluff, a Professor of Wildlife Science at the University of Washington and Tony Angell. It is a wonderful blend of science, neuroscience and anecdote. I was amazed by these birds' intelligence and their relationship with humans. There are numerous awe-inspiring, and poignant stories that portray these creatures as nothing short of amazing.

The authors devote a portion of the book to describing, in gruesome detail, how the brain functions. For those with a knowledge of, or a particular interest in the complexities of the brain, this portion of the book may be of interest. I have very little formal science background and am easily overwhelmed by the technical aspects and terminology used by those scientifically inclined. I present the following several sentences, verbatim, to demonstrate why I will omit the brain analysis/explanation of the book: "The euphoria that crows and we humans feel when playing comes from opioids binding to the complex synapses of the nucleus accumbens. The more the animal plays, the more opioid reward it receives. Some of the endorphines bind to the midbrain, increasing the release of dopamine to the nucleus accumbent." Got it!

Corvids (ornithologists group crows, ravens and jays into this group) assume characteristics once ascribed only to humans, including insight, innovation self-recognition, revenge, tool use, deceit, murder, language, play, risk taking and social learning. As the author states, we are different only by degree. The remainder of this review will amplify and provide examples of each of these characteristics.

A dog owner was aroused by his dog making a ruckus. He quickly discovered that a crow on a nearby branch was calling, loud and clear, "Here boy, here boy." The owner approached the crow and the bird cycled through a series of well-rehearsed phrases. The crow then spent several weeks on a nearby college campus attracting dogs of every breed, size and shape. The crow seemed to lecture the pack of mutts. When students were going from one class to another the crow took off low, only a few feet above the ground, with its crowd of canines in noisy pursuit. In and out, the crow led the pack of dogs through the students, creating confusion, wonder and collision. When the students got to their classes the crow and dog show ended and the crow resumed lecturing from a low branch its rapt class of dogs.

Next month I'll complete this tale with more examples of the wisdom and mischief of crows. I hope to see you at our meeting on September 21st.

Jim O'Shaughnessy

Calendar & Events

Monday, Sept. 21st, Program meeting, "Birding Cuba". For our first meeting after the summer hiatus, David Hartgrove will present a program on our chapter's trip to Cuba last December. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. A brief business meeting follows.

Saturday, Sept. 19th, Natural History Day at the Museum. Come out from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. Our chapter will participate in this event at the Museum of Arts & Sciences, 352 S. Nova Road in Daytona Beach. In addition to our table and those of other groups, there'll be fossil hunting programs, shark researcher, Professor George Burgess, will speak about sharks and their interactions with us and Dr. Maia McGuire will speak about invasive coastal species. Free for members or with paid admission.

Friday & Saturday, Oct. 23rd & 24th, Audubon Assembly. This is the annual main event for Audubon Florida. This year it will be held nearby in Maitland. Click on this [link](#) to get all of the info and hotel reservations if needed. The theme of this Assembly will be "Parks, The Heart of Natural Florida". The keynote speaker will be Rafael Galvez, founder of the Florida Keys Hawk Watch. There's a whole list of great field trips, the Friday night awards banquet and a great opportunity to meet other Audubon members from around Florida.

Field Trips

Wednesday, Sept. 23rd, A1A Run. Join David Hartgrove as we kick off our new season of field trips with this fun trip to look for warblers and shorebirds. Meet at 8:00 am at Washington Oaks Gardens State Park, 6400 N. Oceanshore Blvd., in Palm Coast. We'll spend the cool hours of the morning looking for warblers and forest birds there and head north to Matanzas Inlet in time for low tide and the wealth of shorebirds there. Bring lunch. Questions, call David at 386-235-1249. There is a fee for park entrance.

Friday, Oct. 2nd, Buschman Park Warblers. Join Becky Tate as we look for migrant fall warblers in this excellent warbler location. We'll meet at the park, 4575 Spruce Creek Rd, Port Orange, at 8:00 am. Since we should be finished by 11:00 am, no need to bring lunch on this trip. Questions, call Becky at 386-451-2436.

* * * * *

Welcome To Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Russell Bonner, Llia Dijan, Charles Lammers, Elise Leroux, Barbara Malkus, Sarah Otsby, Keith Parsons, Larry Petrie, Sharon & John Phelps, Harry Ruppenthal, Alice Sala, Gerald Spies, Eleanor Vantassel and Phyllis Wys. We hope to see you soon at a meeting or one of our excellent field trips. Welcome aboard!

Conservation Notes

Earlier this year, in April, a report of a massive abandonment of nests on Seahorse Key set off all kinds of wild speculation as to potential causes. Accusations of drunken hunters shooting the birds, low flying Navy jets, mysterious spray planes and other unfounded rumors swept across the Internet and newspapers. Once again we can thank the cool head and clear thoughts of Alachua Audubon board member, Rex Rowan, for providing some insights into just what did happen. Rex has a blog that appears in the online version of the [Gainesville Sun](#) and last month he reported the findings of several who researched the incident.

Vic Doig is the USF&WS biologist with the Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge. He first discovered the missing birds. Last year there were between 3,000 and 5,000 White Ibis nests along with slightly smaller numbers of Double-crested Cormorants, Snowy and Great Egrets, Brown Pelicans and assorted herons. There were also a few very special nests, Roseate Spoonbills and Reddish Egrets have recently expanded their nesting range to Seahorse Key. In total, between 6,000 and 11,000 nests were suddenly vacated with eggs still in them. The only birds left on the island were Ospreys on several platforms.

On April 25th, Dr. Peter Frederick, a research professor in the University of Florida's Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, spent the day investigating the disappearance of the birds by walking over the island. He thought he'd eliminated a number of possible causes: raccoons, lack of food, bad weather, eagles, chemical poisoning or disease, and humans. He felt that raccoons weren't the cause because he found almost no signs of the type of damage they leave behind. Since Fish Crows aren't capable of dislodging nesting sea birds and waders from their nests, avian predation seemed to be limited to the scavenging of abandoned eggs. There was no evidence at all to support the other possible causes. Seahorse Key was home to some 600 Florida Cottonmouth Moccasins and they have been studied by UF students for decades. They posed little risk to the nesting birds though because even though they can climb trees, they almost never do due to their bulky size. They feed mainly on fish dropped from the nests. Their presence helped discourage raccoons in much the same way as the alligators at the Alligator Farm in St Augustine. Since the birds have left, the snake population has plummeted.

Dr. Coleman Sheehy, also of UF's Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation and Seahorse Key facilities manager, Capt. Kenny McCain, decided to have a second look in early July and found a surprise. Having found numerous raccoon tracks, they set out traps and quickly caught 7 raccoons. These were not the scrawny, evil tempered raccoons researchers usually find in the wild. These were fat, obviously well fed and fairly docile when the trappers approached the traps. These appeared to be someone's pets or at least raccoons that had become accustomed to feeding on cat food and garbage in a neighborhood. It appeared that these raccoons had been trapped and relocated to the island by some well meaning neighbor unaware of the chain of events he or she was about to unleash on this thriving bird rookery. This depends on when the raccoons were set loose on the island. Dr. Frederick sticks by his assertion that when he arrived on the island just after the birds disappeared he found evidence of only one raccoon and little or no evidence that it was a cause of the abandonment.

We may never know the real cause of this mysterious event. Many of the birds have relocated to Snake Key 1.5 miles away and by now nesting season is coming to a close. Will they return to Seahorse Key next spring? We'll have to wait and see. It's a mystery that's had bird people scratching their heads all summer.

David Hartgrove

A Report From [Bird Studies Canada](#)



Gray-cheeked Thrush, *photo by Nick Saunders*

In the last edition of our e-news, we reported on five thrushes tracked from Colombia to Texas, Saskatchewan, and Ontario by researchers using the [Motus Wildlife Tracking System](#). (For details, see our July 15 news story [Secrets of Bird Movements Revealed](#).)

Since our last announcement, we've received data showing that an additional 14 birds tagged in Colombia by [SELVA](#) passed through Indiana and Ohio on their northbound spring migration. These birds were detected by Motus stations operated by researchers from Texas Tech University and Southern Illinois University, with support from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

The research continues to yield amazing results. One of the newly detected Gray-cheeked Thrushes travelled almost 2,000 miles from Colombia to Indiana in just 3.3 days, meaning it flew an average of 611 miles a day!

In total, 19 of 67 thrushes tagged this season in Colombia have been detected so far: 14 Gray-cheeked Thrushes and 5 Swainson's Thrushes. Visit our updated [animated map](#) to view the birds' journeys.

* * * * *

Flagler Audubon and ECVF To The Rescue

The Environmental Council of Volusia & Flagler Counties is an umbrella organization with members from all 4 Audubon chapters, Sierra, Native Plant Society and others. We try to address growth management issues and keep an eye on local government actions through monthly meetings.

Princess Place, in Flagler County, is a treasured environmental gem that we've gone to for a number of field trips over the years. So when news leaked several weeks ago that this fragile site was to be the host of something called the Spartan Race, we thought we'd better investigate. This is a national program, underwritten by Reebok, that involves running, an obstacle course with mud pits and fire and often as many as a thousand entrants. The thought that portions of Princess Place would be turned into a mud pit and a parking area for competitors and spectators set off alarm bells in all corners except where they should have sounded, the Flagler County Administration. With government's usual booster mentality, they thought it sounded great. Once Flagler County Commissioners started hearing from their constituents, in the form of emails and calls from Flagler Audubon and ECVF members, they helped put the brakes on this bad idea before it went any further. County Administrator, Craig Coffey sent out a press release canceling the event until a new venue can be found.

It's time again for another in our series, "Everyday Birding."

Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*)

Years and years have I walked past my backyard kitchen window. Always glancing out at my solitary bird feeder not more than ten feet from the house. Never expecting much, but sometimes seeing natural wonders of avian behavior and colorful dress, a squabble between a Brown Thrasher and a Mourning Dove, the brilliant red splash of the Northern Cardinal or the electric blue and intricate pattern on Blue Jay's feathers, sustain my interest. Countless bird watching pleasures take place on a single poled bird feeder in my backyard, close to the house for the past fifteen years. Years of magnetic treats.

One late Spring day I walked the property of our newly acquired Florida home and observed a light green flash in a thick saw palmetto patch. Closer, intense searching revealed a female Painted Bunting. Wow! I'm going to have Painted Buntings coming to the yard. What a gift. Up goes a bird feed pole close to my house and I excitedly waited. But the onrush of Painted Buntings never happened.

Then, fourteen years later, in February 2014, a female Painted Bunting appeared at my newly designed bird feeding pole and exclusively attached herself to the tube feeder for the next 3 and a half months. One day, I did observe her chasing another female from the feeder. I only observed this behavior once, and I never observed any other Painted Buntings coming to the feeder. I use a wild bird seed called "Finches Supreme" which contains a healthy mix of small seeds, favorites being red and white millet and generous portions of sunflower chips and Nyjer seed. Other songbirds regularly used this feeder.

The Painted Bunting is a small songbird measuring five and one half inches long with a wing span between eight and one half and nine inches. However, the color impact of this male bird is explosive. A greenish yellow back cape slams up into a pure blue head. The wings are dark with green shoulder patches. This unusual combination defies imagination yet it works because it is supported by brilliant red under parts and a red rump. Finishing off this breathtaking color composition is an outstanding full red eye ring. The female has greenish upper parts with lighter yellow greenish underparts and darker wings. Certainly an outstandingly quiet composition of greenish yellow coloration.



Male Painted Bunting, *photo by Ray Scory*



Female Painted Bunting, *photo by Ray Scory*

In the USA the bird winters in southern Florida migrating up through central and northern Florida into coastal Georgia and South and North Carolina for the summer. Sporadically appearing throughout the USA, it summers in the Texas region. From my experience and talking with neighbors from the Daytona Beach and Port Orange, Florida region, the Painted Bunting can best be observed here from late Winter to late Spring.

Birds are colorful - from the subtle brown ones to the explosive reds. All in their own way offer rich visual rewards. However, I am honored to have seen the Painted Bunting here in Florida.

Ray Scory

* * * * *

Changing The Name & The Mission

Florida's Water & Land Legacy was the name of the grassroots group that put together the hugely successful campaign to put Amendment 1 on the ballot last November. 75% of Florida's voters voted to approve the amendment. The Legislature then thumbed their collective noses at all of us when they set about wrecking the implementation of the amendment.

It would be easy to sit back and say, "What else do you expect from this bunch of corporate hacks?" And then chalk it up to another of those things we can't do much about. As Floridians though it's our responsibility to protect our water, land, and wildlife for now and for future generations. The decisions our elected officials make -- protecting irreplaceable treasures like our springs and the Everglades, funding state parks, advancing clean energy policies -- impact our families, our businesses, and this beautiful state we call home.

That's why Florida's Water and Land Legacy is now Florida Conservation Voters and will serve as the political arm for Florida's conservation community. Our goal is to elect the best public officials who will enact sound policies that ensure our cherished, yet vulnerable, natural lands and water are protected.

We aim to become the state's leading non-partisan political voice for protecting Florida's environment. We will elect, educate, and hold elected officials accountable for their environmental and conservation policy votes. We will work to ensure that lawmakers make our springs, parks, rivers, wildlife, iconic treasures like the Everglades, and clean energy a priority. Are you a Florida Conservation Voter? Become a member at bit.ly/launch0815 We need your help.

From the FCV website

If you wish you can print this page for a handy reference guide.

HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE 2015-2016

David Hartgrove - 386-788-2630 (h); 386-235-1249 (c)

Peggy Yokubonus: 386-673-7619 (h); 386-316-4085 (c)

Date	Time	Meet At	Trip	Level	Lunch	Leader	Tel #
Wed, Sep 23	8:00 AM	WO	A1A Run - North	2	Y	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Fri, Oct 2	8:00 AM	BP	Buschman Park - Warblers	2	N	Becky Tate	386-451-2436
Sun, Oct 11	3:00 PM	Bridge	Dunlawton Bridge	1	N	Ray Scory	386-763-4260
Wed, Oct 21	7:30 AM	KRY	Audubon Park, Deltona	2	Y	Paula Wehr	386-299-6651
Fri, Nov 13	7:30 AM	CHK	Ocala Forest & Rodman Dam	3	Y	John Roessler	386-212-6957
Fri, Nov 20	7:30 AM	KRY	Apopka Wildlife Drive	1	Y	Paula Wehr	386-299-6651
Wed, Dec 9	3:00 PM	FR	Gull Watch	2	N	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Sun, Dec 13	3:00 PM	Bridge	Dunlawton Bridge	1	N	Ray Scory	386-763-4260
Wed, Dec 16	7:30 AM	TAR	Black Point Drive, Merritt Island	1	Y	Paula Wehr	386-299-6651
Fri, Jan 8	7:30 AM	TAR	Merritt Island NWR	1	Y	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085
Sat, Jan 9	7:30 AM	TAR	Merritt Island NWR	1	Y	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Fri, Jan 15	7:30 AM	TAR	Viera Wetlands	1	Y	John Roessler	386-212-6957
TBD			Circle B Bar/Lake Hancock #			Betty Butcher	386-310-8039
Wed, Feb 3	4:00 PM	FR	Gull Watch	2	N	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Fri, Feb 5	7:30 AM	TAR	Orlando Wetlands	3	Y	Bob North	352-302-3510
Wed, Feb 17	7:30 AM	TAR	Merritt Island NWR	1	Y	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085
Fri, Feb 26	7:30 AM	KRY	Apopka Wildlife Drive	1	Y	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085
Fri, Mar 4	8:00 AM	WO	A1A Run - North	2	Y	Paula Wehr	386-299-6651
Fri, Mar 18	7:30 AM	CHK	Ocala Forest & Rodman Dam	3	Y	John Roessler	386-212-6957
Wed, Apr 6	8:00 AM	KRY	Tiger Bay State Forest	2	Y	Ray Scory	386-763-4260
Wed-Fri, Apr 13-15	TBD		Overnight trip to Fort DeSoto, Pinellas County #	2		David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Fri, May 13	7:30 AM	KRY	Dora Canal Boat Trip, Leesburg #	1	Y	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249

IMPORTANT: Call leader or check website, www.halifaxriveras.org, before trip to confirm details.

Meeting Places

- BP - Buschman Park - 4575 Spruce Creek Rd, Port Orange
- Bridge - Port Orange Causeway Park under Dunlawton Bridge
- CHK - Ormond Town Square - Granada & Williamson Blvds behind Chick-fil-A
- FR - Frank Rendon Park - 2705 S Atlantic Ave, Daytona Beach Shores
- KRY - Int'l Square - East of I-95 on Int'l Speedway Blvd behind Krystal
- TAR - Target East of I-95 on Dunlawton Ave behind Panera's
- WO - Washington Oaks State Park, 6400 N Oceanshore Blvd, Palm Coast - park fee or pass

Trip Rating

- 1 - Easy or little walking
- 2 - Walking ~ 1 mile - flat terrain
- 2 - Walking 1+ mile and/or uneven terrain

Remember equipment: Hat, sunscreen, bug spray, sturdy walking shoes, drinking water and snacks as needed

trip requires reservations. Circle B Bar & Fort DeSoto are out of town, overnight trips that involve staying in a motel with a block of reserved rooms.

For Fort DeSoto trip we will stay in a La Quinta Inn in St. Petersburg located 30 minutes from the park. We'll drive over on Wed., 4/13, and rendezvous at the big flag in the park at 2:00 p.m. Those wishing to can bird the park until 5:00 p.m. Then we'll drive to the motel and check in. Dinner is on your own that night. Thursday, 4/14, we'll leave the motel at 8:00 a.m. and drive to the park. We'll try to have box lunches delivered to the park. Dinner on Thursday night is at Billy's Stone Crab Restaurant in Tierra Verde. We'll return to the motel by 8:00 p.m. On Friday morning, April 15, we'll leave for home at 8:30 a.m. Those wishing to can stop at the Circle B Bar in Lakeland on the way home.

The Circle B Bar trip is still in the planning stage since we're waiting to hear about our on site guide's availability.

The Dora Canal trip will be on a pontoon boat. Arrangements will be made later. The trip lasts 2 hours and costs \$27 per person. This is one of the most reliable spots in Florida for Prothonotary Warbler as well as a number of other good birds. We can have lunch at the launch site or at a nearby park.

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 For information on upcoming field trips, etc.

Contact Our Board Members

Office	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
President	Jim O'Shaughnessy	386-253-0335	jebk75@gmail.com
Vice President	David Hartgrove	386-788-2630	birdman9@earthlink.net
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At Large 2018	Holly Zwart-Duryea	386-672-8788	hollis1000@aol.com
At Large 2016	Deborah Green	407-625-1390	greenmermaid55@att.net
At Large 2016	Dan Gribbin	386-760-8226	bluzeman1@hotmail.com
At Large 2018	Celine Sullivan	386-257-1980	Celinesul@aol.com

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Committee	Name	Home Phone	E-Mail
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The Pelican

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

Volume 61-No.4 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
October, 2015



The President's Message

Thoughts and concepts

We continue this month with the second half of my review of the book, "GIFTS OF THE CROW, How Perception, Emotion and Thought Allow Smart Birds to Behave Like Humans" written by John Marzluff, a Professor of Wildlife Science at the University of Washington.

There are numerous examples of crows speaking clearly and with purpose. Other corvids, magpies and ravens, have been known to speak and give commands. Research indicates that all of these talking corvids were pets and had spent years around humans. Their learning required revisiting and refining of memories. Learning to imitate human speech is certainly an advanced cognitive trick that points to an important parallel between corvids and humans.

Using creative and innovative methods to get a meal has been documented numerous times. Crows relish roadkill and use our cars to their advantage. The author has observed formations of crows continually diving over a flock of doves and forcing the flock into high-speed traffic where some of the doves will be killed. The crows then harvest the roadkill. Crows have been known to force squirrels into traffic where the squirrel is then struck by an oncoming car. The crow waits for traffic to clear and then dines on fresh squirrel. Corvids have been known to chase unsuspecting robins into windows. The stunned or dead birds are quickly retrieved and eaten. Crows use bait to catch a meal. Crows have distracted dogs who are eating their meal by dropping items away from the food bowl. The distracted dogs investigate the dropped item and the crow moves in to dine on the abandoned food bowl. Ravens have been known to pull on a dog's tail while the canine is dining. The dog leaves the food bowl in favor of a chase and the raven quickly circles back to the bowl as the hapless dog gives fruitless chase. Numerous other examples of creative and innovative behavior abound. This behavior demonstrates corvids's ability to reason, plan and anticipate outcomes. Crows are clearly clever problem solvers, routinely making associations and using insight to succeed in whatever their mission.

Much to my surprise I learned that corvids enjoy playing. Ravens have been frequently observed taking advantage of strong winds and updrafts. They dive, dip, chase, roll, tumble, somersault and seem to shout as they ride the wind. The stronger the wind to more they appear to enjoy themselves. Numerous stories of ravens careening down slippery slopes have been reported and photographed. They slide headfirst on their bellies or roll sideways like kids in a barrel. When the ride comes to an end, they lope up the slope and repeat the fun. In Russia, crows have been filmed using plastic lids as sleds to slide down steep roofs.

Continued on the following page

Calendar & Events

Monday, October 19th, Program Meeting, "My FL Birds + 3".

Join us for this presentation on local birds by Ray Scory. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. A brief business meeting follows.

Saturday, October 10th, Marine Discovery Center Open House

This free event is an opportunity for the Marine Discovery Center to give back to the community which helps support it throughout the year. Games for the kids, fun for all. Hours are 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. The MDC is located at 520 Barracuda Blvd. New Smyrna Beach.

Friday & Saturday, Oct. 23rd & 24th, Audubon Assembly. This is the annual main event for Audubon Florida. This year it will be held nearby in Maitland. Click on this [link](#) to get all of the info and hotel reservations if needed. The theme of this Assembly will be "Parks, The Heart of Natural Florida". The keynote speaker will be Rafael Galvez, founder of the [Florida Keys Hawk Watch](#). There's a whole list of great field trips, the Friday night awards banquet and a great opportunity to meet other Audubon members from around Florida.

Field Trips

Friday, October 2nd, Buschman Park Warblers. Join Becky Tate on a search for migrating warblers and other birds seen in this spot on our hot spots list. Meet at the park, 4575 Spruce Creek Road, Port Orange, at 8:00 am. We'll be through by 11:00 am so lunch is optional. Questions? Call Becky at 386-451-2436.

Sunday, October 11th, Dunlawton Bridge. Join Ray Scory at one of his favorite local birding spots. We'll be looking for migrating shorebirds, gulls, etc. Meet at 3:00 pm under the west side of the bridge. Questions? Call Ray at 386-763-4260.

Wednesday, October 21st, Audubon Park, Deltona. Join Paula Wehr on a trip to the west side of the county to again look for Fall migrants and other things of interest. Meet at Int'l Square - East of I-95 on Int'l Speedway Blvd behind Krystal Restaurant at 7:30 am. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Paula at 386-299-6651

Field Trips With Others

Saturday, October 10th, Buschman Park & Dunlawton Bridge.

Join our friends from Southeast Volusia Audubon Society on a trip that combines both warbler and shorebird opportunities. Rather than driving south to their meeting spot you can meet them at the park, 4575 Spruce Creek Road at 8:00 am. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Dick Domroski at 386-453-1211.

Thursday, October 22nd, Gemini Springs. Join our friends from West Volusia Audubon Society on a trip to look for Fall migrants in this gem of the County's park system. Meet the group at Lake Monroe Park, 975 S. Charles Richard Beall Blvd., DeBary at 8:15 am. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Eli Schaperow, 407-314-7965.

Conservation Notes

Others use their bodies to slide down the cupolas of Russian Orthodox churches. Ravens also engage in tug of war games using twigs, pieces of food or a bone. One entices another to play and the game of strength begins. Both pull in opposite directions until one lets loose. They sometimes continue playing for several hours. Several other types of games have been observed and recorded by researchers throughout the world. There is no doubt that play is a part of corvids's activities. Play helps these birds build better brains and provides them with skill sets necessary to cope with their environment.

Crows and ravens routinely gather around the dead of their species. Rarely do they touch the body, in contrast to their reaction of the dead bodies of other species, upon which they quickly feed. They often circle the dead bird for a period of time then fly away. The assembled birds may be assessing how they fit into the new social hierarchy as well as investigating the cause of death and how they might avoid a similar fate. Much is still to be learned but it is clear that mourning is a part of corvids's emotional state.

Corvids assume characteristics that were once ascribed only to humans, including self-recognition, insight, revenge, tool-use, deceit, murder, risk-taking, social learning and traditions. We are different, but by degree. We both survive in large part because of our brains. This fascinating book, so well researched and intelligently written, is indeed a gift. My respect for these amazing birds has increased immeasurably.

Dr. Marzluff has written a fascinating and informative book, with gorgeous illustrations by gifted artist, Tony Angell. I highly recommend it.

Jim O'Shaughnessy

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Some Good News For A Change

Gleaned from the newsletter of the American Bird Conservancy

Recently there have been efforts by some in Congress to kill the Endangered Species Act. A new poll shows they do so at their peril. 90% of those polled voiced strong or somewhat strong support for the ESA. A deeper look into the poll results shows that 96% of those who identified themselves as liberal and 82% of those who identified as conservative supported the ESA. Further, 71% said that decisions about what species are included under the Act's protections should be made based on science and the recommendations of biologists at the US Fish & Wildlife Service, not by Congress members. To paraphrase the opening of an old TV show, it's a blow "for truth, justice and the American way."

If you've ever gone on a pelagic trip off the California coast you may have gone out with Debra Shearwater. She's been a keynote speaker at the [Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival](#) a number of times and leads trips to Antarctica and other spots. She also stepped up to the plate and was a party, along with several other individuals and the American Bird Conservancy, in a lawsuit against the US Fish & Wildlife Service and the American Wind Energy Association. The USF&WS violated their own rules to give the AWEA a 30 year Incidental Take Permit for Bald and Golden Eagles at wind energy generation sites across the west. AWEA said they needed a pass if any of their turbines killed or injured either of these protected species. Under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act permits can be issued for up to a period of 5 years. Those filing the lawsuit said a 30 year blank check to kill these magnificent raptors was too long since research during a shorter time span could find ways to reduce or eliminate the threats to the birds altogether. On August 11, US District Judge Lucy Koh agreed and ended the 30 year permit.

Editor

In Congress there continues a relentless attack on the environment and the regulations that offer us a small level of protection. Having received vast funding from extraction industries, like mining, oil and coal companies, these extremist members of Congress encourage the "drill baby drill" and dig where and when we want mentality. Regardless of consequences. This behavior and mind set would be laughable if not for the fact that these people have managed to get themselves into positions that enable them to make public policy based on these extreme beliefs. We and our grand children will be paying the cost for these benighted policies for decades to come.

The latest attack is a move by these extremists to prevent the reauthorization of the overwhelmingly popular and crucial Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Passed by the same Congress that gave us the Voting Rights Act in 1965, the LWCF collects money from offshore oil and gas leases. Not a dime of tax payer funds goes into this. The funding is intended to go into a trust to acquire inholdings and expansions of our national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and other sites, including local parks. According to the National Recreation and Park Association, 98 percent of the counties in the United States have had a park or recreation site that was created with LWCF grants.

In the fifty years since the founding of the LWCF, Florida has received nearly a billion dollars. The LWCF state assistance program provides matching grants to help states and local communities protect parks and recreation resources. LWCF funding has benefited nearly every county in America, supporting over 41,000 projects. From building hiking and biking trails, to improving community parks, playgrounds and ballfields, this 50:50 matching program is the primary federal investment tool to ensure that families have easy access to public, open spaces. Right here in Volusia County Ormond Central Park, Lighthouse Point Park, Spruce Creek Park, River Breeze Park and the new Andy Romano Beach Front Park in Ormond Beach were all recipients of funding from the LWCF. Based on the self interested beliefs of a handful of extremist "leaders" in Washington and Tallahassee, all of this good work must come to an end.

The move in Tallahassee to turn our award winning state park system into a profit center is part of this same thinking. I wrote in August about the move to open portions of both Myaaka River and Payne's Prairie State Parks to grazing and timbering. Audubon Florida's Executive Director, Eric Draper, reported the other day that the newest threat comes at Anastasia Island State Park, in St. Augustine. There's a proposal there to bulldoze 38 acres of prime coastal hammock so we can squeeze in more campers and trailers. People come to Anastasia State Park to walk the hammock trails and enjoy the beautiful trees. Not to sit in their campers with the air conditioning running watching satellite TV. That's what private camp grounds are for.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund will have expired by the time you read this unless something is done in Congress to reauthorize it. It's scheduled to sunset out of existence on September 30th. It will be a crime against all of us if this is the end this valuable program. With luck and an enlightened electorate maybe the 2016 election will see a return to sanity in both Washington and Tallahassee. Let's hope so.

David Hartgrove

Once again it's time for an article from our own, Ray Scory, in his continuing series, **Everyday Birding**.

I once read that when Roger Tory Peterson, famed ornithologist, was asked - why feed birds in the Summer time, isn't there enough food available to them anyway? His reply was, "because I just like having them around." This article is an introduction to my show, "My FL Birds + 3", to be presented at the Halifax River Audubon's monthly meeting October 19, 2015.

This show will not take you to far away places to look at interesting and exotic birds. Birds you have never seen before and may never see again. Birds set against or within a landscape never imagined before.

No, this show will take you to places you frequent often - familiar places, places close by your home. You will venture from your home to embark on a journey through your neighborhood or take a short drive to the store or a wild life refuge - close by. Here, also, you may see birds for the first time. But you will see them again, because they live here, or they stay here for a seasonal visit or pass through to migratory grounds. You will see birds that are around. Some of the birds here are quite beautiful, some are dazzling, eye-catching or subtly picturesque. I find the subtle shades of brown on the female Boat-tailed Grackle as exciting to look at as the eye-popping color scheme of the Painted Bunting. Each and every sighting presents its own unique expression. Expressions and feelings I find exhilarating.

Some birds perform interesting behavioral activities and it may be the primary clue to their identity. The feeding dance of the Reddish Egret is a behavior to watch- a thing of beauty, frantic yet graceful, or the stop and go habit of a feeding Black-bellied Plover. Put up a bird feeder and watch bird behavior, fascinating stuff.

Listening to singing birds is a treat. How our spirits rise to the call of gulls riding high on soft ocean breezes, or the eerie call of owls cloaked in nightly secrecy. A mysterious silhouette gliding silently through a darkened sky is what stories are made of. How well we respond and rejoice to the talented Northern Mockingbird as it belts out its repertoire of mimicked songs. How we dream to the songs of birds and the sight of their flight. It's so nice to have them around to see them, to hear them, to watch them.

I take pleasure in surprises, especially in the birding arena. Many times during my daily routine I will take a time out to check a tree or bush in a parking lot, to stop at a small park active with people, to check out a pond, to look up at the sky, to look out a window. I have walked through, visited, driven by places without paying attention to birds. But, when I do, I find them. Sometimes my discovery surprises me.

I encourage you to explore the common places around your neighborhood. Check out the ordinary places. You, too, might just be surprised and enjoy having them around.

Ray Scory

* * * * *

Welcome To Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Donald Byerly, Joan Garber, Laura Morganstern and Jeffrey Sebastian. We hope to see you soon at a meeting or one of our excellent field trips. Welcome aboard!



Standoff between a Brown Thrasher and a Mourning Dove



Snowy Egret in peak breeding plumage. Photos by Ray Scory

* * * * *

A New Hummingbird Species Nearby?

If you have a copy of an older "Peterson Field Guide To The Birds East Of The Rockies", look in the back pages for a plate showing images of "Accidentals From The Tropics." On that page you'll see a hummingbird called the Bahama Woodstar. According to the new, "Florida Bird Species: An Annotated List", by Jon S. Greenlaw, Bill Pranty and Reed Bowman, there are only 3 records of this bird in Florida. None since 1981. Originally listed as 2 distinct species, they were lumped together as Bahama Woodstar in 1945. New research by Dr Christopher James Clark of the University of California, Riverside confirms that instead of being subspecies, these truly are 2 distinct species. The Bahama Woodstar (*Calliphlox evelynae evelynae*) occurs across most of the Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands. The new species, the Inaguan Lyretail (*Calliphlox evelynae lyrura*) occurs only on the Bahamian islands of Great and Little Inagua. Both species use their tail feathers to create unique sounds when displaying in courtship and territorial defense. Here's a [link](#) to more information on this possible new check mark for your life list.

David Hartgrove

Halifax River Audubon

Birding Workshop (Birdwatching Workshop)



Birding is a fast-growing, enjoyable hobby and central Florida is the ideal place to learn its techniques. Join experts from **Halifax River Audubon** and experience the wonders of fall migration while developing your skills. No experience is necessary. The workshop includes four classroom sessions and three outdoor workshops.



Indoor workshops will be held on
Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Place: Prince of Peace Church Hall,
600 S. Nova Rd., Ormond Beach
October 22, 2015
October 29, 2015
November 5, 2015
November 12, 2015



Field workshops will be held on Saturday mornings:
October 24 – 8:00 a.m. at Tomoka State Park*
October 31 – 8:00 a.m. at Ponce Inlet*
November 7 – 8:00 a.m. at Merritt Island NWR*
*Field workshop details will be covered in class
and may be subject to change.



Bring your binoculars to all classes and field workshops.

Donation: \$25.00 check, payable to Halifax River Audubon.
Mail to: Halifax River Audubon c/o Joan Tague
22 Creek Bluff Way, Ormond Beach, FL 32174

Contact instructors @ 386-253-1166
Joan Tague at babyowl@mac.com
Chuck Tague at kingrail@mac.com

Class size is limited, so sign up early. Children are encouraged. Minors and a parent/guardian pay only one \$25 donation. Check with instructors to determine if your child's age is appropriate.

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Last month we ran the new field trip schedule. Here's an updated version. You can print this individual page for easy reference. Remember too to check the website for the latest information.

HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE 2015-2016

David Hartgrove - 386-788-2630 (h); 386-235-1249 (c)

Peggy Yokubonus: 386-673-7619 (h); 386-316-4085 (c)

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Wed, Dec 16	7:30 AM	TAR	Black Point Drive, Merritt Island	1	Y	Paula Wehr	386-299-6651
Fri, Jan 8	7:30 AM	TAR	Merritt Island NWR	1	Y	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085
Sat, Jan 9	7:30 AM	TAR	Merritt Island NWR	1	Y	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Fri-Sat, Jan 15-16	TBA		Circle B Bar/Lake Hancock #			Betty Butcher	863-224-4922
Fri, Jan 29	7:30 AM	TAR	Viera Wetlands	1	Y	John Roessler	386-212-6957
Wed, Feb 3	4:00 PM	FR	Gull Watch	2	N	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Fri, Feb 5	7:30 AM	TAR	Orlando Wetlands	3	Y	Bob North	352-302-3510
Wed, Feb 17	7:30 AM	TAR	Merritt Island NWR	1	Y	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085
Fri, Feb 26	7:30 AM	KRY	Apopka Wildlife Drive	1	Y	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085
Fri, Mar 4	8:00 AM	WO	A1A Run - North	2	Y	Paula Wehr	386-299-6651
Fri, Mar 18	7:30 AM	CHK	Ocala Forest & Rodman Dam	3	Y	John Roessler	386-212-6957
Wed, Apr 6	8:00 AM	KRY	Tiger Bay State Forest	2	Y	Ray Scory	386-763-4260
Wed-Fri, Apr 13-15	TBD		Overnight trip to Fort DeSoto, Pinellas County #	2		David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Fri, May 13	7:30 AM	KRY	Dora Canal Boat Trip, Leesburg #	1	Y	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249

Indicates change from original published dates

IMPORTANT: Call leader or check website, www.halifaxrivers.org, before trip to confirm details.

Meeting Places

- BP - Buschman Park - 4575 Spruce Creek Rd, Port Orange
- Bridge - Port Orange Causeway Park under Dunlawton Bridge
- CHK - Ormond Town Square - Granada & Williamson Blvds behind Chick-fil-A
- FR - Frank Rendon Park - 2705 S Atlantic Ave, Daytona Beach Shores
- KRY - Int'l Square - East of I-95 on Int'l Speedway Blvd behind Krystal
- TAR - Target East of I-95 on Dunlawton Ave behind Panera's
- WO - Washington Oaks State Park, 6400 N Oceanshore Blvd, Palm Coast - park fee or pass

Trip Rating

- 1 - Easy or little walking
- 2 - Walking ~ 1 mile - flat terrain
- 3 - Walking 1+ mile and/or uneven terrain

Remember equipment: Hat, sunscreen, bug spray, sturdy walking shoes, drinking water and snacks as needed

trip requires reservations. Circle B Bar & Fort DeSoto are out of town, overnight trips that involve staying in a motel with a block of reserved rooms.

For Fort DeSoto trip we will stay in a La Quinta Inn in St. Petersburg located 30 minutes from the park. We'll drive over on Wed., 4/13, and rendezvous at the big flag in the park at 2:00 p.m. Those wishing to can bird the park until 5:00 p.m. Then we will drive to the motel and check in. Dinner is on your own that night. Thursday, 4/14, we'll leave the motel at 8:00 a.m. and drive to the park. We'll try to have box lunches delivered to the park. Dinner on Thursday night is at Billy's Stone Crab Restaurant in Tierra Verde. We'll return to the motel by 8:00 p.m. On Friday morning, April 15, we'll leave for home at 8:30 a.m. Those wishing to can stop at the Circle B Bar in Lakeland on the way home.

The Circle B Bar trip is still in the planning stage. Details regarding time, meeting location, etc. will follow.

The Dora Canal trip will be on a pontoon boat. Arrangements will be made later. The trip lasts 2 hours and costs \$27 per person. This is one of the most reliable spots in Florida for Prothonotary Warbler as well as a number of other good birds. We can have lunch at the launch site or at a nearby park.

Revised 9/6/2015

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 For information on upcoming field trips, etc.

Contact Our Board Members

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	Holly Zwart-Duryea	386-672-8788	hollis1000@aol.com
Field Trips	Peggy Yokubonus	386-673-7619	pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com
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The Pelican

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

Volume 61-No.5 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
November, 2015



The President's Message

Thoughts and Concepts

This is the first of a two part report on the Audubon Assembly.

The Audubon Assembly, 2015, was held in Maitland this past week. Several members from our chapter attended and I'd like to describe a little about the Assembly and more particularly tell you about the policy priorities established for the coming year. Before getting into the details I have two wonderful items to report. Our immediate Past President, Paula Wehr, was unanimously elected to the Audubon Florida Board of Directors. This honor is the result of her dedication and effective work not only for our chapter but and at the state level. Executive Director Eric Draper told me how excited he was to have her joining the state board. So Bravo! Actually, I guess that should be Brava!

Saturday morning's breakfast meeting was dedicated to recognizing various chapters throughout the state. The first chapter to be called was - you guessed it - Halifax River Audubon! It was for the "Small Chapter Outstanding Education Program Award" for our 20 years of cooperation with teacher, Louise Chapman, and the Volusia County Schools. Accepting the award, and making some wonderful comments about the importance of teaching young people about conservation was our own David Hartgrove. David has worked tirelessly with students throughout the years and has had the assistance of many of our members. Peggy Yokobonus and Ray Scory are two who have made significant contributions. Peggy was on hand to share the award with David. It was a proud moment for Halifax River Audubon.

Each year at the Audubon Assembly, the regional conservation conferences (made up of representatives from individual chapters) present their lists of conservation priorities in the form of documents presented to Audubon Florida. These priorities are broadly framed problem solution statements that are presented to the membership in the form of resolutions. The conservation action agenda is approved by vote at the annual Assembly and subsequently is ratified by the Audubon Florida Board of Directors. Five policies were adopted for the coming year. The first, Important Bird Areas (IBA's) and Waterways Conservation seeks guidance from chapters and partners on the most appropriate places to focus resources. Also, to engage Audubon Chapters and other user groups to protect specific natural areas. Working with private landowners to achieve good stewardship by supporting incentives for landowners to commit property to conservation, including government purchase of conservation easement and "Payment for Environmental Services" programs to compensate for improved water management, water storage and pollution cleanup. We recognize that the Florida Legislature cut funds for conservation lands in spite of 75% voter approval of the Water and Land Conservation Amendment.

Continued below on the next page.

Calendar & Events

Monday, November 16th, Join us for a presentation by our own, Dan Gribbin, entitled "Breeding Islands: The Young and the Restless." Doors open at 6:30 p.m. at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. A brief business meeting follows.

Monday, November 2nd, Join our friends from West Volusia Audubon for their "Fall 'Fun' Fund Raiser at the Elusive Grape, 133 N. Woodland Blvd., in downtown DeLand from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. Tickets are 25.00 and may be purchased at the door. This includes two beverages of your choice, beer, wine, or soft drink Plus light hors d'oeuvres. There will also be a Silent Auction of select items.

Friday, November 6th, Daytona State College, the Marine Discovery Center and the Florida Chapter of the American Water Resources Association presents the first annual "ShORE" (SHaring Our Resources with Everyone) Symposium on the Indian River Lagoon. This will be held at the News-Journal Center in downtown Daytona Beach. Public registration will begin at 8:30 am for this full day of presentations by students, scientists and agency representatives and community members on the health of the Lagoon, its future and our part in its road to restored health. Here's a [link](#) to more information.

Saturday, November 14th, The Marine Science Center in Ponce Inlet will host its annual "Wings On The Wind Festival" from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Attendees can meet glove-trained birds of prey, learn about bird migration, and visit booths staffed by nature groups and crafters. There will also be music, children's activities, food vendors and the release of rehabbed birds at Lighthouse Point Park a 5 minute walk away.

Field Trips

Friday, November 13th, HRA trip to Ocala National Forest/Rodman Dam. John Roessler will lead this trip to look for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Scrub Jays and what should be excellent wading bird viewing. SJRWMD is conducting a draw down of the reservoir at the dam and the lowered water levels make for a wind-fall for feeding birds. Meet at 7:30 am at Ormond Town Square - Granada & Williamson Blvds behind Chick-fil-A. Bring lunch. Questions, call John at 386-212-6957.

Friday, November 20th, HRA trip to Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive. Paula Wehr will lead this trip to one of best new birding spots in the state. Meet at 7:30 am at Int'l Square - East of I-95 on Int'l Speedway Blvd behind Krystal. Bring lunch. Questions, call Paula, 386-299-6651.

Saturday, November 7th, The Marine Science Center in Ponce Inlet is sponsoring another pelagic birding trip on the Pastime Princess, a 100' aluminum fishing boat sailing out of New Smyrna Beach. Cost is 195.00 per person. Contact Michael Brothers, 386-304-5543 or by email: mbrothers@volusia.org .

Lawmakers have also failed to strengthen laws to protect springs and estuaries.

The second state policy concerns coastal conservation and stewardship. Coastal habitats are jeopardized by a range of human activities including beach management and grooming, coastal armoring, dredging and filling, human disturbances and rising sea levels. Because of both the extraordinary value and tremendous vulnerability of these resources, ranks coastal conservation among it's highest priorities. National Audubon has also elevated coastal habitats as a national priority under the auspices of its Atlantic Flyway Initiative and "Share the Seas and Shores" program. Employing sound science to guide conservation of our coasts and advocating for wise land and recreation management to conserve habitat now as well as in a future of higher sea levels.

Jim O'Shaughnessy



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Doing An International Big Year

Noah Stryker is a 28 year old self described "bird nerd". He's spent over 2 years of his life sleeping in tents, has worked on 6 continents while engaged in avian research projects and has written books about his adventures that have received good reviews.



Noah Stryker photo by Corey Arnold

His goal is to see 5,000 species in a year. He began by thinking about how some birders are committed listers in counties, states or countries. Birds recognize no boundaries and fly anywhere.

Continued below on the next page

Conservation Notes

Last month I wrote about the efforts of some extremist members of Congress to prevent the reauthorization of the Land & Water Conservation Fund. Funded by fees levied on oil and energy companies, it used to take in 2.5 million a day. Money to buy land for parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Not a penny of tax payer funds was used. It turns out to have been the power wielded by one man, Congressman Rob Bishop. A Republican from Utah, he's the Chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee and House rules give this one man the power to wreck a program that's benefitted the entire country for decades. It's hard to imagine the thought process the House Republicans went through that put this angry ideologue in charge of the funding mechanism for our national parks. It's like the wacky days of the first Reagan administration when James Watt was placed in charge of the Interior Department. Here's a man who once complained that he grew bored by the 2nd day of a raft trip down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. How could it be that President Reagan thought it a good idea to put this guy in charge of our national park system? Thankfully, there were safe guards in place in the form of rational members of the Republican Congress that prevented Watt from doing any more damage than he did before he left the office. Unfortunately, we don't enjoy those safe guards now. There's a bipartisan coalition of rational thinkers who are hoping to reauthorize the LWCF at some point in the future. It will have to be after Congressman Bishop is no longer in office since he's vowed to kill any attempts to reauthorize the LWCF. He wants to give the fees collected back to the oil companies. Any bets on who's sending his reelection committee generous donations?

* * *

Back in the 1990's, when Bruce Babbitt was Secretary of the Interior, he proposed an excise tax on some camping and outdoor gear to help fund operations of national parks and refuges. The theory was that since hunters were funding the vast majority of those operations (even though hunting isn't permitted in national parks) through an existing excise tax on hunting equipment and ammunition, non hunting and fishing users of these facilities ought to pony up their fair share. The idea got some support but failed when some members of Congress saw a chance to demagogue against a new tax. The existing excise tax system dates back to the 1930's when the Pittman-Robertson Act was passed at the behest of hunters to benefit wildlife conservation. Unrestricted hunting had done so much damage to wildlife and habitat that they were afraid that if something wasn't done, there would soon be nothing left to hunt. Currently, hunters and fishermen pay the cost for all of us who use parks, refuges, etc. Birders, mountain bikers and other "non consumptive" users essentially pay nothing. Yes, there are some parks and refuges that have instituted a modest fee system. It's frequently administered on the honor system and a lot of dishonorable people drive right past the pay station on their way in. Knowing that there's little chance of being caught.

A number of us buy Duck Stamps each year. These were established as a way to fund hunting activities and maintenance at refuges by the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act of 1934. Many birders rail against purchasing these since, in their view, the money goes to facilitate the slaughter of wildlife. This myopic view has prevented many from supporting the system we all use. "Pay to play" is an idea whose time has come. Arizona is currently discussing the idea of a wildlife viewing stamp. Hunting is declining in popularity. So revenues from the aforementioned excise tax are declining. At a time when we need more funds for research and operations, not less. I already buy a Duck Stamp every year. I'll be glad to switch over to a wildlife viewing stamp if it helps guarantee that my grand daughters get to see Sandhill Cranes and Scrub Jays. My thanks to Ray Scory for bring this issue to my attention again.

David Hartgrove

By no means a wealthy man, he's funding this year long journey by soliciting sponsorships from optics companies and an advance on the book he's contracted to write for Houghton-Mifflin about his adventure. He's also traveling light, very light. Everything he carries needs to fit into a small backpack and his bulkiest item is a small Leica spotting scope.

He began his quest in January of this year spending several days in Antarctica. He then moved on to South America, where he spent 3 1/2 months. Next he moved north to Central and North America for 2 months. Then hopped across the Atlantic for about 10 days in Europe before heading south to Africa to spend another 2 1/2 months. Then he was off to Asia and several of the islands in the South Pacific for 3 months. He will end the trip with several weeks in Australia.

On October 26th, day 299, with over 2 months to go, while hiking up a mountain trail on Mindanao in the Philippines, he saw bird number 5,000. It was a Flame-crowned Flowerpecker.



Flame-crowned Flowerpecker *photo by Noah Stryker*

Along the way to this goal he's had a lot of adventures. In Thailand he discovered why long socks are popular with forest hikers. They help keep leeches off your legs. Before he began a friend told him it might be interesting if he could contract some strange disease, like dengue fever. Fortunately, this hasn't happened yet.

You can follow Noah's adventures on his daily blog. Here's a [link](#) to it. As I write this his total is 5,051 species and he still hasn't been to Australia or New Zealand. He will be a guest speaker at the Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival in January.

David Hartgrove

* * * * *

Welcome To Our New Members

A regular feature in the Pelican is the listing of our new and returning members. Due to circumstances beyond our control, there won't be such a list this month. Apparently the national office is switching locations of membership central. So next month's list should be quite long. Look for it then.

The Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival

It's time to be thinking about the next Festival. It'll be held again at Eastern Florida State College in Titusville, just a short drive south of us. The [website](#) and online registration will be active soon. This is the largest birding festival in the country and this year the emphasis will be on birding photography with some of the best photographers and digiscopers in the world. More information in next month's Pelican. Plan now to attend.

* * * * *

Coming Soon To A Waterbody Near You



Red-breasted Mergansers *photo by David Hartgrove*

Red-breasted Mergansers are crested, fish eating ducks that winter in Florida. They nest from extreme northern Canada down to a few northern counties in Maine. Unlike their close relative, the Common Merganser (which is rarely seen in Florida) they nest on the ground. Common Mergansers are cavity nesters. They eat mostly fish which they catch by swimming underwater. The young feed mainly on insects until they're flight ready about 2 months after hatching. As with most ground nesting birds, nest loss due to predation is a concern. Foxes, skunks, minks, weasels and other mammals are all nest predators. Since Red-breasted Mergansers nest so far north Lynx, a wild cat in serious trouble itself, is a source of predation on both eggs and flightless young. Watch for long lines of Red-breasted Mergansers on the Halifax River beginning in November.

David Hartgrove

* * * * *

A Request From The Editor

Once again I write to ask that readers send in articles, photos etc. for inclusion in the Pelican. Many of you have great photos on your hard drives or have had interesting experiences while on vacation or just working in your yard. Write them down to share with the rest of us. The white morph Reddish Egret below was



standing on the side of the road along Black Point in Jan., 2014.

Please consider sending your material, either written or photos to me at birdman9@earthlink.net. Thanks!

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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The Pelican

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

Volume 61-No.6 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
December, 2015



The President's Message

Thoughts and Concepts

This is the second part of my report on the Audubon Assembly, which was held in Maitland in October.

Each year at the Audubon Assembly leaders present their conservation priorities. These priorities are broadly framed problem solution statements that are presented to the membership in the form of resolutions. The first two, reported on in last month's Pelican, covered Important Bird Areas and issues involving coastal conservation in a time of rising sea levels.

The third state policy priority deals with the Greater Everglades Ecosystem. Shrinking numbers of Roseate Spoonbills, Wood Storks, Snail Kites, and Southern Bald Eagles are indicative of the harm that has occurred to the natural system. More than half of the Everglades has been lost to development and agriculture. Audubon's history is closely aligned with Everglades conservation. Starting with wildlife wardens and continuing with field research, sanctuaries and advocacy, Audubon's presence in all parts of the Everglades gives the organization a special role and responsibility. This priority calls on volunteer leadership to work with conservation allies, business and community leaders, public officials and agencies to restore wetland flows, protect habitat from nutrient pollution, improve habitat and watershed connectivity, prevent loss and restore wetlands, make and keep water available for the environment, track and define wildlife and other ecological responses to water management and to educate people about the ecological and economic benefits of Everglades Restoration.

The fourth state policy priority deals with water for the environment. Water defines Florida's natural ecosystems. Seasonally abundant rainfall seeps into the vast aquifers and floodplains, releasing billions of gallons of freshwater through springs and rivers that nourish productive seagrass and marshes along the coast. While Florida public policy has long aspired to manage water resources to balance benefits for natural systems, economic uses and population growth, today's wetlands, springs, rivers, lakes, and estuaries suffer from decades of over-drainage, pollution, overuse and just plain poor management. The organization has resolved to protect water at the source (aquifers, wetlands, lakes and springs), to advocate sustainable water supply, and to advocate for water quality. Each of these vital areas is amplified with numerous specific goals.

The fifth state policy priority deals with climate. Scientific consensus, documented by the International Panel on Climate Change is that atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases are increasing and causing climate change. Florida is especially vulnerable to climate change and sea level rise.

Continued below on the page two

Calendar & Events

Monday, December 21st, Join us for an evening of owls and Christmas cookies. Sam Fried's presentation on "Owls of North America" will give us all a glimpse into the relatively unknown world of these mostly nocturnal birds. A past President of Hartford Audubon Society, Sam now lives in Titusville and leads birding and photography trips all over North and South America and Africa. This being our holiday meeting, we'll celebrate with cookies and whatever other treats the members bring to share. Beverages will be provided. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. A brief business meeting follows.

Field Trips

Wednesday, December 9th, Gull Watch. Join David Hartgrove for this walk along the beach to learn identification of gulls, terns, etc. Meet at Frank Rendon Park, 2705 S. Atlantic Ave. Daytona Beach Shores at 3:00 pm. Questions, call David at 386-235-1249.

Sunday, December 13th, Dunlawton Bridge Walk. Join Ray Scory for this casual walk beneath the Dunlawton Bridge as we view Rookery Island and the surrounding areas in search of winter migrant shorebirds, etc. Questions, call Ray at 386-763-4260.

Wednesday, December 16th, Merritt Island NWR. Join Paula Wehr for this trip to one of the best winter birding spots in North America. Meet in the Target parking lot on Dunlawton Ave. east of I-95, behind Panera Bread at 7:30 am. Bring lunch. Questions, call Paula at 386-299-6651.

Saturday, December 26th, Our CBC. See the next page for more information.

Field Trips With Others

Monday, December 14th, Join our friends from West Volusia Audubon Society for their trip to Merritt Island NWR. Driving from the east side of the county, it's probably best to meet the group down at MINWR. Bring lunch and call Eli Schaperow, 386-574-2670, for rendezvous directions.

Friday, December 11th, Join our friends from Southeast Volusia Audubon Society for their trip to MINWR. Meet at Indian River Shopping Center, c/o US 1 and SR 442 (Indian River Blvd.) behind Dunkin' Donuts at 7:30 am. Bring lunch. Questions, call Richard Domroski, 386-453-1211.

Saturday, December 5th, 9:00 to 11:00 am. Eco buggy tour of Lyonia Preserve. Sponsored by Volusia County Land Management, this is an opportunity to see this special place from a different vantage point. Experience the flora and fauna of scrub habitat and meet Lyonia's most precious resident, the Florida Scrub Jay. The preserve is located behind the Deltona Regional Library, 2159 Eustace Ave., Deltona. Please pre-register by calling 386-789-7207

Excessive droughts and intense storms will reduce nesting season productivity for many bird species. Wildlife and natural systems face significant challenges adapting to rapid changes in temperatures, seasons, and rainfall patterns. Carbon dioxide is the most prevalent greenhouse, accounting for nearly three-quarters of global greenhouse gas emissions. The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently issued their Green Power Plan. When it is fully in place in 2030, carbon pollution from the power sector will be 32% below 2005 levels. Audubon Florida will therefore advocate for the reduction of green house gases from energy production, encourage conservation in homes, workplaces and communities, and promote ecologically sound sea level rise adaptation strategies.

I have attempted to highlight and summarize these policies. Each is described in much greater detail in the full report. The report is available on-line. Here's a [link](#) to it on the Audubon Florida website. Have a safe and wonderful holiday season and I hope to see some of you on our Christmas Bird Count the day after Christmas.

Jim O'Shaughnessy

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Time For The Christmas Bird Counts Again

The Christmas Bird Count is the nation's longest citizen science project and provides a wealth of valuable data to researchers all across the world. All CBC's are done in a 15 mile in diameter circle. Ours is centered at I-95 and the Tomoka River. Below is the schedule for the three CBC's done here in Volusia County. I can't reiterate too strongly how important it is for members to come out and participate.

Saturday, December 19th, The West Volusia CBC. Contact Eli Schaperow birdnerd@earthlink.net or by phone 386-574-2670 or contact Harry Robinson sirharrydeland@gmail.com or by phone 386-801-4472.

Saturday, December 26th, The Daytona Beach CBC. Contact David Hartgrove birdman9@earthlink.net or by phone 386-235-1249. We'll meet at 7:00 am at Ormond Town Square at SR 40 and Williamson Blvd behind the Chick-Fil-A. Dinner will follow at a restaurant nearby to be determined.

Saturday, January 2nd, 2016, The Ponce Inlet CBC. Contact Richard Domroski rdomroski@cfl.rr.com or by phone 386-453-1211.

We certainly hope you'll come out for our CBC on 12/26. If you can assist on another too, so much the better.

David Hartgrove

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The Biggest Birding Festival In The Country

The [Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival](#) is the largest festival of its kind in the country. This time around there will be an even bigger emphasis on photography. Photographers from all around the world will be there offering workshops. Field trips to all sorts of places will offer participants a chance to see some of those Florida specialities they can't see in their home states and countries. And if you've been thinking that it's time to upgrade your optical equipment, this is the place to do it. The gymnasium at East Florida State College in Titusville, for 4 days, will be transformed into a birder's wonderland. Every binocular manufacturer in the country will have booth there and special low prices are usually the rule of the day. Online registration is open and some field trips have already filled up. It's guaranteed to be a highlight of your birding year.

Conservation Notes

The devious goings on in Tallahassee just seem to multiply as we move closer to next year's legislative session. The latest in the sad saga of our state parks involves a no bid half million dollar contract to a private firm called Forestech. Founded by a former Parks Division employee and her husband, Forestech was awarded the no bid contract to survey timber in all of Florida's parks for possible harvest and sale. In the past this has been done for far less money by state Division of Forestry employees but the new DEP Secretary, Jon Steverson, had insisted that a private firm should do the job.

When the Tampa Bay Times began asking questions about the contract and why it was issued in the first place, the DEP suddenly cancelled the contract and the following day Kelley Boree, head of the Division of State Lands, resigned her position. No explanation was given for either the cancellation or Ms. Boree's resignation, in keeping with the Scott administration's obsession with secrecy and its complete disregard for the people's right to know.

Our old pal, Senator Alan Hayes, is at it again. He's filed SB 400, which will essentially destroy the entire state parks division while reorganizing the Department of Environmental Protection so as to give the DEP Secretary unheard of powers to do as he pleases with all state lands.

Not to be outdone in the shady legislation department, Senator Charlie Dean filed SB 570, which establishes a year long state park entrance fee holiday. The senator grandly explained that he filed the bill in order to encourage the state's residents to enjoy their state park system without having to pay a fee. While this may sound like a great idea to cash strapped families looking for a place for a weekend picnic it places all of our parks in greater danger. The rationale for opening parks to hunting, timber sales and cattle grazing is that they aren't capable of raising enough money to be self sustaining. Yanking a year's worth of admission fees from them will only exacerbate this false shortfall. It's false because the premise on which the so called shortfall is based is false. It looks at our entire park system as a "profit center" and not as an environmental treasure to be preserved for future generations.

The people in power in the Scott administration look at our park system as though it was a collection of 7-11's or some other similar for profit enterprise. If a few of them aren't performing up to expectation, cut them loose or convert them to some other entity that will make a profit. The whole idea that these very special places were set aside for special protection by forward thinking leaders generations ago is considered an antiquated ideology. The people's desire to keep their park system intact and protected is something to be swept under the rug of history as far as these folks are concerned.

Audubon Florida is trying desperately to get these bills amended since they're sailing through committee after committee with few votes against them. If all fees are removed from all parks for a year some of the more popular state parks will be placed in danger of severe overuse. Audubon's Julie Wraithmell thanked Senator Dean for his efforts to encourage Floridians to take advantage of our state parks, but cautioned that current carrying capacities are not based on the amount of visitors that natural resources can withstand; rather, they are simply based on the number of parking spaces available. SB 570 currently does not have a companion bill in the House. However there will probably be by the time the session starts next year. While the legislature makes headlines with its inability to design legislative districts that will pass court scrutiny, behind the scenes they continue to do their utmost to wreak havoc on the state's environmental legacy. Oh for the days of leaders whose only guiding principle wasn't the almighty dollar.

David Hartgrove

Time once again for Ray Scory's "Everyday Birding".

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila caerulea*)

A tragedy in a live oak tree, for a Red-shouldered Hawk a necessity. For me, a pleasant Sunday walk filled with innocent, questioning memories.

Two and a half miles of pleasant, scenic walking. My mind wandering and I reveling in the cocoon of a brilliant, crisp day. A high pitched, nasal pzzzz of excited timbre broke my silent dreaming. To the left of me, in a spacious live oak tree, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher screamed frantically and bounced from one branch to another. The center of attention was a Red-shouldered Hawk passively perched, seemingly oblivious to the panicked gymnastics of the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Without warning, the hawk lazily lifted from the branch of the tree and flew to a quieter place in a nearby forest.

That was when I noticed a tiny Blue-gray Gnatcatcher trapped in the deadly grasp of the Red-shouldered Hawk's weapon-like talons.

Can it be a point in the eternal rotation of life that repeats and defines a common moment in the life of all living things? Does a tiny bird's frantic outburst in a live oak tree open to us the trials of our own lives? I certainly felt the anguish of the tiny bird's railing against this tragic situation. I felt sympathy and pain as if it was my own experience. Does every life experience thread through all living things? Supersonic thoughts sped through my mind during this millisecond of time. Then the moment cleared. The frantic Blue-gray Gnatcatcher quieted. The hawk with its prey disappeared into the forest. I continued my walk. Changed.

My first observation of a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher occurred on a wind swept, rocky bluff overlooking a white-capped sea on a dreary gray early Spring morning. Huddled against raw blasts of wind and rain my birding friend and I looked for sea birds out over Long Island Sound. My more experienced friend kept in motion, partly to keep warm and mostly to observe all that was around him. That is how he spotted the little gray bird with darker wings behind us. This neat little (4.5 inch) gray bird with a flashy, long tail trimmed with white outer tail feathers and a perfectly round, white eye ring held our attention. It had found safe haven in the thick bramble of a multiflora rose bush. A heart warming sight as it found protection from a raw, blasting weather front.

On one of our always memorable field trips with the Halifax River Audubon, Chuck Tague pointed out a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher's nest. Nestled snugly at eye level in a live oak tree were two pale blue brown flecked eggs. We all got good looks at the nest and eggs before the adult returned to continue incubation.

How different yet how related these three different episodes can impacted the meaning of three observations of a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.

Ray Scory

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Welcome To Our New & Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Sarah Ashman, Karen Hoffman, Carol Johnson, Gerald Lampe, Robin McClure, Martha Nardi, Mark & Sue Putze, Mr. & Mrs. Albert Romano, Patricia Shertz, Ralph Smith and John Snyder. We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting or field trip.



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher scolding a predator

both photos by Ray Scory

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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. 45.00 will fund a class room for a year. Any donation is welcome. Send your donation to Halifax River Audubon, P.O. Box 166, Daytona Beach FL 32115-0166. Please specify on your check that your donation is for Audubon Adventures. And thank you!

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"Owl hearing is so sensitive that some species are able to hear small mammals moving under three feet of snow."

From Sharon Stitler's book, "1001 Secrets Every Birder Should Know".

David Simpson has been birding Florida for over a quarter of a century and has amassed numerous records, including seeing 184 species on a Big Day here in 2009. This is his first article for the Pelican. Editor.

How do you find a Franklin's Gull in Florida?

Every fall, Franklin's Gulls leave their breeding grounds in the Great Plains of Canada and the U.S. and head down through Texas to their wintering grounds along the Pacific coast of South America. Some are swept eastward by the many cold fronts that cross the continent. Others, upon arrival on the gulf coast of Texas, may join flocks of Laughing Gulls and wander east with their new friends. However it happens, every October and November we find a few gems hiding among the Laughing Gulls that dominate the gullscape of Florida.

So, finding a Franklin's Gull in Florida is as simple as finding a large group of Laughing Gulls, right? Well maybe not quite that easy, but places where Laughing Gulls congregate are where you want to look. Florida has many such places along our coasts and even landfills and inland lakes, like Lake Okeechobee. Hundreds (sometimes as many as 20,000 or more) of Laughing Gulls gather to feed and rest on beaches, parking lots, lakes, and landfills. Now searching for a wayward Franklin's Gull among 20,000+ Laughing Gulls may seem a bit daunting, but I have some tips to make it a little less so.

Franklin's gulls differ from Laughing Gulls in nearly every feature of plumage and structure. Individual variation within each species confuses the issue somewhat as extremes can nearly overlap. However, there are a couple of shortcuts. I finally found my first Franklin's Gull in Florida at Jetty Park in Cape Canaveral on Oct 23, 2000. Prior to that, I spent many an hour agonizing over Laughing Gulls that "looked good" for Franklin's. Does that bird have enough of a black half hood? Is the bill small enough? Do the eye arcs look thick enough, do they connect at the rear of the eye? I never quite felt comfortable enough to call one a Franklin's. The Jetty Park bird was not my first Franklin's Gull. In January of 1998, I spent eight days in Texas with Howard Adams and John Hintermister. While looking for Mexican Crows (now Tamaulipas Crow) at the Brownsville Dump, we found a couple of Franklin's Gulls. I immediately realized two things: 1) Franklin's gull is not that hard to pick out among Laughing Gulls. 2) All those wannabe Franklin's Gulls I agonized about in Florida were definitely Laughing Gulls.



Franklin's Gull, photographed in Daytona Beach Shores, is in the center of the photo. Note the smaller, more petite size. Ed.

Photo by Tom Ford

What tipped me off? Why are Franklin's Gulls so distinctive? Here are some key points that I use to find wayward Franklin's among Laughing Gulls in Florida. Most Franklin's Gulls found in Florida are young of that year. Juveniles of both species are mostly brown on the head and upper parts. Much of the brown feathers are replaced before they depart the breeding grounds. Back feathers are gray. The primaries are black. The head is mostly white with some amount of black. However the brown "panel" on the wings (retained juvenile wing coverts) allow first year birds to be easily picked out from the rest (all other ages having gray coverts.) At this age, both species have black primaries, but only Franklin's shows white tips in the primaries. Some Franklin's may have very little white in the tip and indeed white tips are prone to wearing off, but all Franklin's Gulls that I have seen in fall have shown white tips. On the contrary, no first year Laughing Gulls, and I have looked at thousands of them, have shown any white at all in the wing tips. While scanning through a sitting flock of gulls, look for the distinct half hood of Franklin's Gull along with the thick white eye arcs connecting at the back of the head. This is the feature that jumps out at me first. Some variant Laughing Gulls may mimic these features, but once you see a real Franklin's Gull, you will realize that the others were just pretenders. If you are not sure if it is "Franklin's" enough, it is a Laughing Gull. Franklin's Gull sports a clean white hind neck, not the mottled gray neck of a Laughing Gull. The whiter hind neck further sets off the distinct half hood in Franklin's.

Eureka! You have found a bird with a distinct half-hood, bushy eyebrows connecting at the back of the eye, and white-tipped primaries, a Franklin's Gull! Congratulations. Now take the opportunity to observe how the other features differ from the more common Laughing Gulls. Note how the bill is smaller and lacks the slight bulge on the tip of the maxilla (upper bill) shown on Laughing Gulls. The maxilla and mandible of Franklin's Gulls are similar in size and shape. The head of Franklin's is smaller with a shorter, more rounded forehead. Legs and wings of Franklin's are shorter than Laughing, giving Franklin's a distinctly smaller look.

Later in winter, Laughing Gulls begin molting into the black headed garb of summer. Some might even have full black heads by early January. These transitional birds may go through a phase where they mimic the half-hooded look of Franklin's Gulls. The brown panel of juvenile wing coverts is replaced by gray as the birds approach their second spring. The white tips on the primaries of Franklin's Gulls may wear off by late winter. Thus, some of the more eye-catching differences in plumage are less striking in late winter. Structural and other plumage differences remain, however. Also note that adults of both species have gray wings and white tips on the black primaries. Structural differences become even more important in identifying adult Franklin's Gulls in fall and winter. Most Franklin's Gulls are gone from Florida by December, but a few may stick around. I once saw a second year Franklin's gull, by itself, on Lake Okeechobee in April. The white primary tips had worn off and the brown panel had been replaced by gray. Structural features were not quite as noticeable without any Laughing Gulls standing nearby. I had to resort to the internet to figure that one out.

Hopefully these tips will help you pick out Franklin's Gulls from among the 1000's of Laughing Gulls in Florida. Once you get some practice, you might be surprised at how many you find. Franklin's gulls will still be uncommon, but not so mysterious as before.

David Simpson

Look for more articles by David in future issues of the Pelican. Here's a link to his [website](#). Editor

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