

The Pelican

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

Volume 61-No.7 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
January, 2016



The President's Message

Thoughts and Concepts

We're entering a very busy time of year for birders. There are festivals and field trips galore. While this is somewhat short notice I wanted to alert you to a bird walk to be lead by Meret Wilson, bird bander extraordinaire. "New Year's Day is for the Birds!" From 8am till 11am on January 1st, at Tomoka State Park, Meret will lead a guided bird walk. All experience levels are welcome. Reservations are required. Bring sunscreen, bug spray, and water. Dress for weather conditions. Meet at 7:45AM at Outpost parking lot, the Camp Store. Call 386-676-4050 for reservations. Regular entrance fees apply.

Next comes our overnight trip to the Circle B Bar property and Lake Hancock Outfall in Polk County. The trip is Friday and Saturday, January 15th and 16th. We'll meet at the Circle B for an 11:00 am tram ride; bring your picnic lunch. After lunch we will bird around nature center before checking into motel rooms in Winter Haven at the Hampton Inn on Cypress Gardens Blvd. Dinner is on your own. Saturday we meet at 7:30 to travel to Lake Hancock Outfall where we will bird until about noon. You must be signed up to attend as there is limited seating on the tram ride. Contact Betty Butcher, 863-224-4922, to sign up or for more details.

Then it's time for the largest birding festival in the country. The [Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival](#) begins on Wednesday, January 20th and continues for 5 days. Headquarters for the Festival is East Florida State College in north Titusville. This year there's a special emphasis on photography, with workshops and field classes. The field trips are legendary and it's a guaranteed good time. World class birders and photographers will be leading trips and teaching classes. You owe it to yourself to go.

In February there's a much smaller birding festival, the second "Birds of a Feather Fest", in nearby Palm Coast. Registration is now open. This three day birding fest will be offering a weekend of birding, workshops, presentations and family activities. It will be held February 5-7. The City of Palm Coast birding festival is geared toward serious birders, as well as beginners and families. A good number of the birding trips offered will be on paved trails in and around Palm Coast, making birding accessible to children and people with disabilities. With more than 125 miles of trails, miles of coastline, varied habitats and more than 200 identified bird species, Palm Coast and greater Flagler County are a birder's paradise. A complete schedule for the Birds of a Feather Fest is at this [link](#) and registration is now open. For planning and staffing purposes participants must register even if they plan to participate only in free events. There will be no general registration fee. Friday will be a full day of birding and Saturday includes a full day of free activities. Transportation will be provided for the out of town trips.

Continued on the next page

Calendar & Events

Monday, January 25th, Regular meeting, Chuck Tague, our resident pollination specialist, will present a program on "Pollinators" 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

Friday & Saturday, January 8th & 9th Merritt Island NWR, This is one of the nation's premier birding destinations in winter. As we have in the past we're scheduling back to back trips with one on a weekend day for those whose schedule precludes weekday trips. On Friday Peggy Yokubonus will lead the trip. Saturday's trip will be lead by David Hartgrove. For both days we'll meet at the Target in Port Orange, east of I-95 on Dunlawton Ave. behind Panera Bread. Bring a picnic lunch. Questions, call Peggy, 386-316-4085 or David, 386-235-1249.

Fri. & Sat., January 15th & 16th, Our first of the season overnight trip to the Circle B Bar. See information in the adjacent President's column.

Friday, January 29th, Viera Wetlands, Join John Roessler for this trip to one of our favorite Brevard birding sites. Least Bittern, Green-winged Teal and nesting Great Blue Herons are all to be expected on this trip. Bring a picnic lunch. Questions, call John, 386-212-6957.

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Field Trips and Events With Others

Saturday, January 22nd Seminole Rest/Shiloh Marsh, Join our sister chapter, Southeast Volusia Audubon Society, for a trip to see history and birds. While at Seminole Rest they'll explore Oak Hill Marsh. Then they'll travel down to Shiloh Marsh in search of Seaside Sparrows and shorebirds. Meet at 7:30 am in the Florida Shores Plaza parking lot in Edgewater, (at the corner of US 1 and Indian River Blvd), south of the new Dunkin Donuts building. Bring a picnic lunch. Questions, call Gail Domroski, 386-428-0447.

Saturday & Sunday, January 23rd & 24th, Manatee Festival This will be the 31st annual [Manatee Festival](#), presented by Orange City and Blue Springs State Park at Valentine Park, 1511 W. French Ave., Orange City. Games, funnel cake, trips into Blue Springs State Park to see manatees and fun for the whole family.

"**Explore Volusia**" is a series of programs presented by Volusia County that span the entire month. There's a workshop on nature photography, eco buggy tours, star gazing programs, guided hikes at Lake Woodruff NWR and Lyonia Preserve and much more. For more information on all of these and more, check out this [link](#) or contact Trey Hannah, Environmental Specialist with the County at 386-736-5927, ext. 12072. or THannah@volusia.org

Conservation Notes

It seems we can't pick up the newspaper or watch a television news show without reading or hearing a report on something that's recently been found to be damaging to our health. It seems that products, compounds and various food items that we've long taken for granted are either fattening, rot our teeth, make our hair fall out, or cause cancer. Early in the last century doctors, or people claiming to be doctors, regularly extolled the virtues of all kinds of patent medicines, cigarettes, even heroin. Fortunately these claims were debunked and the truth was finally exposed in spite of the vast sums spent by manufacturers of these products to convince us otherwise.

Many in Congress and most of the presidential candidates rail against the wanton disregard for private enterprise shown by the Food and Drug Administration and other regulatory agencies tasked with protecting the public's health. In reality we're all guinea pigs for manufacturers whose only concern is the profits to be shown in the next quarter. If something can be advertised as, "New and Improved", it goes on the market as quickly as possible. Any potential damage to human health or the health of our ecosystem can be dealt with more efficiently with an improved profit structure.

A case in point is microplastic beads. Hailed by their developers as a miracle material, these tiny beads of plastic are now found in a variety of personal care products. They're used to replace the natural alternatives these products used for years in their manufacturing process. They're used as exfoliating or abrasive additives in body scrubs, tooth paste and other such products. Many of the producers of these newly dangerous compounds advertise their products as "natural" and cover the containers with green images. This is done to make the consumer think they're doing something good for themselves and the environment. The beads are used to replace natural ingredients such as pumice, ground almond and walnut shells, etc. These ingredients biodegrade or are eliminated from the environment through natural processes. The microplastic beads of course do not biodegrade. To make matters worse, they're so small that they pass right through the filters at municipal water plants. The chances are very good that you and I both have concentrations of these things in our system right now. You can bet that marine and aquatic organisms are loaded with them. So if you eat fish or enjoy a shrimp cocktail, congratulations. You and I are now part of the group of guinea pigs involved in the tests of whether or not these tiny, useless beads are carcinogenic or perhaps injurious to our health in some other way in the long run.

When the developers of these beads first brought their product to market they were not required to prove the product's safety nor to demonstrate that their introduction into the environment wouldn't cause harm. The chemicals used to manufacture them are known to be carcinogenic and are POPs, "persistent organic pollutants." The idea apparently was to grab all of the quick profits they could and fight the inevitable law suits later. Awareness of the dangers of these products has been slow but momentum is building for their complete ban. Due to high concentrations found in Lake Michigan, Illinois has already banned consumer products that contain the beads and New Jersey Senator, Frank Pallone, has filed a bill, the Microbead-Free Waters Act of 2014 which calls for a nationwide ban on the creation and sale of products that contain microbeads by 2018.

in a now famous scene in the 1967 film, "The Graduate", Dustin Hoffman's character is pulled aside in a cocktail party given in his honor by an obnoxious, well meaning neighbor. The guy has one word for our protagonist: "plastics". Back then few knew just how much damage these new products would cause in us and in our environment. If you've ever dropped a plastic shampoo bottle in the shower, you're glad it's there. All the same, it comes at a cost. For more information check this [link](#).

David Hartgrove

Trips to Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, Viera Wetlands, Paynes Prairie Preserve and Talbot Island State Park are scheduled. Twenty three birding trips and classes will be offered at various locations. A "Meet the Experts" event also be held.

I hope to see you at one or more of these events. Our chapter is involved in all of them in one way or another and we hope you'll take advantage of these opportunities. See you out there!

Jim O'Shaughnessy

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The Everglades, Jeb Bush and Big Sugar

As our former Governor Jeb Bush was in the forefront of Everglades restoration. He's now a presidential candidate and based on this well researched article from [New Yorker Magazine](#) there are things the candidate would rather we not know. Once again we see the ugly results of the convergence of money and politics. Thanks to chapter member, Pasty Hunter, for passing along word of this enlightening piece.

David Hartgrove

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Vesper Sparrow photo by Eddie Rizer



Swamp Sparrow photo by Eddie Rizer

These are just two of the species we can expect to see on our overnight field trip to the Circle B Bar Reserve on January 15th and 16th. The Swamp Sparrow is agitated about something since they don't actually have a crest as this bird appears to have. Contact Betty Butcher, 863-224-4922, if you'd like to go with us.

Editor

This month we have another article from David Simpson. A former state park ranger, David is a professional guide and holds a number state records. Find him [here](#).

Suburban Bluebirds

We normally think of Eastern Bluebirds as being birds of more rural areas. As those areas change character and are developed, many species that use rural habitat can't make the adaptations necessary to utilize the newly changed surroundings. Eastern Bluebirds have apparently been taking a few lessons from their more cosmopolitan cousins, Northern Mockingbirds. With a little help from human friends, they're gradually making the transition to more suburban landscapes. In November, while attending the very popular "Wings On The Wind Festival" at the Marine Science Center, I was approached by Kevin Lemire. A retired US Navy Lt. Commander, Kevin and his wife make their home in Port Orange west of Williamson Blvd. He sent these photos of the Eastern Bluebird family that used the bluebird box he installed in their front yard earlier in 2015.

Was That Cuckoo Yellow-billed or Black-billed?

Strikingly unique in flight, skulking and secretive in the trees, cuckoos are often difficult to observe. By far, the majority of Florida's cuckoos are Yellow-billed. Bill and eye ring color are readily apparent on a perched cuckoo, when seen well. But what of the rest? Most cuckoos flash across the trail and/or disappear among the foliage; no way to tell if they are Yellow-billed or Black-billed.

Maybe not. In good light and at close range, flying cuckoos are more easily separated than you might think. Flying Yellow-billed Cuckoos show a distinct rufous flash in the primaries while Black-billed Cuckoos have very little or no rufous. Note: Mangrove Cuckoos (limited range in south and southwest Florida) also lack rufous in the primaries. Upper parts of Yellow-billed Cuckoos are noticeably warm brown. Black-billed Cuckoos show a colder, grayer, tone. Both species have white tips on the tail feathers, but these are more prevalent on Yellow-billed. At close range, underpart coloration is surprisingly helpful. While searching for Mangrove Cuckoos in the keys, I was struck by the immaculate white underparts of Yellow-billed Cuckoos, and by how many Yellow-billed Cuckoos are in the keys. Black-billed Cuckoos have more dull, off-white colored underparts.

I have seen about a dozen Black-billed Cuckoos in Florida. Only two were perched, allowing me to observe the diagnostic bill and eye ring. I first recognized a Black-billed Cuckoo in flight at Sebastian Inlet State Park. I was struck by the lack of rufous in the wings and the drab upper parts. The first thing I notice on flying cuckoos is the flash of rufous in the wings, or lack thereof. Next is spotting on the tail feathers. Many flying cuckoos are heading away from me, making it impossible to see the underparts. Underpart coloration, if you can see it, is a surprisingly good mark and a useful supporting characteristic. Altogether, these traits give Yellow-billed Cuckoos a distinctly more contrasty look than the more uniform appearance of Black-billed Cuckoos. Cuckoos often flush at close range, allowing close observation, if only for an instant. With some practice and good conditions (sun at your back, bird in good light), wing flash, upper part coloration and tail spotting can be noted quickly. Cuckoos flying in the shaded canopy or toward the sun are probably best left unidentified or with the safe assumption of Yellow-billed.

The next time a cuckoo flies by, look at the wing tips, look at the tail, assess the tone of the upper parts, and the underparts, if you can. You will see lots of bright, contrasty Yellow-billed Cuckoos. Keep looking; eventually one of them will be a dull, boring, old Black-billed!

David Simpson

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Problems At Audubon's National Office

Audubon's national office has been experiencing some minor problems with meeting the expectations of its members. There have been changes to the organization's mailing and education departments. These involve retirements and vendor alterations that have resulted in late arrival of information related to new memberships and to Audubon Adventures. We've been assured that these problems will soon be corrected. However, due to these problems, we have no list of new members to welcome in this issue of the Pelican. If you're new, take heart. We'll welcome you just as soon as we get the notifications. We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting or field trip.

Editor



The female arrives bringing food to the chicks



The male stands watch over his territory and the nest box

photos by Kevin Lemire

Our thanks to Kevin for sharing this life affirming story with us. As I've said in previous issues, I'm sure many of you have interesting stories to tell. With or without photos. Please, send them along to share with our readers. Thanks!

David Hartgrove, Editor

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

Our website is www.halifaxriveras.org 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
February, 2016



The President's Message

Thoughts and Concepts

A number of our members recently returned from a wonderful field trip to Circle B Bar Reserve near Winter Haven. This 1,267 acre reserve was a cattle ranch until the year 2000 when the property was purchased by Polk County and the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Since then restoration of the marsh and uplands has been ongoing, creating habitat and providing new food sources for thousands of resident and migrating birds and other wildlife. Polk County's Nature Discovery Center is on the property and provided us with great local information and shelter from morning rains. The sky cleared and we enjoyed a wonderful tram ride throughout the property. We then took a walk through the marshes and along Lake Hancock. The next morning we were provided access into a water restoration area on the opposite side of Lake Hancock. The birding was great! We saw American Bittern, Green-winged Teal, American Avocets, Savannah Sparrows and many more. The highlight (for me at least) were the hundreds of American White Pelicans that we saw. One flock flew right over our heads and we could see just how big these marvelous birds are. Special thanks to our treasurer, Betty Butcher, who made all the arrangements for the outing.

I encourage you to check our field trip offerings for the remainder of the season. Our chapter is so fortunate to have talented members who volunteer to organize and lead these trips.

The second annual [Birds of a Feather Fest](#) will take place in Palm Coast on February 5-7. Three days of field trips, classes and workshops will be offered. Family activities on Saturday, the 6th, include Beginning Birding Walks in Linear Park and Gina Holt's presentation on raptors. Our own David Hartgrove will be leading trips to Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge and to Viera Wetlands. There are additional trips to Payne's Prairie, Matanzas Inlet for shorebirds and others. Photography classes and field trips are also offered as well as workshops on what to do with your photos after you've processed them. No registration fee is required.

Jim O'Shaughnessy

Audubon Adventures Needs Your Help

Yes, that means we need your money. Supplying Volusia County schools classrooms with [Audubon Adventures](#) is a major HRA project. The cost to supply one classroom with this exceptional educational material is \$45.00. Please donate what you can to this special project. We are currently serving forty five teachers in sixteen schools. Make your generous check payable to HRA and designate it's for Audubon Adventures. And Thank You!

Chapter Education Co-Chair, Marion Monaghan

Calendar & Events

Monday, February 15th, Regular meeting, David Baker, PhD., retired educator and Southeast Volusia Audubon Society member will give a presentation entitled "Birding Ireland." 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, February 3rd, Gull Watch Join David Hartgrove for an afternoon of larid delights. Larid is the family name for gulls and we'll see plenty, as many as 100,000 on the beach. Meet at Frank Rendon Park, 2705 S. Atlantic Ave., Daytona Beach Shores, at 4:00 pm. Questions, call David at 386-235-1249.

Friday, February 5th, Orlando Wetlands Join Bob North for a trip to this water treatment facility where in the past we've seen Crested Caracara, Vermillion Flycatcher, Limpkin and others. Meet at 7:30 am in the Target parking lot on Dunlawton Ave. just east of I-95 in Port Orange. Plan on about a 2 mile walk on level ground. Bring lunch. Questions, call Bob at 352-302-3510.

Wednesday, February 17th, Merritt Island NWR Join Peggy Yokubonus for our last trip of the season to this outstanding birding location. Spoonbills, avocets, ducks and shorebirds galore grace this refuge in winter months. Meet at 7:30 am in the Target parking lot on Dunlawton Ave. just east of I-95 in Port Orange. Bring lunch. Questions, call Peggy at 386-316-4085.

Friday, February 26th, Apopka Wildlife Drive Join Peggy Yokubonus for a trip that's mostly driving and may reach a species count of over 75 species. Meet in the International Square Mall just east of I-95 on Int'l Speedway Blvd., behind the Krystal Restaurant at 7:30 am. Bring lunch. Questions, call Peggy at 386-316-4085.

Reminder, Fort DeSoto in April

Wed.-Fri., 4/13-15 Fort DeSoto This is just a heads up. It's been several years since we've done this. We're having another overnight trip to this incredible birding location. We have a block of rooms reserved at the [La Quinta](#) with a double room rate of 70.18 per night. Call 727-527-8421, ext.6 to make your reservation for the nights of April 13th & 14th and state that you're with Halifax River Audubon. We'll carpool over to St Petersburg and meet at the big flag in Fort DeSoto Park on the afternoon of Wednesday, April 13th. You won't want to miss this one. It can be about as good as birding in Florida gets.

Field Trips With Others

Saturday, February 13th, Apopka Wildlife Drive Join our friends from Southeast Volusia Audubon Society for a trip to this reknowned birding destination. Meet at 7:30 am in the Florida Shores Plaza parking lot in Edgewater, (at the corner of US 1 and Indian River Blvd), south of the new Dunkin Donuts building. Bring a picnic lunch. Questions, call Gail Domroski, 386-428-0447.

At MOAS thru February 28, 2016

The Museum of Arts & Sciences owns 63 original prints and a total of 103 artifacts of John James Audubon. Seventeen prints from the permanent collection can be seen on display at the Museum until February 28, 2016. I enjoyed a scheduled lecture and collection viewing by Zach Zacharias, senior curator of education. The prints are located in the hallway of the north wing. John Audubon was a self-taught artist and scientist who single-handedly lifted bird portraits to a status of fine art. The result of his work is found in the book The Birds of America. Zach said that there are two originals, one in America and one in Russia. I was given a book by my family titled John James Audubon The Watercolors for the Birds of America. I enjoy looking at and reading through it often.

Of the seventeen bird portraits currently on display, the ones in action pose are the most appealing. The Northern Mockingbirds at nest being raided by a Diamondback Rattlesnake has an error in it. Maybe you have already guessed the problem. Next, the Great White Heron with a fish in its bill is stunning. This bird is a color morph of the Great Blue Heron. Audubon found this bird at what is known as Great White Heron NWR, established in 1938. Another startling action portrait is of the Virginia Partridge or Northern Bobwhite. The birds are being scattered by a hawk descending from above, talons open.

Continuing along the wall of action pose portraits, you will see the Eider Duck pair being disturbed by a second male that wants to invade their peaceful habitat and take the female for himself.

If you go, pick up a copy of the MOAS Winter 2016 magazine. An article titled "John James Audubon's Travels through Florida" is full of information about this great American frontier ornithologist.

Marion Monaghan

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SEA WATCHES AT TOM RENICK COUNTY PARK, ORMOND-BY-THE-SEA

From January 1st, 2016 I have started a long term project to record the birds and the numbers involved that pass this park. All species even the humble House Sparrow that can be seen to the rear are included. My name is Harry Robinson and I live in DeLand. In England my specialty was sea watching but here I have "worked" inland for the last 18 years so now I have gone back to my roots.

There is a spreadsheet that is updated monthly and it will hopefully be available on the Halifax River Audubon web site. There will also be a monthly newsletter detailing the more interesting sightings. Both the newsletter and the spreadsheet can be "ordered" from me Harry Robinson at sirharrydeland@gmail.com.

You are welcome to join me at the park on Friday, Saturday or Sunday mornings (sunrise to noon or later). I may also be there on Wednesdays. Unlike say a field trip to Merritt Island where you can share a spotting scope, that does not work with sea watching. The birds are in view for such a short time that sharing a scope is not a viable possibility. If you do not have a scope you will still see many of the more interesting species but perhaps not all. My hope is that the number of sea watchers in Volusia County will grow.

Harry Robinson (386-943-8342)

With our state legislature in session the possibilities for all sorts of chicanery and double dealing are too vast to contemplate. It's started already of course. Hydraulic fracturing, commonly known as "fracking" has been used in our country's push to increase oil and natural gas supplies. All across the country the results have been disastrous for thousands. Permanently contaminated ground water supplies and ruined landscapes are just two consequences of this destructive method of drilling. Twenty-seven of the state's sixty-seven counties have passed bans on fracking. Their citizens approached county administrators with results of research that convinced local officials that the practice was too damaging to our state's fragile ecosystem. Riding in to rescue the oil companies are Rep. Ray Rodrigues, (R) from Estero and Senator Garrett Richter, (R) from Naples. Among their constituents is the Barron Collier Companies. They want to drill fracking wells in the Naples area. They and various other oil companies have donated over 440,000.00 to major Republican legislators since the last election. Garrett's bill, SB 318, is racing through committees in the Senate. Rodrigues' bill, HB 191 already passed the House. Both prohibit local governments from interfering with fracking operations in their jurisdictions. While they do call for a study of possible negative effects from fracking, it appears this is nothing more than feel good legislation to calm the public's outrage while the oil companies get exactly what they want. Regardless of the damage they'll do to our water, tourism industry and quality of life. Yet further evidence that we have the best Legislature money can buy. I believe our last hope of stopping this madness is an appeal to Governor Scott. Call him at 850-488-7146 and leave a message requesting the he veto any bill that authorizes fracking in our state.

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While doing the Ponce Inlet Christmas Bird Count I found a Red Knot with a lime green leg flag, number 647. I reported the band to the band re-sighting [website](#) and got back a report that the bird was banded on 4/21/15 in South Carolina by Billy Dukes, of the South Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources. The bird is believed to be 3 years old. Making an annual round trip migration of roughly 28,000 miles between its Arctic breeding grounds and Tierra Del Fuego, in southern Chile, this bird and all Red Knots face a tremendous challenge. Keep an eye out if you're at the beach. Sometimes these bird will allow you to approach close enough to read these leg flags without a scope. Not all of the flags are lime green. The flag's color indicates where the bird was banded. Prior to 2003 birds banded in the US got dark green flags. A blue flag shows the bird was banded in Brazil; orange is for Argentina and red is for Chile. Over the years I've seen both red and orange flags. I haven't seen one from Brazil yet.

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The 19th Great Backyard Bird Count is just 2 weeks away and you can make a contribution to this important citizen science project. Here's a link to the [GBBC](#) website. It's full of information and links on how to get started, tips for identifying birds and much more. A cooperative effort by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Audubon and Bird Studies Canada, the count offers people who may not be able to get out and about as often as they'd like a chance to make a valuable contribution to the bird knowledge database. And it's a lot of fun.

Harry Robinson, whose first column in the Pelican is to the left, is one of the most experienced birders in Florida. His self published "Bird Migration - A Florida Study" runs nearly 400 pages and documents 5 years of data he collected while working for the St Johns River Water Management District at Lake Apopka. No one knows that place and its bird life like Harry. Welcome aboard Harry! We're glad to have you.

David Hartgrove

Welcome To Our New & Returning Members

We offer a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Beth Bartholomew, Deborah Benoit, Elaine Carlini-Davis, Carolyn Goodrich, Shelly Green, Beverly Greist, Henry Guy, Reid Hughes, Charlie Latta, Frederick Lloyd, Joyce Parks, Kristen Richards, Lauren Slade, Elizabeth Smith, Jeanette Stewart, James Sweeney, Alyce Switzer, Judy Travis, Nicole Triantafello, Helen Tucci, Wilma Wagoner and Martha Wirkutis. We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting or on one of our excellent field trips.

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Time for another in our series "Everyday Birding", by Ray Scory.

Dunlawton Bridge Field Trip, Port Orange, FL

Fog clung to the surface of a rippling Halifax River. The rain came, sometimes in wind driven sheets, other times in a soft, light drizzle. All this cloaked in a dark overcast sky. Then a more brisk wind pushed aside the menacing clouds to reveal azure blue strips of an emerging clear sky. The sun appeared bright and fresh, sparsely surrounded by puffy white clouds. All perfect ingredients for a wonderful 2.5 hours birding at the Dunlawton Bridge with eleven excited Halifax River Audubon friends.

I have birded the bridge for the past 15 years, leading trips, participating in Christmas Bird Counts, The Big Sit, other surveys, and by myself. Each time in its own way the bridge has gifted me with a wealth of pleasure and surprises. I like to tell people, "...any time of the day, any day in the week, any week in the month, any month of the year and under any weather conditions. I can count at least 25 species if not more in 1.5 hours of birding at the bridge.

I submitted this challenge to the eleven birders during our Halifax River Audubon field trip to the bridge on Sunday, December 16th. They accepted the challenge in good-natured gusto and by the 1.5 hours limit we had identified 31 different species of birds. Thankfully, also, my Dunlawton Bridge bird species pronouncement held true for another trip to the bridge. I salute the skill of the participating birders. My pronouncement stands unblemished.

Some notable bird species that graced our avian table this day were four American White Pelicans, one each Palm and Yellow-rumped warblers, black-bellied Plovers, a dancing Reddish Egret, Caspian and Royal Terns, Tree Swallows and Red-breasted Mergansers gracefully looping up and down the river in synchronized fashion.

Continued in the next column.



American White Pelicans, gulls, etc. photo by Ray Scory

Shortly after the field trip terminated, I lazed around hoping to see some late arrivals coming to the river and mud flats. It was not to be. However, holding to the nature of most field trips, the unexpected happened. A brilliant sun setting to the west created a monster rainbow out over a fog laden ocean. A perfect backdrop for this phenomenal display of Nature. A flawless rainbow arching in a dramatic half circle with each point seemingly anchored to the beach. Breathtaking in the sheer impact of saturated color. Awesome.



Rainbow, looking northeast from the bridge, photo by Ray Scory.

Closing out the field trip spectacular, my son, John, and I watched hundreds of White Ibis glide into Rookery Island just south of the Dunlawton Bridge. A calming dusk gradually changed into a politely mysterious night. I opened the door to my pickup, climbed in and drove home.

Ray Scory

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That's Not Any House Sparrow I've Ever Seen!



Pin-tailed Whydah, photo by Paul Rebmann

This male Pin-tailed Whydah, (*Vidua macroura*), in non breeding plumage, showed up in Ponce Inlet recently while our local Native Plant Society chapter was having a plant walk. Popular cage birds, they have been seen in the area before and a breeding population exists in southern California. Like Brown-headed Cowbirds, they're nest parasites. Laying their eggs in the nests of other birds and flying off to have the host bird raise their young. Native to Africa, they are not established in Florida... yet.

David Hartgrove

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**Florida Power & Light, Garden Club of the Halifax Country,
The Ormond Beach Garden Club, Spruce Creek Garden & Nature 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.3 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
March, 2016



The President's Message

Thoughts and Concepts

My wife and I have enjoyed watching a pair of blue jays in our backyard for the last several weeks. Today I opened the latest edition of Bird Watcher's Digest and the cover article is all about Blue Jays. I learned a lot.

It is one of the most strikingly beautiful of America's birds. Its bright blue mantle contrasts with a grayish-white breast. Its wings are intricately woven in blue, black and white. The blue tail is crossed with black bars and has white outer corners. The white cheeks are set off from the nape by a broad black border. The expressive blue crest earned the Blue Jay its scientific species name, *cristata*, which means crested.

The adult Blue Jay weighs 2 to 3 ounces. Males and females look almost alike with the males slightly larger. Fledgling Blue Jays are less colorful. These beautiful birds are superficially blue and white, but actually are a remarkable variety of complex colors and patterns. Interestingly, if you hold a Blue Jay feather up so that the light streams through it, instead of reflecting off it, the feather appears gray with no hint of blue. To simplify a complicated explanation, the bird's feathers appear blue because the prismatic structure of their feathers reflects light in the blue segment of the color spectrum. Variations in those structures explain why some birds appear "bluer" than others.

Blue Jays have a reputation for robbing nests. Probably because John James Audubon first painted them doing so. In fact they do occasionally rob nests, to feed their young, but normally feed on acorns, insects, fruit and obviously enjoy bird seed from our feeders. Their movements are something of a mystery. Research indicates that the vast majority reside in one general location year round. Some move from season to season or year to year and remain within a radius of a few miles. Blue Jays that breed in Florida do not appear to migrate at all. In northern states as many as 20% migrate significant distances but don't seem to do so on an annual basis. Flocks of Blue Jays are seen flying in the fall but there is no evidence that they are flying to a warmer climate for the winter. They may be hunting for acorns and returning to their home after caching nuts. They bury their acorns and return to dig them up and eat them later. However they appear forget the location of the majority of their treasure and may be primarily responsible for advancing the growth of oaks in the eastern United States. So, these wonderfully beautiful creatures, weighing less than a quarter pound, may be responsible for many of our beautiful forests.

Spring is just around the corner and with it, migration. So clean your binoculars and sharpen your warbler identification skills for this amazing annual occurrence. And keep an eye and ear open for Blue Jays.

Jim O'Shaughnessy

Calendar & Events

Monday, March 21st, Regular Meeting Florida's Springs and Aquifers will be the subject of our program. Heather Culp, Assoc. Director of the Howard T Odum Florida Springs Institute, will be our speaker. Access to clean water will be a rising concern, especially as sea levels continue to rise too. This promises to be a fascinating program. 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

Friday, March 4th, A1A North Run, Join Paula Wehr for this drive up A1A for both warblers and shorebirds. Meet at 8:00 am at Washington Oaks State Gardens, 6400 N Oceanshore Blvd., in Palm Coast. There we'll look for warblers and other passerines. Then we'll head north to Matanzas Inlet to look for migrant shorebirds. Bring lunch. Questions ? Call Paula at 386-299-6651.

Friday, March 18th, Ocala Nat'l Forest & Rodman Dam, Join John Roessler for this trip west to see Florida Scrub Jays, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and others. Meet at 7:30 am at Ormond Town Square - Granada & Williamson Blvds behind Chick-fil-A. Bring lunch. Questions ? Call John, 386-212-6957.

Field Trips With Others

Saturday, March 5th, Princess Place Preserve, Join our friends from West Volusia Audubon for a trip to this wonderful destination. WVAS meets in DeLand at the Post Office to carpool. If you're driving from here you may want to rendezvous with the group at Princess Place, 2500 Princess Place Road, Palm Coast. Bring lunch. Questions ? Call Eli Schaperow, 407-314-7965.

Thursday, March 19th, Blue Heron River Cruise, Join the West Volusia Audubon folks for an outing on the St Johns River. Cost for this pontoon boat trip is 20.00 for seniors (60+), 22.00 for adults. RSVP as soon as possible by calling Eli Schaperow, 407-314-6957 and mailing your check (made out to West Volusia Audubon) to Eli at 902 Sweetbrier Dr. Deltona, FL 32725. You'll need to be at the Hontoon Landing Marina, 2317 River Ridge Road, Deland by 2:45 pm. The boat leaves at 3:00 pm and should return to the dock by 5:30 pm. Or a bit later if the birding is even better than expected.

* * * * *

Reminder, Fort DeSoto in April

Wed.-Fri., 4/13-15 Fort DeSoto We're having another overnight trip to this incredible birding location. We have a block of rooms reserved at the [La Quinta](#) with a double room rate of 70.18 per night. Call 727-527-8421, ext.6 to make your reservation for the nights of April 13th & 14th and state that you're with Halifax River Audubon. PLEASE, if you're going on this trip, call David Hartgrove at 386-235-1249 or send an email to birdman9@earthlink.net to let me know you're going. Thanks!

Conservation Notes

It's hard to believe that the people who've been elected to our State Legislature have been living on the same planet as the rest of us. Time and again we've voted in overwhelming numbers to say how important conservation lands are to all of us. Our state park system in years past has received awards as the best park system in the nation. So why was it necessary for hundreds of protestors to gather at state parks across the state on the day before Valentine's Day?

HB1075, a bill filed by Rep. Matt Caldwell (R-Lehigh Acres) will, among other things, open our parks to hunting, timbering, cattle grazing and even the development of golf courses, RV parks or worse. The bill will also allow a private land owner whose property is adjacent to state lands or a park to apply for ownership of the state property without paying a cent. Audubon Florida has been working behind the scenes to try to amend this bill and its senate companion. Some amendments were made that in small ways improve the House bill. The Senate bill, 1290, filed by Senator Wilton Simpson (R-New Port Richey), is in committee and it's hoped that similar amendments can be made there before either bill reaches the floor for full votes. Even with the amendments these bills represent serious threats to our park system and to all of our conservation lands. It's as if these adults in the Legislature were behaving as petulant children. They're mad that we voted in Amendment 1 in 2014 so they're going to show us what they can do because they have the power. They'll show us just what they're capable of.

Those of us who've been involved in conservation issues for any length of time knew already just how out of touch these "children" are. That's why we mobilized and passed Amendment 1 in the first place. They refused to listen to our pleas for sound land management and conservation lands purchases. So we passed an amendment to the state Constitution that contains language directing them to do as we had asked nicely earlier. Audubon Florida representatives have been working hard in Tallahassee to get some common sense amendments added to these terrible bills since we can't seem to get them killed outright. We'll keep you posted on their efforts.

* * *

The Great Backyard Bird Count set new records for participation this year. In just one hour on February 14th 3,292 entries were made on the website. The highest number in one hour in the history of the GBBC. The following day more than 52,000 checklists were submitted. The highest number for a single day ever. And this is going on all over the world. Over half of the world's bird species have been reported with a species total of 5,491. Globally, a total of 156,534 checklists were submitted and nearly 18 million birds were counted. Because this information goes into the [e-Bird](#) database it can be accessed by researchers all over the world.

An example of just how valuable e-Bird is to researchers is shown on the [Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's](#) website. By studying data from the hundreds of thousands of entries and looking for specific species they were able to put together a map that shows the migration routes of 118 bird species that nest in North America. Birds like Bobolinks, Cape May Warblers and American Golden Plovers follow a somewhat circular route. In Fall they fly across a thousand miles or more of open ocean to take advantage of favorable winds. In Spring they fly inland to again take advantage of winds pushing them northward. Birds that avoid open ocean migration routes tend to migrate north and south along the same pathways. All of this information goes a long way in helping insure the birds' survival. Another example of the value of citizen science and you did your part. Thank you!

David Hartgrove

Upcoming Environmental Events

With the good weather of March and April comes events for you to enjoy:

Saturday, March 5th, Ponce Preserves The Planet,



Ponce Inlet's Earth Day Celebration 
Ponce Preserves the Planet

Saturday, March 5, 2016
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Ponce Preserve 

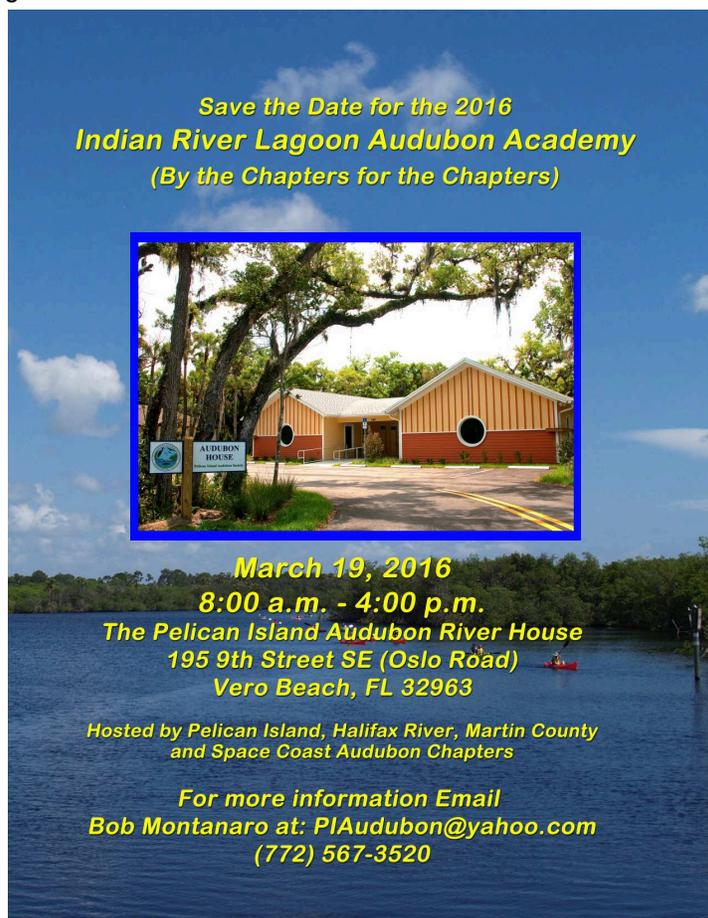
Activities for the whole family with over 20 exhibitors focusing on their contribution to preserving the planet.

Featuring a Native American exhibit, demonstrations, and presentations throughout the day by Jim Sawgrass

Parking & Shuttle available at Ponce Inlet Town Hall, 4300 S. Atlantic Ave
A designated TREE CITY USA for 22 years.
For more information please call Amy Z at (386) 236-2163

Our chapter will have a table at this event handing out fliers and giving information on birds, our chapter and its work and more.

Saturday, March 19th, Audubon Academy, This event will be held Vero Beach and is for all chapters in the Indian River Regional Conservation Committee.



*Save the Date for the 2016
Indian River Lagoon Audubon Academy
(By the Chapters for the Chapters)*



March 19, 2016
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
The Pelican Island Audubon River House
195 9th Street SE (Oslo Road)
Vero Beach, FL 32963

*Hosted by Pelican Island, Halifax River, Martin County
and Space Coast Audubon Chapters*

**For more information Email
Bob Montanaro at: PIAudubon@yahoo.com
(772) 567-3520**

Those interested in attending this event should contact President, Jim O'Shaughnessy at 386-253-0335 or jebk75@gmail.com so we can arrange a carpool.

Editor

Time once again for another installment of *Everyday Birding*, by Ray Scory.

Backyard Birding and a Few Visitors

Silent is the Owl, yellow eyed stare

Great Horned Owl's cunning flair.

Sitting at our breakfast table early one morning, Jane said, "Every time I pull into the driveway I look up to see if the owls are in the trees." So do I. We both laughed, as it brought back a memory of two years ago when two young Great Horned Owls roosted for the Winter months in our backyard pine trees.

They became our neighbors, our friends. They accepted us. Not once did our presence frightened them. They just looked down at us and went about their daytime business - resting. At the coming of dusk, they would lift from their perch and silently fly to a tree across the pond. What an eerie sight it was to watch them turn and face our house and then fly off. Two ghostly silhouettes casting off at the close of another day to begin their nightly excursions. They left us, not yet to return, with a sacred memory of quiet peace, deliberate activity, exquisite beauty and the regal poise of two birds of special character.

The Great Horned Owl female is slightly larger than the male, but they look similar. A large, rich brown body with splashes of mottled gray. Well-defined ear tufts (which have nothing to do with their ears) and a rufous facial mask with penetrating yellow eyes distinguish this amazing owl. Dark brown barring against a white upper breast rounds out the tell tale features of the Great Horned Owl.

Many memorable bird watching experiences have been framed by the back and front yard windows set in our home in a residential neighborhood. I sometimes feel that I miss so much avian behavior when I fail to look out the window as I pass by. It seems every time that I do pass by, I get to see some bird activity that is interesting and at times exciting. Looking out a window is a good way to build a birding life list.

Getting back to our breakfast backyard window, a spectacular morning sunrise peaked my interest. Day time was fast moving in and the rising sun was coloring the cloud splattered sky with a rich, orange glow. Across the pond in a leafless tree perched together were two robin sized birds silhouetted against the glowing sky. I went for my binoculars and returned to the window. My view of two birds was instantly shattered by a wave of frantically excited Cedar Waxwings. They were bent on stripping the remaining fruit from the tree in one passing encounter. They then moved to a nearby pine tree. The two robin sized birds were pushed from their perch and quickly flew overhead, confirming my first morning sighting as two Common Grackles. I have been looking for migrating Cedar Waxwings coming through our yard for the past few months. If I hadn't gone to the window to enjoy the sunrise I would have missed them.

Jane said, "You never know what you'll see when you look out the window."

Ray Scory

Ray's Doing A Presentation Next Month

On Friday, April 8, at 2:00 PM, Ray will be presenting his show "Everyday Birding - Close By". The presentation will be at the Port Orange Regional Library, 1005 City Center Circle. It will be an excellent show. We look forward to seeing you there.

Editor



Young Great Horned Owls in the backyard. *photo by Ray Scory*



Cedar Waxwings, *photo by Ray Scory*

* * * * *

Audubon Adventures Needs Your Help

Yes, that means we need your money. Supplying Volusia County schools classrooms with [Audubon Adventures](#) is a major HRA project. The cost to supply one classroom with this exceptional educational material is \$46.00. Please donate what you can to this special project. We are currently serving forty five teachers in sixteen schools. Make your generous check payable to HRA and designate it's for Audubon Adventures. And Thank You!

Chapter Education Co-Chair, Marion Monaghan

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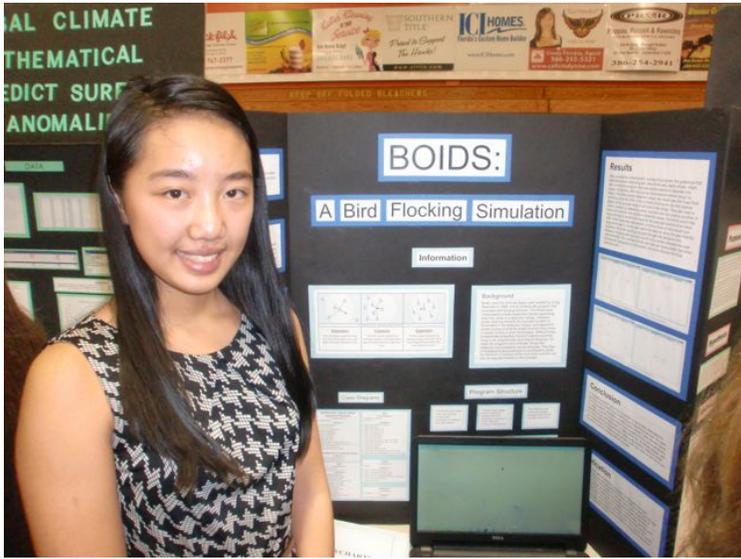
We Welcome Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Anita Deckard, George French, Marie Harrison, Carolyn Keene, Raymond Lilly, Kathryn Morris, Cledith Oakley, Cheri O'Donnell, Robert Oxley, Sang Roberson, Patty Stout and Laurie White. We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting or on one of our excellent filed trips.

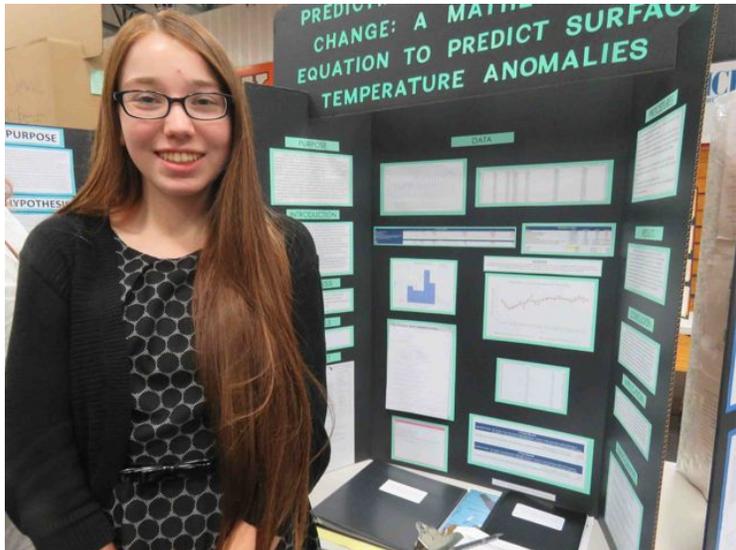
Volusia County Science Fair Awards

The Volusia County Science and Engineering Fair is an annual event, held in January. Our chapter, along with West Volusia Audubon and Southeast Volusia Audubon, pool resources and present cash awards to students whose projects involve environmental conservation themes. The three chapters each provided a judge to select the award winners. The 2016 Volusia County fair had 121 projects in the Junior division and 39 projects in the Senior division.

In the Senior division, the 1st place \$100 award was presented to Julia Yu from Spruce Creek High School for her project “Boids: A Bird Flocking Simulation” in the Mathematics and Computational Sciences category. She wrote a Java program which started with birds flying in random directions. If a bird came close to another bird, they would adjust their flight so that they would fly in the average direction of the group. The flocking would avoid obstacles while gathering other birds into the flock.



In the Senior division, the 2nd place \$50 award was presented to Gabriella Chehaitli from Spruce Creek High School for her project “Predicting Global Climate Change” also in the Mathematics and Computational Sciences category. For her project she did a correlation analysis of six social and economic factors and temperature changes. She then used her equations to predict historic changes in global temperatures.



In the Junior division the 1st place \$100 award was presented to Isabella Truxall of Silver Sands Middle School for her project “Dangers Lurking in Our Waters: Microplastics”, in the Environmental Engineering category. She used a micro-filter to extract minute pieces of plastic from water. She found 30 pieces of plastic per liter in Rose Bay salt water. The freshwater pond near her house had 8 pieces of plastic per liter.



In the Junior division, the 2nd place \$50 award was presented to Faythe Corr from the New Smyrna Beach Middle School for the project “TP Time is the Right Time” in the Earth and Environmental Sciences category. The project studied how quickly toilet paper decomposed.



Our congratulations to these outstanding students. Their embrace of science and its ability to address the problems their generation will face in the future will stand them in good stead as they move forward in their education.

Fred Mosher

photos by Fred Mosher and Eli Schaperow

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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
April, 2016



The President's Message

Thoughts and Concepts

The front page Sunday March 20 feature article described in graphic detail the latest crisis facing the Indian River Lagoon. I'd like to commend reporter Dinah Voyles Pulver and the Daytona Beach News-Journal for focusing on this critical issue.

The Indian River Lagoon is part of the longest barrier island complex in the United States. The lagoon spans two climate zones on Florida's East Coast and is approximately 156 miles long. It extends from Ponce Inlet to Jupiter Inlet near West Palm Beach. The Indian River Lagoon System actually consists of three lagoons: the Mosquito Lagoon which begins in our Volusia County, The Banana River in Brevard County and the Indian River Lagoon, which spans from Brevard County, through Indian River County and St. Lucie County. Its southern terminus is at Jupiter Inlet in Martin County.

By the way, a lagoon is defined as shallow coastal bodies of water separated from the ocean by a series of barrier islands which lie parallel to the shoreline. Inlets permit tidal currents to transport water into and out of the lagoons.

The Indian River Lagoon is in crisis. For several decades scientists have tracked sea grass as an indicator of the health of the Lagoon. Between 2009 and 2011 the Lagoon suffered a 60 per cent loss (47,000 acres). Recovery has been spotty and slow. Over the last several years over 500 manatees and hundreds of brown pelicans have died in the Lagoon. Scientists are reporting massive phytoplankton blooms, lesions on fishes and sea-turtles, flesh-eating fungus on dolphins and frequent fish kills. The most severe fish kill may have taken place days after the March 20 News-Journal article.

The causes for this devastation are many, but high nutrient inputs resulting from storm water releases, runoff, seeping septic tank systems and sewage treatment plant overflow, are the primary culprits. Audubon Florida has been a leader, along with other conservation organizations, in attempting to resolve these critical problems. Compelling the Florida legislature to appropriate Amendment 1 funds for the acquisition and improvement of conservation is critical. Educating local governments about the threats to the lagoon and encouraging recovery and cooperation to obtain state and federal funds for projects to improve water quality is essential. Continuing to support enforcement of strong fertilizer ordinances and supporting strong regulations that will reduce pollution from septic tanks and sewer overflows is likewise critical.

We can all play a role by promoting the importance of a quality environment and the fact that environmental protection is good for growing businesses.

Continued below

Calendar & Events

Monday, April 18th, Regular Meeting- Julie Wraithmell, Director of Wildlife Conservation, Audubon Florida will give a presentation on Coastal Stewardship. Julie's presentation will highlight the need for volunteers to monitor nesting shorebird colonies and how chapter members can play a vital part in the survival of these at risk species. 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, April 6th, Tiger Bay State Forest- Join Ray Scory for this trip to one of our area's better birding spots. Brown-headed Nuthatches, Eastern Bluebirds and Pine Warblers are just a few of the species we expect to see. Meet at 8:00 am behind the Krystal Restaurant, Int'l Square - just east of I-95 on the north side of Int'l Speedway Blvd. Bring lunch. Questions, call Ray, 386-763-4260.

Wed., Thur., April 13th & 14th, Fort DeSoto- We're having another overnight trip to this incredible birding location. We have a block of rooms reserved at the La Quinta with a double room rate of 70.18 per night. Call 727-527-8421, ext.6 to make your reservation for the nights of April 13th & 14th and state that you're with Halifax River Audubon. We'll meet at 8:00 am behind the Krystal Restaurant, Int'l Square - just east of I-95 on the north side of Int'l Speedway Blvd. to carpool. PLEASE, if you're going on this trip, call David Hartgrove at 386-235-1249 or send an email to birdman9@earthlink.net to let me know you're going. Thanks!

Friday, May 13th, Dora Canal Boat Trip- Join David Hartgrove for this 2 hour pontoon boat trip across Lake Dora and down the Dora Canal. We'll meet at 7:30 am behind the Krystal Restaurant, Int'l Square - just east of I-95 on the north side of Int'l Speedway Blvd. to carpool to Mount Dora. The trip leaves the dock at the Lakeside Inn, 100 N. Alexander St. Mount Dora at 11:00 am. Bring a picnic lunch and we'll dine at a park nearby afterward. Cost is 24.00 per person and the deadline for reservations is Friday, May 6th.

* * * * *

Field Trips With Others

Tuesday, April 19th, Orland Wetlands Park Tram Tour- Join our friends from Southeast Volusia Audubon for this special event. It's usually a long walk around the impoundments at OWP. For this trip the tram has been reserved. Purple Martins, Purple Gallinules, Crested Caracara and maybe a Least Bittern are all possibilities on this trip. **Reservations are required.** Contact SEVAS President, Don Picard, at (386) 957-1886 or cell, 307-699-2536 to reserve your seat. Meet at 7:30 am 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.

We can continue to improve partner-ships with schools, teachers, municipalities, health departments, service organizations and other like-minded groups. Maybe most importantly, we can work hard to elect public officials who will take the difficult but necessary steps to improve our environment before it is too late.

Jim O'Shaughnessy

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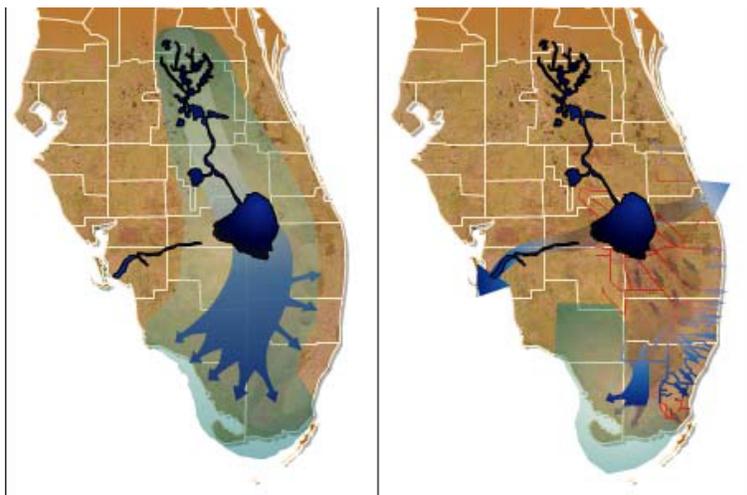
Lake Okeechobee Is Part Of The Problem

There is an ecological crisis in the Lake Okeechobee watershed. Large quantities of water with high levels of nutrient pollution from Lake Okeechobee and local basins are being discharged through the fragile St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries. The St Lucie empties into the Indian River Lagoon.

The discharges have caused algae blooms to form, which negatively impacts native vegetation, fish, and coastal birds. Florida's famously clear coastal waters have turned dark brown and green, driving away tourists, harming local businesses, and reducing home values. Scientists have also detected harmful bacteria in some areas, making the water dangerous for human contact.

There is no quick fix to solve this problem. Protecting the health of Lake Okeechobee and the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries requires long-term solutions that hold water in the right places at the right time to more closely replicate the balance of water levels in the historic Everglades.

Below is an illustration showing the difference 100 years has made in the flow patterns of the Lake Okeechobee water shed.



Historic Flow Pattern

Current Flow Pattern

To achieve this goal, Audubon Florida recommends the following: Complete the CEPP, C-44, and C-43 reservoirs: The Central Everglades Planning Project will provide an outlet for 217,000 acre-feet of water to flow south from Lake Okeechobee and replenish the Central Everglades and Florida Bay. The C-44 reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) will limit salinity imbalances and pollution by storing and treating 50,600 acre-feet of water from the St. Lucie basin and at times from Lake Okeechobee. The C-43 reservoir will reduce estuary harm, especially during droughts, by storing 170,000 acre-feet of water from Lake Okeechobee and the Caloosahatchee basin.

After these projects are completed, it is estimated that Lake triggered high discharges to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries will be reduced by nearly 55%

Reprinted with permission from Audubon Florida

The sad saga of the Volusia Growth Management Commission took another turn as I write this. The development community, the Chamber of Commerce and others, whose opinion on the value of public participation in critical issues resides somewhere below a snake's belly, to borrow from an old phrase, are not happy. Certain they know what's best for us they've devised a plan to shut us out of the debate when an amendment to our Comprehensive Plan is in the offing.

Ten years ago during the last charter review period an amendment was put forward by these same groups seeking to do away with the VGMC all together. Though it was buried in a number of other proposed amendments it failed to pass by roughly 66% of the vote. The public saw that they were being bamboozled by a slick public relations pitch that would deny them a say in issues that could have a profound effect on their quality of life. They said, "No thanks!"

Now it's charter review time again and the same folks thought they had devised a fool proof plan. Grasping onto an event that took place last year in Oak Hill involving the Blue Origins land deal and their decision to locate at KSC, in Brevard County, these folks began to scream like banshees. How un-American it was that the VGMC wanted to hold a public hearing on the Comp Plan amendment the deal required. They claimed that Blue Origins moved to Brevard because it doesn't have a growth management commission. Yeah, right. All those empty buildings with just the right layout and all those laid off workers had nothing to do with the decision.

The VGMC was threatened with another amendment doing away with the Commission altogether. In a carefully orchestrated move designed to shut the public out of the decision making process, the VGMC came up with a plan to rewrite their own rules. There would be no need for a referendum because the VGMC would still exist. It just wouldn't have any power to do the job for which it was created. The amended rules would deny standing to individuals when a Comp Plan amendment was under consideration. Further, under the guise of streamlining the process, they would do away with the requirement that Comp Plan amendments be advertised in the newspaper. What we don't know won't hurt us, right ? Then, just as the VGMC was poised to vote itself into insignificance, it was decided that yes indeed there would need to be a charter amendment after all.

The charter review commission was to have had a meeting on Wednesday, March 30th where the proposed amendment dealing with the VGMC would be revealed. At the last minute it was postponed because the language of the amendment still hadn't been worked out. I can't help but think of the scene in the Wizard of Oz when Toto pulls back the curtain and Oz, the great and powerful, is forced to quickly state, "Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain." The same players who tried to bamboozle us ten years ago are at it again. A simple amendment isn't hard to write. Writing one with language which is designed to obfuscate the issue and confuse the public yet is still capable of passing muster before a court is the reason lawyers go to law schools.

In November there will be an amendment on the ballot that will, under the guise of streamlining the process, deny the public its voice in development issues. It will be long and wordy and designed to confuse the average voter into thinking that voting for it is in his or her best interest. We'll be watching for it and keeping you informed.

David Hartgrove

Snowy Egret - *Egretta thula*

I don't think of snow when I see a Snowy Egret. I don't think of cold. I think of people I have met, things I have done, places I have been. I think of beauty. I think of nice, and I think of life. I think of birds and the memories wash over me like a soft wind gentle over an incoming tide. I feel good.

I like to stand in a forest and watch the wind whisper through or sit on a log in a wetland area and bathe in the cacophony of twitters, whistles and grunts. Standing by a pond or taking a short walk in my neighborhood isn't a shabby way to go either. How about looking out a backyard window. All good things. All in bird watching. Silence can generate thoughts and thoughts perceptions and perceptions observations and observations identifications and identifications a thrill - a reward. Bird watching can be good.

A lone scarlet tanager resting on the top of a front yard hedge, surrounding my parent's small yard in a quiet residential neighborhood, awakened my interest in bird watching. I was 13 year's old and it was the year 1948. I had just started preparing for my Boy Scout bird study merit badge and there on the hedges a tired scarlet tanager was resting. I stopped, focused and memorized the beauty of this brilliant bird. I remained still for some time, and then bravely reached out slowly and touched the back feathers of this magical bird. "POW!!!" Bird watching has been with me ever since.



Scarlet Tanager by Ray Scory (his first bird photo)

I have watched scarlet tanagers feed their young in a small forest in Connecticut and occasionally had them come to my back yard there. However, I have yet to observe one in Florida. When I observe one here, it will be a nice moment. The scarlet tanager migrates from its wintering ground in NW South America, through Florida and lower southern states to its summer stay in the central and northeast US states into southern Canada.

The snowy egret in all its cleanly beauty is a joy to watch, especially when it is hunting or breeding. To mimic the patience of a snowy egret, in fact any waterbird, is a mighty challenge that can easily put one into a zone of quietude. Many superlatives come to mind when I watch the snowy egret, such as: showy, focused, active, wily, beautiful and determined.

Continued in the next column



Snowy Egret (in breeding plumage) by Ray Scory

With over three hundred miles of water edge in Volusia County, the Snowy Egret has quiet a lot of suitable habitat to ply their trade. I have watched them feeding as such varied habitats at the ocean's edge, wetland areas, agricultural locations, shopping malls, my backyard and under the Dunlawton Bridge. We can learn a lot about nature, and ourselves by watching the snowy egret. I touch the heavens when I think of birds and soar above the clouds to undiminished returns.

Ray Scory

* * * * *

They're Late But They're Here

The Bald Eagle nest in Holly Hill's Centennial Park finally has two youngsters again. Normally the adults have eggs in the nest by mid October. This year (perhaps due to the long, hot Fall) they're 3 months late. My grand daughters and I visited just before they left at the end of their Spring break.

Maya took this digiscoped photo without using an adapter. You can see one of the two chicks in the nest. That's the adult male keeping an eye on the nest. The female was in a tree over the parking lot.

David Hartgrove



Bald Eagle & chick photo by Maya Vicente

SEA WATCHES AT TOM RENICK PARK,

ORMOND-BY-THE-SEA

From January 1st, 2016 I have started a long term project to record the birds and the numbers involved that pass this park. All species even the humble House Sparrow that can be seen to the rear are included. My name is Harry Robinson and I live in DeLand. In England my specialty was sea watching but here I have "worked" inland for the last 18 years so now I have gone back to my roots.

There is a spreadsheet that is updated monthly and it will hopefully be available on the Halifax River Audubon web site. There will also be a monthly newsletter detailing the more interesting sightings. Both the newsletter and the spreadsheet can be "ordered" from me, Harry Robinson, at sirharrydeland@gmail.com.

You are welcome to join me at the park on Friday, Saturday or Sunday mornings (sunrise to noon or later). I may also be there on Wednesdays. Unlike say a field trip to Merritt Island where you can share a spotting scope, that does not work with sea watching. The birds are in view for such a short time that sharing a scope is not a viable possibility. If you do not have a scope you will still see many of the more interesting species but perhaps not all. My hope is that the number of sea watchers in Volusia County will grow.

Harry Robinson (386-943-8342)

* * * * *

The Great Backyard Bird Count

Well the GBBC is over and next February will be the 20th anniversary of its beginning. Each year sees an increase in the number of people participating. This year nearly 164,000 people sent in 162,052 checklists and totaled 5,689 species. Of course this is only possible because people all over the world are participating.

Here's a Green-tailed Sunbird that was seen and photographed in Bhutan.

Dark-eyed Junco was the species that made more lists than any other. Others in the top five are Northern Cardinal, Mourning Dove, Downy Woodpecker and Blue Jay.

David Hartgrove



Green-tailed Sunbird by Rinchen Dorji

Citizen Science of a Different Type

I was recently contacted by a professor from Vanderbilt University about participating in an online survey testing birding and observational skills. Below is the information. I urge all of our readers to participate in this survey. It's fun and you'll be contributing to the knowledge database. The bird survey takes about 10 minutes and is multiple choice.

Editor

Birders of All Skill Levels Needed

Our laboratory at Vanderbilt University is looking for birders of all levels of experience to participate in a project examining how perception and memory for birds differs between beginners and experts. We really do mean all levels of experience, from the true beginner to the expert with decades of study, and everything in-between.

These experiments are online on the web. They measure your ability to remember and identify birds and sometimes other animals or objects. Many experiments are fairly short. They can be done on any computer, wherever and whenever you decide to do them.

One of our current experiments is a bird identification test. Go online and test your birding skills.

This is the web site for our experiments: <http://expertise.psy.vanderbilt.edu>

Once you register your own login id and password on the site, and complete a short survey of your birding expertise, you will be able to participate in any experiments that are available. We expect to add new experiments over time. Some future experiments may include modest compensation.

If you have questions, please contact Professor Thomas Palmeri (thomas.j.palmeri@vanderbilt.edu) at Vanderbilt University.

Ethan Schmerling

Research Assistant

* * * * *

We Welcome Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: John Henningsen, Gail Jones, Lynn Kruse, Patricia Moore, Gwen Mugg, Eliza & James Phillips and Margaret Snyder. We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting or on one of our excellent field trips.

* * * * *

Audubon Adventures Needs Your Help

Yes, that means we need your money. Supplying Volusia County schools classrooms with [Audubon Adventures](#) is a major HRA project. The cost to supply one classroom with this exceptional educational material is \$46.00. Please donate what you can to this special project. We are currently serving forty five teachers in sixteen schools. Make your generous check payable to HRA and designate it's for Audubon Adventures. And Thank You!

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The Ormond Beach Garden Club, Spruce Creek Garden & Nature Club
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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 62-No.5 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
May, 2016



The President's Message

Thoughts and concepts

My wife and I finally made it to Fort De Soto Park in St. Petersburg. I say finally because we have been on the verge of going there twice before but for reasons I can't remember had to cancel. What a great place it is. It's south west of downtown St. Pete in the Gulf of Mexico. Well maybe it's in Tampa Bay or maybe it's in both of these bodies of water. Look at a map and you will see what a fragile piece of land it is. It is also absolutely beautiful with great beaches, picnic pavilions and wooded areas with oaks and some very important mulberry trees.

The park is made up of five islands and totals 1,136 acres with over 6 miles of beach. In May of 1539 a well known Spanish explorer came to the Tampa Bay area and began a conquest that would change the world. It is believed that Hernando De Soto explored these barrier islands before moving to the coast. As early as 1849 the U.S. Army realized the strategic significance of these islands. Thirteen years later, after the start of the Civil War, Union troops set up a blockade on two of the islands. Any Confederates attempting to run the blockade could be seen by troops perched atop a make-shift lighthouse. In 1898, at the start of the Spanish American War, these islands took on added significance and a mortar battery was constructed. Finally, a total of 29 buildings were constructed and the compound was named Fort De Soto. The Fort was used during World War I but I doubt it played a major role in the wars outcome since it was manned with one noncommissioned officer and eight privates. After the war the fort closed and hurricanes took a major toll on the buildings. The army sold the islands to Pinellas County and in 1963 Fort De Soto Park was officially dedicated. Self guided tours of the fort are today available however we did not have time to take advantage of this option.

We met at the giant flag upon arriving at the park and headed to a wooded area known for its mulberry trees. Northern Parulas and Yellow-Throated warblers were seen within minutes. Shortly after that a Black and White, and then another came into view. They are stunning. Then a magnificent Hooded Warbler was spotted. Cedar Waxwings abounded. We were able to see these special birds both days. American Redstart, Cape May Warblers and Prothonotary Warblers were also in view. After a wonderful and delightfully hectic couple of hours we headed to the North Beach area to see what short birds awaited us. Laughing Gulls were everywhere as were Ruddy Turnstones. We spotted American Oystercatchers, Semipalmated Plovers, Black-Bellied Plovers, Willets, and Wilson's Plovers, Short-Billed Dowitchers and a Loggerhead Shrike were some of what we saw. As with all our field trips, a complete list of all birds spotted will be posted on our web site.

Continued below on the next page.

Calendar & Events

Monday, May 16th- Program Meeting. Marianne Korosy, Important Bird Areas Coordinator and Coordinator of Audubon's Jay Watch program will give a presentation on Florida Scrub Jays, the state's only endemic species. 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

Friday, May 13th, Dora Canal Boat Trip- This will be our last field trip of the season. Join David Hartgrove for this 2 hour pontoon boat trip across Lake Dora and down the Dora Canal. Our target bird will be the gorgeous Prothonotary Warbler, along with whatever else we can find. We'll meet at 7:30 am behind the Krystal Restaurant, Int'l Square - just east of I-95 on the north side of Int'l Speedway Blvd. to carpool to Mount Dora. The trip leaves the dock at the Lakeside Inn, 100 N. Alexander St. Mount Dora at 11:00 am. Bring a picnic lunch and we'll dine at a park nearby afterward. Cost is 24.00 per person and the deadline for reservations is Friday, May 6th. We'll pay upon boarding and they've asked that we bring cash.

* * * * *

Field Trips With Others

Sunday, May 15th- Join our friends from West Volusia Audubon for a walk around Audubon Park, in Deltona. Meet the group at 8:00 am at the park entrance, on the south side of Doyle Road at Lush Lane. Questions, call Eli Schaperow, 407-314-7965.

* * * * *

Volusia County's Environmental Management Department offers a variety of field trips that give participants a chance to see and do things they may not be familiar with. Reservations are required, so call 386-736-5927 to reserve your spot for these exciting trips.

Monday, May 9th, Doris Leeper Spruce Creek Preserve- Learn about the importance of estuaries while hiking through beautiful scenery. Participants will have the opportunity to use a seine net. Fish, bird, and plant identification will be the focus of this adventure. Please wear closed toed shoes. Meet at 3251 N. Dixie Highway, NSB, FL 32168, call 386-736-5927 to reserve your spot.

Friday, May 20th, Eco Buggy Tour of Lake George Forest- Take a tour on the Ecobuggy to explore pine flatwoods, cypress swamps and marsh. Meet at, 998 Ninemile Point Road, Seville, FL 32190. Again, be sure to reserve your spot by calling 86-736-5927.

The second day was more of the same but I must mention the Great Horned Owls. We were told where to find two fledglings. After only a few minutes someone spotted one of them. Finally I was able to find this absolutely precious bird. Then we all saw the second one. Someone had to point out that the mother or dad was in a palm tree not ten feet from the two of them. Their ability not to be seen is magical. Seeing this family was an incredible treat. There were 15 people on the trip. Our trip leader, David Hartgrove, did a great job. Thanks David. Several people on the trip are birding snowbirds who spend the winter in the New Smyrna area. Our field trips are always open to members of other Audubon chapters and to anyone who wishes to join us. A list of our trips is published in early fall. Please join us.

We arrived home about 5PM and looked out back to see an Indigo Bunting and two Painted Buntings at the feeder. This our first Indigo. What a welcome home!

Jim O'Shaughnessy

* * * * *

This month Conservation Notes features a guest writer, Lamont Ingalls, Conservation Chair for our sister chapter, Southeast Volusia Audubon Society.

The Indian River Lagoon, Fish Kills and Root Causes

- 1) *Everything comes from somewhere.*
- 2) *Everything has to go somewhere.*
- 3) *There is no such thing as a free lunch.*

-Biology Professor, first day of class

Muck, aka "fine-grained, organic-rich sediments", now covers much of the bottom of the 156 miles of the Indian River Lagoon (IRL). This muck, which in some navigational channels is up to 13-feet deep, is the color and consistency of "black mayonnaise" and is saturated with organo-phosphates and nitrogen compounds. Heavy metals such as lead, zinc, copper, chromium and cadmium are often mixed in with this layer of sediment. The muck has been built up by decades of runoff and overflow from human activities along the watershed of the IRL. Core samples from the IRL show a pristine mix of sand and low-levels of organic silts until around the mid-1960s. Then, the muck begins to accumulate, aiding the establishment of those oxygen-robbing (anoxic) effects which create so much death in marine eco-systems that are dependent upon the stability of the normally-oxygenated waters of the IRL. The increase in water turbidity caused by muck that is unsettled by weather and water and human activities is also very injurious to marine life, especially the sea grasses.

A recent study, "Muck Thickness and Distribution in the Indian River Lagoon 2014" (Christopher Hoey) under the auspices of Florida Tech's Department of Marine and Environmental Systems, noted some of the key effects of muck and its continuing accumulation. "Muck accumulation causes the depletion of sea grass directly through anoxia and smothering, and indirectly by fueling harmful algal blooms. Smothering and blooms shade grasses and prevent them from receiving sufficient light for photosynthesis. 49 percent of the [70] stations surveyed exhibited muck. Comparing muck thickness in navigation channels from 2008 to 2014 showed an average increase of 0.5 feet."

Several muck removal projects have been completed over the years, or are in-progress. However, the present estimate of the amount of muck in the IRL is 135,000,000 cubic feet, the equivalent of a cube approximately 513 feet on each side. Or, for a comparison, this is about 5.5 million cubic feet *larger* than the volume of the iconic Vehicle Assembly Building at the Kennedy Space Center, one of the largest buildings on Earth.

The 2014 muck study by Christopher Hoey also included a summation of the factors in the decline in the quality of the waters of the IRL. "...The IRL exhibits a muddy to sandy benthos and is home to vegetation such as sea grass. In recent years the health of the lagoon has declined due to pollution, over fishing, invasive species, harmful algal blooms, and muck accumulation. Muck is mostly fine clay sediments with a high organic content. It accumulates in the IRL as a result of excess nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) runoff, and organic matter input. Muck is easily suspended in the water column, increasing turbidity. Settled muck rapidly goes anoxic and most benthic life cannot survive in muck impacted areas. Finally, muck can contribute excess nutrients to the water column and promote harmful algal blooms."

The March 2016 large-scale die-off of fish and other marine life along a 50-mile stretch of IRL shoreline from Titusville southward was a direct result of a bloom of brown algae which was nourished by the increased temperatures, existing layers of muck, and El Nino-related nutrient-rich January rains that were three times normal. The source of much of the added nutrients is fertilizer runoff from lawns and agricultural lands, and in equal measure, septic tanks. This creates conditions in which the water of the IRL becomes a petri dish optimized for an algal bloom.

These brown fogs of algae rob the water of oxygen, killing fish and marine invertebrates and killing or stressing seabed grasses. These die-offs and reductions in food sources also affect manatees and birdlife. As a result, these living beings also suffer reductions in reproductive success if not direct die-offs as a result of algal blooms.

Human-caused changes to the waters of the IRL are the root of this damage to the lifeforms that comprise the eco-systems of the Indian River Lagoon. The overflow and leakage from 600,000 septic tanks (up from 300,000 in 2008) in the IRL watershed and the fertilizer from residential, commercial and agricultural uses in this watershed directly create these zones of death. There is no other source.

The knowledge of the deleterious effects of septic systems and nutrient/sediment runoff in the IRL is not new. Scientific studies that warned of human-caused quality issues in the waters and dependent eco-systems of the Indian River Lagoon have been the subject of many university and public symposia since the early 1980s. Now is the time to apply solutions based in science rather than upon political expediency and political ideologies that refuse the knowledge created through science.

As a direct result of the recent massive fish kill, the political will to meet these problems is stirring in Brevard County. There is a proposed County initiative to dredge the muck from IRL waters. The cost of this effort is estimated at \$200 million. This money will only be well spent if plans truly address the root causes. In addition to direct dredging of the accumulated muck, these plans and regulations could begin with a moratorium on *any* new septic systems and a buildout of existing sewage treatment systems (including artificial wetlands) to replace the huge number of septic systems in the IRL watershed.

We just need to recall the wisdom in this saying from the Cumberland Plateau: "If a man made it, a man can fix it."

Lamont Ingalls,

Conservation Chair, SEVAS

Tiger Bay State Forest Field Trip

a feature of *Everyday Birding* by Ray Scory

Wednesday our field trip day was the kind of day you throw open your arms, lean back to the sky, close your eyes, feel the soft Florida breeze caress across your consciousness and softly sigh, "Aaaahhh". A magnificent day of billowy white clouds set against a spectacular marine blue sky surrendered to a mid seventies day, happy faces and a sun of penetrating brilliance.

And the birds. The birds were there. Thirty-five species were there and a few species were plentiful, but they were quiet, and that was the fun it. The search. The discovery. The moment of realization that you have found the location of that high pitched squeak or sweet, piercing trill is an exciting reward. That is the beauty of it all. Birdwatching.

Tiger Bay is a car driving, birdwatching experience. Dirt roads and acres of trees, slash pine and live oaks dominate the landscape. Myrtle and palmetto, also, make appearances and the birds that are there call it home. Drive slowly, roll the windows down, listen for the soft squeaks or melodious trills, stop the car and Brown-headed Nuthatches and Pine Warblers will be scurrying at tree top levels. This happened many times on our field trip through Tiger Bay State Forest.

The Brown-headed Nuthatch is not easy to find. It helps if first you hear it or see it fly across an open space, such as a roadway. Next get out of your car and look up. You will not find it feeding on the ground. Watch for movement in the tree tops. There you might see it moving rapidly down a tree trunk or spiraling across a thin branch. It might even try it duck your camera as it illusively scoots behind a pine cone, note my photo-illustration.

They are a challenge to photograph, but a fun challenge. They seem to constantly be on the move between branches on one tree or flying to other trees. Occasionally I have seen them rest, but only occasionally. Their pale, soft blue, gray coloration is a masterful disguise. Coupled with their diminutive size (4-5 inches) and wingspan (8-9 inches), they are a rare treat to observe and photograph. My photo-image illustrates a most common position of the Brown-headed Nuthatch observed when visiting Tiger Bay State Forest. The Brown-headed Nuthatch is one of the few birds in the world to use tools in gathering their food. The like to eat spiders, pine and sunflower seeds and insects.

Our Halifax River Audubon began the day by watching a Brown-headed Nuthatch excavate a nesting hole, we continued on to observe or hear 35 different species of birds, lunch under a magnificent Live Oak tree while serenaded by a Parula Warbler overhead and finally we said "Goodbye" to our cherished Brown-headed nuthatches.

A string of Eastern bluebirds perched on telephone wires, two Sandhill cranes and a Northern mockingbird wished us well as we drove from the forest and headed toward home. Tiger Bay State Forest, again, did not disappoint.

Ray Scory

* * * * *

Audubon Adventures Needs Your Help

Even though this school year is about to end, our chapter's efforts to supply Audubon Adventures to elementary schools could use your help. The cost to supply one classroom with this exceptional educational material is \$46.00. Please donate what you can to this special project. Make the check out to HRA and write "Audubon Adventures" in the memo space. Our mailing address is PO Box 166 Daytona Beach, FL 32115-0166. Thanks!



Brown-headed Nuthatch hiding behind a pine cone



Brown-headed Nuthatch photos by Ray Scory

* * * * *

Welcome to Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Frank Andrea, Fred Bankston, Wanda Bankston, Glen Battaglia, Marsha Beckwith, Krystal Berry, Dorothea Black, Merrill Black, Barbara Brown, Kathleen Brown, Louise Butcher, Pat Clark, Kathy Crawford, Larry Davis, Fred Favorite, Joyce Hall, Carla Hand, Krystal Johnson, Jerry Lapidus, Margaret Leone, Jean Lyksawa, Norma McDonald, Richard Moore, Kitsel Outlaw, Louise Patterson, Penney Pierce, Joan Raco, Glen Storch, Ronald Schultz, James Shepherd, Linda Smarse, Michael Wasserman and Laureen Weibel. We hope to see you at a meeting or on one of our field trips soon.

* * * * *

From "The Quotable Birder"

"For most bird watchers, the coming of the warblers has the same effect as catnip on a cat."

Arlene Thomas

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The Pelican

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

Volume 62 - Number 6 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
June, 2016



The President's Message

Thoughts and Concepts

Our last field trip of the season is now history. On Friday, May 13th, we headed for a boat trip to Dora Canal. On our way to Mt. Dora we stopped at Rock Springs Run State Reserve, a place I did not know existed. It is off of state road 46 east of Sorrento. It's always rewarding to discover new areas of our state. It's one aspect of the field trips that very much appeals to me. We all saw a pair of Summer Tanagers and were entertained by them for sometime. We visited the riding stable and came across a family of Wild Turkeys who were not pleased to see us. We then continued to Mt. Dora and boarded our boat for the trip across Lake Dora to the Dora Canal. We checked out a huge Bald Eagle nest but it appeared that no one was home. Prothonotary Warblers nest along the canal and we were hoping to see them but they did not cooperate. We did see Green Herons, numerous Tricolored Herons, and other wading birds. The canal itself is about five miles long and is partially man made and partially natural. It is a beautiful part of Florida and I recommend the boat trip to anyone who has not done it. We were advised by the crew that weekends are extremely busy so you may want to plan a weekend day tour if possible. Thanks to our own David Hartgrove of being our trip leader.

I'm pleased to tell you that board member Peggy Yokubonus has volunteered to be our field trip coordinator for our 2016-2017 year. A position she held with Sierra for a number of years. If you have any ideas or suggestions please let her know. Also, I am putting together the speaker list for the coming year. If there is someone who you think would be of interest to our group please let me know and I will move on it. Your input is valuable and appreciated.

Speaking of our monthly speakers, our last two (April and May) have been by members of the Audubon Florida team and both have provided a wealth of knowledge for us to digest. Julie Wraithmell coordinates the coastal stewardship program and provided us with ways to ensure beach goers do not enter fragile nesting areas for beach nesters such as terns and plovers. She brought us up to date of the potential impacts of global warming and resulting higher water levels. She told us of a new report summarizing the impacts of coastal engineering on the American Oystercatcher. The report includes recommendations for permit applications, and regulatory reviews to improve projects for the benefit of imperiled shorebirds. She coordinates the Bird Steward program and works with numerous conservation volunteers throughout the state. Her presentation was supported with terrific pictures to compliment her talk.

In May we were fortunate enough to have Dr. Marianne Korosy Florida's Jay Watch Coordinator. I did not know that Scrub- Jays are cooperative breeders!

Continued below

Calendar & Events

Monday, June 20th, Program Meeting: Join us for an evening of stunning wildlife photos by our own Robert Wilson. Robert's presentation will include photos made using digiscoping, a technique that utilizes a digital camera and a spotting scope. 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. This will be our last meeting of the season. As usual we'll be on summer hiatus in July and August.

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Summer Exploration Options

As you drive over our area's bridges across the Halifax or Indian Rivers, you may wonder what's hidden in those winding waterways among the mangrove islands. The Marine Discovery Center, in New Smyrna Beach, offers the answers with pontoon boat trips and wonderful kayaking opportunities for both the experienced kayaker and the beginner.

There are three boat tours. The "Dolphin Discovery Tour" goes south of the MDC into Calalisa Creek. The "Dolphin Lighthouse Cruise" goes north to Ponce Inlet. Both cost 28.00, or 25.00 for seniors and students. Click [here](#) for the schedule. The third option, the "Island Discovery Tour", runs only on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month, from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm and cost 35.00 for adults, 30.00 for seniors and students. This tour provides a more interactive experience where you get to use dip nets and a seine to capture, identify and release fish, conchs, sea stars, horseshoe crabs and other marine life.

For the more adventurous souls among us, try the kayak tours. There are two offered: the "Kayak Adventure Tour" and the "Guided Kayak Ecotour." Both cost 40.00 and include kayak, life vest and safety instruction. Lisa Mickey, a chapter member who many of you may know from her attendance at our monthly meetings, leads many of these outings. Under her skillful tutelage you'll learn to handle the kayak and about the birds, fish and general ecology of the area. She says now is the perfect time to go to see babies on the nest at the two rookery islands in the New Smyrna Beach marina area. The tours are offered most days at 10:00 am. If you want to go with Lisa, schedule your trip for Monday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday. Be sure to plan for your trip by wearing closed toed water shoes or an old pair of sneakers you don't mind getting wet. Bring water, sun screen, a hat, sunglasses, bug spray, a sealed plastic bag for all electronic devices and your binoculars.

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And Don't Forget To Check Out Volusia County's Events

Volusia County's Environmental Management Team offers a number of activities, hikes, buggy tours, etc. Click on this [link](#) and scroll down the page to "Upcoming Events."

As a matter of fact, I never heard of such a thing. The federally threatened Florida Scrub-Jay is our state's only endemic bird species. Habitat loss and fire suppression of scrublands, the Scrub-Jay's prime habitat, have caused historical populations to plummet. She talked about the seven primary Scrub-Jay sites in the state, including Lyonia Preserve and Lake Monroe Conservation Area in our own Volusia County. Almost three hundred volunteers contributed over 3000 hours to protect these amazing creatures last year. Naturally, she is always on the lookout for additional volunteers. Her wonderful photos added greatly to her most informative program.

We are very fortunate to have such talented and dedicated folks working for Audubon Florida.

Jim O'Shaughnessy

* * * * *

Sea Watch Report From Tom Renick Park

Hi folks, another month and the spring temperatures have given way to those of summer. Which means half as many species each day. This was shorebird month, with the heaviest passage in the first two weeks. There were still a few stragglers at the end of the month. For the month I saw 88 species over 19 visits and 98 hours. I have now seen 151 species this year and 155 overall.

There were four additions this month. There was an adult Reddish Egret over the Halifax River on the 4th, a Cliff Swallow on the 6th, a Blackpoll Warbler on the 4th and a Tufted Titmouse on the 8th. So what did I see for the rest of the month?

There were single Brown Boobies on the 6th and 18th there were also 1 to 2 Northern Gannets on occasions through the month. Herons were still moving, with 31 Snowy Egrets on the 8th, the Reddish Egret and up to two Yellow-crowned Night-Herons from the 15th. Two Roseate Spoonbills were seen on three dates over the river. The last Black Scoter was seen on the 1st whilst Red-breasted Mergansers (1 to 3) were seen regularly. There were 3 Swallow-tailed Kites on the 13th and a pair of Cooper's Hawks must be nesting in the immediate area. There were high counts of ten Black-bellied Plovers on the 7th, 13 Semipalmated Plovers on the 7th, 22 Willets on the 11th, 4 Spotted Sandpipers on the 18th, 8 Whimbrel on the 6th, 1 Red Knot on the 6th, 430 Sanderlings on the 5th, 161 Semipalmated Sandpipers on the 6th, 55 Least Sandpipers on the 11th, White-rumped Sandpipers on four dates from 5th to 8th with 3 on 6th and 8th. There were 7 Pectoral Sandpipers on the 6th with 8 on the 7th. There were 8 Dunlin on the 21st with 2 Short-billed Dowitchers on the 6th and 1 on the 30th.

Some last dates for the gulls: Ring-billed on the 14th, Herring on the 18th and Great Black-backed on the 14th. There were two Gull-billed Terns on the 7th with one on the 18th. There was one Common Tern on the 7th with five on the 18th. The Least Terns peaked at 47 on the 15th. There was a Common Nighthawk on the 8th and 11th with an Eastern Kingbird on the 7th. The last Tree Swallow(s) were seen on the 13th. Bank Swallows were seen to the 8th with 13 on the 6th. There was also a Cliff Swallow on the 6th. Barn Swallows peaked at 8,460 on the 6th with 5,700 on the 7th and 1,140 on the 8th. Passage continued to at least the 30th. Warblers were scarce there was a Palm Warbler on the 4th, single Blackpoll Warblers on the 4th and 14th with an American Redstart on the 14th. On the 30th a warbler flew in off the sea but I did not get a good enough look to identify it. A total of 65 Bobolinks flew to the north on the 8th.

The 6th was a special day I saw 9,623 birds and 59 species both are record high counts. Just when will I get to see the petrels and shearwaters?

Harry Robinson

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave...when first we practice to deceive." So said Sir Walter Scott in 1808. He could easily have been speaking of the current events in DeBary. With assistance from the supposed environmentalists in the St Johns River Water Management District, the city staff in DeBary thought they were about to pull a fast one on all of us. They forgot to take into consideration the investigative skills of Dinah Voyles-Pulver. Her revelations in the News-Journal of malfeasance by these people is worthy of the Pulitzer Prize she has long deserved.

We're supposed to be protected from chicanery by government officials by something called "The Sunshine Law." Contained in Chapter 286 of the Florida Statutes, "these laws provide that any records made or received by any public agency in the course of its official business are available for inspection..." So comments made by government officials when engaged in official business are not to be hidden from the public. Period. The members of the DeBary city government have been in contact with staff and board members of the SJRWMD and some undisclosed developer to scam the public out of conservation land. Their negotiations have been carried on in secret in clear violation of the law. In addition, none other than the Chairman of the SJRWMD Governing Board, one John Miklos, is also president of the consulting firm advising DeBary on how to secretly acquire the 102 acres of conservation land and being handsomely paid to do so. And the amazing thing is, he and the rest of these clowns seem to think they've done nothing wrong. Ask them, they'll tell you. However, they're also stonewalling any attempts to find out who came up with this scheme. If it's all so innocent, why are they so determined to conceal the facts ? The reason is obvious, they knew this was going to be controversial. They knew they were about to kick open a hornet's nest of public disapproval. If they could keep it under wraps until it was too late for the public to mobilize opposition, the plan would go through and the money would flow to the "right" people.

Ever since Governor Rick Scott took office he and his henchmen have done their best to reverse decades of progress in correcting the state's environmental problems. After the SJRWMD did away with a number of dedicated people who would have objected to the plan, some in DeBary's city hall felt the plan would go forward and eventually resemble Crane's Roost, in Seminole County. There's nothing wrong with Crane's Roost, such as it is. Trying to imagine turning the relaxed, tree shaded glory of the area in question into something resembling that sun drenched, over crowded and noisy venue would be like putting a bingo parlor and a Chuckee Cheese next to the Museum of Arts and Sciences.

Now that the state's attorney has executed a search warrant and collected thousands of emails and other evidence the truth should eventually come to light. The real problem here is not just the theft of land that has been set aside in conservation for us all. This deal, if it were allowed to go through, would set a dangerous precedent that could endanger all sorts of conservation lands, including state parks. Remember, the governor and his staff came into office with plans to add golf courses to several of our state parks. They still want to open them up to hunting, timber harvests and cattle grazing. The public's strong opposition to these plans put them on notice that they needed to be more discreet (as in sneaky) about what they're trying to do in DeBary.

Put people who subscribe to these ideas about parks into power at the national level and we'll see a sign above Mount Rushmore for Alka Seltzer. It wouldn't be Grand Canyon National Park. It would be Verizon presents Grand Canyon National Park. Fortunately, we still have a strong press here that alerted us to this travesty and we will hopefully prevent DeBary from ruining dedicated conservation land in the quest for quick profits.

David Hartgrove

Wow! What A Pelagic Trip

The Marine Science Center sponsors several pelagic trips each year. Sometimes the birds can be few and far between. And then there are days like Sunday, May 29th. Editor

On May 29th, 42 stalwart individuals boarded the Pastime Princess in New Smyrna Beach and headed out of Ponce de Leon Inlet, Volusia County at 3:00 a.m. We traveled out to the Gulf Stream and began to find bird action shortly after dawn. With the crew chumming heavily we had an amazing day. By 8:00 a.m. we had already logged Sooty Terns, Pomarine Jaegers, Wilson's Storm-Petrels, Cory's Shearwaters, Black-capped Petrels, and to top it off a stunning White-tailed Tropicbird. The action continued for several hours virtually non-stop. We hit a slower period about lunch time when suddenly we had another White-tailed Tropicbird, Bridled Tern and Audubon's Shearwater. We made it out 62 miles offshore to the edge of a canyon over 2,400 feet deep.

We ended up with a fantastic day full of excellent birds, at least 10 Loggerhead Sea Turtles and we successfully released a Green Sea Turtle from the Marine Science Center sea turtle hospital back to the wild at a weed line in Gulf Stream.

Michael Brothers

Here Are Some More Photos From The Pelagic Trip



—13TT



Top photo is of one of the Pomarine Jaegers we saw. Bottom photo is of one of the White-tailed Tropicbirds.

Photos by Michael Brothers



A Special Thanks To Our Sponsors

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The Ormond Beach Garden Club and Colonial Colony**

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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

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July, 2016



The President's Message

Thoughts and Concepts

Few, if any, activities require less gear and equipment than birding. Comfortable footwear, a hat, and your binoculars and off you go. But we humans find ways to complicate just about everything and birding is no exception.

Today we can purchase specially designed harnesses to help us carry our binoculars and our camera with a long, and heavy lens. Optic stabilizers are available to assist us in getting the perfect picture. Spotting scopes, today an essential for many, come in a range of prices from a couple hundred bucks to over \$3000. Tripods today are made with space age materials and come with a bewildering selection of head combinations. Binoculars, the truly essential item, are now manufactured by dozens of companies and range in price from less than \$100 to several thousand dollars. You can purchase bird song recording gear, apps that provide the sounds of hundreds of birds and broadcast these sounds for long distances. And who would think of leaving home without waterproof ink-jet paper and a writing instrument that will permit you write home in the middle of a hurricane without having to seek shelter.

Today's digital world provides us numerous tech tools. I'm sure you will agree that the following are "must get" items, if you don't already own them. Film cameras went the way of prop planes and today most of us have owned at least a couple of digital cameras. In the last couple of years new compact "ultra-zoom" cameras have become available and they are attracting those who don't wish to continue to carry the heavy long-lens traditional DSLR camera. Nikon and Canon both make compact-ultra zooms and more and more birders are purchasing them. These cameras have mind-blowing optical zooms from about 60x optical zoom to 83 optical zoom. This is equivalent to somewhere between 1400mm and 2000mm reach. These babies weigh in at about a pound and a half! We will see a lot more of these in the next few years.

Phone scoping (digiscoping) is another hot topic. Simply purchase an adapter and then clamp your smartphone onto your spotting scope and you're in business. This can get pretty expensive because whenever you purchase another smartphone or scope you may need another adapter. However, the quality of pictures, and the incredible detail, because you are using your spotting scope, is amazing. The digital revolution has extended to sound. This has permitted the more frequent use of sound recordings for identification. Many of the built-in smartphone mics have very good sound quality and its only necessary for us to learn how to quickly activate its recording features. There are external mics available for those that wish to supplement their smartphone.

The article to be continued in next month's Pelican.

Jim O'Shaughnessy

Calendar & Events

As you all know our chapter is taking its annual summer hiatus. That doesn't mean there aren't lots of activities available for those of us who haven't left town for the summer. Below are some ideas for summer fun.

Volusia County Environmental Management has these activities.

Thursday, July 7th, Snorkel/Swim Adventure- Bring your snorkeling gear and sense of adventure to learn about the wonders of our underwater ecosystem. Participants will learn about various marine species, while snorkeling the high slack tide near Ponce DeLeon Inlet. Participants must be able to swim, have their own equipment, and anyone under the age of 18 will be required to wear a Personal Floatation Device (PFD) and be accompanied by an adult guardian. Meet at 10:45 am at Lighthouse Point Park, 500 S. Atlantic Avenue, Ponce Inlet. Be sure to register by calling 386-736-5927.

Thursday, July 14th, Guided Hike, Spruce Creek Preserve- Learn the importance of estuaries while hiking through beautiful scenery. Participants will have the opportunity to use a seine net. Fish, bird, and plant identification will be the focus of this adventure. Meet the group at 3251 N. Dixie Highway, NSB. The event is from 2:00 to 4:00 pm. Please wear closed toed shoes and be sure to register by calling 386-736-5927.

Saturday, July 16th, Guided Hike, Scrub Oak Preserve- This two hour hike offers a chance to learn about the importance of scrub habitat, water recharge zones, and keystone species while hiking through the beautiful scenery. Participants will hike approximately 1 mile of trails and get an up close look at the land management practices of the conservation area. Meet at 8:00 am at 1495 McGregor Road in DeLand. Be sure to register by calling 386-736-5927.

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Critical Wildlife Area Meeting

The Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission has announced plans to establish a number of newly designated "Critical Wildlife Areas" across our state. Most of these will primarily benefit our bird populations. However, birds aren't the only things that fly and need help. So a cave complex used by bats in Citrus County is on the list too. Here's a [link](#) to the areas under consideration. One of them is Rookery Island, the island just off the Port Orange Bridge with all of the nesting birds. On Tuesday, July 26th, a stakeholder's and informational meeting will be held at the Piggotte Community Center, 504 Big Tree Road, South Daytona from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Please come to this meeting to show your support for this important project. Current legal restrictions prevent proper signage that will help protect the birds from disturbance by humans who don't realize that simply by landing their boats they're endangering the birds. A CWA designation will correct this.

The Latest From the American Bird Conservancy

Information gleaned from the latest issue of their monthly bulletin.

New Research Reveals Destination of Willets

The Willets we see on our beaches and mud flats in winter are Western Willets. Their slightly smaller brethren, the Eastern Willets, migrate south from here to points in Central and South America for the winter. Western Willets nest on the Great Plains in grass lands. Eastern Willets nest along our beaches and on islands in our coastal lagoons. The latest issue of the bulletin from the [America Bird Conservancy](#) reports that two researchers from Texas had fitted out 10 Eastern Willets from San Bernard NWR with geolocators. These tiny data recorders store information about sun light the birds encounter. If the birds can be recaptured on their return to our shores, the use of a sophisticated algorithm allows the data in the geolocator to be translated into an amazing picture of the bird's travels.

One of the 10 birds, a male, was recaptured upon its return to the San Bernard NWR. Information from the recorder indicates that the bird left the coast of Texas on July 10th. The bird stopped the first time on the Yucatan Peninsula, spending one day. It then flew non stop to the Bay of San Miguel, in southern Panama, arriving on July 14th. A trip of over 1,800 miles in 3 1/2 days. After spending the winter there the bird left San Miguel Bay on March 23rd and arrived back at the refuge on March 26th. Another testament to the abilities of these amazing creatures.

Endangered Hawaiian Geese Face Another Threat

Hawaii's state bird, the Hawaiian Goose (locally known as the NeNe), is federally listed as an Endangered Species. The birds evolved with no ground based predators. So when the first Hawaiians arrived around 300 AD the NeNe population was first placed in jeopardy. When Captain Cook arrived in 1778 he brought along rats. These, along with later introduced cats and mongoose, devastated the birds and by 1952 there were just 30 of the birds left. Mosquitoes, something else we introduced to the islands, brought avian malaria. The local bird populations had no resistance to this and it's caused the extinction of numerous species.

Now, new research has discovered that in addition to feral cats killing chicks, they infect the birds with toxoplasmosis. This disease, which can be transmitted to humans and other mammals, is a protozoan parasite that depends on cats for completion of its life cycle. Pregnant women are at great risk from infection since it can be transmitted to the unborn with tragic results, including brain damage or death. The protozoa does all kinds of damage in the brain of its host.

Good News For The Florida Grasshopper Sparrow

With an estimated population of just 150 birds left in the wild, the Florida Grasshopper Sparrow is one of America's most endangered species. In hopes of bringing them back from the brink of extinction, the US Fish & Wildlife Service has captured some of them and has established a captive breeding program at the Rare Species Conservatory Foundation, in Loxahatchee. The first hatchlings have survived for some time now and it's hoped that this program will help keep their quiet, lisping calls sounding across their range from now on. Difficult to locate, the birds have specific habitat requirements. One place to see and hear them is Kissimmee Prairie Preserve. Another is Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area, in southern Osceola County.

Hummingbird Video

Finally, here's a [link](#) to a short video on hummingbirds and how you can help in their survival.

Editor

Sea Watch Report

In this month's Sea Watch Report, Harry Robinson tells of several unexpected sightings, like Short-tailed Hawk and White-winged Dove.

As far as species goes (71) this was by far the quietest month but surprisingly the content was more interesting than that for May! There were even nine additions to the list. I carried out surveys on 17 days over 87 hours. So far this year I have seen 161 species with three remaining from the earlier Christmas Bird Counts making for a grand total of 164 species. The three species are: Sooty Shearwater, Razorbill and Long-tailed Duck.

There was one day with strong easterly winds the 19th and there were 5 Cory's and 1 Greater Shearwater, both are new species. As a squall approached on the 26th two immature Brown Boobies fled in front of it. In contrast on the 1st a calm day a Magnificent Frigatebird flew to the north. On the 1st there were five Common Terns whilst on the 19th there were 29 Common Terns and two adult Arctic Terns another new species.

Most of the herons/egrets were seen during the month with a Green Heron on the 24th (second record) and an adult Black-crowned Night-Heron on the 3rd (a new species). Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were to be seen on most days hunting for Ghost Crabs with a high count of five on the 25th. There were 54 White Ibis on the 26th a new high count. Roseate Spoonbills, 86 in all, were seen flying to the north with 41 on the 8th a new high count. Much to my surprise five Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks flew north up the Halifax River on the 8th. Another new species.

Swallow-tailed Kites were seen occasionally but there were nine on the 29th a new high count. With these kites on the 29th there was an adult Mississippi Kite a very unexpected new species. Another unexpected new species was a light morph Short-tailed Hawk on the 15th.

Shorebirds were scarce but from the 7th a southerly passage of Black-necked Stilts started. In all for the month 80 were seen with 27 on the 26th there were also two Whimbrel on the 19th. The Black-necked Stilts were another new species.

White-winged Doves were seen on 5 dates with three on the 24th. The two Nanday Parakeets were seen on the 1st. There was a Downy Woodpecker on the 18th just the second sighting. Great Crested Flycatchers were seen on the 3rd and 8th another new species. Barn Swallows started flying to the south from the 12th with a Bank Swallow on the 29th.

Spring migration appeared to end on May the 31st with the last Barn Swallow flying to the north. The fall passage started on the 7th with the parties of Black-necked Stilts flying to the south. So the summer appears to be one week long....The Barn Swallows as I said earlier started back on the 12th.

Just what will July bring?

Harry Robinson

* * * * *

A little perspective on Harry's report if I may. The large number of Roseate Spoonbills seen is in keeping with reports of increased numbers of this species from around the state. The Black-bellied Whistling Ducks he saw are part of a huge increase in this species which is expanding its range north and eastward from its Mexican and Central American range. Its closely related cousin, the Fulvous Whistling Duck is too but they're far less numerous. It's possible that in 20 years most retention ponds in the state will have their own population of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks. Finally, keep an eye out for White-winged Doves. Already established in several areas of the state, including Deltona, this southwestern species is another that's expanding eastward.

David Hartgrove



Top photo, a White-tailed Tropicbird. Above, our intrepid traveler with the object of his affection.

Photos by Dan Gribbin

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Welcome To Our new Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Margaret Althouse, Sandra Blackmer, Thomas Boffey, Carleen Eberhardt, Edward Flanagan, Elizabeth Flynn, Miriam Haddad, Sarah Harris, Lisa Hiatt, Will Hobson, Elizabeth Howard, Richard Livsey, Mary Sherman, Ronald Tiwalt and Kathleen Wilson. We hope to, as the old song says, "See You In September" at our next meeting or on a field trip.

Bermuda, Everything You Imagined And More

Five years ago, my wife Martha and I spent two weeks on the South Shore of Bermuda, where, each morning, I climbed the lava cliffs that surround the coves and bays. I am no mountain goat, but if you want to photograph "Longtails"—the White-tailed Tropicbirds so beloved by Bermudians—you have to be willing to climb. These pelagic birds arrive in February and March, building their nests in holes that dot the sheer faces of the lava cliffs. "Longtails" fascinate me, in part because of the stark beauty of the black-on-white patterns on their wings as they soar along the oceanside, and in part because the tiny paddles that serve as their feet are suited only for propulsion on the surface of the water. Unable to perch, a "Longtail" approaching its nest must gauge the wind properly to hover for a few seconds and then crash land at the portal of the nest, finally wiggling up the sandy entrance into the nest hole.

Arriving on May 24th, this year, Martha and I spent two weeks walking the beach at Warwick Long Bay and photographing the tropicbirds, this time with a little bit better Nikon camera and a better lens, an 80x400 zoom. Aside from getting some wonderful shots from the rocky cliffs, I had the pleasure of talking with Dr. David Wingate, the dean of Bermudian birders, both at the Bermuda Audubon's annual general meeting, held at Government House, and at my lecture on "Florida Shorebird Breeding Islands," held at the Bermuda Aquarium. Dr. Wingate has dedicated his life to preserving Bermuda's natural heritage. His efforts on behalf of the endangered, Bermuda Petrel (*Pterodroma cahow*), include the invention of a baffled installation to their nest openings to prevent intrusion by predators.

The Audubon meeting was hosted by Governor George Fergusson and his wife. Martha and I were very happy to get to talk to this fascinating career diplomat who is very actively involved in conservation work. My talk at the Aquarium was attended by more than 50 bird enthusiasts and photographers. Afterward, Patrick Talbot, Curator of BAMZ (Bermuda Aquarium, Museum, and Zoo), asked if I would like to handle a "Longtail." I was, of course, thrilled at the prospect. The bird had been brought to the Aquarium with oil on its feathers. After a careful cleanup, it was to be released the next day, but not before it appeared in a photo op with its chief Florida admirer. I could feel those two tiny feet, and I almost got to feel the bite of the orange beak before we got the bird comfortably adjusted in my hands. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience on an island that is full of wonderful natural surprises.

Dan Gribbin

* * * * *

Audubon Adventures Needs Your Help

Yes, that means we need your money. Supplying Volusia County schools classrooms with [Audubon Adventures](#) is a major HRA project. The cost to supply one classroom with this exceptional educational material is \$45.00. Please donate what you can to this special project. Even though is currently out the need will be there when classes begin again in the Fall. Make your generous check payable to HRA and designate it's for Audubon Adventures. And Thank You!

Chapter Education Co-Chair, Marion Monaghan

* * * * *

An Osprey Nest In Maine

Here's a [link](#) to a live feed camera on an Osprey nest in Bremen, Maine.

Editor

Chuck Tague

Our chapter and the community at large lost a friend. Long time chapter member, Ken Hunter, wrote the following memorial.

Chuck Tague, a keen observer and skillful interpreter of nature, died June 17 at age 71. Here's a link to his online [obituary](#).

Chuck had an astonishingly broad range knowledge of the natural world and a special ability to clearly explain why something was worth looking at. He could leave a class of school kids or a group of seniors on an outing enthralled with the uniqueness of the critter or plant being observed. If it flew, crawled, slithered, swam, burrowed, blossomed or hopped, Chuck could probably tell you something interesting about it, and, given the least encouragement, help you find out more.

Scores of Halifax River Audubon field trip participants got to see and hear birds they almost surely would have missed without Chuck's assistance. More would be learned from the several presentations he made during the past decade at evening Audubon chapter meetings at Sica Hall. His own outstanding photographs enhanced his talks. Chuck and his wife, Joan, taught several "Birding 101" classes sponsored by the chapter. They were field trip co-chairs for several years.

Nor was it just Audubon members who were graced by Chuck's presence. He was a special enrichment visitor to classrooms in several Volusia schools, most recently Pine Trail Elementary and Tomoka Elementary in Ormond Beach. He also did field trips and instruction sessions for summer enviro-camps.

Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge was a major beneficiary of his time and talent once he and Joan moved here from Pittsburgh, PA. He was generous with his time there as a volunteer, both as a broad-ranging small group leader and as the developer of a series of butterfly identification programs for the on-going butterfly diversity surveys. His slide presentation on swallowtails was a delight, and his programs on skippers and various other groups of hard to distinguish butterflies reached an impressive level of detail that facilitated the better butterfly enthusiasts' abilities to make accurate identifications in the field.

In Pittsburgh, Chuck was Education Curator at the Pittsburgh (National) Aviary, an adjunct professor at the Rachel Carson Institute at Chatham University and wrote commentary for the Allegheny Front, Pittsburgh's only locally produced radio environmental program. He volunteered as a naturalist for the Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh and many conservation activities.

Among condolences Joan has received from friends in Pittsburgh was one from Patti Griest and April Claus who wrote: "His gentle, kind ways, knowledge and love of nature made hm a joy to learn from." Kind and gentle --words that occur more than once in the Facebook postings. Yet this gentle man, so engaged with the natural world, was, when younger, a Marine.

Chuck served in Vietnam as part of a detail which recovered the bodies of slain American soldiers. He and his squad brought out the remains of untold scores whose names are inscribed on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. It was an experience that marked him for life. When he first came back from Vietnam, the only thing he wanted to do was go off by himself into the woods.

A memorial fund has been established with the Merritt Island Wildlife Association, P.O. Box 2683, Titusville, FL 32781. Donations designated for the Chuck Tague fund will be used for a yet-to-be-determined specific purpose once the new Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge Visitors Center is built. Please contact Connie Cranston, MIWA bookstore manager, at 321-861-2377, if you have any questions regarding donations.

Ken Hunter



Chuck teaching kids about a plant



Chuck teaching a group about aquatic invertebrates

Photos by Joan Tague

* * * * *

Sea Turtle Nests Keeping Pace With Past Seasons

As of June 20th, over 2,600 Loggerhead sea turtle nests have been marked on the 24 miles of Canaveral National Seashore. A few Green and Leatherback nests have been laid too. With the heat of July upon us the pace will pick up even more. Recently selected as one of the top ten beaches in Florida by Coastal Living Magazine, it's a great spot for a get away.

A Special Thanks To Our Sponsors

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The Ormond Beach Garden Club, Spruce Creek Garden & Nature Club
and Colonial Colony**

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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 62-Number 8 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
August, 2016



The President's Message

Thoughts and Concepts

As promised last month, here's the rest of my column on birding related gear and supplies.

If you wish to learn more about bird sounds there appears to be a number of apps available. I will mention a few that I have come across in the Apple app store. [Bird Calls: 4500 Bird Sounds](#), [Bird Songs](#), [Bird-Identification & Bird Guide](#) is free and claims to provide an incredible amount of info. Bird Sounds-Great for Bird Watchers is by Michael Novak and may be worth looking into. [Bird Song Id USA Automatic Recognition and Reference by Mullen and Poland](#) has some excellent reviews. It has a quiz component that really appeals to several of the reviewers. [Chirp! Bird Song USA](#) has been around for sometime and has a loyal following. It gets good marks for its ease of use and gets very positive comments about both its photographs and organizational layout.

The number of birding reference guides that have gone digital is staggering. I will mention some of the better known ones and don't want anyone to think that this list is all inclusive. [Pete Dunne's Essential Field Guide Companion](#) is a decade old and considered by many as one of the classic birding books. It is now available for Ibook and Kindle and can be no further away from us than your smartphone. The [National Geographic Birds: Field Guide to North America](#) is a favorite of many, including me. It is very comprehensive, with 995 species. All species have one to three illustrations and a map. The majority have sound recordings. The layout is clean and easy to follow. I guess we would expect nothing less from National Geographic. The [Sibley eGuide to the Birds of North America](#) is another classic that commands a loyal following. The [Audubon Bird eGuide](#) is well structured and has wonderful illustrations. What else would you expect? It is divided into several sections that assist in finding birds, recording sightings and keeping lists. It has a FAQ section, a tutorial and a guide to other apps. The [Peterson Field Guide](#) has a bird search, browse birds and sightings section. It is easy to use and a very popular digital reference guide.

You might be surprised to see the number of digital guides that are geographically specific. Ecuador, Europe, Columbia. Cuba, Ireland, Central Park(as in New York City), the United Kingdom, Venezuela, Australia, Switzerland, East Africa, Peru, Germany, the Netherlands, the Indian subcontinent, and Vietnam each have digital birding reference guides listed in the Apple app store.

Let me mention that these wonderfully comprehensive eGuides require significant amounts of memory. If you are planning to purchase a new smartphone or computer please keep this in mind.

Continued on the next page

Calendar & Events

Just a reminder that we're on our annual summer hiatus. So we don't have any field trips planned until after Labor Day. The new Field Trip list will be published next month. However, there are other options from our partners in Volusia County and here are some of them. **Please be sure to register for these events** by calling 386-736-5927.

Tuesday, August 16th, 9:00 to 11:00 am Paddling Adventure-Bring a canoe, kayak or SUP for a leisurely paddling trip down Spruce Creek. Learn about estuary and marsh ecosystems, along with a variety of information about the biodiversity of these important habitats. Participants must have Kayak/Canoe/SUP, life preserver and whistle. Meet at 9:00 am for this 2 hour adventure. Meet at 2317 Creek Shore Trail, NSB, FL 32168.

Saturday, August 20th, 9:00 to 11:00 am Guided Hike - Doris Leeper Spruce Creek Preserve. Estuaries are home to unique plant and animal communities that have adapted to brackish waters. LEC and Explore Volusia staff will guide you on a hike through parts of beautiful Doris Leeper Preserve. Fish, bird, and plant species identification will be part of the focus of this adventure that will include the opportunity to seine net in Rose Bay. Program participants are recommended to wear long pants, closed toed shoes water shoes/rubber boots. This program is limited to 20 program participants and pre-registration is required. Please meet staff at the following address, 3251 N. Dixie Highway, New Smyrna Beach, FL. 32168.

Tuesday, August 23rd, 9:00 to 11:00 am Bicycle trail ride from Green Springs Park. Participants will ride the first segment of the East Central Regional Rail Trail from Green Springs to State Road 415 and back while experiencing the natural world along the way. All ages and abilities are welcome, please note this is an 11.4 mile round trip. Bicycle helmets are required. Meet at Green Springs Park, 994 Enterprise-Osteen Road, Enterprise.

Tuesday, August 30th, 9:00 to 11:30 am Guided hike at Smyrna Dunes Park. Explore Smyrna Dunes Park with staff members to learn about the wonders of the dune systems and importance of the ecosystem. Experts will also inform participants on sea turtles, and estuaries. Meet at 2995 N Peninsula Ave, NSB, 32169. Registered participants will receive a parking pass for the park.

* * * * *

And For Those Seeking An Air Conditioned Experience

"The Birds of North America" was once a multi volume set of reference works that no serious amateur ornithologist could be without. A number of years ago it went online and provides an invaluable data base through a subscription service. It's recently been upgraded and is currently available free to anyone. Here's a link to this outstanding resource, [Birds of North America Online](#).

Conservation Notes

I recently wrote a letter to the editor of the Daytona Beach News-Journal. It wasn't published, probably because in it I suggested that the Florida Department of Environmental Protection consider a name change to the Department of Environmental Prostitution. What else can anyone think when the regulatory agency we count on to "protect" the environment openly calls for increasing the amount of toxic chemicals allowed in Florida's waters?

A letter written on behalf of the Environmental Council of Volusia & Flagler Counties to DEP Secretary, Jonathan Steverson, on the subject went unanswered. I refrained from suggesting a name change for the Department in that one. He and his agency are just responding to orders from our corrupt governor. Rick Scott, in his continuing campaign to wreck Florida's environment for the sake of quick profits for his friends, has made sure the Environmental Regulatory Commission is an industry friendly board. By state law the Commission is supposed to have seven members, one of whom is to be from the environmental community and one from a local government entity. Those two positions have been left vacant on purpose so that the remaining five members could more easily be whipped into line and vote the way the governor and his cronies desire.

Some of the chemicals the DEP has suggested we should drink more of include benzene and perchloroethylene. The latter is the chemical responsible for the cluster of cancers that hit the Marine Base at Camp LeJeune several years ago. Benzene's harmful effects have been documented time and again. The new rules will allow 3 times what was allowed under the old rule. Knowing this was going to be a contentious meeting that would garner adverse publicity, the governor's staff moved the date of the meeting up to July 26th from sometime in the Fall. The 26th was the same day a big meeting in Martin County was scheduled dealing with the toxic discharges of algae laden waters from Lake Okeechobee. By rescheduling the ERC meeting in Tallahassee to the same day as the one in Martin County the staff assured that the forces against the governor's plan would be divided. When your sleazy policies are going to screw the public in such a profound way you want to make sure opposition and publicity are kept to a minimum.

In what has to be one of the most disingenuous statements ever made by a regulatory administrator, DEP Deputy Secretary Drew Bartlett said the rule-making was, "very emotional, but we needed to get it done for Floridians." "The only thing we do is we take the science, we try to figure out how to use the science to best protect Floridians," Bartlett said, responding to criticism of the department. "That's exactly what we did here." How we as Floridians will be better protected by having higher amounts of carcinogens in our drinking water and in the locally harvested fish and shellfish we consume remains to be explained.

Now, if you're the governor and your campaign has been receiving generous contributions from the fracking industry chomping at the bit to start drilling, you might consider increasing the allowable limits of these chemicals since they're the same ones used in the toxic drilling compounds. When this was suggested at several meetings held around the state before the vote the DEP folks said there was absolutely no connection. And if you believe that I have a friend who has a bridge he'd like to sell.

* * * * *

As it happens July 26th was also the date of the meeting here in South Daytona to receive public comments about the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission's proposal to declare Rookery Island a "Critical Wildlife Area." Doing so will allow the erection of signs closing off the island to humans and their dogs. Our chapter has long worked for this and we're happy to see it come about.

David Hartgrove

Too many of us have simply run out of memory with computers only a couple of years old. Spend the money to ensure that you have sufficient memory. My intent with this article was simply to introduce to you the amazing digital world that is available to those interested in birds and nature. It is indeed a very exciting world of technology that we have available to us.

I want to remind everyone that we do not meet in July and August. Therefore our next meeting will be September 19, 2016. Our scheduled speaker is Dr. Paul Gray, a Florida Audubon staff member. Paul lives and works in the Everglades area of our state and will enlighten us on the challenges facing this important part of Florida. He is a great speaker and I hope you will be with us. Have a wonderful summer.

Jim O'Shaughnessy

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Audubon Adventures Needs Your Help

Yes, that means we need your money. Supplying Volusia County schools classrooms with [Audubon Adventures](#) is a major HRA project. The cost to supply one classroom with this exceptional educational material is \$45.00. Please donate what you can to this special project. School will resume on August 15th and we want to make sure we're ready when they are. Please make your generous check payable to HRA and designate it's for Audubon Adventures. And Thank You!

Marion Monaghan & Holly Zwart-Duryea
Chapter Education Co-Chairs

* * * * *

Welcome To Our New Members

Teachers whose classes receive Audubon Adventures also receive membership in our chapter. As a result we have a bigger list of new and returning members than usual. We extend a warm welcome to Ann Anderson, Geraldine Babbitts, Debbie Bastion, Laura Bloom, Kathryn Brother, Elizabeth Burns, Danny Cain, Ralina Campbell, Carol Colucci, Melissa Koenke, Michael Dresner, Susan Fitzgerald, Susan Fox, H.L. Funkhouser, Pam Goeman, Randal Green, Joe Hamilton, Carolyn Hoffman, Tina Jacobs, Sally Kriegsman, Jennifer Lastinger, Amber McAndrew, Sunnie Merrell, Deon Myers, Robert Neetz, Barbara Northrup, Leticia Roman, Jenna Schul, Donna Sheean, Monica Sherwin, Jennifer Smith, Deborah Treur, Steve waterman, Janet Wells and James Yates. We hope to see you at our chapter meetings, which resume again next month, on September 19th, or on one of our field trips.

* * * * *

Audubon's New Birding Travel Map

The folks at Audubon have produced a new map that links you to all sorts of information on birding hot spots around the country. If you're headed to Alaska, Wyoming, Texas or Maine this new [web page](#) has valuable information for helping plan your trip.

* * * * *

Help In Finding Sweet Honey

Board member and blues player, Dan Gribbin, set along this link to a special story in [The New Yorker](#). Greater Honeyguides (*Indicator indicator*), a bird found over much of Africa, have a sweet tooth themselves but an inability to access bee colonies which are often hidden deep in trees. The local people have the taste for honey but a problem finding it. The two species help each other through a tradition passed down through generations. In different parts of the bird's range a variety of calls are used by humans to elicit the birds' cooperation. Fascinating stuff.

July Pelagic Trip Report

Birders from 10 states gathered on the dock in New Smyrna Beach at 2:30 am on July 24th for the latest pelagic trip sponsored by the Friends of the Marine Science Center. The seas were calm and the birds cooperative. We saw storm petrels, shearwaters, terns and migrating land birds. The marine mammals stole the show though. *The photos below are by Michael Brothers.*



Here a Wilson's Storm Petrel steps across the water. They are roughly the size of a mockingbird but with longer wings.



A Cory's Shearwater sits on the surface of the Gulfstream.



A Black Tern and a Bridled Tern share a perch at sea.



Here, a pod of Short-finned Pilot Whales we came across.



Looking straight down along side the boat into the blue water of the Gulfstream, a pilot whale mother and calf.



We also released 8 Loggerhead Sea Turtle hatchlings into a sargassum weed line. The next trip is scheduled for Sunday, September 25th. For information, contact [Michael Brothers](#), MSC Director.

photos by David Hartgrove

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The Pelican

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

Volume 62-Number 9 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
September, 2016



The President's Message

Thoughts and Concepts

My wife and I are fortunate enough to spend July and August in the Berkshire region in a cool part of our country. It is beautiful country and we enjoy hiking and taking advantage of the numerous activities that are available during the summer.

I came across a copy of the 1988 book, "THE BIRDER'S HANDBOOK, A Field Guide to Natural History of North American Birds". Many of you are probably familiar with this amazingly comprehensive, fact-filled book. I did not know it existed and have really enjoyed getting familiar with it. You many recognize one of the three authors, Paul Ehrlich, as the author of the best selling book, The Population Bomb, which was published in 1968.

In this, and the next several articles, I am going to extract bird facts that I hope you will find interesting, useful and informative. This process is somewhat arbitrary and may be too basic and elementary for some of you. I trust, however, that many will learn from this information.

Let's begin with the nest, where the all-important eggs hatch. Nest building is thought to have arisen from a shortage of natural cavities for use in sheltering eggs and young. Birds began to make compartments in soil and decayed soft wood and to chisel new holes in firm wood and to search for and assemble materials to augment their sites. The diversity of nests among bird species demonstrates the variety of structures that can provide satisfactory shelter and how highly specialized nest-building has become. However many non-passerines (non perching birds) do not use nests to protect their eggs. They simply lay their clutch (a nest of eggs) after making minimal scrapes in the soil or they pile available materials and make a pad for the eggs. To compensate for the reduced insulation that a nest would provide they spend more time on the nest, however the price of being so exposed increases the exposure to predators. There is speculation that nest building become more prevalent as the evolutionary diversification of mammalian predators increased. The majority of passerine species (perching birds) build open nests.

Nest types can be classified as follows: the cup is the type that most of us consider to be a "nest". Hemispherical inside with a rim height several times the diameter of the eggs and always with a deep depression. The nest that is a simple indentation in the ground, to prevent the eggs from rolling away, is known as a scrape. Many duck species use this scrape type of nest. Last year, on the beach several miles south of New Smyrna Beach, several of us were fortunate enough to witness a pair of Wilson's Plovers incubating and then raising their chicks. Volunteers had found the scrape nest before the eggs hatched and had roped off the area around the scrape nest to prevent people from walking over the nest.

This article continues on the next page

Calendar & Events

Monday, September 19th- Program meeting: Dr. Paul Gray, Audubon Florida's Lake Okeechobee Science Coordinator, will give us a presentation on the myriad difficulties effecting the state's largest lake and some possible remedies for its troubled waters. 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, etc.

Our first chapter field trip will be on October 15th. Here are some choices with other groups. See page 4 for a printable list of ours.

Saturday, September 17th- We've been invited to join Orange Audubon Society to tour Canaveral National Seashore in New Smyrna Beach. This pristine beach stretches 24 miles from New Smyrna Beach to Titusville. This special place is managed by the National Park Service, as one of only 10 National Seashores in the United States, and this trip honors the Park Service's 100th anniversary. The group will search for songbirds that migrate down the East Coast to tropical wintering grounds. We'll scan for birds in Mosquito Lagoon and on Canaveral's beautiful beach. The group will meet at 8 a.m. at the Canaveral National Seashore (New Smyrna Beach) Visitor's Center parking lot. Cost to enter the National Seashore is \$5/carload. Bring correct change, plenty to drink, sun protection, insect protection, birding gear, and lunch.

Saturday, September 17th- International Coastal Cleanup- Looking for something closer to home? Don your hat and sunscreen, grab your gloves and come out to help clean up our beaches and waterways. Coordinated by Volusia County's Environmental Management Department this annual event is open to all volunteers. Registration and information on where to rendezvous is available at this [website](#). Click on the Coastal Cleanup to learn where to report. Then click on the "Register" link to volunteer.

Wednesday, September 21st- Guided hike around Longleaf Pine Preserve with Volusia County's, Trey Hannah. This easy two hour hike will meet at the west entrance trailhead, 3637 E. New York Ave, DeLand, FL 32724. Call 386-736-5927 for reservations.

Tuesday, September 29th- Bicycle around Lake Beresford Park Trail. Join Mr. Hannah again and ride the Lake Beresford Park trail and a segment of the spring to spring trail. Participants will learn about the local environment, and the importance of springs. Emphasis will be on the connectivity of our local waters. Meet at Beresford Park, 2100 Fatio Rd, DeLand. Again, be sure to call 386-736-5927 for reservations.

Beginning Birding Class Announcement Below

On Page 3

The saucer nest type is a shallow cup with the rim height several times the diameter of the eggs. A structure in a tree or cliff big enough for the bird to land on is known as a platform nest. This nest type is typical of many raptors and birds residing in wetlands. Our Bald Eagles build amazing large and well built platform nests. The cavity type of nest is excavated, as with woodpeckers, or it can be a natural cavity found in a dead or dying tree. Some birds place eggs in a crack in the face of a cliff. This type of nest is classified as a crevice nest. If the eggs are placed in a chamber at the end of a tunnel it is called a burrow type nest. Many kingfishers, puffins and storm-petrels use this burrow nest type. The pendant nest type is an elongated saclike nest structure suspended from a branch. Orioles typically use this pendant type nest.

I'll continue with my article next month, when we investigate the mating systems of our avian friends. Remember that this month means a return to our monthly meetings and our first chapter field trip is on October 15th. I hope you've all had a fun summer.

Jim O'Shaughnessy

* * * * *

Conservation Notes

The largest single contributor to the degradation of the St Johns River is the Georgia Pacific paper mill in Palatka. For years they dumped millions of gallons of toxic sludge into Rice Creek, which empties into the St Johns. When Audubon, Sierra and others complained and filed a law suit forcing a cleanup of the creek, Georgia Pacific sought and received a permit from Governor Rick Scott and his handpicked DEP Secretary to install a pipeline to dump its effluent directly into the river. When a study raised questions about the damage being done to the river by this move, the study was ignored and another study, more friendly to the polluters, was chosen as the one to follow.

The Palatka mill is now owned by the Koch brothers, whose campaign donations across the country are aimed at keeping candidates like Scott in office. They also own another paper and pulp mill in Taylor County, in the Big Bend area. That one was dumping effluent into the Fenholloway River for years. It's the only "industrial" river so designated in the state. Now the EPA has finally begun trying to get that mill to clean up its act. The river empties into the Gulf of Mexico and thanks to the mill's pollution there's a 10 square mile dead zone in the Gulf. Now this paper company (also owned by the Koch brothers) wants to clean the river by installing a pipeline to dump its poisonous effluent directly into the Gulf. Several adjacent counties whose livelihoods are closely tied to the fishing industry have moved recently to demand that the Governor deny this pipeline permit. Knowing how closely tied the Koch brothers and our governor are, the outcome of this permit process seems a foregone conclusion. It's impossible to over estimate how much damage Governor Scott has done to our state in just 6 years.

* * *

On July 26th, at the Piggotte Center in South Daytona, the public meeting announcing the proposed Critical Wildlife Area designation for Rookery Island was held and many of our members were there in support. Staff members from the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission chaired the meeting and gave an impressive presentation on why this proposed designation is so important. This is one of 14 proposed CWA's. And though most are bird related, two are directed at protecting bat habitat in caves. There are more meetings to be held and the final one will be in Tallahassee in December. We'll keep you posted on the progress of this important program.

David Hartgrove

Time for another in our series, "Everyday Birding" with Ray Scory

The House Finch *Carpodacus mexicanus*

Across the corner of my eye a blurred shadow streaked from my backyard bird feeder, triggering an amazingly human quality - called memory recall. Synapses connected, sparks ignited and a process, taking only milli-seconds, released a history of observations that covered years of field and bird feeder watching experiences. Attention to details and to the behavioral antics of birds are an integral part of these experiences.

Now I don't intend this essay to delve into the physiology of the human brain. I only want to express the importance of observation. In the spirit of birdwatching, acute observations will lead to avenues of surprise and new adventures.



House Finches, female & male. *Photo by Ray Scory*

In the context of that fleeting moment of a blur a deluge of reactions exposed me to an identification - House Finch. To that milli-second reaction to a blur many things happened. I identified a bird at my bird feeder. It brought back memories of my connection with House Finches. I confirmed its identification in my bird bath the next day and it led me to a study of an interesting House Finch behavior.

I thought of the hundreds of House Finches that came to my bird feeders during the Winter months in Connecticut. How hardy they were. How they dug through snow covered feeders to get at the seeds - how determined, persistent. How they escaped from marauding Sharp-shinned Hawks to go another day. How they diminished in flock (development) size in my yard from about forty to less than five in a matter of a few years due to a chronic eye disease. Deciding how different they look from their often times confusing and near look alike relative - the Purple Finch. The Purple Finch looks like it has been dipped head first into a watered down red ink. The House Finch's head is covered with a stronger red head washing down over its breast with a brown back and wings. Both female finches are grayish brown birds. The female Purple Finch has strong, sharper brown stripes and the female House Finch has soft, less pronounced brown stripes. No red shows on either female, only the males.

The next morning I observed a male House Finch splashing in my bird bath with feathers wet in utter confusion. This House Finch displayed a lot of orange/yellow where the red should have been.

Continues below on page 3.



Tiny Jewelry For A Tiny Bird

Membership Chair and Chapter Historian, John Carr, was cruising the Internet a few weeks back and came upon the photo above on the [Hilton Pond](#) website. Those tiny blue bands are leg bands for a hummingbird.

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Ormond Beach Environmental Discovery Center

will host a program on Bats and their importance in Florida's environment. There are all kinds of misconceptions surrounding bats and Shari Blissett-Clark, President of the Florida Bat Conservancy, is just the person to dispel those damaging rumors. The program will be held on Thursday, September 15th, from noon to 1:00 pm, as part of the Center's "Lunch and Learn" program.

Audubon Adventures Needs Your Help

Yes, that means we need your money. Supplying Volusia County schools classrooms with [Audubon Adventures](#) is a major HRA project. The cost to supply one classroom with this exceptional educational material is \$45.00. Please donate what you can to this special project. We are currently serving forty five teachers in sixteen schools. Make your generous check payable to HRA and designate it's for Audubon Adventures. And Thank You!

Water Festival Coming In October

On Sunday, October 16th, from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm The [Water Festival](#) will enliven DeLand and Earl Brown Park. A presentation sponsored by a host of environmental and civic organizations, the Festival will include food, live music, a DJ, an art contest and much more. You won't want to miss this fun and educational event.

Former Education Chair Mourned

Glade Koch, former Education Chair and HRA board member passed away on August 13th after a long illness. Glade joined HRA in 1988 and almost immediately volunteered to be Education Chair. Early in her tenure Audubon Adventures was introduced and rolled out nationally. As a former elementary school teacher she saw the value of the curriculum being offered. Her [obituary](#) in the News-Journal offered only a brief glimpse of the contribution she made to our chapter and the community at large.

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From "The Quotable Birder", a quote from Will Rogers: "Live in such a way that you would not be ashamed to sell your parrot to the town gossip."



Male House Finch, Photo by Ray Scory

Further internet investigations revealed that some male House Finches display partially or totally yellow/orange coloration instead of the more expected red. There is a reason for this quirk of nature. Research has revealed this color changing behavior of the males. It seems the first year breeding females have eyes for the strikingly handsome red colored male. However the flaw in the inexperienced female's selection is that the handsome male prima donna is lazy and a poor provider, leaving the female over worked. The next year after experiencing a first year disappointing lesson. She selects the less attractive yellow/orange colored male discovering that they are better providers.

From a shadowy blur to learning about a unique bird behavior - not bad for a millisecond birding experience at my bird feeder.

Ray Scory

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Beginning Birding Class Starts September 29th

Ray Scory, assisted by past President, John Roessler, will teach our chapter's Beginning Birding Class at the Port Orange Regional Library, 1005 City Center Circle, in Port Orange. There will be 3 classroom sessions held on Thursdays: September 29th, October 6th and November 3rd from 9:30 to 11:30 am. The field sessions will be held on Tuesdays: October 4th, to Port Orange Causeway Park, 8:30 am; October 18th, a visit to the bird banding station at Tomoka State Park, 8:00 am and November 8th, Merritt Island NWR, 8:00 am. Cost for the class is 25.00 per person. Please register as soon as possible by calling David Hartgrove, 386-788-2630 or email: birdman9@earthlink.net. Mail checks, made out to Halifax River Audubon with a note "bird class" in the comment section, to Halifax River Audubon, PO Box 166 Daytona Beach, FL 32115.

* * * * *

The Million Dollar Duck

Board member, Celine Sullivan, sent this announcement. On Wednesday, September 14th, at 9:00 pm, Animal Planet (check your service provider for the channel) will broadcast, "The Million Dollar Duck." This film won the Jury Award for best documentary at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival and traces the work and drama around selecting the next national Duck Stamp.

HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE 2016-2017

Date	Time	Meet At	Trip	Level	Lunch	Leader	Tel #
Fri, Oct14	8:00 AM	WO	Washington Oaks State Park	2	N	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085
Sun. Oct 16	4:00 PM	Bridge	Dunlawton Bridge	1	N	Ray Scory	386-763-4260
Fri. Nov 18	7:30 AM	KRY	Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive	1	Y	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085
Sat. Dec 3	7:30 AM	TAR	Audubon Park, Deltona	3	Y	Betty Butcher	863-224-4922
Fri. Dec 16	7:30 AM	TAR	Merritt Island NWR	1	Y	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Jan. 10-13			St. Marks NWR	3	Y	Betty Butcher	863-224-4922
Wed. Jan 25	9:30 AM	CC	Cracker Creek Boat Trip	1	N	Celine Sullivan	386-523-4809
Fri. Feb 3	7:30 AM	TAR	Viera Wetlands	2	Y	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Fri. Feb 10	7:30 AM	TAR	Merritt Island NWR	1	Y	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085
Sat Feb 11	7:30 AM	TAR	Merritt Island NWR	1	Y	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Fri. Feb 17	7:30 AM	KRY	Oakland Nature Center	2	Y	Betty Butcher	863-224-4922
Wed. Mar 15	1:45 PM	KRY	Blue Heron Boat Trip	1	N	Celine Sullivan	386-523-4809
Fri. Mar 17	7:30 AM	CHK	Ocala National Forest	3	Y	John Roessler	386-212-6957
Fri. Mar 24	7:30 AM	TAR	Orlando Wetlands	3	Y	Celine Sullivan	386-523-4809
Thurs. Apr 6	8:00 AM	TB	Tiger Bay State Forest	3	Y	Ray Scory	386-763-4260
Sun. Apr 9	3:00 PM	Bridge	Dunlawton Bridge	1	N	Ray Scory	386-763-4260
Fri. Apr 21	8:00 AM	WO	Washington Oaks State Park	2	N	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085
Fri. May 19	8:00 AM	CHK	St. Augustine Alligator Farm	2	N	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085

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

Meeting Places

Bridge - Port Orange Causeway Park under Dunlawton Bridge
 CHK - Ormond Town Square - Granada & Williamson Blvds behind Chick-fil-A
 TB - Tiger Bay State Forest headquarters - US 92 West
 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

Boat Trips - require reservations made thru Celine Sullivan 386-523-4809. Cracker Creek Concession is located at 1795 Taylor Rd., Port Orange. Cracker Creek is a one hour boat tour from 10-11 am with lunch following at the Olive Garden Restaurant located in the Pavillion Shopping Center, Port Orange. The fee for the boat trip is \$10.00 (please bring exact fee in cash). Limit 20 persons. The dedline for this trip is Mon., 1/23/17. The Blue Heron trip is \$20 per person, cash only. Absolute deadline for reservation is Wed., 3/8/17. Limit 36 persons. Meeting place is behind Krystal on International Speedway Blvd. at 1:45 pm. Those going over on their own must be there by 2:30 pm. The boat does not wait for latecomers!

St. Marks NWR - We will leave Tuesday January 10, carpooling to St Marks, FL (appx 260 miles). We will stay at Shell Island Fish Camp (shellislandfishcamp.com) (850-925-6226); they have 1 and 2 bedroom cabins, motel rooms and RV sites (if you want to bring your RV). Dinners will be as a group at local seafood restaurants. Stay from 3, 4, or 5 nights, whichever is better for you. If interested, please contact Betty Butcher, 863-224-4922, for more information.

St. Augustine Alligator Farm - Admission is \$24.99 per adult, Seniors 10% discount. Lunch will follow at a local restaurant in St. Augustine area.

Washington Oaks - Lunch will follow at a local restaurant

A Special Thanks To Our Sponsors

**Florida Power & Light, Garden Club of the Halifax Country,
The Ormond Beach Garden Club, Spruce Creek Garden & Nature 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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At Large 2018	Holly Zwart-Duryea	386-672-8788	hollis1000@aol.com
At Large 2016	Vacant		
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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	Holly Zwart-Duryea	386-672-8788	hollis1000@aol.com
Field Trips	Peggy Yokubonus	386-673-7619	pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com
	David Hartgrove	386-788-2630	birdman9@earthlink.net
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The Pelican

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

Volume 62-Number 10 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
October, 2016



The President's Message

Thoughts and Concepts

This is a continuation of my long article on information gleaned from the book, "THE BIRDER'S HANDBOOK, A Field Guide To The Natural History of North American Birds." This book is not a field guide to identification. It's an invaluable reference work on just about any question you could have about birds.

The mating systems used by birds is wonderfully complex and interesting. An estimated 90 percent of all bird species are monogamous. Monogamy is defined as one male mating with one female and forming a "pair bond." This bond may last for a single nesting, an entire breeding season, for several seasons or for life, as is the case with petrels, swans, geese, eagles, and some owls and parrots. It is thought that monogamy evolved in situations where young have a much better chance of surviving if both parents cooperate in rearing them. However, the amount of time and energy invested by monogamous males varies greatly. In some species the male only helps guard the nest until the brood goes out on their own. Levels of male parental investment seem to be higher in many passerines, where males often feed brooding females and assist in feeding the young. In herons and egrets males not only provide food for the young but share in incubation as well.

Polygyny, where one male mates with more than one female, while each female mates with only one male, is thought to be a fundamental mating system of animals. This seems to happen because the gender that produces the larger reproductive cells (eggs) is the female, and the one that produces the smaller (sperm) is the male. Males make a smaller investment in the embryos that result from the fusion of egg and sperm cells. The difference is particularly pronounced in birds, since the sperm is so tiny and the egg relatively gigantic. Therefore the male puts little effort into any single embryo whereas the female has a much greater stake since she can produce few eggs in her lifetime. It might therefore seem that polygyny would be the fundamental mating system for birds. Most birds, however, are monogamous. It seems that both parents must help to rear the young if the adults are going to have much chance of leaving genes to posterity. Why a few species practice polygyny is not completely understood.

I'm sure you have always wanted to know how adult birds make baby birds. Interestingly, the testes of birds vary greatly in size with the seasons. During the breeding season they may be several hundred times larger than they are during the rest of the year. Enlarged testes secrete greater amounts of male hormones and stimulate singing and courtship behavior. During copulation, the male mounts the female from behind. Both sexes hold their tails to the side so that contact can be made by their cloacas.

Continued on the next page

Calendar & Events

Monday, October 17th- Program Meeting: Michael Brothers, Director of the Marine Science Center, will give a presentation on the geologic history of Volusia County. This promises to be a fascinating presentation that you won't want to miss. 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, October 14th, Washington Oaks Gardens State Park- We'll meet at the [park](#) at 8:00 am and join Peggy Yokubonus as the group looks for migrant warblers and other species in the park and then head north to Matanzas Inlet to look for shorebirds. Lunch will be at one of the restaurants along A1A. Questions? Call Peggy at 386-316-4085.

Sunday, October 16th, Dunlawton Bridge- Meet Ray Scory at the [bridge](#) at 4:00 pm for this pleasant afternoon walk as we view all of the wading and seabirds on Rookery Island and in the area. This is one of the best and most accessible hot spots in our area. Questions? Call Ray at 386-763-4260.

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Field Trips With Others

Saturday, October 8th- Join our friends from Flagler Audubon Society for the first of their monthly bird walks. This one will go to [Graham Swamp](#). Meet there at 8:00 am, 1125 S. Old Kings Rd. Palm Coast, 32137. Questions? Call Frank Quinn, 386-225-5101.

"Explore Volusia" with Volusia County Environmental Mgmt.

Friday, October 7th, Guided Hike, Wiregrass Preserve- Join Trey Hannah and take a hike of the wonderful 1,400-acre Wiregrass Prairie Preserve, which is situated almost entirely in the St. Johns River Valley. Explore upland and wetland natural communities that include wet flatwoods, cypress domes, and wet prairies. Learn about land management practices while hiking the diverse ecotones of the land. Meet at [1751 Lopez Road, Osteen](#) at 9:00 am for this 2 hour hike. Be sure to call 386-736-5927 to register for this event. Do Not try to use your car's GPS to locate this address.

Saturday, October 29th, Eco Buggy/Hike Longleaf Preserve- Take a riding trip through Longleaf Pine Preserve, which includes 12,000 acres of natural communities of flatwoods, cypress domes and swamps. In some areas there is an understory of saw palmetto, gallberry and seasonal wildflowers. Meet at the east entrance, [4551 Pioneer Trail, New Smyrna Beach](#). This event is brought to you by the good folks at the Lyonia Environmental Learning Center. Be sure to register by calling 386-789-7207.

A single copulation is usually sufficient to fertilize the eggs laid over a period of about a week. In some birds the sperm remains viable for much longer. Turkeys have been reported to lay eggs more than two months after copulation.

This amazing book is available at the Visitor's Center at the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, where your expenditure will do a lot of good. It's also available through retail outlets and on Amazon. Treat yourself to this informative volume and you'll be glad you did for years to come.

Jim O'Shaughnessy

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Memorial Plaque For Chuck Tague Unveiled

On Saturday, September 3rd, a small dedication ceremony was held at the Ormond Beach Environmental Discovery Center on Division Street in honor of Chuck Tague. The board voted to donate a Screech Owl box. There is also, a plaque with a picture and description of the Eastern Screech Owl, and a picture of Chuck. We extend our sincere thanks to the City of Ormond Beach and Stefan Sibley, who was instrumental in getting this project completed. They donated the plaque and manpower for the installation. Stop by to see it when you get a chance. Photos are to the right. The quote on Chuck's plaque (one of his favorites) is from Joseph Campbell. It says, "The goal of life is to make your heartbeat match the beat of the universe, to match your nature with nature."

Celine Sullivan

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Audubon Adventures Needs Your Help

Yes, that means we need your money. Supplying Volusia County school classrooms with [Audubon Adventures](#) is a major HRA project. The cost to supply one classroom with this exceptional educational material is \$46.00. Please donate what you can to this special project. We are currently serving forty five teachers in sixteen schools. Make your generous check payable to HRA and designate it's for Audubon Adventures. And Thank You!

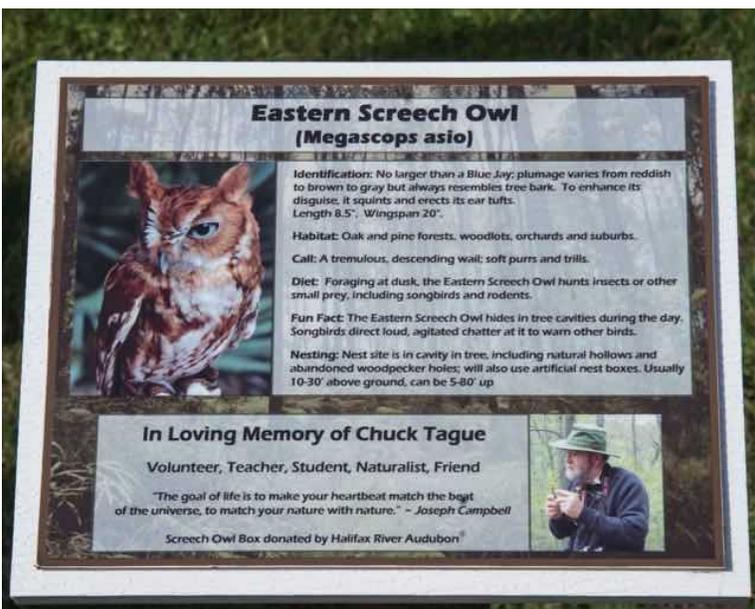
Chapter Education Co-Chair, Marion Monaghan

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Due to some recurring problems at the membership desk at National Audubon, we were unable to include new members in last month's issue of the Pelican.

We Welcome Our New & Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and renewing members. Some of whom are teachers whose classes receive Audubon Adventures: Ann Anderson, Geraldine Babbitts, Debbie Bastion, Laura Bloom, Kathryn Brother, Elizabeth Burns, Danny Cain, Ralina Campbell, Carol Colucci, Sandi DePaul, Michael Dresner, Susan Fitzgerald, Susan Fox, H L Funkhouse, Pam Goeman, Randal Green, Joe Hamilton, Carolyn Hofmann, Tina Jacobs, Melissa Koenke, Sally Kriegsman, Jennifer Lastinger, James Lincoln, Amber McAndrew, Sunnie Merrell, Deon Myers, Robert Neetz, Barbara Northup, Leticia Roman, Jenna Schuld, Donna Sheean, Monica Sherwin, Jennifer Smith, Deborah Treur, Steve Waterman, Janey Wells, and Jamea Yates. We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting or on one of our excellent field trips.



From the top: The assembled crowd, including past and present board members, City of Ormond Beach workers and others. Also the nest box and the memorial plaque.

Photos by Steve Blackledge

Chapter Only Memberships

Membership Chairman John Carr confirmed that he is working through the list of HRA Chapter-Only members and advising them as to when their membership dues should be submitted. He hopes to complete his review and contact everyone within the next few weeks. If you are a Chapter-Only member and haven't yet heard from John, you will hear from him shortly. For the future John plans to institute a process where he will notify Chapter-Only members about one month prior to the date their current membership expires and remind them to renew their membership. If you have questions in the meantime, you can contact John at jcarr14@gmail.com.

Paula Wehr

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If a contest were held for best birder in Florida, David Simpson would be right up there at the top of the list. Here's a little taste of why and a link to his [website](#). Editor

September Happenings

September is one of my favorite months. Football begins. I get a year older. The number and variety of fall migrants hit their peak. Here in Florida, migration occurs throughout the year. "Fall" may begin as early as May when the first Purple Martins, perhaps early or failed breeders, start heading south. July 4th is not just Independence Day. Among birders, it is known as the traditional start of shorebird migration. Many shorebirds spend a brief but bountiful summer on the tundra. Some populations winter as far south as the southern tip of South America, so they must be on the move as soon as possible. Once reproduction has been achieved, the adults leave. Youngsters are on their way a little later. The earliest travelers may even arrive in the southern states before July. Other migrants have a more temperate nature. Waterfowl, loons, robins, sparrows, and goldfinches arrive later, mostly November and December. Cedar waxwings are the tardiest of all. Reluctant to move while food is available, the bulk of their numbers may not arrive until February. At the same time, waterfowl start to push north, anticipating the ice melt. Local wintering populations of Northern Parula, are augmented by off-singing new arrivals. The tide of migration ebbs northward.

September sits in the middle of fall migration, capturing a little of everything. In Florida, there are more birds around than any other time of the year. Among the southbound migrants are many new travelers, most only a few months old. Resident bird populations swell as parents encourage their youngsters to find a place of their own.

Songbird migration peaks in late September and early October. For many species, migration is a nocturnal affair, often riding favorable winds that follow cold fronts. Flying in darkness helps avoid predators, but it has its difficulties. Without the benefit of sight, flocks keep together by using flight calls. Find a quiet place on a good flight night and you may hear dozens or even hundreds of "zeets", "chips", and buzzes overhead. With some practice, and the right resources, you might be able to identify who's who. To learn more, check out my new [Flight Calls](#) resources page. Don't be discouraged, even the experts can't recognize them all!

For tips on where to look to look for migrants, check for local hotspots on [eBird](#). Check with clubs like the Audubon Society which often lead local birding trips. Better yet, ask me. I can tell you the best places near you, if you are from Florida! Better still, book a trip with me, and I'll show you in person and give you tips on where, when, and how to find migrants. I hope to see you out there.

David Simpson

Here's another report from Harry Robinson's sea watch at Tom Renick Park, in Ormond By The Sea. Spend a morning with Harry one day and you'll be amazed at what you can learn.

TOM RENICK PARK BIRD COUNTS -AUGUST, 2016

For much of the month conditions were calm and sunny however for the last week there were stronger winds from the east. On the 31st the winds came from the south-west with the occasional shower.

There was a young Brown Booby on the 27th. The last Yellow-crowned Night-Herons (four) were seen on the 7th. Blue-winged Teals were seen from the 5th with a new high count of 248 on the 27th. A single Green-winged Teal flew to the south on the 31st.

Black-necked Stilts were seen occasionally with 15 on the 5th and 12 on the 21st. American Avocets put in their first appearance with one on the 5th and two on the 24th. There were single Solitary Sandpipers on the 7th and 27th. Willets were the feature of the month with very large numbers on the beach; there were 283 on the 7th with 446 on the 20th, then 360 seen on the 21st with 62 on the 31st. A Marbled Godwit flew to the north on the 24th.

It was nice to see Parasitic Jaegers back there was one on the 26th with two on the 28th. There were two Roseate Terns on the 10th with one on the 17th. There were two adult Arctic Terns in breeding plumage on the 27th. Black Terns were seen all month with 81 on the 24th.

The last White-winged Doves (two) were seen on the 3rd. There was a Ruby-throated Hummingbird on the 20th with an Eastern Kingbird on the 21st. Loggerhead Shrikes peaked at three on the 20th. There was a Tree Swallow on the 21st and Bank Swallows peaked at 14 on the 3rd. There were single Cliff Swallows on the 3rd and 6th. Barn Swallows peaked at 1429 on the 5th.

There was a Yellow Warbler on the 10th with a Prairie Warbler on the 3rd. Finally there was a Louisiana Waterthrush on the 5th. Both the Yellow Warbler and the Louisiana Waterthrush were new species. The other two were American Avocet and the Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

During this month up to 42 species were seen a day and there were 2,581 birds on the 5th. In all during August 87 species were seen during 17 surveys. A total of 171 species have been noted this year with 174 overall for this site.

So what will September bring?

Harry Robinson

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Audubon Assembly, Our Annual Gathering

The Audubon Assembly will be held in St Petersburg at the Sirata Beach Resort October 28th and 29th. Field trips, workshops and good food highlight this annual gathering and you know you want to be there. Click this [link](#) for all of the information.

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Project Feeder Watch, Citizen Science For All

For some, getting out to participate in all day bird counts is just too taxing on the body. Run by Cornell Lab of Ornithology, [Project Feeder Watch](#) offers every-one, from beginners to experts, a chance to contribute to the knowledge database on our bird populations from the comfort of their kitchen window or easy chair.

* * * * *

Finally, it's a bird eat bird world out there. As this [video](#) graphically shows.

Editor

A Special Thanks To Our Sponsors

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The Ormond Beach Garden Club, Spruce Creek Garden & Nature Club
and Colonial Colony**

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The Pelican

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

Volume 62-Number 11 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
November, 2016



The President's Message

Thought and Concepts

Last week my wife and I were fortunate enough to watch a PBS Nature show devoted to the hummingbird. It was beautifully photographed and full of interesting and informative facts about these incredible creatures.

Subsequently, I did a little research on these birds and I thought I'd share a few facts with you. Did you know that hummingbirds are the only creatures able to remain in the same place in still air for as long as they wish. A hovering hummer keeps its body at a 45 degree angle to the ground and moves its wings in a sort-of figure-eight pattern. Their shoulder joints permit them to twist their wings in such a way as to generate lift off both the backward and forward strokes. The front edge of the wings leads on both strokes, and on the backstroke it is the underside of the feathers that face upward. The shoulder rotation causes the wing to be inside down! I do not suggest you attempt this at home. The direction of thrust changes between the forward and backward strokes so that they cancel each other out. Their wings, beating between 20 and 80 times a second, hold their bodies stationary. This amazing system permits hummers to hover while they extract nectar from flowers that might be inaccessible.

Metabolism is the physical and chemical processes that maintain a bird's life. The sun is the basic energy source that provides basic energy for all birds. Hummingbirds, with their tiny bodies and incredible high levels of activity, have the highest metabolic rate of any animal. To maintain these rates, they have to consume about their weight in nectar on a daily basis. When hovering, they are using about eight times the energy as when they are resting. I am sure you have noticed that hummers seem to forage in bouts- they feed somewhere around 14 to 18 times an hour and then rest in between. They do this to permit the nectar to be absorbed before foraging again since they have little ability to store excess energy. There is so much more to learn about these truly special birds. Here's a [link](#) to a Wikipedia article that is full of good information.

Check our field trip schedule and please join us on some of these fun trips. Next month I'll report on the annual Audubon Assembly, Audubon Florida's state conference.

Jim O'Shaughnessy

* * * * *

We Welcome Our New & Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Betty Cook, Teresa Downey, Todd Erhart, Lynn Gartley, Patty Godwin, Selena Guardino, Diane Hermann, Jolene Rau, Frances Smith and Lorene Wartick. We look forward to seeing you at a meeting or on one of our excellent field trips.

Calendar & Events

Monday, November 21st- Program Meeting: Join us and learn about a bird that's been described as, 'wearing a tuxedo and smoking a carrot.' Chris Farrell is the Audubon Florida Policy Associate of Northeast Florida. His presentation will be on the American Oystercatcher and Audubon's efforts to save it and other shorebirds from further population declines. 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

Friday, November 18th- Lake Apopa Wildlife Drive- Join Peggy Yokubonus for an easy trip to this new and very productive birding hot spot. Meet at 7:30 am at Int'l Square - East of I-95 on Int'l Speedway Blvd behind Krystal. Here's a [link](#) to the location. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Peggy, 386-316-4085 or by email pyokubonus@cfl.rr.com.

Saturday, December 3rd- Audubon Park- Join Betty Butcher for a trip to Audubon Park, in Deltona. Meet at the Target parking in Port Orange, 1771 Dunlawton Ave., behind Panera. Here's a [link](#) to the location. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Betty, 385-224-4922 or email: bbutcher6@cfl.rr.com.

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Field Trips With Others

Sunday, November 6th-Orlando Wetlands Park Join West Volusia Audubon for a bike ride around Orlando Wetlands Park. Information on their website is currently undergoing upgrades. For information, contact Eli Schaperow, 407-314-7965 or by email: birdnerd@earthlink.net.

Saturday, November 19th- Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive- If your schedule prevents you from joining us at this great location the day before, join the folks from West Volusia Audubon for their trip there. Again, for information, contact Eli Schaperow, 407-314-7965 or by email: birdnerd@earthlink.net.

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Spend 2 Minutes, Save A National Wildlife Refuge

The state of Florida has a plan to bulldoze a national wildlife refuge and sell off the land to developers. I know, it sounds preposterous but through a careful manipulation of the data and a rigorous adherence to contract language that's what they have in mind. The Arthur Marshall Loxahatchee NWR, in Palm Beach County, is one of the state's most popular. But they have an invasive plant problem and no where near enough funding to control it. So the state wants to exercise a clause in the contract to evict the refuge. Read all about it and take action [here](#). Many Thanks!

Conservation Notes

I was under the impression that the road to Everglades restoration was well under way and would include the construction of a large reservoir south of Lake Okeechobee. For far too long polluted water from the lake has been dumped into the Caloosahatchee and St Lucie Rivers, where that water then flows into estuaries on both sides of the state. The discharge of this polluted water was principally responsible for the degraded condition of the Indian River south of Melbourne two years ago.

Now comes news that the state, in yet another incidence of foot dragging, will not even begin to study the issue until 2020. This was supposed to have been settled back when Charlie Crist was governor. He devised a plan to buy US Sugar's land, south of Clewiston, for a fair price. Then had to watch as the Legislature, ever anxious to serve those making king sized campaign donations, dawdled around and let the deal expire. The state still has an option until 2020 to purchase the land. Now however, US Sugar has been able to renegotiate the deal and the asking price is just over 1 billion dollars. Meanwhile a handful of US Sugar shareholders count their government subsidized profits and we once again are left to deal with their pollution.

* * *

Key Deer, the small and very much endangered white-tailed deer of extreme South Florida now face yet another threat. Screw worm is actually the larval stage of *Cochliomyia hominivorax*, also know as a blowfly. These voracious little maggots attack otherwise healthy animals and the result is often a long, painful, lingering death. FWC researchers are said to be looking into methods of dealing with the disease but for now luck, in the form of not being a host to these destructive pests, is the best we can hope for.

* * *

From Bird Studies Canada comes news of yet another hybridization in the world of warblers. This one is the first ever record of a Magnolia x Chestnut-sided. The bird was captured in a mist net at Long Point Bird Observatory during Spring migration in 2014. Here's a [link](#) to an article in the Wilson Journal of Ornithology.



Magnolia x Chestnut-sided Hybrid, *photo by Ken Burrell*

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Thanks to chapter member, Lisa Mickey, for sending along a note about this [article](#) on the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's "All About Birds" website. It's fascinating information on Florida's only endemic species, the Florida Scrub Jay.

David Hartgrove

Time for another report from Harry Robinson's sea watch.

October Sea Watch At Tom Renick Park

I had expected October to be a special month. Well it was for all the wrong reasons. Hurricane Matthew paid a visit on the 7th and the hurricane appears to have pushed all the pelagic birds out ahead of it. After the hurricane there have been strong easterly winds and these produced a Magnificent Frigatebird. That was it.

Just 80 species noted this month, on 17 surveys and 84 hours of watching. So far this year I have done 185 surveys over 936 hours. The highest number of species (45) was on the 25th and the highest number of birds (1,730) was on the 28th. I have seen 178 species this year with an overall total of 181.

Common Loons were seen on the 28th and 30th. Most were in breeding plumage. A new species was a Pied-billed Grebe, that I saw on the 23rd and 25th. There was a Brown Booby on the 5th. Northern Gannets were seen from the 28th with 5 on the 30th all but one were adults. Over the Halifax River there were 7 American White Pelicans on the 26th. That was the day of the Magnificent Frigatebird. There were 6 Roseate Spoonbills on the 1st with 21 on the 22nd the latter were all adults. On the 30th there was a single Ring-necked Duck and a single Surf Scoter, together with a flock of 7 Black Scoters.

There were 12 Peregrine Falcons on the 12th and unexpectedly there were two Sandhill Cranes over the river on the 2nd. Red Knots were seen from the 23rd with 42 on the 25th. Another new bird was a Wilson's Snipe that flew to the south on the 11th. Single Parasitic Jaegers were seen on four dates. There were 720 Royal Terns on the 28th with 111 Sandwich Terns on the 30th. The last Common Tern was seen on the 29th. There was an Eastern Phoebe on the 25th. On the 25th a party of three American Crows flew to the south calling. Finally another new bird was a Sedge Wren seen on the 22nd.

There were a number of high counts: there were 165 Great Blue Herons on the 1st, 33 Great Egrets on the 2nd, 127 Cattle Egrets on the 1st, 354 White Ibis on the 1st and 357 Black Vultures. All were flying to the south. There were also 8 Ospreys on the 29th, 4 Northern Harriers on the 1st and five Merlins on the 12th. Even a very poor month had some interesting birds.

Harry Robinson

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Here's another chapter in Ray Scory's ongoing feature:

Everyday Birding

What is this little gray bird doing in my backyard? Will it come to my feeder? Will it come back to my yard? Why did it appear at four o'clock in the afternoon? What can I do but wait and keep looking out in my backyard. So becomes the joy and mystery of birding. The patience of the wait and the art of observation, coupled with the skill of identification, all will crash together upon the moment of a split-second sighting.

A split-second sighting because this is how the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher acts - darting in and out of leafy branches in the trees and bushes of deciduous and in pine forest. Appearing briefly on the outer edges of trees kindly giving us a quick look at its tiny, gray shape. How wonderfully they move from our view to the inner recesses of the tree, only allowing us the time to exclaim, "Where, Where is it?"

Well I'm quite inquisitive about this tiny, gray bird that can bring such joy into my life, especially in such fleeting instances. My research reveals that it has a Summer range over most of the United States, with a global population of 57,000,000.

Continued below on page 3.

Tripod & Scope For Sale

Board member, Celine Sullivan, has a deal for you. She's selling an Eagle Optics Raven, 60 power scope, with its valid lifetime warranty. It's in perfect condition with case and lens covers, AND a new tripod, an ABEO 243AT,,,, all for only \$200.00. Call her at 386-257-1980 or email: celinesul@aol.com.



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, photo by Ray Scory

This bundle of stealth and activity migrates into Central America, down to Cuba, the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands and Mexico.

The Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher resides in a number of habitats including pine forests, deciduous woodlands, stream side thickets, live oaks and chaparral. It is propelled along its journeys with a wing span of six inches and a body weight around 6 grams (2.1 oz). It finds its way around various habitats using shallow wing beats and a fluttering flight. Just watch one as it drops from a high tree level down to a lower one. Very entertaining and challenging to see.

I can count on one hand the number of times the Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher has entered my life. With three occasions remaining quite vivid. The nest that Chuck Tague discovered on a Halifax River Audubon walk at Lake Monroe revealed a tiny nest that could fit in the cup of my hand. Tiny bark and leafy particles, fine grassy pieces were neatly wrapped in a cocoon of lichen. Inside the cup resided two diminutive, recent hatchlings, with bulging, covered eyes and no feathers. The nest reminded me of the Ruby-throated Hummingbird nest, only this one was about three times larger. The Ruby-throated Hummingbird's nest looked about the size of a marshmallow.

After a dormant time of birding, due to a forty year career in professional photography, I redirected my activities back to a better understanding of the art. My first move was to get back to birding at Hammonasset Beach State Park, in Connecticut. This two mile moraine juts out into Long Island Sound. Standing on a wind swept, rocky peninsula overlooking the churning sea, I was yanked back into a more active state of birding. This particular chilly morning I was with a wise, experienced birder looking out in to the Sound for seabirds. However, his focus was not one hundred percent upon the sea, but also behind us. He pointed out a tiny, gray bird dancing about a prickly thicket of Multi-flora Rose bushes. He called it a Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher. I learned a good lesson that day, don't just look, observe your surroundings and you will see birds.

A few days ago, while reading, I glanced out between my Venetian blinds and spotted a gray shape with rear white streaks flash by into a leafy shrub. Closer investigation revealed a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. The second in my backyard in sixteen years.

From the sea, to the forest, to my backyard. A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher is very exciting.

Ray Scory



* * * * *

Time to Start Thinking About The Festival

[The Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival](#) is the largest of its kind in the country. And all the fun takes place just 35 miles to our, south in Titusville. Headquartered at Eastern Florida State College, this is the 20th anniversary edition and it promises to be a doozy! Online registration should be open by the time you read this and the incredible field trips will fill up fast. Birders from as far away as the Yukon, England, Germany and all over the US will be here for the excitement. Scheduled from January 25th thru January 30th, it will be 5 days of field trips, work shops, keynote addresses and a gym full of all things birding and nature. Don't miss it.

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Christmas Bird Counts Coming Soon

One of the best ways to improve your birding skills is to take part in a Christmas Bird Count. This will be the 117th CBC and it's the longest running citizen science project anywhere. Begun in 1900, just 27 birders participated in the first counts, that were done in both the US and Canada. Originally done only on Christmas Day, they are now conducted in a window that runs from December 14th through January 5th. They're conducted all over globe and there are 4 here in Volusia and Flagler. We try to schedule them so that members from the 4 chapters in our area can participate in more than one. Due to Christmas and New Years falling on Sunday this year, scheduling hasn't been as easy as other years. The Flagler CBC starts things off on Friday, December 16th. The following day, December 17th, will be the West Volusia Count. Sunday, December 18th, will be the Ponce Inlet Count. Some of us are going to have a very busy weekend. Our Daytona Beach Count will be on Friday, December 23rd. If you're interested in participating in any or all of these Counts, contact me: by phone, 386-788-2630 or email: birdman9@earthlink.net. I guarantee you a great time.

David Hartgrove

* * * * *

From the Quotable Birder

"I once had a sparrow alight upon my shoulder for a moment, while I was hoeing in a village garden, and I felt that I was more distinguished by that circumstance that I should have been by any epaulet I could have worn."

Henry David Thoreau, Walden

A Special Thanks To Our Sponsors

**Florida Power & Light, Garden Club of the Halifax Country,
The Ormond Beach Garden Club, Spruce Creek Garden & Nature 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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At Large 2016	Vacant		
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The Pelican

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

Volume 62-Number 12 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
December, 2016



The President's Message

Thought and Concepts

The annual meeting of Audubon Florida was held at the Sirata Beach Resort in St. Petersburg Beach on October 28th and 29th. Field trips were offered on Friday morning just prior to the start of the conference. Most attendants went to Ft. De Soto Park as you would expect. My wife and I had been there last year so we decided to go to Boyd Hill Nature Preserve. It is a 300 acre preserve to the south end of Tampa Bay surrounded by residential neighborhoods on three sides and Tampa Bay is the northern border. It contains hard wood forests, wet lands, a lake and several small islands in Tampa Bay. We saw numerous birds, an interesting variety of flora and had two wonderfully informed guides who made everything come to life. I'd recommend this little gem of a park to anyone in the St. Pete area.

The theme of this years conference was "One Gulf". Before Deepwater Horizon the political boundaries seemed important. Florida, Texas and the other states bordering on the Gulf each saw it as their Gulf. But when disaster struck, those boundaries emerged as starkly artificial. The oil didn't pile up at state lines on the map as though it was running into a glass wall. Suddenly, all the different interests in the Gulf of Mexico realized the Gulf didn't recognize boundaries and neither did the tragedy. It will take many hands to make the Gulf ecosystem whole again. Audubon has applied itself in a number of ways to this task. A number of Audubon restoration projects are underway and others are being proposed. Audubon brings a unique blend of science, local knowledge, grassroots engagement, and policy acumen to what may be the biggest conservation opportunity of a generation.

Audubon coastal bird technicians have engaged hundreds to volunteers to protect beach nesting birds along the Gulf. Audubon chapter members are bringing local knowledge and accountability to update the process relative to Surface Water improvement and Management plan. Florida members are advocates for new protections for some of our most vulnerable bird habitats along our Gulf shoreline. Audubon's Everglades scientists are crafting restoration plans to staunch the accelerating erosion of southwest Florida's Cape Sable. Audubon staff and volunteers are continually working to turn our conservation vision into reality.

Audubon members were among the most active advocates in securing passage of the RESTORE Act and celebrated last year's historic settlement with BP. Now that implementation of Gulf Restoration from several funding streams is gearing up, Audubon voices will be needed to speak for the Gulf's natural resources.

Continued below on the next page

Calendar & Events

Monday, December 19th- Program Meeting. Dr. Harry Moulis is one of the best nature photographers around. His award winning photos have graced magazines, homes and offices alike. He will be our speaker for this meeting. 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, December 3rd- Audubon Park. Join Betty Butcher for a trip to Audubon Park, in Deltona. Meet at the Target parking lot in Port Orange, 1771 Dunlawton Ave., behind Panera. Here's a [link](#) to the location. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Betty, 385-224-4922 or email: bbutcher6@cfl.rr.com.

Friday, December 16th- Merritt Island NWR. Join John Roessler for a trip to one of the nation's premier winter birding destinations. We'll meet to carpool at the Target parking lot in Port Orange, 1771 Dunlawton Ave., behind Panera. Here's a [link](#) to the location. Bring lunch. Questions? Call John, 386-212-6957, or email: johnroessler@bellsouth.net.

Plan Now For Our Overnight Trip To St Marks NWR

Tuesday, January 10th thru Friday, January 13th. We will leave Tuesday January 10th, carpooling to St Marks, FL (approx. 260 miles). We will stay at [Shell Island Fish Camp](#), 850-925-6226. They have 1 and 2 bedroom cabins, motel rooms and RV sites (if you want to bring your RV). Dinners will be as a group at local seafood restaurants. Stay from 3, 4, or 5 nights, whichever is better for you. If interested, please contact Betty Butcher, 863-224-4922, for more information.

And Plan Now Too For January's Boat Trip

Wednesday, January 25th- Spruce Creek Boat Tour- Join Celine Sullivan at [Cracker Creek](#) for a 1 hour pontoon boat ride on this Outstanding Florida Waterway. Cracker Creek Concession is located at [1795 Taylor Rd., Port Orange](#). The tour is from 10-11 am with lunch following at the Olive Garden Restaurant located in the Pavillion Shopping Center, Port Orange. The fee for the boat trip is \$10.00 (please bring exact fee in cash). Limit 20 persons. The deadline for this trip is Mon., 1/23/17. Questions? Call Celine at 386-523-4809.

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Field Trips With Others

Monday, December 12th- Merritt Island NWR. Another option for those wanting to see one of the nation's best winter birding hot spots is to go with our sister chapter, the West Volusia Audubon Society. If you want to join them for this trip, contact Eli Schaperow at 407-314-7965. You may be able to rendezvous with the group near the Refuge rather than driving to DeLand first.

The comprehensive plan that guides RESTORE is being revised and Audubon has had input into this critically important document. Natural resources damage funding and the Gulf Environment Benefit Fund will need local knowledge from Audubon chapter members to evaluate proposed priorities and projects. To receive notification from Audubon when opportunities to comment are advertised sign up for the electronic newsletter at this [link](#). Your voice is needed and makes a difference.

Dr. Harry Moulis, a wonderful nature photographer, will be our speaker at our December 19 meeting. You will not want to miss this special presentation.

Jim O'Shaughnessy

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Conservation Notes

As many of you may have seen in the Sunday, November 27th [News-Journal editorial](#), Rookery Island was removed from the list of new Critical Wildlife Area designates at the last minute. I wrote about the CWA program in the September edition of the Pelican. The island also has the somewhat less descriptive name of "Island #V-7." Whatever it's called it's one of the most important nesting areas in the state and the northern most Brown Pelican colony on Florida's Atlantic coast. In addition to the pelicans, herons, egrets, cormorants and American Oystercatchers nest on the island. It's clearly in need of extra protection.

Its proximity to Port Orange Causeway Park and its boat ramps, along with the attendant boat traffic, have the potential to cause serious disturbance to the nesting birds. However, the birds pay little attention to the boats as they launch and cluster at the end of the day to reload onto trailers for the ride back home. Boaters are able to remain a respectful distance away from the island and nearly all do. It's the fishermen who decide the nearby fishing dock doesn't suit their fancy. Who land on the island and are oblivious to the disturbance their presence causes as they cast fishing lines or nets into the water. It's the kayakers who bring their dogs along and land on the large sandbar that's exposed at low tide on the west end of the island. The dogs are turned loose to chase birds and again, the owners are oblivious to the damage being done. And now, thanks to new technology, there's [another threat](#). This one from above via drone. Hopefully none of these bozos has any idea of the threats their activities cause to the birds. Surely they wouldn't purposely harass the birds and clearly the island needs the protection a CWA designation extends.

The reason the island was pulled off the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission's CWA list was a last minute objection by the Volusia County representative to the Florida Inland Navigation District. FIND owns the island through an agreement with the state. The island was created back when the Intra Coastal Waterway was dredged in the 1940's. FIND's mission is to maintain navigable waterways, among other things. However the island's only value to FIND is as a spoil dump site from dredging operations. Since there's been a thriving bird colony on the island for over 40 years, and since FIND has a long history of being a very good partner at other nesting sites, it's a puzzle as to what their objection could be. The public relations nightmare created if they suddenly decided to pump thousands of gallons of dredge spoil into the middle of a long time bird colony make that possibility non existent.

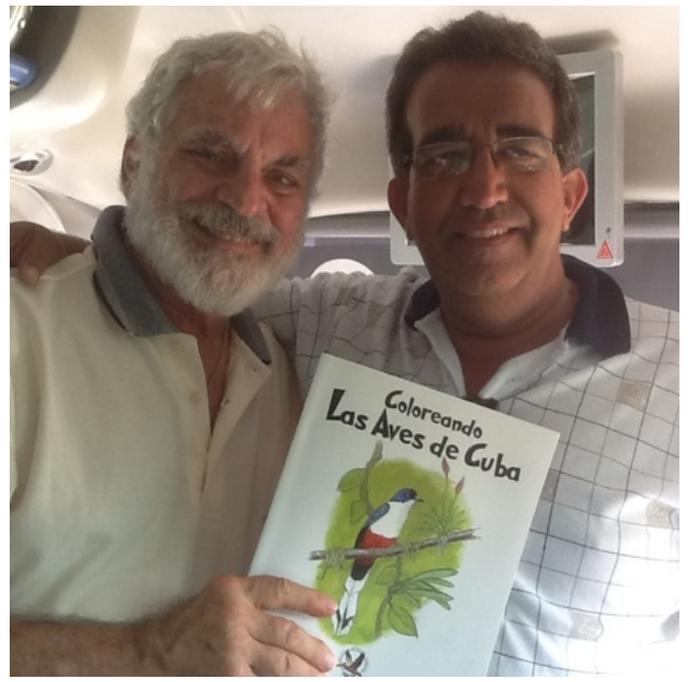
So what's their complaint? We hope to find out in a meeting with the FIND staff here in Port Orange on December 13th. As I was told when I drove to the FWC meeting in St Petersburg on November 16th, this issue is still up for debate and could make it to the list after all. Stay tuned.

David Hartgrove

Coloring Book Project Off And Running

In December, 2014 our chapter organized a birding trip to Cuba. Built into the cost of the trip was a donation to our chapter. That donation funded a project to design and publish a coloring book of Cuban birds for Cuban school aged children. Our donation allowed for the printing of 2,000 copies of the book in Spanish. At last month's Audubon Assembly I was contacted by Dr. Norman Capra who put me in touch with Dr. Robert Lerer, who among his many titles lists Associate Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at The University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center.

For a number of years now he has organized a medical missions program to hospitals and clinics in Cuba. He asked for 30 copies of the book for distribution on the latest trip. All of the books were shared with children (some of whom suffer from autism) and their doctors. Below Dr. Lerer (left) gives a copy to professor of Speech Pathology and Audiology, Dr. Hector Perez Galban, for use with



his class of deaf students. Our profound thanks to Dr. Lerer for his assistance in getting the books distributed to the children of Cuba. For more photos and and information, visit our chapter's [Facebook](#) page.

David Hartgrove

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Audubon Adventures Needs Your Help

Yes, that means we need your money. Supplying Volusia County schools classrooms with [Audubon Adventures](#) is a major HRA project. The cost to supply one classroom with this exceptional educational material is \$45.00. Please donate what you can to this special project. We are currently serving forty five teachers in sixteen schools. Make your generous check payable to HRA and designate it's for Audubon Adventures. And Thank You!

Marion Monaghan, Education Co-Chair

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From the Quotable Birder

"The bird a nest, the spider a web, man friendship."

William Blake

Tree Down (A Story of Birds and a Fallen Tree)

A tree down is a loss. Never to be again. Gone. When it happens in your backyard. It is personal. It carried with it memories. My memories. I will not be able to look at it anymore. I will miss its majesty , its beauty, its call for memories.

This wonderful slash pine now lays down in my yard, half on the lawn, the other half partly submerged in our retention pond. Forlornly, it awaits the buzz of the chain saw, decked in the memories of years past. Before the time we came to live here, long before this subdivision was a dream. It was one tree in a vital forest protecting plants, flowers and wildlife, keeping the land intact from the ageless changes of weather. It began its life forty-two years ago and shut down bending to the inevitable progress of aging and a hurricane called, "Matthew." The tree became a remnant from times past. It can be proud. It did its job well and served its purpose.

I fondly remembered the two Great Horned Owls that roosted in the tree during one long winter season. Every morning they were there, looking down at us as we peered out our kitchen window to see if they were still there. Friends they became - two big brown birds with rounded faces and piercing yellow eyes. Stoic and alive they were. At dusk, we watched them fly off to a tree across the pond, look back at our tree and then on off to create their own memories but still return to us the next morning.

Years ago, a Common Nighthawk flew over our house, I grabbed my camera, charged out to the backyard and photographed the bird tightly resting on a branch of our tree. The first and last time I have seen a Common Nighthawk in our yard. Semi-annually, migrating warblers, American Robins, Cedar Waxwings and other avian travelers have used this tree as a welcoming stopover. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker winters on it. All wonderful lasting memories.

For six weeks after the hurricane, the tree rested in the water providing a cover for the wildlife in our back yard. Fish swam up among the submerged branches right to the edge of the pond. Schools of small fingerlings and larger bass welcomed the covering shade of the tree. They never came this close to the shore before. Egrets and herons used the out-of-water branches as perching sites, majestically establishing a position of priority and adding a touch of beauty to their new found environment. Every day just before dusk an Anhinga came to the same spot under the cover of the branches to spread its wings. Mallards seem to enjoy weaving in and our of the branches that penetrate down into the water. They liked to rest on shore up close to the fallen tree. Quite a sight to see, all those ducks huddled in the protection of the tree. A good feeling I had, warm and peaceful. Wood storks stood by this fallen tree.

A few days ago the chain saws came and the tree was carried away. The birds fly by and the waterbirds perch in other places. The ducks sit across the pond and face where they once played. A wood stork just stands there.

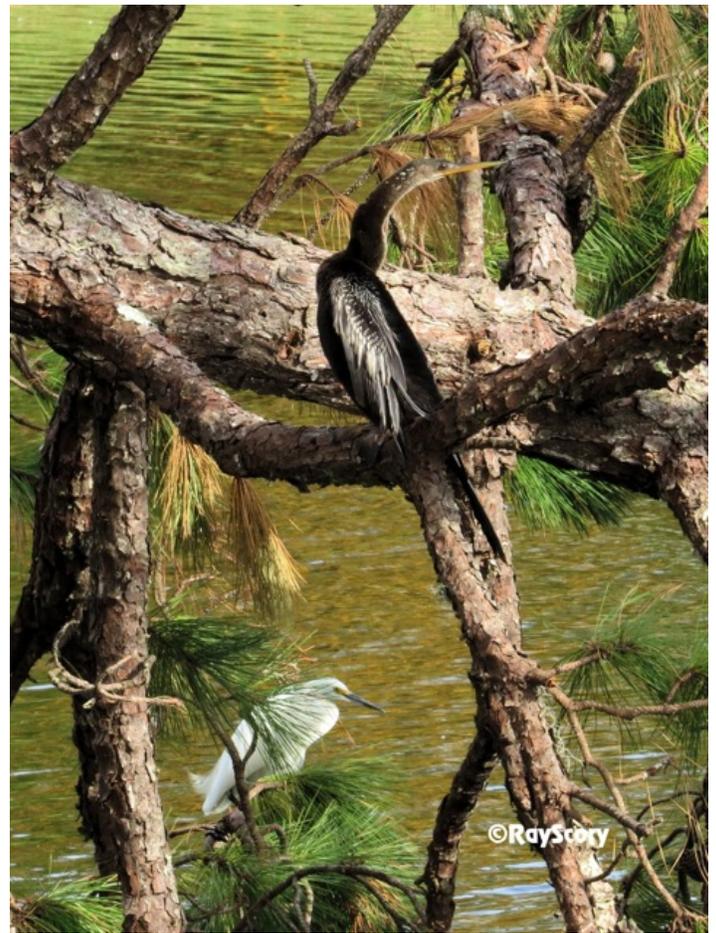
I will miss this tree but take satisfaction realizing that... This tree did its job. This tree was there to help and this tree did.

This tree was OK.

Ray Scory



The slash pine taken down by the winds of Matthew.



A Snowy Egret and a male Anhinga take refuge on the tree's branches. No doubt the branches made good platforms for the birds to search for a meal of fish.

Photos by Ray Scory

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Welcome To Our New & Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Joanne Axelrod, Wayland Bennett, Lorene Cook, Mary Downey, Gezina Ehrhart, Daniel Eubank, Todd Fox, Jessie Gaby, Barbara Gallant, Tina Garber, Diane Giles, Selina Goeman, Carol Koenke, Melissa Lammers, Josephine LeGrand, Patti Musette, Frances Myers, Michael Piers, Chuck & Helga Nelson, Nancy Robinson, Linda Soden, David Thorp and Lynn Van Tassel. We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting or on one of fabulous field trips.

A Special Thanks To Our Sponsors

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and Colonial Colony**

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