

The Pelican

We need to be the stewards of this world, not its destroyers
Volume 64-Number 1 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
January, 2018



The President's Ruminations

Here we are at the start of a new year, with new opportunities to deliver on our mission, to be stewards of our land. There are some glimmers of things to be optimistic about but we need to speak up. Possibly the most important are P-46 and SB 370.

Background

In 2014, 75% of Florida's voters passed The Florida Water and Land Conservation Amendment to the Florida State Constitution. The intent of the amendment was to guarantee that from 2015 through 2035, the Land Acquisition Trust Fund would receive at least 33% of net revenues from the existing excise tax on documents ("doc stamp") to purchase sensitive conservation lands. This wasn't a new tax. It was a directive from voters to fund the Land Acquisition Trust using already-collected public monies. Here's a nice [recap](#).

There was some common-sense leeway in the amendment's language that did not seem problematic given the very clear intent of the amendment but it gave the State Legislature the room to go against the spirit (and some say the letter) of the law. The Florida Forever land acquisition program didn't get a penny from the State Legislature in 2017 even though nearly \$800 million was deposited into the Land Acquisition Trust as its annual share of the doc stamps.

So, what's the good news, you ask? Two items: **P-42** and **SB 370**. Every 20 years, Florida appoints a Constitutional Revision Commission (CRC) to review the Constitution and place changes before the electorate. (This is a very good thing and in my opinion, Florida should get a lot more credit for its good housekeeping than it does). The Revision is underway and Commissioner Jacquie Thurlow-Lippisch has filed a proposed amendment, P-46, that would require that at least a third of the annual Amendment 1 revenues be directed to land purchase. Here is a link to the [CRC](#).

For P-46 to "fix" The Florida Water and Land Conservation Amendment by eliminating the leeway and clarifying the intent, your support is needed. Please follow the link above to show your support or better yet, please attend either of the closest meetings:

Central Florida Public Hearing, Monday, February 19, 1:00-7:00 PM EST, Eastern Florida State College, Maxwell C. King Center, 3865 North Wickham Road, Melbourne, FL 32935

Continued on page 2 below

Calendar & Events

Monday, January 22nd- Program Meeting- "Plant it and they will come" has become the new mantra for those wishing to attract birdlife to their yards and gardens—the "it" being native plants, which have co-evolved for millions of years with our native birds and form the foundation of a healthy North American ecosystem. Tod Winston is Program Manager for the Plants for Birds program at the National Audubon Society. He will be our speaker and it should be an informative evening. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. A brief business meeting will follow Tod's presentation.

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Field Trips

The January 9th through 11th trip to St Marks is full.

Friday, January 19th, Viera Wetlands- Join David Hartgrove on this trip to see one of the hot spots on Florida's east coast. We'll be looking for Least Bittern, Purple Gallinule and Crested Caracara, among others. Bring a lunch and rendezvous at the Target East of I-95 on Dunlawton Ave., behind Panera Bread. Questions, call David at 386-235-1249.

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Field Trips With Others

Sunday, January 7th, Lake Woodruff NWR- Join our friends from West Volusia Audubon Society for this trip to one of our local birding gems. Contact Eli Schaperow, 407-314-7965 to arrange meeting their group at the Refuge, 2045 Mud Lake Rd, De Leon Springs, FL 32130.

Saturday, January 13th, Merritt Island NWR- Join our friends from Southeast Volusia Audubon Society for this trip to one of America's best winter birding spots. 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. Questions, call Joe Montpelier at 386-882-8679.

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"Forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the wind longs to play with your hair."

Kahlil Gibran

Northeast Florida Public Hearing, Tuesday, February 20, 1:00-7:00 PM EST, University of North Florida, Herbert University Center, 12000 Alumni Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32224

SB 370 The Florida Senate is considering a bill that would commit at least \$100 million annually to Florida Forever through SB 370. While yes, that is a large sum of money and both Florida Audubon and Halifax River Audubon support the bill, it is much less than the \$300 million the program received annually prior to the recession. So, if we can make P-46 a reality, then SB 370 can also become the law of the land and the combination **would restore funding comparable to historic levels.**

Florida has largely recovered from the recession. The time to honor the will of the citizens is now as even in our local area, sensitive lands are being approved for development. Once land is paved over, it's too late. Or as Joni Mitchell so beautifully put it in her [song](#). Please consider lending your support to P-46 and SB 370. Thank you.

Melissa Lammers

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A Special Birthday Wish

A belated special birthday wish for a very special person. Carol Branch has been a member of Halifax River Audubon longer than many of us have been on the planet. Last month she celebrated her 90th birthday by making a very generous donation to Audubon Adventures. Many, many thanks Carol and many more Happy Birthdays!

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Let the Birding Festivals Begin

First up is the [Lake Apopka Birding Festival](#), January 18-21, 2018. It's sponsored by Orange Audubon and all proceeds go to Orange Audubon Society's nature and environmental education center fund. As you may have heard, the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive reopened December 22nd. It was open through Christmas Day (such a nice Christmas present) and will be open the regular Friday-Sunday plus federal holidays schedule, thanks to the SJRWMD's hard work. Lots of birds out there. The Lake Apopka Birding Festival is perfect for birders visiting Florida or locals wanting to learn more from well known, knowledgeable birding guides. Add to your life list at an amazing birding area, the 20,000-acre Lake Apopka North Shore. Twenty-one trips, led by Greg Miller, Clay Taylor (Swarovski Optik), David Simpson and some of Central Florida's best local birders, are offered, along with two dinners and keynotes.

Next up (January 24th through the 29th) is the grand daddy, the [Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival](#). The largest birding festival in the country, it's headquartered at [East Florida State College in Titusville](#) and includes 5 days of field trips, work shops and classes on photography, bird identification and all kinds of nature related family activities. If you've been thinking about new binoculars or a spotting scope, this is the place to look. Every manufacturer of sport optics in the country will be represented here and they'll just hand you a pair to try for yourself. With nationally known speakers, field trip leaders and teachers, this is one you don't want to miss.

Conservation Notes

As we begin the second year of the Trump administration the triumph of ignorance and petty vengeance over science and common sense continues to wreak havoc on our quality of life. Reversing protections for two national monuments, Bear's Ears and Grand Staircase Escalante, seems to have been done simply because Obama had issued executive orders protecting them. The EPA under Scott Pruitt has gutted its science staff and put political hacks with no qualifications in their place. In the face of overwhelming evidence that CO2 emissions are heating the planet and setting the stage for catastrophic climate change, Trump calls for more fossil fuel burning and blathers on about making America great again. He praises the military and the generals but issues orders omitting climate change from our nation's national security strategy which the generals see as a major threat. The window is fast closing on our ability to make the changes that could partially avert disaster. And meanwhile we're treated to Tweets about how great things are and are going to be. Our grand children will scratch their heads and wonder how so many could have been so duped.

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Off shore wind farms have been a major contributor to the power generation grid for several European nations for quite a few years now. The US is about to jump into the act with its own off shore wind farms. There are already some off Rhode Island and plans are slowly making their way through the approval process for a lot more. Fishermen are already raising concerns about the potential danger these large platforms could pose as navigation threats, especially in foggy conditions. In 2011 I worked on a project for an environmental consultant firm in North Carolina. We were trying to determine whether or not aerial, high resolution photography could be a substitute for having human eyes to do marine mammal and bird surveys on the open ocean. These would be necessary for an environmental impact assessment.

We were operating out of Oak Island, North Carolina with a large fishing boat and two Cessna 337 Skymaster aircraft. One plane had a high resolution camera. The other had two marine mammal specialists and two birders. The boat, a beautiful 44 foot Striker, was an excellent deep sea fishing boat. It made an awful science platform. Imagine bounding across 4 to 6 foot seas at 16 knots while trying to see birds, grab a digital voice recorder to make your data entry and hopefully not fall overboard since there was almost nothing to hang onto. Sitting wasn't an option since you were then too low to see the birds in wave troughs.

Flying was the way to go and after the first day on the boat I was asked to switch to the plane when one of the other birders was too air sick to continue. My first thought was, if he's got motion sickness in the plane, wait till he's bouncing across the waves. He ended up working in ground support. The result of our project was that we believed that aerial photography would do the job. Will there be tall wind mills off Cape Hatteras any time soon? Probably. If they're placed over 14 miles out you wouldn't be able to see them from shore and they could be spinning away creating renewable energy. Their impact on birds should be minimal since our observations showed few birds between 3 and 40 miles out.

David Hartgrove

Giant Leaps In Migration Studies

The article below was for the most part taken from one that first appeared on the *Bird Studies Canada* [website](#). Editor

Geolocators are small devices that record the sunlight a bird encounters as it moves across oceans and continents. One type can sometimes be seen on the legs of migrating Red Knots as they pass through our area. They are about the size and shape of a vitamin capsule. Others are smaller, allowing them to be deployed on much smaller birds.

As so often happens, all this began with a coincidence. At a conference in Mexico, Bridget Stutchbury, an ornithologist at York University, stumbled across a poster on geolocators, which the British Antarctic Survey first developed to study seabirds. She realized that at 1.5 grams, the geolocators were small enough to put on very large songbirds like the Purple Martin. The following year, Stutchbury and her students deployed 20 of them, strapped to the birds with a backpack-style harness. Though they recovered just two from this initial batch—geolocators are “archival,” meaning they don’t transmit data remotely—they revealed an immediate surprise: a female identified as Yellow 2551 had flown north in the spring much quicker than expected, covering the thousands of miles from Brazil to Pennsylvania in just two weeks.

According to a forthcoming review study by Emily McKinnon, a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Windsor, many of the locators tell remarkable stories. After recovering geolocators from two Connecticut Warblers in Manitoba in 2016, McKinnon was astonished to discover that the tiny birds’ journey south to Bolivia the previous fall had included a nonstop, two-day haul over the Atlantic Ocean. Connecticut Warblers weigh just over half an ounce.

The word “motus” is Latin for movement. [Motus](#) is also the name of a unique tracking system that uses tiny radio transmitters and a network of ground based receiving stations to discover heretofore unknown facets of bird and animal migration. Motus tracks animals (birds, bats, and large insects) affixed with digitally-encoded radio transmitter “nano-tags” that broadcast signals several times each minute. These signals are detected by automated radio telemetry stations that scan for signals 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The Motus network includes over 350 receiving stations across the Western Hemisphere. Cooperating partners include Canopy Tower, in Panama; Cape May Bird Observatory; Florida Gulf Coast University and many state and international Audubon chapters.

The [ICARUS](#) initiative—short for “International Cooperation for Animal Research Using Space”—will be the next ornithological game changer. Scheduled to come online next year, after Russian cosmonauts install a new antenna on the International Space Station, ICARUS will remotely track tagged birds’ movements with such precision that it will be able to tell when they stop breathing, says Martin Wikelski, the project leader at the Max Planck Institute for Ornithology.

When ICARUS launches, the lightest tags will weigh about 3.5 grams—still too heavy for most songbirds—and they’ll only communicate with the orbiting antenna once a day. But Wikelski predicts a one-gram tag will be available in two to three years.

Continued in the next column.

Plans are in the works to put more antennae in orbit, improving ICARUS’s coverage and allowing more frequent data transmissions. The idea is to allow scientists to follow individual birds across the globe while keeping tabs on an enormous amount of data—speed, altitude, temperature, heading, acceleration, and so forth—much like airplane passengers now track their flights on the seat-back display. As tags get smaller and satellite coverage improves, the birds they track can be smaller and the data they receive gets closer and closer to real time.

This means that any interested party should soon be able to follow a dot on a computer screen representing an individual purple martin en route from Pennsylvania to some tiny speck of a sandbar in the Amazon. It is, obviously, an exciting prospect for the ornithologists who study this stuff, as well as for the wider bird-watching public. Wikelski emphasizes the educational angle: Imagine an elementary-school science unit built around a single purple martin’s journey to Brazil and back again. That could be the spark that sets a child on course to being the next Roger Tory Peterson.

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This Barred Owl was photographed by Peter May at a site in Tiger Bay State Forest called Danny’s Hole. It may be the same bird our team saw last year at this spot while doing the Daytona Beach Christmas Bird Count. Their diet consists mostly of small mammals, amphibians, reptiles and occasionally small birds.

David Hartgrove



Ovenbird, Photo by Peter May

Bird Biography: Ovenbird

A sometime feature in the Pelican

Ovenbirds get their name from the type of nest they build. Located on the ground, it's an intricate, dome shaped structure built by the female using dead leaves, grass, bark, twigs and lined with animal hair. So if you see a bird diving on a dog or other mammal it may not be trying to attack. It may be gathering nesting material. They lay 4 to 6 eggs and are frequent hosts to the chicks of our best known nest parasite, the Brown-headed Cowbird. The parents being good providers, both cowbird and Ovenbird chicks usually survive.

Primarily an insectivore, the birds can be seen walking purposefully, rather than hopping. They look for beetles, their larvae, ants, caterpillars, worms, spiders and snails on the ground or in rotting logs. They also "hawk" flying insects or hover to pick them off leaves. They usually have one brood per year but it years with an outbreak of spruce bud worm have been known to produce 3 broods. Not a breeder in Florida, birds nesting east of the Appalachians migrate to the Caribbean, though some winter here. Ovenbirds nesting west of the Mississippi migrate to Mexico and Central America.

David Hartgrove

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From the "Quotable Birder"

"Almost all male birds are extremely pugnacious, using their beaks, wings and legs for fighting together. We see this every spring with our robins and sparrows. The smallest of all birds, namely the hummingbird, is the most quarrelsome."

Charles Darwin, "The Decent of Man"



House Wren, Photo by Peter May

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THE PELICAN

is published monthly by the Halifax River Audubon, a chapter of the National Audubon Society and a member of Audubon Florida serving eastern Volusia County.

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Meets monthly September through May

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Recording Sec.: Peggy Yokubonus

Membership Sec.: Joan Tague

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We wish to thank our sponsors, whose contributions play a vital part of allowing us to continue our work: Florida Power & Light, Colonial Colony and the Spruce Creek Garden and Nature Club.

The Pelican

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Volume 64-Number 2. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
February, 2018



The President's Ruminations

What Kind of Birder Am I? What Kind of Birder Are you?

This isn't really about me but maybe if I share my story, you'll help me out with tailoring our chapter to your wishes. In 2016, I moved back to Volusia County with the very certain but fuzzy goal of devoting myself to protecting the environment in this beautiful area where I grew up. In the early fall, I attended a talk at Halifax River Audubon (HRA) where an upcoming birding class was announced. My husband and I signed up. We had a wonderful time but we weren't really sure we were going to be birders like our most experienced members. We still are not sure, although we just went on our first extended birding field trip to St. Mark's National Wildlife Refuge and loved, loved, loved it!!

However, if spending three days searching for and finding birds doesn't grab you yet, IT DOESN'T MATTER. If you love birds, it follows that you love nature. Audubon is one of the oldest environmental organizations in the US, with a track record of making a difference. Here is a link to a short YouTube [video](#) that tells the story of National Audubon.

Halifax River Audubon has been around since 1923. Here is a link to our [webpage](#) that tells of our history.

And now we'd like to know about you and what fires your passion. Here's a link to a [short survey](#) that will give us information on how you'd like to interact with us and our mission to help protect our area's environment. Thanks in advance for your participation and I hope we'll see you at an upcoming meeting or on a field trip.

Melissa Lammers

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From the Quotable Birder

"The very idea of a bird is a symbol and a suggestion to the poet. A bird seems to be at the top of the scale, so vehement and intense is his life... The beautiful vagabonds, endowed with every grace, masters of all climes, and knowing no bounds- how many human aspirations are realized in their free, holiday lives- and how many suggestions to the poet in their flight and song!"

John Burroughs, Birds and Poets

Calendar & Events

Monday, February 26th, Program Meeting- First, please note that this will be the 4th Monday in the month. The 3rd Monday being President's Day. Our speaker will be Dr. J. Cho. Dr. Cho is the author of numerous publications and is a Professor of Integrated Environmental Science at Bethune-Cookman University. She will present an overview on the current status and results of research projects of the Halifax River and Indian River Lagoon areas. We meet at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Ave, Daytona Beach, FL 32117. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. We hope to see you there!

Field Trips

Friday, February 2nd, Lake Apopka- Join Peggy Yokubonus for this trip to one of Florida's best birding locations. We'll meet at 7:30 am at International Square, east of I-95, behind Krystal to car pool. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Peggy, 386-316-4085.

Tuesday, February 6th, Orlando Wetlands- Celine Sullivan will be our leader to this great spot. We'll meet at 7:30 am at Target in Port Orange, East of I-95 on Dunlawton Ave behind Panera to carpool. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Celine at 386-523-4809.

Thursday, February 22nd, Dunlawton Bridge- Join Ray Scory for a morning walk at this local hot spot. We'll meet in Port Orange Causeway Park in the parking lot below the bridge. Questions? Call Ray, 386-290-0075.

Field Trips With Others

Friday, February 23rd, Lake Apopka- If you can't make our trip to this hot spot on 2/2, join our friends from Southeast Volusia Audubon for theirs. Meet in the Florida Shores Plaza parking lot in Edgewater, (at the corner of Ridgewood Ave and Indian River Blvd), South of the new Dunkin Donuts building at 7:30 am. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Joe Montpelier at 386-882-8679.

Sunday, February 4th, Lake Woodruff NWR- Join our friends from West Volusia Audubon for a walk around this great spot. During the recent Space Coast Festival a LeConte's Sparrow was found here, along with lots of other good birds. You can meet the group at the Refuge, 2045 Mud Lake Road DeLeon Springs, FL 32130. Contact Eli Schaperow to arrange the rendezvous, 407-314-7965.

Volusia County Science & Engineering Fair

Projects Win Special Recognition

Four projects and the students who created them received Special Awards from Volusia County's Audubon Chapters. The three chapters, Halifax River Audubon, Southeast Volusia Audubon Society and West Volusia Audubon Society once again came together as judges for Special Awards at the 51st Tomoka Regional Science and Engineering Fair with Volusia County Schools. The Special Awards consisted of cash prizes to the students who had the best projects in the areas of Audubon's interests: environment, conservation, alternative energy and climate change.

The winners were:

First Place Senior: Jessica Hanflink and Taylor Young for their project, "Can Lithium Hydroxide be used as an effective substance to neutralize dissolved carbon dioxide in salt water to mitigate ocean acidification?"

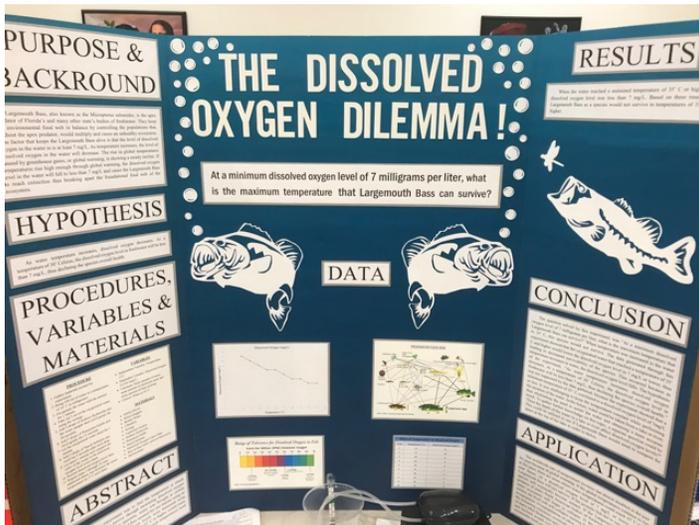
Second Place Senior: Aubrey Heiss, for "King Tides"

First Place Junior: Rita Gupta for her project, "What plant is most beneficial to water filtration in the Tomoka River?"

Second Place Junior: Cody McCafferty for "The dissolved oxygen dilemma."

The Audubon judges were Steve Underwood, Halifax River Audubon, Don Picard, Southeast Volusia Audubon Society and Eli Schaperow, West Volusia Audubon Society.

Melissa Lammers



This was the second place winner in the Junior Division

Photo by Steve Underwood

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It's That Time of Year Again

Time for the [Birds of a Feather Fest](#), presented by the City of Palm Coast. There will be lots of great field trips, classes and workshops. World renowned wildlife photographer, Moose Peterson will deliver the keynote address. Click on the link above for all of the information and to register.

Conservation Notes

It never ceases to amaze me the lengths some people will go to make a fool themselves. A good example just unfolded in Palm Coast over the past several years. A homeowner on one of the water ways up there has two posts with man-made, gourd type, Purple Martin nest boxes mounted on his dock. Purple Martins are migratory insect eaters that are some of the first migrants to arrive here from their wintering grounds in South America. As colonial cavity nesters they depend on manmade nest boxes for nesting. They are popular with people across the country who believe they eat lots of mosquitoes. The only place I've ever seen them nesting in natural cavities is at Orlando Wetlands, where they nest in old woodpecker holes in dead palm trees. We have a field trip to this location on February 6th.

The neighbor next door to the dock with the nest boxes decided to take offense for some reason. He claimed that the birds were depriving him of sleep and were a nuisance. What he did next shows the truth of my opening sentence. In order to drive them away, he rented one of those tall, inflatable, waving characters often seen at used car lots. They're inflated by a somewhat noisy fan and noise from the birds was one of this guy's chief complaints. Purple Martins are diurnal, they're silent at night and in the daytime they're hardly what you'd call noisy. It's not like standing at Payne's Prairie listening to 25,000 Sandhill Cranes. The guy also used some sort of laser device to scare away the birds. As you can see, his efforts were far more of a disturbance to the neighborhood than the birds.

Finally, he sued his neighbors for 40,000.00 for all kinds of imagined complaints and they counter sued. Earlier this month, Circuit Judge Scott DuPont ruled in the bird lovers' favor and tossed the suit out of court. So four years of anger and acrimony are over, for now.

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NEWS FROM CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

In early January Interim Executive Director Julie Wraithmell held a conference call with chapter leaders to summarize Audubon Florida's focus for the 2018 legislative session. Governor Scott recommended funding for conservation, but it is up to the legislature to determine the numbers. Senator Bradley introduced [SB 370](#) and [SB 204](#), including \$100 million to Florida Forever and \$75 and \$50 million, respectively for springs and the St Johns WMD. SB 370 passed the Senate unanimously and has a companion bill in the House, H 1513, which is in committee. SB 204 has been moved to the Special Order Calendar.

Members of the Central FL Regional Conservation Committee met on January 14 to discuss continuing efforts with local land advocacy and visits with legislators in their hometown offices. Seminole Audubon Society is educating legislators by showing them conservation land which absorbed the flood waters from Hurricane Irma as nature intended vs. developed areas where homes and businesses were flooded following the storm because they were built on flood-prone properties.

David Hartgrove and

Audubon Florida Board Member, Paula Wehr

by Ray Scory

The Joy of Bird Watching

I write this column in January 2018. A first month in a new year. A new year is always full of new hopes and new dreams and new aspirations and, yes, even a setback or two, All still untested but out there to become new experiences, to become a part of our life's history.

About four years ago Halifax River Audubon asked me to write a column for their newsletter, The Pelican. Specifically to write about birds that visitors and newcomers to our region would see and know more about. I accepted this challenge and it opened a whole new way of enjoying birds.

And to think that it all began when I was a boy of fourteen and earned the Bird Study Merit Badge from the Boy Scouts of America. Pursuing that merit badge exposed me to observing birds in different habitats, watching their behaviors, checking the details and colors of their feathers and watching them fly. I was thrilled by their various landing techniques and getting to know their names. I read about the pioneers of bird watching and was excited to own and use Roger Tory Peterson's, "Field Guide to the Birds", published in 1947. I took that book everywhere.

This was my first leap forward in the total enjoyment of bird watching. Previously I had watched my mother feed the birds and my father set up the bluebird house in front of the kitchen window. My mother planted a honeysuckle vine next to our front porch so she could watch the hummingbirds and my father trimmed the cedar tree so that every year they could watch close-up a family of robins, catbirds, blue jays or cardinals raise their young. I was there too.

Yesterday, at the Port Orange City Center pond, I watched a young mother with her knee high child joyously centered in of a flock of over one hundred White Ibis. I thrilled at watching that young boy cautiously touch an ibis and timidly reaching out with a tiny morsel of food for a patiently waiting ibis, always acting as if this child was not a threat. How do they know? A child and a bird, two distinctly different orders of living things, coming together, understanding.

I would like to know what was going through the minds of that mother and child and bird at that time, possibly to become a cherished memory. I like to think I do know because I can still remember the rush I felt the first time I was touched by a bird - a Scarlet Tanager. I then slowly turned and went for my camera and made my first bird photo at fourteen years old. My mother was watching.

The Wonder of it all. The Thrills. The Rushes. The Experiences. The Memories. The Realizations and Awareness. The Joy. The Friends. A new Adventure - every time. Something for Everyone. Wonderful.

Ray Scory

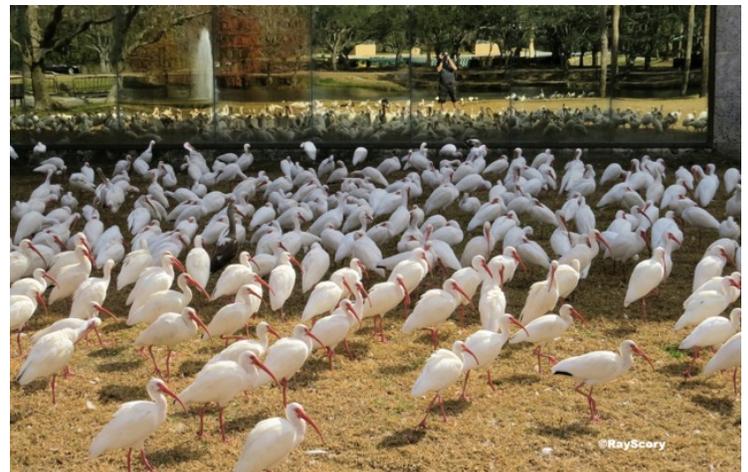
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Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Edward Flanagan, William Harrington, Gina Holt, Betty Kelly, Wilma Kyle, Nancy Mellon, Jolene Ran, John Roessler and Earl Stutzman-Miller. We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting or on a field trip.



My first bird photograph, a Scarlet Tanager, made in the front yard of my Connecticut home in May 1948 when I was 14 years old.



I made this recent photograph January 23, 2018 at Port Orange City Center between the town hall pond and the town hall building. The best time to observe the hundreds of White Ibis that visit this area is late in the day during winter months.

Photos by Ray Scory

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Volunteer Opportunity With Manatees

Volusia County is looking for enthusiastic volunteers to participate in Manatee Watch, a program that identifies manatees and gives us a better understanding of how they are using Volusia County waterways. You must be 16 years old to volunteer. Advance registration is required, so please contact Debbie Wingfield at dwingfield@volusia.org or 386-736-5927 ext. 12235, if you would like to attend one of the following dates:

Thursday, February 22, 2018, 10 a.m. to noon at the Thomas C. Kelly Administration Center (first-floor training room) 123 W. Indiana Ave. DeLand.

Saturday, February 24, 2018, 10 a.m. to noon at the The Marine Discovery Center 520 Barracuda Blvd. New Smyrna Beach.

Halifax River Audubon Is Holding a Bird-a-thon

So, you may Be Asking Yourself, What's a Bird-A-thon ?

It's a fun citizen-science competition and fund-raiser to support the work of Halifax River Audubon in our community. It starts with you! You can pledge an amount in support of the efforts of others or you can mount a team of your own.

A team could be just one person but we recommend 2 to 4 people. It's more fun and those pledging to donate feel better about it. Here's how it works. If your friend pledges 25 cents per species to sponsor your birdwatching team and the team sees 61 species, your friend would donate \$15.25 to Halifax River Audubon (61 species x 0.25 cents). Sixty-one is about average. A really committed team could get up to 90 or more, but that takes a lot of work and a lot of luck!

The Bird-A-Thon will take place on Saturday, February 24th from 5:00 am to 5:00 pm. At our meeting on Monday, February 26th, we'll announce the totals and see which team found the most species. Check our [website](#) for details and a pledge form.

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We hope to see you all at the Scrub Jay Festival



Florida Scrub-Jay Festival and Wildlife Festival
FESTIVAL
 at
 Lyonia Environmental Center

February 3, 2018 • 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
2150 Eustace Ave., Deltona
386-789-7207

Join us for these fun-filled, family activities:

- Early bird hike at 8 a.m.
- Guided hikes in Lyonia Preserve
- Eco-buggy tours of the preserve
- Guest presentations on native wildlife
- Environmental exhibitors
- Kids' activities
- Food available for purchase
- Free admission!



LyoniaPreserve.com



This Western Tanager hung out in Port Orange last month. Unfortunately not in an easily accessible area.

Photo by Michael Brothers

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Meets monthly September through May

President: Melissa Lammers

Vice President: David Hartgrove

Treasurer: Betty Butcher

Recording Sec.: Peggy Yokubonus

Membership Sec.: Joan Tague

Corresponding Sec: Christine Dann

Historian: John Carr

At-Large: Ellen Tate, Marion Monaghan, Holly Zwart-Duryea, Joan Tague, Dan Gribbin, Steve Underwood

Committee Members

Conservation: David Hartgrove Education: Marion Monaghan
 Holly Zwart-Duryea

Field Trips: Peggy Yokubonus
 David Hartgrove

Newsletter Editor: David Hartgrove

Welcome: Christine Dann

Webmaster: Joan Tague

* * * * *

We wish to thank our sponsors, whose contributions play a vital part of allowing us to continue our work: Florida Power & Light, Colonial Colony and the Spruce Creek Garden and Nature Club.



LeConte's Sparrow Photo by David Hartgrove

Birding Lake Woodruff

While leading a trip to Lake Woodruff NWR for the just ended Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival, I managed to digiscope the bird above along the trail just south of the observation tower. Though easily seen on their breeding grounds in Nova Scotia, this is a hard bird to see in Florida. They usually offer only brief glimpses when they pop up in the middle of dense grass.

David Hartgrove

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Sea Watch Report From Frank Rendon Park

When compared to the fall and winter passage, January was a quiet month. Even so there were two new additions to the bird list. During the month 97 species were located as against 91 species in 2017 this was over 31 surveys and 146 hours at the park. Highlights were a Magnificent Frigatebird on the 10th, Red-throated Loons on the 2nd, 4th and 25th, a Long-tailed Duck on the 8th and 2 Peregrine Falcons on the 28th. One new species seen were 6 American Pipits. A large group of pipits were blown off course up north and ended up in Bermuda. Could these seen here being some of those birds that got back on track? Who knows?

On the 12th a cold front was approaching and on its leading edge came 3,750 American Robins, along with the pipits, 1,460 Cedar Waxwings, 910 Brown-headed Cowbirds and 62 Goldfinches. I look forward to what February will bring.

Harry Robinson

Birding The Dry Tortugas

Spring Migration Birding at its best with Florida Nature Tours!



We have the best prices by far. We're offering three tours in April & one in May aboard the M/V Playmate. They are the best tours at BY FAR the best price. Just 1295.00. There are only 2 other companies offering multi day stand alone birding tours of the Dry

Tortugas this coming Spring. One charges 1895.00, the other, 1795.00 and we give you a day's birding in the southern Keys and donate 100.00 to your favorite Audubon chapter. Contact Wes Biggs: 407-376-6967 or birdsatfnt@bellsouth.net

While we don't accept paid advertising this is a bit different. If you go our chapter gets a donation. There really is nothing like Spring migration in the Dry Tortugas. Standing on the parade ground in Fort Jefferson in mid April it's possible to see 100+ Indigo Buntings all feeding at once. Or to see the fountain full of warblers. I once saw Black-and-White, Blackpoll, Northern Parula, Prairie and Palm Warblers all crowded in bathing and drinking. As the first land fall for trans Gulf migrants the Dry Tortugas is a magnet for birds. Plus it hosts the only Sooty Tern and Masked Booby colonies in the US. Check out the [website](#). Then pack your bags and head south.

Editor

The Pelican

We need to be the stewards of this world, not its destroyers
Volume 64-Number 3. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
March, 2018



The President's Ruminations

In January, I filed our Annual Report to National Audubon. It was quite eye-opening to see how many of the questions asked in the report related to local conservation efforts we had undertaken. It solidified my desire to learn about our members and why they choose to be part of Audubon, so last month I included a survey in my President's Letter to you. My hope was to learn about whether your involvement with Audubon is only about the birds or if you also care about wider environmental issues. My goal was and is to serve our members as best as I am able, while also fulfilling Audubon's mission.

Unfortunately, only six of our more than 400 members responded to the survey. That is not enough to be statistically reliable but looking on the bright side, 100 percent of the six respondents care about the environment and conservation! So I'm running with that.

It seems that the recession has finally lifted in Volusia County as evidenced by the increase in construction activity. No matter where you live in Halifax River Audubon's (HRA) footprint, you can see signs of building, none perhaps more eye-popping than the clear-cutting of some of the last old-growth forest in Ormond Beach along Granada Boulevard. Historic trees recommended for preservation were felled. They will be replaced by sterile landscape specimens, not by native trees that support birds and other wildlife. The flow of a natural wetland will be interrupted with consequences to man and nature. And there is more.

Speaking only for myself, I believe development is not inherently bad and can be good. I believe just as strongly that it has to be managed in a way that conserves quality of life, that seeks to keep some spaces wild or closer to nature for future generations of humans and for current flora and fauna to thrive. It seems that there may be a lack of awareness about how development can be mitigated to be more supportive of nature. That is where, now speaking as Chapter President, I believe we have a role to play. I am hoping that many of you will step forward and reach out to our Conservation Chair, David Hartgrove, to let him know your interest in helping create awareness about how we do less harm as we grow. I am confident that together, we can make a difference.

Melissa Lammers

Calendar & Events

Monday, March 19th, Program Meeting- The Oceans Are Changing. How Do We Keep Up? Join us for a discussion on this topic by our guest speaker, Cameron Jaggard. Mr. Jaggard is a Principal Associate with The Pew Charitable Trusts, U.S. Oceans, Southeast Team. During his more than eight years with Pew, Cameron has worked on a variety of campaigns to reduce bycatch in the U.S. pelagic longline fishery, protect forage fish, and otherwise advance an ecosystem-based approach to fishery management. He has degrees from both Rollins College and Florida Atlantic University and his talk promises to be informative and entertaining. We meet at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Ave, Daytona Beach, FL 32117. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. We hope to see you there!

Field Trips

Wednesday, March 7th, West Volusia Ramble- Join Joan Tague for this tour of some of her favorite hot spots on the west side of the county. We'll meet at 7:30 am at International Square, on US 92, east of I-95, behind Krystal to car pool. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Joan, 386-871-6049.

Wednesday, March 14th, Blue Heron Boat Trip- *The Trip Is Now Sold Out. However, a waiting list is being compiled in case someone has to drop out.* Join Celine Sullivan for this exciting afternoon trip on the St Johns River. Contact Celine Sullivan 386-257-1980 or email at celinesul@aol.com. Be sure to include with the words "boat trip" in the subject line. Dinner at the Stockyard, in DeLand, will follow for those interested in joining us. Cost for the trip is 20.00, *cash only please*. For those meeting us at the boat, please arrive no later than 2:30 pm. The boat waits for no one! Questions? Call Celine at 386-523-4809.

Thursday, March 22nd, Ocala National Forest- Join John Roessler for this trip to look for the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker and Florida Scrub Jay, among many other species. Bring lunch and meet at 7:30 am at Ormond Town Square, Granda & Williamson Blvds., behind Chick-Fil-A. Questions? Call John at 386-212-6957

Field Trips With Others

Every month Trey Hanna, and Volusia County Land Management, offer a series of great field trips that involve hiking, biking, boating or riding the County's eco buggy. Here's a [link](#) to this month's offerings. Please be sure to call 386-736-5927 to register for the activities.

Conservation Notes

There are any number of assaults on our state's environment under way in the Florida Legislature right now. None holds more threat for potential damage than Senate Bill 1402 and its companion in the House, HB 7043. These bills provide for state assumption of Federal Section 404 Dredge and Fill Permitting Authority. Currently such authority is held by the Federal government under the Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency. While neither agency has a stellar record on protecting our waters, fresh or salt, the rules under which they operate guarantee us some level of protection from the rapacious greed of development interests that seek to squeeze every last nickel from every last acre of wetland or shoreline in sight.

Under these bills the Florida Department of Environmental Protection would write the dredge and fill rules and then enforce them. At least that's what is called for. In reality the agency will open the door to every kind of stupid, destructive scheme placed before them. We have only to look at their valiant efforts to protect the St Johns River from paper mill wastes in Putnam County some years ago. The paper company complained and instead of enforcing the rules the DEP ruled that the company would just have to extend the sewer pipe out into deeper water. Then they saw to it that the budget for water testing was cut so that we wouldn't have the evidence of their perfidy. Senate President, Joe Negron, was awarded Audubon Florida's "Champion of the Everglades" award last December. Please take 3 minutes to call his office, (850) 487-5025, and ask that he see to it that this terrible bill (SB 1402) is not scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor.

* * *

From the [Eco-Voice Moderator](#) comes a bit of good news. Septic tanks are one of the largest sources of pollution in our state's waterways. Based on research from Florida Atlantic University's Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute we know that every year more than 4.4 million pounds of nitrogen leach into the Indian River lagoon and its tributaries from over 600,000 septic tanks. Now Representative Gayle Harrell, (R-Stuart) and Senator Debbie Mayfield, (R-Vero Beach) have teamed with the Florida Chamber of Commerce to push for passage of what they're calling Legacy Florida 2.0. The first Legacy Florida bill provided 135 million dollars for springs restoration. The new bill would provide a dedicated funding source of up to 50 million dollars to provide matching funds for septic to sewer conversion. The money would come from Amendment 1 funds. We're not happy about this part of the deal but it's a compromise we may be forced to live with if we want to see a cleaner Indian River Lagoon.

The fact that funds come from Amendment 1 are probably a reason for the Chamber of Commerce to come onboard in support of the bill. They fought tooth and nail against any pollution control measures for years. Then the south end of the Lagoon began seeing massive algae blooms and those million dollar water front homes suddenly had putrid, foul smelling green goo where fish used to jump. Faced with a drop in home prices and a clamor from their wealthy constituents, the Chamber suddenly discovered an environmental conscience and had an epiphany. Hallelujah! They were dead set against Amendment 1 and poured millions into its defeat. 73% of Floridians ignored the reams of negative advertising they put out urging against passage and voted it in anyway. Now, if we could just get the Legislature to act responsibly...

David Hartgrove

Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Beth Bartholomew, Mary Blackledge, Douglas Brown, Karen Collins, Lenore Cowan, Darryl Deets, John DiCesare, Richard Goudey, Dan Gribbin, David Hess, Lisa Hiatt, Marion Jacobsen, Anna Johnson, Wayne Johnson, Ed Kocis, Michael Krayewsky, Margaret Leone, Janet Mills, Debra Moulis, Mary Nelson, Andrea Pair, Kim Ramos, Deanna Schaeffer, Lauren Rae Schroeder, Ronald Schultz, Ellen Sherman, Frances Smith, Ralph Smith, Richard Smith, Earl Stutzman-Miller, Nicelette Triantatelli, Jeffery Ware, Robert White, Rosemarie Zukas. We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting or on one of our excellent field trips.

* * * * *

Making a Difference

There are so many issues that we as environmentalists need to stay abreast of if we're going to help make a difference. **The Advocate** is Audubon Florida's monthly newsletter featuring up-to-the-minute developments on environmental issues. Read previous editions below and [sign up to receive the Advocate](#) for yourself.

<http://fl.audubon.org/about-us/audubon-advocate-newsletter>

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Photo by Steve Underwood

Here's an Identification Challenge

Young birds can often present a problem with identification. The field marks to look at on this bird to help you make the identification are its yellowish legs, the shape of its bill and the indistinct streaking on its chest. Any thoughts? Look for the answer at the bottom of the next page.

by Ray Scory

Dunlawton Bridge Magic

Eleven hardy Halifax River Audubon birdwatchers braved an early morning wakeup to scout the Dunlawton bridge before 8:00AM. A spectacular day it was - a cool breeze softened the bright Florida sunshine, exposing plenty of birds to study and embrace as Florida's own.

Oyster bars and sandbars jutted from the calm of quiet river waters, influenced by the morning low tide. This was an opportune time to showcase the variety of our favorite shorebirds and waterbirds. Hundreds of Laughing gulls in all phases of plumage development, with lesser numbers of Ring-billed and immature Herring Gulls graced our viewing panorama. We had a nice variety of Great Blue Heron, Little Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, White ibis and Brown Pelicans, along with our familiar northern visitors, a Red-breasted Merganser and many Yellow-rumped Warblers.

We, the eleven birdwatchers, experienced a show the goes on every day of the year at the Dunlawton Bridge and we were privileged to witness two and half hours of it that day. I have often mentioned to the birdwatchers that have come to the bridge with me that on any day of the week, any week of the month, any month of the year, in any kind of weather, in one and a half hours we can count at least twenty-five species of birds. For the past eighteen years that I have been coming to the bridge to watch the birds, the record remains intact. On this particular morning we observed twenty-eight species.

The marvel of this location, at the Dunlawton Bridge in Port Orange, is that the birds are there all throughout the year. At different seasons of the year, yes, different birds stop by - depending upon their calling to this location. A location graced with Common Loons in their winter gray and whites with thick, pointed bills, Black-throated Blue Warblers resting flat on the ground after a long migratory journey, Roseate Spoonbills in their pointed flight patterns zipping down the Halifax River, a Brown Booby thrashing through the winds of the "Hurricane with No Name" and ,of course, the ever present Brown Pelicans. What is incredible about this location is that all this great bird watching takes place amongst the hubbub of moving boats, active people, barking dogs, automobiles coming and going, necessary construction and changing weather patterns. What a spot to see birds!

As I was leaving, I was alerted to a small flight of Dunlin whirling down upon the sandbar. I had already packed my spotting scope away. Through my binoculars I noticed a lighter and smaller bird on the fringe of the flight of Dunlin. I quickly photographed the group on the sandbar with my 1200mm lens. Shortly after the birds flew off and I went home. Once there I brought up onto my computer the image I had made. I zoomed in to reveal a large, black breast band on this small, light colored bird. This singular bird with the flight of Dunlin was a Wilson's Plover. The photo was good enough for diagnostic purposes but not for publication.

Not a bad half morning at the bridge.

Ray Scory

* * * * *

Answer to the Identification Challenge

The bird is a young Black-crowned Night-Heron. The yellow legs are indicative of a heron and its bill shape is diagnostic.



Brown Pelican in flight over the Dunlawton Bridge

Photo by Ray Scory



Three Dunlin, with the head of a Sanderling showing in back.

Photo by Ray Scory

* * * * *

Bird-a-thon Results

Our Bird-a-thon, held on Saturday, February 24th, turned out finding a total of 87 species. There were some glaring misses. We saw Florida Scrub-Jays but no Blue Jays. We also recorded no sparrows and no swallows. We found Eastern Screech Owls at Timucuan Preserve, in Ponce Inlet and while listening to a pair of them, off in the distance we heard the basso profundo sounds of a Great Horned Owl. With all of the pledges totaled up we should receive \$442.05. Our thanks to all who pledged and participated.

* * * * *

From The Quotable Birder

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

Robert Lynd, American Sociologist

Sea Watch Report From Tom Rennick Park

Harry Robinson, Kim Ramos and others are at the park 4 or 5 days a week beginning around sunrise. Stop by and get a lesson in long distance bird identification from one of the best birders in the state.

This was a quiet month perhaps the quietest so far even so there was an addition to the list. Fog was a common problem this month with the fog often lingering over the sea. In all 88 species were seen there were 91 in February, 2017. I carried out surveys on all 28 days for a total of 131 hours. For this year 110 species have been seen with 239 for the survey as a whole. The highest species count was 48 on the 2nd and the most birds were 3,089 on the 7th.

Now to the birds there was a Horned Grebe on the 6th and American White Pelicans peaked at 31 on the 16th. Single Reddish Egrets were seen on three dates the 6th, 17th and 26th. There were four Glossy Ibis on the 4th this is always an uncommon species here. For the ducks there were four Blue-winged Teal on the 19th with a Ring-necked Duck on the 12th. There were two Surf Scoters on the 3rd with two more on the 19th. Finally for this group there was a Hooded Merganser on the 17th.

There was a Merlin on the 12th with a Peregrine Falcon on the 2nd there were two more peregrines on the 13th. Whilst Willets continued moving to the north the first signs of spring passage were at the end of the month. On the 27th two American Oystercatchers flew to the north and a Greater Yellowlegs did likewise on the 28th.

A total of 14 Pomarine Jaegers were seen up to the 17th with six on the 12th. There were 76 Parasitic Jaegers this month with 39 on the 12th and ten on the 17th (the last was on the 27th). Most unexpectedly a first-winter Long-tailed Jaeger (pale morph) flew to the south on the 14th. The only gull of note was a first-winter Iceland Gull that flew to the south on the 26th. Royal Terns moved to the north for most of the month there were 520 on the 27th. On the 12th a total of 786 Forster's Terns flew to the south. The highest count of Black Skimmers was that of 36 on the 1st.

There was a White-winged Dove on the 6th with a Pileated Woodpecker on the 25th that remains a local rarity. There were six American Crows on the 1st this species rarely crosses over the river. The last American Robin was on the 21st. Now to the addition to the list there was a female Eastern Bluebird on the 9th. Cedar Waxwings peaked at 375 on the 2nd the last were on the 18th. The 5th seems to have been a special day as there was a Louisiana Waterthrush, a Savannah Sparrow and a very high 105 American Goldfinches. There was another Savannah Sparrow on the 21st.

Hopefully March will be much better.

Harry Robinson

Spring Migration In The Dry Tortugas

Imagine looking out across a grassy field and seeing 100+ Blue Grosbeaks feeding, or a bird bath with Blackpoll, Black-and-White, Northern Parula, Prairie and Palm Warblers all crowded in at once. The Dry Tortugas are the first landfall trans Gulf migrants see after leaving the Yucatan on their northward migration. In April and early May it's a birder's paradise. [Florida Nature Tours](#) has been leading trips there since 1966. The price is just 1295.00 and they donate 100.00 of that back to the Audubon chapter of your choice. You get 4 days of birding, including a day in Key West and the surrounding area. Mangrove Cuckoo, Black-whiskered Vireo and White-crowned Pigeon are some of the target birds on this part of the trip. Once while there we saw, 50 feet apart, a Gray-cheeked Thrush, a Bicknell's Thrush and a Verry. There's not another place on Earth you can see those 3 species so close together. Check out the website linked above. Then pack your bags and head south.

David Hartgrove

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THE PELICAN

is published monthly by the Halifax River Audubon, a chapter of the National Audubon Society and a member of Audubon Florida serving eastern Volusia County.

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Halifax River Audubon

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Meets monthly September through May

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Vice President: David Hartgrove

Past President: Jim O'Shaunessy

Treasurer: Betty Butcher

Recording Sec.: Peggy Yokubonus

Membership Sec.: Joan Tague

Corresponding Sec: Christine Dann

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The Pelican

We need to be the stewards of this world, not its destroyers
Volume 64-Number 4. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
April, 2018



The President's Column

Your Audubon Wants YOU!!!

Have you ever wondered how Halifax River Audubon maintains a steady calendar of informative evening programs, delightful birding field trips and educational classes? It's due to the unwavering commitment of our volunteers. Halifax River Audubon is a 100% volunteer lead organization and as a "new-last-year" board member, I can say that our directors, committee chairs and birding class leaders are capable, passionate and energetic about what they do for our chapter. And we need more like them!

Halifax River Audubon has standing committees whose chairpersons sit on the Board of Directors. These committee chairs would like to have more people working with them to further our various initiatives. Joining a committee is a great way to get to know more about Audubon, to get to know a board member and what she or he does in-depth, as well as decide if some day, you might also like to sit on the Board of Directors. Please take a moment to read about some of our committees below. If you have an interest in joining a committee, you can approach the chair at one of our meetings or you can send an email to president@halifaxriveras.org.

Program Committee - Ensures we have high-quality speakers for our monthly programs.

Chair – Melissa Lammers

Responsibilities: Identify speakers and topics for nine monthly meetings (September through May); approach speakers and secure their commitment to give a talk; with at least six weeks of lead time, request and receive speaker biographies and overview of topic for use in publicity, in the newsletter, on the website and at the program; coordinate arrival instructions, equipment needs, honorarium and anything else to facilitate the speaker's talk.

Publicity Committee - Promotes the various activities carried out or sponsored by us in the various media

Chair – Melissa Lammers

Responsibilities

Receive speaker biography and topic overview from Program Committee to draft press releases; disseminate press releases according to the various media deadlines; write press releases for other events as these arise during the year; seek other ways to amplify the public's awareness of Halifax River Audubon and our mission; manage social media presence.

Calendar & Events

Monday, April 16th, Program Meeting- Wildflowers and Pollinators with Paul Rebmann- One of the marvels of nature is the symbiotic relationship - where both parties benefit - between wildflowers and pollinators. When pollinators are mentioned, the first thing that probably comes to mind are bees, or possibly butterflies. Paul will show us, with his photos and a few videos, other pollinators working away to make our lives better. We meet at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Ave, Daytona Beach, FL 32117. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. We hope to see you there.

Field Trips

Thursday, April 5th, Tiger Bay State Forest- Ray Scory will lead us on this trip to see the southern pine woods birds that inhabit this local birding jewel. Targets will be Brown-headed Nuthatch, Bachman's Sparrow and Yellow-throated Warbler. For this trip we'll meet at 7:30 am at the [Forest](#) headquarters, 4316 W International Speedway Blvd. Daytona Beach, FL 32124. Bring a lunch. Questions, call Ray at 386-290-0075

Friday, April 13th, Washington Oaks Gardens State Park- Peggy Yokubonus will lead us on what promises to be a lucky Friday the 13th. Migration should be in full swing and we hope to see birds that are usually seen here just twice a year. We will meet at the park at 8:00 am, 6400 N Oceanshore Blvd, Palm Coast 32137. Bring a lunch. Questions, call Peggy, 386-316-4085.

Sunday, April 15th, Dunlawton Bridge- For our last field trip of the season, Ray Scory will lead this casual walk under the Dunlawton Bridge. We'll meet at the bridge at 3:30 pm. We'll look for nesting American Oyster-catchers, Brown Pelicans and any Bald Eagles that may be lurking around. Questions, call Ray, 386-290-0075.

Field Trips With Others

Wednesday, April 18th- St Augustine Alligator Farm- Join our friends from West Volusia Audubon on a trip to this birding photography hot spot. Reservations are required. Call Eli Schaperow, 407-314-7965.

Friday, April 20th- Mead and Leu Gardens- Join our friends from Southeast Volusia Audubon for a trip to these two lovely garden and birding destinations in Orlando. Meet the group 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 a lunch and plan on some extended walking. Questions, call Joe Montpelier at 386-882-8679.

Continued below on the next page

Membership Committee - Maintain membership records and email list; manage renewals

Chair – Joan Tague

Responsibilities: Maintain membership list including emails, telephone numbers and addresses for both National and Chapter-only memberships; update and maintain email list and send reminders for chapter memberships.

Webmaster Committee, Chair, Joan Tague. The primary task is to maintain and keep the official website up to date. The webmaster may be asked to assist in other applications that are used to keep members and the community informed, such as Facebook, Mail Chimp and Meet Up. The website has many sections, with assistance also needed in ways that do not require any knowledge of website coding. Some opportunities to help include: data collection - Field Trips and Bird Lists (maintain spreadsheets that are used in annual reports); submit news items with pictures - especially of HRA activities like Community events, Christmas Bird Counts, Meetings, Field Trips; develop content for social media; help edit articles and news items for posting to the web and in our newsletter; update older pages and club activities.

Conservation Committee, Chair, David Hartgrove.

Responsibilities: Monitor local environmental threats, like large developments; attend planning and zoning and Council meetings at local and county level when necessary; volunteer with FWC and Volusia County for wildlife surveys, etc.; compile Christmas Bird Count and other counts in which we participate.

Education Committee, Chair, Holly Zwart-Duryea

Responsibilities: Currently focused on providing Audubon Adventures to 3rd through 5th graders at public and private schools. This Committee is ripe for growth by seeking other opportunities to educate the public both about Audubon Adventures (see below) as well as additional topics like Plants for Birds. Audubon Adventures is a learning module typically made up of 3 environmental topics developed for Audubon by scientists and educators. A classroom kit provides 32 student newspapers per topic and teacher access to online resources. Expansion of the committee would enable us provide this resource at environmentally friendly festival tables and other similar public events.

Field Trip Committee - Plans and manages all aspects of field trips held from September through April.

Chairs – Peggy Yokobonus and David Hartgrove

Responsibilities: Plan and establish yearly field trip schedule during Summer. Schedule must be finalized by September; Lead or find leaders for all of the yearly field trips.

Welcome Committee- The “face” of Audubon at monthly meetings, ensures people feel welcome.

Chair, Christine Dann-

Responsibilities: Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to door-opening at monthly meetings (6:15 pm); man the welcome table; ensure meeting attendees sign-in, noting whether they are members or not; ensure we are getting email addresses, especially for members; provide list of meeting attendees to Membership Committee; Have informational materials on-hand at sign-in, if appropriate and manage the 50-50 raffle.

It's election time and we need new volunteers to help on these committees. We're hoping we can count on you and your expertise to assist in making ours the best chapter in the state. Think about it, then contact me to volunteer. Thank you!

Conservation Notes

In last month's column I wrote about the need to prevent the passage of SB 1402/7043. By way of an explanation, bill numbers are constantly changed as they move through the legislative process. The combining of similar bills and merging with companion bills in the other legislative body makes for some confusion when tracking legislation. HJ 1114, the final number on the bill that is sitting on the Governor's desk will transfer the permitting of dredge and fill activities in wetlands from the federal government to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

I had asked all of you to please call Senator Joe Negron's office to request that he (as Senate President) prevent the bill from reaching the Senate floor for a vote. The bill passed the Senate on a 35 to 1 vote. Senator Jose Javier Rodriguez (D, Miami) was the only one to vote against this terrible bill.

Now our hopes are placed on Governor Scott. Not an encouraging thought I grant you but we have to work with what we have. Please call the Governor's office, 850-488-5000 and ask that he veto HJ 1114. You'll almost certainly be asked to leave a voice mail so this won't take but a few minutes.

* * *

Not content with the level of damage already done to our environment by their legislative assault on a long established regulatory structure, Congress is set to make serious changes to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The MBTA is one our oldest wildlife protection ordinances, enacted 100 years ago in 1918.

This began of course with the Trump administration issuing a new interpretation of the Act that weakens enforcement for activities known to kill birds. The House is set to enact legislation which will weaken the Act permanently. This was done in response to oil industry trade groups who were asked by the Trump administration for a “wish list” of regulatory reforms they'd like to see.

Open oil dumping pits from fracking and drilling activities collect rain water on their surface. Birds are attracted to these new ponds, land in them and quickly die. Under the MBTA the drilling company could be prosecuted for leaving a hazard that killed birds protected by the Act. When the Deep Water Horizon blew up in 2010 and its associated oil spill killed an estimated 1 million birds, BP paid a 100 million dollar fine for violating the Act. Under the new interpretation set down by the Interior Department, BP wouldn't pay a dime.

National Audubon has a page devoted to citizen participation where it will take just one minute to register your opinion and make a difference. Click on this [link](#) and follow the instructions.

* * *

Finally, we're in nesting season for all kinds of birds. This includes the cardinals, mockingbirds, hawks, etc. that nest in our yards and neighborhoods. It's also nesting season for shorebirds, wading birds and seabirds, like Brown Pelicans. Rookery Island, just south of the boat ramp at the Dunlawton Bridge, is an excellent place to see this nesting activity. Least Terns, which will soon be arriving from their wintering grounds on the beaches of Brazil, often nest on gravel rooftops here. I have 15 buildings I monitor as a volunteer with the [Florida Shorebird Alliance](#). If you should see evidence of nesting Least Terns on a building (birds flying above the roof repeatedly) please contact me: birdman9@earthlink.net. Thanks!

David Hartgrove

Watch For Swallow-tailed Kites



Swallow-tailed Kite, Photo by Joyce Stefanic

Swallow-tailed Kites returned from their wintering grounds in western Brazil and Paraguay last month. Audubon Florida board member, Paula Wehr, has been monitoring a nest on the golf course at Halifax Plantation. Here's a report she sent to Gina Kent, an associate at [Avian Research and Conservation Institute](#).

"Several weeks ago my golfing friend said several Swallow-tailed Kites were flying over the sixth tee again. Today, March 22, she and I stood in the back yard of a friendly resident whose yard abuts the golf course and saw a kite on the nest in the same tree. Through my scope we saw the kite fussing in the nest, perhaps rotating the eggs or finding a more comfortable position. She finally settled down into the nest, disappearing below the edge. Only her long tail was visible poking out of the nest."

The birds will probably have young fledglings flying by late May or early June. At that point they relocate to large, communal roosts that can sometimes host 2,000 birds.



Swallow-tailed Kite roost in northwest Volusia County

Photographed here on a foggy morning in late July several years ago are just a few of the birds seen annually at this roost.

David Hartgrove

Interested In Some Out of State Birding?

Orange Audubon is sponsoring a trip to South Carolina. It's coming up May 18–20, 2018 and you're invited to attend.



The elusive Swainson's Warbler, Photo, Nat'l Park Service

Swainson's Warbler is just one of the target birds in this birder's paradise. How many of you have driven up I-95 and never stopped in South Carolina to bird? South Carolina is fantastic, with the largest preserved bottomland hardwood swamp in the East, a virgin cypress tupelo swamp owned by Audubon South Carolina, a national forest with Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and estuarine habitats in the ACE Basin. Our nearest national park besides the Everglades is Congaree National Park, upgraded from a National Monument in 2003 (so it is our 3rd newest national park). Birds that only overwinter in Florida breed in South Carolina, so the bird song in mid May is fabulous.

On Friday, May 18th, we will drive 4 hours from Orlando to Savannah for a lunch break and then 2 hours more on to South Carolina. If your starting point is other than Orlando, you can meet us at our Friday destination at approximately 4:30 p.m. Cost of the three-day trip is \$60 for Audubon members, \$75 for non-members, which includes honoraria for local expert guides, field trip fees, and picnic supper Friday at Congaree. Lodging, other meals, transportation and incidentals are not included. Tips for guides are always appreciated. We need to know how many people are going and the sooner the better. Please make your reservations before mid-April. For more information contact Chapter President, Deborah Green, (407) 637-2525 or sabalpress@mac.com.

Deborah Green, President, Orange Audubon

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From The Quotable Birder

"The thousands of warblers and thrushes, the richly blossoming magnolias, the holly, beech, tall yellow poplar, red clay earth and hilly ground delighted my eye."

John James Audubon, writing in his journal about visiting Oakley Farm in Louisiana.

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

Birds In Brown

When a female Northern Cardinal lands on my backyard feeder or a Brown Thrasher makes a surprising visit, I am excited. Equally so, when Chipping Sparrows make their annual three month Winter appearance under my bird feeder, I marvel at their return. I watch their unhurried feeding maneuvers in quiet solitude. Why? Because of my wide-eyed fascination with the wide variety of brown colors that they bring to my yard.



Brown Thrasher, The vast variety of browns are evident on the bird, from light tans to a rich chocolate brown. Pure genius to outline the rich chocolate brown with two, thin white wing bars that are juxtaposed with the rufous brown on the back and mantle of this bird. Photo by Ray Scory

Occasionally it is fun, if not needed, to temporarily put aside the mainstream pursuits of a particular passion and go off on an unfamiliar tangent.

Wouldn't it be nice to just put aside the rush to see more new birds, to temporarily close the book on the academic study of birds and the various categories that they offer, to slow down the pursuit of identifying every bird in sight or to quietly rest the desire to be the first one to ID a shadow of a bird? Instead, adding a new dimension to your birding activities could be as exciting. For me, I have enjoyed searching for the color brown in birds that define their beauty.

When it comes to the color of birds, I am hooked on the color brown. From a rich cordovan brown like the female Boat-tailed Grackle to the subtle, creamy beige on the under belly of the Red-bellied Woodpecker I am moved to look for more examples. I am partial to the stunning variations of honey, auburn browns that cloak the body of the Brown Thrasher. I take great pleasure in slowly scanning the multiple variations of this bird and marvel at the discoveries I make.

There is something solid about "brown" - something grounded. I recently read an anthology titled, "In Search of Harmony." Harmony is a small agricultural town just south of Fort Collins, Colorado. The author reaches back to the first days of its settlement, when the land was open plains and swaying grasses and covers up to the today, of sturdy homes and hardworking ancestors- a vital agricultural community. From her childhood the author remembers the fragrance of brown: as the turning of rich, fertile sod, the color and aroma

of wheat, various smells abundant in beets and haylage (a grass based food for farm animals stored in a silo). The miracle of a potato, newly pulled from the ground. A staple to our everyday diet - vital. I did discover in searching for the color of brown in birds that it is not only a visual experience. I learned that the color brown can arouse other senses we use as well: touch, smell. I, also, relate to the color brown through language - on the printed page, in conversations with other birders. The opportunities to investigate this seemingly offbeat "color brown" tangent in birds are endless. Cinnamon, cordovan, chocolate, light tan, toasty brown, coffee, chestnut, a nice brown suit. How about brown as a berry for a deep, rich bodily tan or cook them nice and brown. All exciting sensory treats that define a color.



Chipping Sparrow, The exquisitely designed markings on this bird are truly a work of art. To keep it on the pallet of browns is selectively special. Photo by Ray Scory

It is no wonder, now, that I can reminisce about how a search for browns in small birds that come to my yard to feed have opened a whole new way to look at the connections that exist in my birding. All because of the color brown.

So I salute the Chipping Sparrows, Brown Thrashers, Carolina Wrens, Cedar Waxwings, House Finches, Mourning Doves, Mallards, Winter warblers, Spotted Sandpipers, female Northern Cardinals, Great Horned Owls, Red-shouldered Hawks and Wilson's Snipe. The one I'm waiting for- the female Boat-tailed Grackle. She has yet to appear in my yard. I know she is nearby and I welcome her and her exquisitely varied, brown colorations. I will, again, be looking out my backyard window.

Ray Scory

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Welcome to Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Joseph Bierworth, Eleanor Christman, Edythe Donnelly, Jean Jackson, Anna Lambert, Ann Meres, William Rogers, Margaret Schlageter, Pia Vilaragut. We hope to see you at a meeting soon or on one of our excellent field trips.

Our Cuban Coloring Book Update

Sierra Club International Outings went to Cuba in February and took along some books. Here's their story.

Our Cuban ornithologist and guide, Maikel Canizares, located a school for our group to visit and distribute the coloring book. The school is in Tunas de Zaza, a small fishing village on the southern coast. We arrived to find that the school kids had prepared skits for us. One was a boy who likes watching birds and shares his enthusiasm with his friends, which inspires them to learn the bird's names and to protect them. The second was a child displaying a migration map, explaining Cuba's importance in providing resting and feeding habitat for birds along the flyway- a lesson in conservation.

The director of the Tunas de Zaza Natural Preserve accompanied us to the school and kept a few of the books to use with her environmental education in schools even more rural than Tunas de Zaza.

We were impressed and delighted that the teachers, the naturalist and the students had put together such a warm welcome and skits for us. Maikel (a Ph.D candidate and graduate student advisor at the Instituto de Ecologia y Sistemática) gave the kids a brief lesson in bird anatomy highlighting features such as the color and shape of the beak. He pointed out the inside covers of the coloring book to learn the correct colors and promised to return and give a pair of binoculars to the child with the best artwork.



Sierra Club International travelers and the students of the primary school in Tunas de Zaza. Photo by Pati Rouzer

Many thanks for providing the coloring books! It was a wonderful experience for our group and hopefully inspired the kids to learn, love and protect their birds. The teachers suggested that colored chalk is also an excellent gift. We have another trip going back in February 2019. If you have more books we'd love to deliver them.

Pati Rouzer, Sierra Club International Outings

There are currently about 300 copies of the Spanish version of the book left from the first printing. We will see about funding a second printing. *Editor*



Here a student is coloring Cuba's national bird, the Cuban Trogon. To its right in the is the Great Lizard Cuckoo. Photo by Pati Rouzer

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THE PELICAN

is published monthly by Halifax River Audubon, a chapter of the National Audubon Society and a member of Audubon Florida serving eastern Volusia County.

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We wish to thank our sponsors, whose contributions play a vital part of allowing us to continue our work: Florida Power & Light, Colonial Colony and the Spruce Creek Garden and Nature Club.

The Pelican

We need to be the stewards of this world, not its destroyers
Volume 64-Number 5. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
May, 2018



The President's Column

What I Get From Audubon – Part 1

Hello Friends. I have had a bad case of writer's block this month. I think it is due to the wonderful weather and the strong desire to be outside that it engenders. When I joined Audubon I simply wanted to learn about the wild places in our area so that I could visit them on my own. I have achieved that goal but I have found so much more. I've come in from outside just long enough to share some of what I found with you.

Halifax River Audubon is a wonderful group of people who love to explore, to learn and to teach! It's no secret that I am a beginning birder but after a year of gentle efforts and lots of guidance, I have improved my binocular skills enough to occasionally spot "LBBs" (little brown birds), something I initially thought impossible. I went on several field trips with our group, where I was patiently schooled in birding. I went to Lake Apopka, where I saw Swallow-tailed Kites, a Fork-tailed Flycatcher and a Mississippi Kite. I went on my first Christmas Bird Count, a wonderful citizen science project. I'm not sure how helpful I was but I realized I could spend an entire day searching for birds. Soon after, I went to St. Mark's National Wildlife Refuge for almost three days of birding. It was wonderful! Recently, I went with our group to Washington Oaks and Fort Matanzas National Monument. I managed to see two birds that were very new to me: the Great Crested Flycatcher and the Black-throated Blue Warbler. And one day, I helped David Hartgrove rescue an injured cormorant from the beach. We both got pecked!. But the way I know I am hooked is that I have gone birding without my Audubon friends! My husband and I went for a second time to the Alligator Farm in St. Augustine and were rewarded with lots of Roseate Spoonbill families, Snowy Egrets in breeding plumage and a cacophony of hilarious bird calls. On our way home from our last trip to Miami, we stopped at the [Wakodahatchee Wetlands](#), a marvelous man-made storm water treatment facility in Delray Beach. Nesting Wood Storks dominated the scene that day, feeding their babies and fixing their nests. They were wearing their beautiful breeding plumage, with the black feathers shining an iridescent emerald green. We also saw Purple Gallinule families and Anhingas. Then we went to [Green Cay](#), which is close by yet very different. There we saw Common Gallinules, Tricolored Herons, Great Egrets, Green-winged Teal, Mottled Ducks, Green Herons and a Double-crested Cormorant that let everyone get up close and personal.

We are increasing the number of native plants in our yard and enjoy watching the birds feed naturally. If you plant it, they will come!

Continued below on the next page

Calendar & Events

Monday, May 21st, Program Meeting- For the final meeting before our summer hiatus we have a real treat. Michael Brothers, recently retired Director of the Marine Science Center, will give a program on bird migration in Florida. If you've ever attended one of Michael's programs you know we have a great evening ahead of us. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Avenue, Holly Hill. The presentation begins at 7:00 p.m. A brief business meeting follows. We will also be voting on incoming officers and board members for next season.

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Field Trips

Our field trip schedule is completed for this season. Stay tuned for our new schedule to be posted later this summer in both the newsletter and on our [website](#).

Field Trips With Others

Friday, May 18th, St Augustine Alligator Farm- Join our friends from Southeast Volusia Audubon for this trip to one of the best spots for bird photography in Florida. The rookery at the back of the property hosts large numbers of nesting wading birds, including Great and Snowy Egrets, Roseate Spoonbills and Wood Storks at distances so close you'll be amazed. Since they meet in Edgewater you might want to arrange to meet them at the Alligator Farm. For additional info, contact Joe Montpelier at 386-882-8679.

Friday, May 18th, Eco-Buggy Tour- Volusia County Environmental Management offers some interesting and free field trips and this one is an easy ride through Longleaf Pine Preserve's flatwoods, cypress domes and swamps. Meet at the Preserve's east entrance, 4551 Pioneer Trail, New Smyrna Beach. Reservations are required and may be made by calling 386-736-5927.

Saturday, May 19th, Deep Creek Preserve- How about a bike ride. If you have a bike and would like to see what a good deal of Florida looked like before Europeans arrived, this trip is for you. On this trip you can see Volusia County's only endemic plant species, Rugel's Paw Paw. This is an unpaved road, and larger-tired bikes are recommended. Meet at 964 S. State Road 415, Samsula. Reservations are requested and may be made by calling 386-736-5927.

So while I am barely an apprentice birder in terms of my skills, I am at the top of the tree when it comes to enjoyment! Make sure to check our website in September for our complete list of Field Trips for 2018-2019. And I hope to see you all at our last of the season meeting on Monday, May 21st.

Melissa Lammers

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Conservation Notes

Lisa Mickey, who runs eco boat and kayak tours for the Marine Discovery Center, and who, coincidentally, often runs the 50/50 drawing at our monthly meetings, had a bad weekend recently. She reports that on Friday she was able to capture and disentangle an adult Brown Pelican that had flown in to the rookery island near the MDC dock trailing monofilament fishing line. Once the line becomes entangled in the mangrove limbs the bird will slowly and painfully starve to death. So, one saved bird. Then the next day she saw an immature Brown Pelican with something large stuck in its throat. She was unable to locate the bird again and thought it could have swallowed some line and tackle and. That's a possibility but there could be another explanation.

Graceful and beautiful in flight, Brown Pelicans are awkward and gawky when we see them walking on a dock or perched on a railing. Fishermen often succumb to the temptation to toss them a shrimp. Then they toss another. Then they cast a baited hook out into the water and seem confused as to why the pelican plunges in and gets hooked. An experienced fisherman will then reel in the bird and remove the hook or cut the line next to the bill and release the bird. With any luck the hook will rust away before doing any permanent damage. Another way we love these birds to death is by tossing them scraps that are far too large for the bird to safely swallow. Remember, pelicans aren't raptors. They lack the ability to tear or rip their food into small pieces. Everything they eat is swallowed whole. When a fisherman is cleaning his catch and tossing the scraps in the water the pelicans can become engaged in a feeding frenzy.

I once watched a man filet a four pound red fish and then toss the entire skeleton, head and tail to a flock of squabbling pelicans. One grabbed his prize and flew off a short distance to eat it. After a while he realized it was too large and abandoned it to sink to the bottom. Often though, in the heat of the moment, the bird swallows a large scrap and if he's lucky survives. If he's unlucky,... This may be what happened to the bird Lisa saw.

Later that same Saturday she was on an eco boat and saw several young boys fishing off the bridge pilings on the South Causeway. She wrote, "They were throwing bait into the water and then casting their lines. It appeared as if they were either teasing the pelicans or deliberately trying to catch them." The cruelty and lack of conscience among a group of young boys can be unmatched. Having little idea of the consequences of their actions for the birds, they see their activity as a game. Unfortunately for the birds the results can be deadly. Lisa reported what she'd seen to the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission but by the time they arrived the boys were long gone.

I took on the position of Conservation Chair thirty-one years ago. The first issue I was asked to deal with was the problems posed by monofilament fishing line in our environment.

Continued in the next column

Mary Keller, for whom the rehab facility at the Marine Science Center is named, called me to ask if we could do anything to educate the public about the dangers posed by the unsafe disposal of old or damaged fishing line. I was able to get a grant from Florida Power & Light to fund the printing of thirty signs that were placed at fishing docks and boat ramps around the east side of the county. Maybe they did some good. Faded now they're still out there but clearly we have an ongoing job to do to educate the general public, fishermen and young boys about our responsibilities to our winged friends. After all, we introduced this new hazard to their world.

David Hartgrove

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Board members, Melissa Lammers, David Hartgrove and Holly Zwart-Duryea at Ormond Beach Earth Day. Not in the photo but there, Dan Gribbin. *Photo by Luis Villalon*

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Photographer, J W Callis, was on the Honeymoon Island Causeway in Dunedin recently. They say the early bird gets the worm. Here's a Black-bellied Plover who's found a big one and was described by J W as, "sucking them down like spaghetti."

Photo by JW Callis

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Welcome To Our New & Returning Members

Only three new and returning members this month: Laura Doig, Megan Peritore and Steven Vanaernam. We extend a warm welcome and hope to see you at our next meeting or on a field trip when they resume in September.

by Ray Scory

It happened again. Another unusual birding field trip sponsored by Halifax River Audubon (HRA) at the Dunlawton Bridge. Distant ominous clouds laden with rumbling thunder and flashing lightning defined the closing of our one and a half hour trip. A piercing wind drove stinging rain pellets south to north up the Halifax River - too strong to anchor a spotting scope and tripod. Holding binoculars was like waving a flag and blasting beach sand challenged lens and eye capabilities.

Yet three, soaking wet to be, HRA members counted twenty-five bird species on this turbulent, fifty mile per hour, gusty morning. Most of the seasonal regulars were there along with a Roseate Spoonbill on the spoil island south of the bridge. This was my first sighting of a Roseate Spoonbill encamped on the island in eighteen years of observation.

The drama of it all. Three birders trying to hold still in the wind while appearing to dance the two-step. All the resting birds facing south, giving us wonderful views for back-end observations, an uncommon opportunity not often found in routine bird identification. An European Starling whizzing by, experiencing a flight speed that may have dumbfounded this bird. We were mesmerized by the aerial circus of tumbling, diving, dodging, zooming birds performing feats of unintentional skill in the roiling sky.

A birding field trip is a wonderful adventure. Many bird watchers make it the crowning jewel of their birding experience. Halifax River Audubon offers a wealth of fascinating birding field trips, nineteen this season to be exact, between September 2017 and April 2018. Added to this number were three field trips, an integral part of our annual Beginner Bird Watchers Class, available during the Autumn months for all interested beginning birders and birders who wish to refresh their birding skills.

To close out this stormy birding day, the last field trip for this season's HRA field trip schedule, we observed a Clapper Rail. It was scurrying along between the river's edge and the white mangrove thicket near the second boat ramp on the north side of the bridge. On this dark day, in pouring rain, its narrow, upright silhouette attracted our eye. He was searching in the mud with a long down curved beak. His muted browns and a flash of rufous color, low flight profile, rapid wing beats and the mangrove habitat led to this identification. Also, Clapper Rails have been sighted there before.

As a postscript to the last field trip of the season, the second to last field trip was to Tiger Bay State Forest where 32 bird species, including Wild Turkeys, a Blue-headed Vireo, a Red-headed woodpecker and a Swallow-tailed Kite lent excitement to a spectacular field trip day. Joan Tague emailed me her report for this trip and commented on the good will and helpful nature of the State Forest rangers. All in all a great, well rounded birding field trip.

While our field trip program and Beginner Bird Watchers classes have ended, they will begin this September with renewed energy and predictable enthusiasm. It doesn't get any better than this and it will happen again.

Ray Scory



Stormy weather viewed through the windshield of my truck as I drove out from under the Dunlawton Bridge during the height of the storm.



My first sighting of Roseate spoonbills on the spoil island south of the Dunlawton Bridge.

Photos by Ray Scory

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Florida Scrub-Jays Need Your Help

The Florida Scrub-Jay is our state's only endemic bird species. Habitat loss and other factors have them teetering on the brink of extinction and you can help. [Audubon Florida's Jay Watch](#) program offers a perfect chance to participate in citizen science and to help make a difference in our natural world. A training session will be held on the morning of Saturday, May 12th, at [Lyonia Preserve](#). The session will end before Noon. This is an excellent chance for you to help make a difference in our natural world. Participants will learn about Florida Scrub-Jay cooperative breeding behavior, population trends and factors affecting population stability and standardized Jay Watch survey methods employed statewide.

For more information and to register for the session, contact Jacqui Sulek at jsulek@audubon.org. You'll be glad you did.

Harry Robinson conducts bird surveys at Tom Renick Park. Here's an abbreviated entry from his survey's April results. Harry will soon publish a book about this survey.

TOM RENICK COUNTY PARK BIRD COUNTS APRIL, 2018

In 2016 I saw 103 species in April. In 2017 I saw 113 species in April. This year I saw 140 species in April and that says it all! There were even four additions to the list which now stands at 243. For the year I have recorded 174 species which goes well with the 187 that I saw in the whole of 2016. I carried out 30 surveys over 170 hours this month. There were 3359 birds on the 27th and there were 65 species on the 9th – that is a new high count. Now to the birds.

There were 11 Common Loons during the month with a full breeding plumaged individual in the surf on the 30th. Single Brown Boobies were seen on the 9th, 12th and 16th. The Northern Gannets have been gradually leaving but there were still 120 on the 30th. Double-crested Cormorants have been moving to the north all month there were 416 on the 5th, 425 on the 7th and 456 on the 8th. Finally for this group there were 272 Anhingas on the 9th that left the previous high count in the dust.

The herons and egrets have also been moving north all month there were 135 Great Egrets on the 8th (a new high count), 170 Snowy Egrets, 62 Little Blue Herons and 34 Tricolored Herons also on the 8th. There was a Reddish Egret on the 15th with single Green Herons on the 7th, 12th and 27th. There was a Black-crowned Night-Heron (a real rarity) on the 13th and Yellow-crowned Night-Herons (up to three a day) have been seen from the 12th. To round out this section there was a Roseate Spoonbill on the 3rd with three on the 4th – a very poor year for them so far.

There were four American Wigeon on the 20th. There were 495 Blue-winged Teals on the 8th with 307 on the 11th the last was on the 20th. There were 11 Northern Shovelers on the 8th with a very late Lesser Scaup on the 16th. There were single Surf Scoters on the 5th and 22nd with a White-winged Scoter on the 28th. There were two Hooded Mergansers on the 11th and 12th with one on the 14th. Red-breasted Mergansers were seen all month with 30 on the 11th.

There were single Swallow-tailed Kites on the 7th, 9th and 14th. A Northern Harrier flew to the north on the 24th. The last Sharp-shinned Hawk was seen on the 14th. There were two Short-tailed Hawks on the 9th (one light one dark) with one dark morph on the 24th. Migrant American Kestrels were seen on the 19th and 27th. During the month 28 Merlins were seen the last being three on the 30th. In contrast there were only five Peregrine Falcons the last being on the 27th.

Now to the shorebirds there were three Black-necked Stilts on the 2nd. Willets have as usual been flying to the north all month but there were a high 421 on the 1st. A total of 11 Spotted Sandpipers were seen with four on the 29th. This year a total of 45 Whimbrel flew to the north with 13 on the 11th and 17 on the 29th (a new high count). There was a single Marbled Godwit on the 1st this is really an early fall passage migrant. On the 29th 20 Semipalmated Plovers, 283 Semipalmated Sandpipers (new high count), 60 Least Sandpipers, six Pectoral Sandpipers and a White-rumped Sandpiper all flew to the north. Surprisingly there was a Purple Sandpiper on the 8th with two on the 11th I have only seen this species fly through the surf. To complete this section there were two Red-necked Phalaropes on the 11th with a Red Phalarope on the 22nd.

There were single Parasitic Jaegers on the 9th and the 16th there were no April sightings in 2016 or 2017. See the next column.

The last Bonaparte's Gull was seen on the 12th. The other gulls are still present. There were two Gull-billed Terns on the 6th with singles on the 7th, 11th, 16th and 30th. There were also single Roseate Terns on the 12th and 21st. A real spring rarity was a Black Tern on the 30th.

There was a White-winged Dove on the 13th. On the 8th a Cockatiel flew to the north. This was the first of the new species for the park. Next there was a Yellow-billed Cuckoo on the 24th. The second new species was an Eastern Screech-Owl calling just across A1A on the 8th. As for last year a Chuck-will's-widow flew in off the sea on the 2nd. The third addition was a stunning Red-headed Woodpecker that flew to the south on the 15th and the 4th new species was a Rose-breasted Grosbeak on the 19th. There was also a Blue Grosbeak on the 16th. Bobolinks have had a strong passage from the 4th. In all, 258 were seen with 86 on the 24th (a new high count) and 78 on the 28th. As I said it was a good month. Hopefully May will also be interesting.

Harry Robinson

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is published monthly by Halifax River Audubon, a chapter of the National Audubon Society and a member of Audubon Florida serving eastern Volusia County.

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Vice President: David Hartgrove

Past President: Jim O'Shaunessy

Treasurer: Betty Butcher

Recording Sec.: Peggy Yokubonus

Membership Sec.: Joan Tague

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Historian: John Carr

At-Large: Ellen Tate, Marion Monaghan, Holly Zwart-Duryea, Joan Tague, Dan Gribbin, Steve Underwood

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Field Trips: Peggy Yokubonus

David Hartgrove

Newsletter Editor: David Hartgrove

Welcome: Christine Dann

Webmaster: Joan Tague

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The Pelican

We need to be the stewards of this world, not its destroyers
Volume 64-Number 6. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
June, 2018



The President's Column

The Board of Halifax River Audubon meets every month, year-round. In our Board meetings, we set goals and check progress on our committee work. This is how we manage nine high-quality programs each year, 19 or more field trips, beginning birding classes, elementary school educational programs in more than 30 classrooms, community outreach at events and conservation advocacy. In addition, we also carry out the work of keeping communications, finances, membership and publicity running smoothly. We're an all-volunteer chapter, so the work of our dedicated Board members is deeply appreciated. We are therefore delighted to welcome Pam Pennella as our newest At-large Director. Welcome, Pam!

We have also had some losses in 2018: both Marion Monaghan and Christine Dann resigned from the Board (but not from HRA). We thank them for their service. Very sadly, we recently suffered the tremendous loss of John Carr, our Historian. Please read more about John's service in this newsletter.

This Summer, Board Members are going to work over-time as we seek to renew our vision and mission and chart the course for 2018 and beyond. It's an exciting moment and we hope that come Fall, you will consider joining one or more of our Committees to ensure that HRA continues the great work it has done in our community since 1923.

Melissa Lammers

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Words of Praise for Audubon Adventures

Our Education Chair, Holly Zwart-Duryea, has heard from some of the teachers who utilize the Audubon Adventures kits we provide them with. Through your donations we're able to provide over 30 elementary classrooms in our area with these valuable teaching tools.

"I just wanted to thank you for your Audubon Adventures kit! My students love reading about birds each year during our unit on living things. We learn about bird adaptations, food chains, and also revisit the characteristics of living things, including birds. Thank you for providing this resource for our students. We appreciate you!"

Sincerely, Jenna Schuld Longstreet Elementary 5th grade.

Ms. Schuld teaches at a school named for our chapter's founder. See more words of praise on page 4. Editor

Calendar & Events

June marks the beginning of our summer hiatus. No general meetings or field trips until September. The board will still meet monthly on the first Monday of the month at the Ormond Beach Regional Library, Meeting Room #4 at 1:30 pm. Members are invited to attend.

Field Trips With Others

While our chapter's field trips are on hiatus there are other opportunities with the Explore Volusia County program. This program offers a number of activities including canoe, kayak and paddle board trips, bicycle rides, etc. on many of the County's environmental properties. You must provide your own equipment and be sure to register for any event you select. Here's a link to the [June Calendar](#) of events.

* * *

If you've never been on the beach at night to see sea turtles hauling their heavy bodies across the sand to dig their nests and deposit their eggs, here are two opportunities for you to do so.

Canaveral National Seashore hosts turtle walks beginning Wednesday, June 13th. Walks will be held Wednesday through Saturday nights and reservations are required. Phone the Apollo District in New Smyrna Beach 386-428-3384, ext.223 to make your reservation. Participants need to have good mobility to walk across the dune and in soft sand. Remember to bring insect repellent. That body of water on the other side of the island is called Mosquito Lagoon for good reason.

The southern end of the Seashore gets even more turtle nests than the north end. Turtle walks there are coordinated by Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. Join them for a late night exploration of Canaveral National Seashore and watch a sea turtle nesting! Dates are for Thursday, June 7th and Saturday, July 7th. The walks will be preceded by a ranger talk about sea turtles at the Visitor's Center. After the program everyone will take their own vehicles and caravan out to Playalinda Beach at Canaveral National Seashore. Once we are all out at the beach, we will wait in our vehicles (to avoid any of those pesky mosquitoes) at a designated parking lot until a sea turtle has been sighted. Once on the beach we will watch as she digs her nest, lays her eggs, covers her nest and then journeys back out to sea.

Reservations are required and may be made by phone at 321-861-0669 or by email at habichat@merrittislandwildlifeassociation.org.

John Carr and Halifax River Audubon

Halifax River Audubon has lost one of its most dedicated supporters and long time board members, John Carr. John passed away on Friday, May 18th. Having long dealt with congestive heart disease his big and generous heart finally gave out.

John's the only person I know to have seen a Bachman's Warbler. Now extinct, they once bred in specific habitat all over the southeast. John's father taught college in Greensboro where T. Gilbert Pearson, founder of the North Carolina Audubon Society and an early President of National Audubon was college president. Through this connection John's family knew Archibald Rutledge, the first poet laureate of South Carolina. Mr. Rutledge lived on an old plantation that bordered the Santee River. Bachman's Warblers nested on the property and once when John and his family were visiting, Mr. Rutledge asked if 10 year old John would like to see them. So John began his commitment to Audubon and conservation at an early age.

After a long career working in health care in North Carolina John and his wife, Fran, retired to Daytona Beach and quickly joined our chapter. Before his health began to fail he was an enthusiastic birder and looked forward to leading field trips, the Christmas Bird Count and doing the Big Sit at the Port Orange Bridge with Ray Scory. In 1997 our then newsletter editor, Carleton Smith, had to resign due to health issues and Fran stepped up to volunteer as newsletter editor. For the next 14 years she and John wrote, edited, had printed and mailed over 600 copies of the newsletter each month. John also served as chapter historian and board member. John had a habit of bringing his check book to board meetings. When an issue arose that needed a financial solution, John quickly and quietly wrote a check. He shunned acknowledgement of this generosity and was loathe to step into the spotlight. His wise council and curmudgeonly smile will be missed by all of us who knew him.

David Hartgrove

* * * * *

Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Robert Arnold, Renita Bethell, Janet Clark, Joyce Davidson, Mary Derbenwick, Harry Hildebrandt, Shirley Parran, Shed Roberson, Nancy Robinson, Frances Smith, William Valez, Dixie Van Aernam, John Wagner and Peter Walton. We hope to see you at one of our meetings or on one of our field trips when they resume in September.

* * * * *

John Baker, a board member with the Environmental Council of Volusia/Flagler sent the following:

"This is probably old news to some of you. in 2013 CO2 concentrations reached 400 parts per million (ppm) for the 1st time in human history. A year later, it averaged 400 ppm for an entire month. This April, co2 concentrations were 410.31. the last time it was this high was before humans existed."

These numbers are going in the wrong direction if we want to continue living as we have. Our burgeoning population is crowded along coastlines that will soon be flooding daily. And the current administration continues pushing use of fossil fuels that increase CO2 emissions.

The Trump administration's war on the environment has been ratcheted up another notch. Not content to wreck the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, they have now set their greedy sights on the Endangered Species Act. And to help implement their plans the President nominated Susan Combs. Combs was originally nominated in July as Interior's assistant secretary for policy, management, and budget, but her confirmation been stalled in the Senate for a number of reasons. Perhaps because a number of senators can't stomach the idea of putting such an ideologue in a position of power. So for now she will serve in an acting capacity at Fish and Wildlife and Parks, which doesn't require senate confirmation.

She comes to the office from Texas where she was comptroller. While in that position she managed to get control of the endangered protections program away from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. She likened the Endangered Species Act to "incoming Scud missiles" that threatened to blow up the Texas Miracle economy. In 2015 she prevailed on the Army to reverse its position that special protections for the Golden-cheeked Warbler at Fort Hood had not impaired military readiness. Among her first acts since moving to Washington is to announce a complete rollback of what's called the "blanket rule." The blanket section rule (4D) under the Endangered Species Act covers about 300 animal and plant species, such as the Northern Spotted Owl and manatee, that are at risk of becoming endangered. So this could end protections for the manatee here. The Interior Department has promised that any rollbacks would be subject to a public comment period as required by federal law.

* * *

There are strange happenings in Port Orange. The City has applied for and been granted a permit from the St Johns River Water Management District to extend Yorktowne Drive a short distance. The cost of the project (entirely born by the City) is estimated at 2.4 million dollars. This isn't the first permit issued for this project. One from some years ago was allowed to expire, much to the relief of the residents in the area. The new permit was announced over Thanksgiving weekend, apparently in hopes that no one would notice until it was too late to object. The road will contribute to even more traffic congestion in an area that's clogged already. It will also further degrade the Spruce Creek watershed.

A couple of developers are pushing for the road, assisted by City staff. No one else wants it and a group of Port Orange residents, banded together as the Sweetwater Coalition, has filed a challenge to the permit. Livid at the temerity of this group to challenge their plans the City staff and the City Attorney prevailed on the City Council to fund the hiring of a big time law firm from Jacksonville to defend the permit in court. The Water Management District has its own attorneys to defend its actions and presumably the City Attorney could defend the City's position. But if you want to crush the efforts of your own citizens when they seek to have input on how their tax dollars are spent there's nothing like bringing in some hired gun law firm. Of course that means spending even more tax payer dollars but that's the price of "progress."

The Sweetwater Coalition's spokesman, Derek Lamontagne, offered to put together a presentation for the City Council on the group's objections to the proposed road extension. The City Attorney told him that he was not to approach any of the Council members under any circumstances. When you're up to no good it's important to control the message.

David Hartgrove

By Ray Scory

The Carolina Wren

...hopefully, my bird of brown will always stay around.

What is there not to like about the Carolina Wren? A bundle of Joy. A tiny ball of energy to spare, alive with action, inquisitive, charming, inventive, aggressive, and loving. Cloaked in an exquisite palette of brown shades. Vibrant color could not add to its beauty.

The stage is set. The drama is about to begin. The curtain rises and a new day awakens. The actors appear and the show begins. The audience reacts and the applause is loud - now and then a cheerful whistle pipes up. All in all, an enthusiastic audience. Some of this is in the form of my imagination and other parts are real. What is real, takes place at my bird feeding station everyday in my backyard here in Florida. It is a guarantee that every time I look out my kitchen window and a Carolina Wren appears, something wonderful and interesting will happen.

They are not acting out their life for their audience, they are actually living the everyday act of survival. They come to my feeder to eat. Eating is an important component of survival. They come well prepared for this challenge - just watch them... and listen too. The quality and variety of their songs belong in the high reaches of symphonic orchestration. It is melodic and honey smooth, shattering and intense. Horn like in structure it reminds us of high and echoing castle halls of ancient times. Close your eyes and listen. You are there, hearing the music. In the hall, realizing the spirit of a magical moment.

The Carolina Wren is a fascinating nest builder. Placing its nest on a bemusing variety of solid structures. In my neighborhood I have witnessed their dome covered nest woven inside a shoe, on the bench in a garage and in a wreath attached to a next door neighbor's front door. In my yard they have nested in a birdhouse, in the tangles of a coral honeysuckle vine and most astoundingly of all - they wove a nest into a garden hose, through the metal supports of a rotary garden hose caddy that is attached to side of my house. A most interesting structure this nest, more like a two floor condo instead of a one room hut. I watched them build that condo using thin sticks, dead brown grasses and a few feathers, flying across a green lawn not more than six feet from a large palmetto island. They moved back and forth in this small area until the nest was completed. I did not witness the exit of their fledglings, but I did notice a few more Carolina Wrens coming to the bird feeding station the following week.

The Carolina Wren may not be explosively dressed in vibrant colors, but their exquisite shades of browns and blacks, intricate feather designs, buff brown and white underparts, a very diagnostic white supercillium, all lightly sprinkled from above with a few white flecks, is simply beautiful. The Carolina Wren is truly a remarkable bird.

Ray Scory

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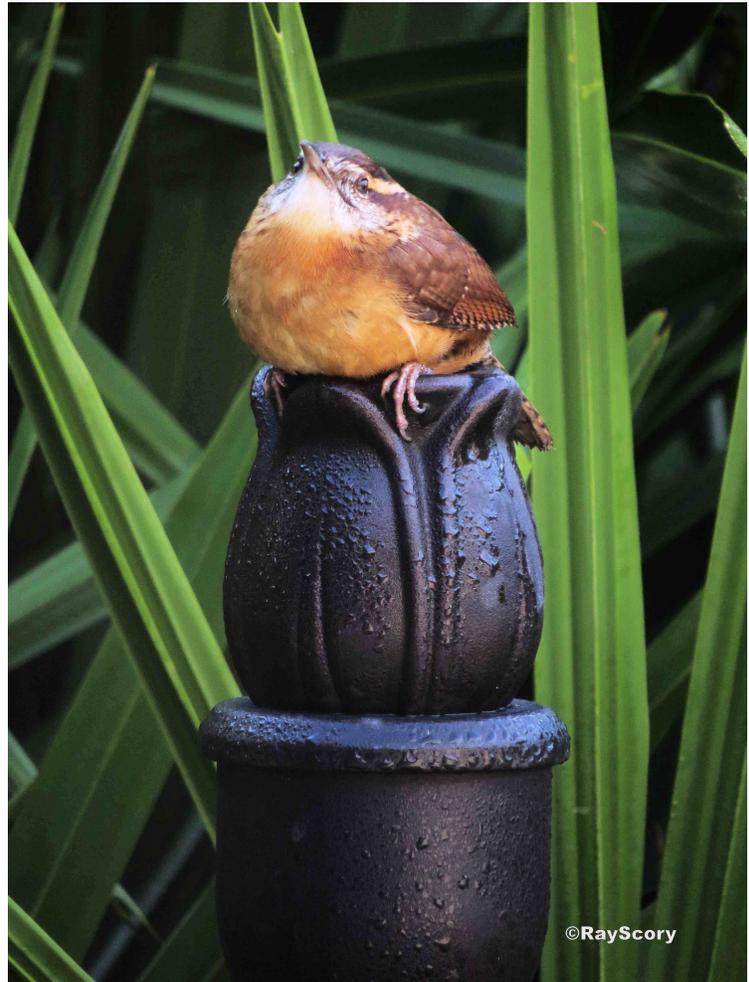
From the Quotable Birder

"How come the dove gets to be the peace symbol? How about the pillow? It has more feathers than the dove, and it doesn't have that dangerous beak."

Jack Handy, "Deep Thoughts" From SNL



Carolina Wren showing its classic upturned tail pose



This Carolina Wren sits in a puffed out wintery pose on a dry water fountain head. Photos by Ray Scory

Scrub-Jays at North Peninsula State Park

It's always good to see that special places are not forgotten nor the very special birds that once resided there. I started participating in Jay Watch back in 2008. I believe the first year for Jay Watch at the park was 2006. It was organized by Gail and Mike Duggins, long time Flagler Audubon members. At least that is when my "records" start. The last time a Florida Scrub-Jay was seen at NPSP was in the spring of 2016. The jay was not in his/her usual location, and for about three months was seen at the south end of the park (much closer to Kingston Shores Condos than usual). I believe this was our last Florida Scrub-Jay at the park and he/she was headed south looking for new habitat and companions.

Maintaining ideal habitat is essential for a healthy Scrub-Jay population. NPSP's location adjacent to A1A creates a problem when it comes to prescribed burns. Winds have to be out of the Northeast so that the smoke doesn't drift over A1A. Generally speaking, with a northeasterly wind we have a low pressure center sitting offshore and of course that means rain. This means looking for a weather pattern that is not all that common. I have seen scheduled burns delayed for months looking for optimal weather conditions. It's my understanding that the ideal situation is for mechanical clearing to precede the burn within a certain amount of time. It is also my understanding that much of the restoration and maintenance at Lyonia Preserve is "mechanical" because it sits in the middle of an established city (Deltona) and burns are not practical in all locations there.

When Jay Watch started at NPSP, three main family groups were identified. Other groups were believed to be sub-groups of these three family groups. The scrub-jays from Matanzas Shores and Shelter Cove in northern Flagler County migrated down to NPSP after development destroyed the habitat at those locations. They were easily identified because of their unique colored leg bands.

In earlier years (2006 through 2009) there were between 10 and 12 Scrub-Jays in the park. The number dropped to 8 jays in 2010. By 2012 we were down to 6 adult scrub-jays and only 3 adults in 2013 and 2014. In 2014 we were also observing predators: Cooper's Hawk and Swallow-tailed Kite. Cooper's Hawks tend to take adult or fledgling birds. Swallow-tailed Kites are looking for nestlings.

It's been suggested that some birds could be relocated from other active sites to establish a population here. About 5 years ago, at a Jay Watch Volunteer Appreciation event, there was a young woman who gave a presentation about the first translocation attempt. It was a great presentation and a bit of a wake up call on what locations were to be considered for translocation. I remember her saying that sites that would be considered needed to already have an established "community" of jays. That community would have to consist of ten families of Scrub-Jays. Not ten jays, ten families! They may have revised the criteria since then but as Marianne Korosy (Director of the Jay Watch Program) pointed out, an already established community seems to ensure success for translocated jays. It's great that translocation is taking place "somewhere". Hopefully, this will result in an increased Florida Scrub-Jay population. Anywhere the numbers increase is better than nowhere. We sure want to see them back here.

Laura Ostapko

Laura is a long time volunteer at Gamble Rogers State Park, which manages North Peninsula State Park. Editor

Words of Praise for Audubon Adventures, cont.

"My class absolutely loved the Audubon Adventures magazines. They eagerly read them with a partner in order to learn more about birds and bees. A project that they enjoyed participating in was to create a paper cube with their favorite learned facts listed on each side of the cube with an illustration. The students then shared their cubes and they were engaged in what each classmate felt was important. I look forward to getting next year's set of magazines. Thank you for the learning!"

Katherine S. Reynolds 4th Grade Teacher, Gifted Pine Trail Elementary

"The "Audubon Adventures" were a great resource in my class. We used them to learn the content, but they were also valuable for our reading standards. I used them with my class to identify text features, discuss fact and opinion, and create summaries. The engaging information, eye catching layout, and color print made these fun for my students. I appreciate the opportunity to use them Thank you.

Sincerely, Robin Knight Pine Trail Elementary ESE gifted

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Meets monthly September through May

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4 We wish to thank our sponsors, whose contributions play a vital part of allowing us to continue our work: Florida Power & Light, Colonial Colony and the Spruce Creek Garden and Nature Club.

The Pelican

We need to be the stewards of this world, not its destroyers
Volume 64-Number 7. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
July, 2018



The President's Column

"The conservation of our natural resources and their proper use constitute the fundamental problem which underlies almost every other problem of our national life..."

"I recognize the right and duty of this generation to develop and use the natural resources of our land; but I do not recognize the right to waste them, or to rob, by wasteful use, the generations that come after us."

"...Natural resources must be used for the benefit of all our people, and not monopolized for the benefit of the few..."

These quotes are from the 26th President of the United States of America, Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. Born in 1858, he served as President from 1901 to 1909. During his terms, he created 150 national forests, 51 bird reservations, 3 game preserves, 5 national parks and 18 national monuments. He protected the equivalent of 84,000 acres of public lands PER DAY for each day he served, for a total of more than 230 million acres preserved for future generations of Americans.

Right here in Florida, with encouragement from the Florida Audubon Society, President Roosevelt established Pelican Island in the Indian River Lagoon as the first federal bird reservation on March 14th, 1903, giving rise to the National Wildlife Refuge System. By the end of his presidency, Roosevelt had named 9 more reservations in Florida.

I was in New York on Long Island earlier this month and toured Sagamore Hill, Roosevelt's "Summer White House", which is fittingly managed by the National Park Service. The Park service invites us to tour the property and "...become inspired by the legacy of one of America's most popular presidents." I was inspired to shed tears of gratitude and to find effective ways to do my part to protect the environment for the children and living organisms of the future. While this is especially challenging today, Teddy would surely brook no excuses for shirking what I am sure we would agree is a duty. I urge us all to find ways, every day, to make a positive impact on the environment we share and to become educated and involved with our local government. Here in Volusia County, in addition to conservation-focused organizations like Halifax River Audubon, there are a number of citizens' groups that are forming to address the rapid development our area is both enjoying and suffering from. On June 26th, the Daytona Beach News Journal held a public forum to discuss "Smart Growth." It is a very good time to be part of the community in search of solutions. If we all join in, I believe we can find them.

Melissa Lammers

Calendar & Events

We're in the middle of our summer hiatus. No general meetings or field trips until September. The board will still meet monthly on the first Monday of the month at the Ormond Beach Regional Library, Meeting Room #4 at 1:30 pm. Members are invited to attend.

Field Trips With Others

Those of us willing to brave the heat of July can find a number of fun activities offered by Volusia County's Environmental Management Department. There are kayaking, bicycling, hiking and snorkeling programs spread across the month at a variety of locations. Click on this [link](#) and scroll down to the "Upcoming Events" section.

* * * *

Gopher Tortoise Halts MDC Construction, Prompts Relocation

The Marine Discovery Center got a little surprise from a burrowing reptile after starting construction this spring. In early April, executive director Chad Truxall noticed a hole at the base of what will be the seating area of the new amphitheater, currently under construction. "We knew we had a gopher tortoise onsite a while ago, but we had not seen it and we thought it was gone," said Truxall. "As soon as we saw that hole, we knew we had to do something about it."

Truxall said a survey on the property for endangered and threatened species was standard procedure before construction could begin. Unfortunately, an assumption was made that the survey had already taken place. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) informed MDC that it needed to determine if there was one tortoise or more than 10 on the property. Procedural requirements vary based on the number of animals present.

Truxall reached out to Joe Young, owner of Biological Consulting Services, who came to the center's campus in April and performed a gopher tortoise survey one week after construction had begun at the site. Young determined there was one tortoise in the burrow, prompting the halt of all construction within 15 feet of the area until the animal could be removed.

This story is continued on page 4

Conservation Notes

There's a song by New Orleans musician, Dr. John, titled "Right Place, Wrong Time." This is a story kind of that reverses that phrase. It's about being in the wrong place at the right time.



Across from the entrance to Tanger Outlets there's another "shopping destination" going up. Construction began early in 2017 and as site preparation continued intense rains created large, flat areas of bare ground with a mix of old shell and large muddy wet areas with standing water. That made for what looked like good shorebird habitat to Michael Brothers and he stopped by one afternoon in early May last year and discovered a thriving Least Tern colony. Least Terns are listed as a "Threatened" species due mostly to loss of nesting habitat. I monitor 15 rooftops across our county as a volunteer with FWC and the birds also nest on some islands in the river.



Last year I worked with FWC personnel to install signs and string to mark off the nesting area. While not happy about the delays to their construction schedule, the construction company was very cooperative in leaving the site undisturbed and the birds had a successful nesting that produced a number of fledged young.

This year the birds are back and again we've erected signs and string to delineate the nesting area. Over the past year construction has continued and what was an open field now has a divided road and concrete curbs. Paving would have

commenced already if not for the birds having nests in the unpaved road. As I said, wrong place, right time.



Both Joan Tague and I have been monitoring the site for FWC this year and it appears the birds may not fledge a single youngster. Though at one point we had at least 81 nests, a big female Red-tailed Hawk has been seen hanging out in the area and apparently she's been taking a lot of chicks. There may be other predators we haven't seen that have been active. The birds do the best they can with the limited tools they have to deter predation but the cards are stacked against them.



Adult Least Tern with its chick. *Photo by Michael Brothers*

You'll notice in the top photo that the bird on the left is just sitting back down on its egg. Some of the nests have 2 eggs. As you can imagine it gets very hot out there until an afternoon rain shower cools things off. The adults will fly over to one of the puddles, wet their breast feathers, and return to the nest to allow the moisture to cool the eggs. That's what was happening when I took the photo.

By this time next year the entire shopping area will be completed and the bare ground where the birds are now nesting will be covered in asphalt. This was one of those serendipitous moments when conditions were created that the birds could temporarily use for nesting. The rooftops they use must be tar and gravel. Since this is an antique technology and not in use any longer, as the existing roofs are replaced the birds lose yet another place to nest. Changes are taking place faster than they can adapt.

David Hartgrove

A Treasured Local Resource

Some of you may know Dr. Peter May, Biology Professor at Stetson University, or you may know of his reputation for incredible nature photography.

Peter's blog, <http://volusianaturalist.com>, is full of interesting articles that are illustrated by his photos. His posts to [Facebook](#) elicit ooohs and aaahs from commenters across the spectrum.



A few of his shots are somewhat comical, like this one of a soaking wet Brown Thrasher. His interests range from birds to plants and the myriad insect species that inhabit our state and in particular, Volusia County. His haunts include Tiger Bay State Forest, Heart Island Conservation Area, Lake George State Forest, Ocala National Forest, Emeralda Marsh and just about anywhere else there's an opportunity to view the plants and creatures that make living here so interesting.



Here's a female Ebony Jewelwing



3 The White-eyed Vireo eating the moth and the crab spider eating the walking stick were seen in Tiger Bay State Forest.

Continued on the below

Gopher Tortoise story continues below

Then MDC was given two options: 1.) Install a silt fence around the entire construction project, remove the tortoise from the burrow and place it outside the silt fencing; or 2.) extract the tortoise in its burrow and move the animal offsite to a state-approved location. "Once you decide on an option, you apply for a permit and let the state know your plans," said Truxall, who took the second option. On the day of the tortoise extraction, Truxall watched while Young and Weaver Construction executed a precise extraction using a backhoe. The burrow was approximately 20 feet deep and the procedure rendered a large female tortoise.

"This is far better than entombment, which they used to do," Truxall said. "For a long time, construction companies could pay a fee – in what's called a 'take' – and just fill in a burrow, not knowing whether it was active or not. They buried tortoises alive and maybe even crushed them with their bulldozers while only paying a fine."

FWC banned the practice of entombment in 2007, ending a state policy that allowed construction companies to bulldoze burrows for paid permits. The Humane Society took action in halting the statewide practice, which reportedly entombed anywhere from nearly 100,000 to 900,000 gopher tortoises in Florida from 1991-2007. "When people realized what was going on with the entombment practices, they were really upset," said Truxall. "I'm glad the laws were changed."

Truxall noted that gopher tortoises are a keystone species, sharing their burrows with many animals, ranging from mammals and reptiles, amphibians, insects and birds. More than 350 other species have been identified as communally residing in gopher tortoise burrows. Certain endangered species, such as indigo snakes, the gopher frog and the beach mouse, all share gopher tortoise burrows – sometimes taking refuge in the burrows during fires.

While humans may sometimes be inconvenienced that the presence of a threatened animal can hold up an entire construction project, Truxall said state laws are now in place for a reason to protect gopher tortoises. "When it comes to gopher tortoises, we certainly have come a long way," he added.

Lisa D. Mickey

Our thanks to Lisa for this informative article. Editor

* * * *

From The Quotable Birder

Then he felt quite ashamed, and hid his head under his wings, for he did not know what to do; he was so happy, and yet not at all proud. He thought how he had been persecuted and despised; and now he heard them saying that he was the most beautiful of all birds. Even the elder tree bent its branches straight down into the water before him, and the sun shone warm and mild. Then his wings rustled, and he lifted his slender neck, and cried rejoicingly from the depths of his heart,- "I never dreamed of so much happiness when I was the Ugly Duckling!"

Hans Christian Andersen

I urge you to click on the link to Peter's blog. Scroll down and click on the article from August, 2016 to learn about Pygmy Rattlesnakes. Or the article from February, 2016 to see his knockout photos of Cedar Waxwings learn about what they're up to while in our area. The writing is sure to inspire you to learn more and has a sense of humor that should appeal to all.

David Hartgrove

* * * *

Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Thomas Arbogast, Wanda Bankston, Rob Bird, Larry Davis, Gary Froehlich, Francis Heredeem, Chris Higgs, J Moore, Trudy Shoemaker, David Vedder, Marilyn Ward and Jeff Wedge. We hope to see you all at our next meeting in September or on one of our field trips. Watch the [website](#) for updates on the field trip schedule.

* * * * *

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* * * * *

We wish to thank our sponsors, whose contributions play a vital part of allowing us to continue our work: Florida Power & Light, Colonial Colony and the Spruce Creek Garden and Nature Club.

The Pelican

We need to be the stewards of this world, not its destroyers
Volume 64-Number 8. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
August, 2018



The President's Column

THE JOYS OF VOLUNTEERING...AND LEARNING!

A few weekends ago, David Hartgrove, Vice President and Conservation Committee Chair, Holly-Zwart Duryea, Education Committee Chair, and I met with Summer STEM (Science, Technology, Education and Math) program attendees at the Yvonne Scarlet Golden Community Center in Daytona Beach. The centerpiece of our meeting was an educational presentation on Migration that was prepared by former chapter member, Chuck Tague. Though mostly about bird migration it covered migration by others, like butterflies and dragonflies too.

Although the program learners for our module were elementary school aged, our audience ranged from about six to around 40 years of age and included elementary school children, a pair of Bethune-Cookman University student interns, some educators and school counselors, and a few parents---quite a range of age and knowledge! That presented a challenge, but it was one we overcame with some of us pretending to be learners ourselves. What is migration? What do you mean by resources when you talk about birds? How high do birds fly? How long do they live?

About half way through the presentation, we were getting questions from everyone --- kids, parents, educators, interns --- and they were all very good questions too! We could tell that our audience was genuinely curious, not just about birds but also what they need to survive and thrive. It showed us that yes, we can engage kids and their families, which is something we hope to do more of in the coming year. We also made contacts to give presentations at more schools during the academic year and perhaps to after school programs, as well.

If you're a beginning birder like I am, you might enjoy going to the Audubon Adventures [website](#). Yes, it's geared toward elementary school learners but it has a lot of great, easy to digest information that I can use, too.

And whether you are an experienced birder or not, you can join our Education Committee this fall and participate, to help brainstorm more ways for us to take nature to kids and kids to nature! It is deeply rewarding to see minds blossom to the beauty of the natural world and such a privilege to be part of it.

Stay tuned to this space in September for a very important update on Halifax River Audubon's Strategic Initiatives for the coming year and beyond! See you soon!

Melissa Lammers

Just a reminder that we're still in our summer hiatus. So no regular meetings or field trips until next month. The board does meet on Monday, August 6th, at the Ormond Beach Regional Library in Meeting Room 4 at 1:30 pm. You're welcome to attend.

* * * *

Explore Volusia, Summer Field Trips With Volusia County Environmental Management

A slightly shorter list of activities for the month of August includes a paddling trip on Spruce Creek, a lecture on sharks and their important place in our environment and a bike ride around Gemini Springs. These are just a few of the chances for fun with Volusia County's Environmental Specialist, Trey Hannah. Click on this [link](#) for all the information. Be sure to scroll down to the bottom of the page for the full calendar.

* * * *

Archbold Biological Station, One of Florida's Truly Special Places, and the Queen of Red Hill

Archbold Biological Station has been a gathering spot for biologists, ornithologists, entomologists, botanists and others pursuing knowledge about our natural world since 1941. It's a world class research facility and has also hosted any number of field trips for Audubon chapters, the Florida Ornithological Society and birding festivals. In 1929 John Roebling II (his uncle built the Brooklyn Bridge, among many other things) bought one thousand acres of pine scrub on the Lake Wales Ridge in Highlands County. His idea was to build a vacation home for himself and his wife, who suffered from tuberculosis. The mansion he planned was never built. So in 1941 his son, Donald, donated the property to Richard Archbold, a world renowned biologist and philanthropist. Who incidentally did some of the original surveys of Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp in 1946. The two families worked together to guarantee the future of the property as a research facility and protected environmental treasure.

The Queen of Red Hill is the title given to Gopher Tortoise number 21. That number was painted on her shell in 1968 by Dr. Jim Layne, who took over leadership of the site in 1967. She continues to roam the property today. Here's a [link](#) to a short, beautifully shot video which I'm sure you'll enjoy. As it plays see if you can identify the birds heard calling in the background: like Florida Scrub Jay, Northern Bobwhite, Red-bellied Woodpecker and Eastern Towhee.

David Hartgrove

Conservation Notes

An article published in [Scientific American](#) tells us that due to excessive snow pack along Greenland's eastern coast, many shorebird species will not be nesting this year. It seems ironic that as we hear about the melting of Greenland's glaciers due to climate change, we now hear that the late spring snow pack will prevent birds like Ruddy Turnstones, Sanderlings and Red Knots from nesting. Not only will the birds not be nesting but huge numbers will die of starvation due to their inability to find adequate food. These birds depend on arriving on the tundra just as the warmer temperatures of late spring trigger the hatching of billions of mosquitoes and other insects on which the birds feed. There are always fluctuations in breeding numbers from one year to the next but a complete loss of a year's nesting season is unprecedented. And it's not just in Greenland. Researchers across the Arctic are finding similar conditions in northern Canada and Alaska. Climate change is causing wetter conditions that mean more spring snow. Snow that then lingers longer into June when the birds arrive to begin the frantic race to breed, raise their young and fatten up for their southward migration in August. This does not bode well for shorebird survival chances as our climate changes faster than these species can adapt. Our future shorebird surveys could be a depressing documentation of their extinction.

* * *

Sometimes incompetence in high places can reveal evidence of what was suspected but not proven. A year ago the Trump administration ordered a review of 27 national monuments announced during the Obama administration. Suspicious that this "review" would be a one sided affair with a predetermined outcome, the Center for Biological Diversity, the Washington Post, the New York Times and others filed a joint Freedom of Information Act request seeking all relevant documents to said review. They spent a lot of time sifting through the volumes of testimony, emails and paperwork. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's henchmen, hand picked for their connections to extraction industries, seemed almost gleeful at the prospect of gutting Obama's environmental legacy. Researchers came across numerous email communications that proved beyond doubt that the purpose of the "review" was to open up vast tracts of protected lands to drilling, mining and logging interests. The very industries in which the people conducting the "review" had worked a short time earlier.

Dino Grandoni wrote in the Washington Post that the emails "show more candid conversations than ordinary FOIA releases because the Interior Department sent out the unredacted correspondence by accident." Officials there removed the email documents from the Interior website and urged anyone who had downloaded them to hit delete. Unfortunately for them the cat was out of the bag and their perfidy was exposed for what it was. Rep. Raul Grijalva of Arizona (D) raised a red flag when he spoke in Congress and said, "The review has been secretive. It has been opaque and it has been contrived. I say it's contrived because the conclusion was already written."

So far Trump has reduced the size of two of the monuments Obama announced: Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante, both in Utah. We now know based on the released documents that the reduction of Bears Ears was done strictly to allow oil and gas drilling on lands held sacred by Native Americans. Before that shrinking can actually take place, the courts will have the final say. Environmental advocates have sued and are convinced that law and court precedent are in their favor. They believe the monument reductions will be reversed. Let's hope they're right.

David Hartgrove

Look for our table at the Museum's Natural History Festival next month. We'll be there dispensing information on birds, Audubon and answering questions. We'll also have chapter t-shirts and books for sale. Come out and support us and the Museum.

* * * * *



Scarlet Tanager with beetle, Photo by David Hartgrove

The photo above was taken at Fort Jefferson, in the Dry Tortugas. [Florida Nature Tours](#) has been running birding trips to this fantastic location since 1966. They have just released the dates for next year's trips: Wed., 4/10 through Sat., 4/13; Sat., 5/4 through Tues., 5/7 and Tues., 5/7 through Fri., 5/10. Stay tuned for more information.

Here's another in our ongoing series about local naturalists and their contributions to our appreciation of the world around us.

Paul Rebmann, A Man For All Seasons

I've known Paul for over twenty years and done many bird counts with him but his interests extend far beyond the realm of birds.



His photo here of a loggerhead sea turtle hatchling crawling toward the waves won first place in the Orange Audubon Chertok Photo Contest in 2008. In early 2011 he completed the Florida Master Naturalist Program and he's a past president of the Paw Paw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society.



Here's a Florida Scrub-Jay photographed at Lyonia Preserve



Here's a Beef Fly on a Roseling that won an award earlier this year. Yet another example of a pollinator that isn't a honeybee or a butterfly.

Paul's [website](#) and his [blog](#) make for fascinating reading. Last December he and a friend hiked part of the Appalachian Trail and stood on Blood Mountain, in north Georgia. It gave them a beautiful view of the Blue Ridge. Paul wrote, "This is also the greatest elevation in the Apalachicola River watershed making Blood Mountain the highest source of water that reaches Florida. Amazing to think that rain falling on this remote north Georgia peak could be part of the fresh water essential to the oysters in Apalachicola Bay."



It's hard not to get a great photo of a Swallow-tailed Kite and here Paul has caught a shot of one in fresh plumage gliding gracefully through the air.

I urge you to click on the website and blog links above and while you're on the website look for the link to Paul's [newsletter](#). There you can click on the December, 2017 entry to learn about mushrooms or the entry from October, 2015 to learn about Lake Disston, in western Flagler County. This Outstanding Florida Waterway is also an Audubon Important Bird Area. All of these photos were shot by Paul and there are many more to be seen on the links above. Now that he's recently retired from his job as Director of Information Systems for the Root Corporation he has lots of time to devote to his passions. And we all benefit from that.

David Hartgrove



Sandhill Crane, photo by Paul Rebmann

* * * * *

Duck Stamps, Funding Wildlife Refuges

The newest Duck Stamp has been issued. Officially known as the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, it went on sale on the 29th of June. For the paltry sum of just 25.00 you can contribute to our national wildlife refuge system and assure yourself access to any refuge in the country for an entire year.

First issued in 1934, that first stamp was designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling. He was an artist and a political cartoonist who also happened to be the Chief of the Bureau of Biological Survey, the predecessor to today's U S Fish & Wildlife Service. He and some other folks came up with the idea of selling stamps to fund the purchase of wetlands for conservation. Many of us have spent a lot of quality time at the refuge near Fort Myers that bears his name.

Ninety-eight cents of every dollar collected goes directly to the maintenance and purchase of lands for our national wildlife refuge system. There's a misconception that these are stamps for duck hunters only, and hunters need them to hunt on refuges. But they're also one of the most effective ways the average person can help save our environment. They can also be a valuable collector's item. They can be purchased [online](#), at your local wildlife refuge, like Merritt Island NWR or at the Post Office. Though I've run into trouble trying that last approach. Not all post offices have them in stock apparently. So do yourself and wildlife a favor and get yours today.

Editor

Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members. There's just a small group this month: Gregg Goldsworthy, Pauline Kurpinsky and Rick Seiler. We hope to see you next month at our general meeting or on one of our excellent field trips.

* * * * *

From The Quotable Birder

"Words are like rocks... they weigh you down. If birds could talk, they wouldn't be able to fly."

Marilyn Whirlwind, character on the TV show, Northern Exposure

* * * * *

THE PELICAN

is published monthly by the Halifax River Audubon, a chapter of the National Audubon Society and a member of Audubon Florida serving eastern Volusia County.

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Halifax River Audubon

forbirds@halifaxriveras.org

Meets monthly September through May

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Vice President: David Hartgrove

Past President: Jim O'Shaughnessy

Treasurer: Ellen Tate

Recording Sec.: Peggy Yokubonus

Membership Sec.: Joan Tague

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* * * * *

We wish to thank our sponsors, whose contributions play a vital part of allowing us to continue our work: Florida Power & Light, Colonial Colony and the Spruce Creek Garden and Nature Club.

The Pelican

Fostering a community where people and wildlife thrive
Volume 64-Number 9 Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
September, 2018



There are two issues of the Pelican this month. This one, with some slight updates to the form, and a printed version that has different and important content that will be arriving by mail.

WELCOME BACK! WE HAD A VERY BUSY SUMMER!

Welcome to the start of Halifax River Audubon's (HRA) 2018-19 year! We have lots of news! In sharing the highlights with you here, I'd like you to know how devoted and hard-working our all-volunteer Board of Directors is. In addition to the regular HRA summer activities, they worked extra hours to ensure that HRA remains a force for conservation in Volusia County, as it has been since 1923. We refreshed our vision for the community and are working to ensure that everything we do will help us achieve it. We have a wonderful list of activities and potential activities that we believe offer something for everyone who is a part of HRA. We strongly encourage you to become involved with a Committee, whether it's for the entire year or for a special project. We need your involvement!

In case you missed it, we held elections at the May meeting. Our 2018-19 Board Members are: Melissa Lammers, President; David Hartgrove, Vice President; Jim O'Shaughnessy, Past President; Ellen Tate, Treasurer; Peggy Yokubonus, Recording Secretary; Joan Tague, Membership Secretary; Holly Zwart-Duryea, Historian; At-Large Members: Betty Butcher, Dan Gribbin, Pam Pennella and Steven Underwood.

During June and July, the Board worked on our Strategic Plan to define exactly who we are and what we will do in the coming year and beyond. We set a new VISION and MISSION for our Chapter, we established five core priorities for our work in the community, identified ways to achieve our goals for each priority, and how we will measure success over time. Hint: it all starts with your involvement.

Our Vision statement describes the world we want to create through our work and in collaboration with others in our community. We adopted National Audubon's VISION as our own. We couldn't imagine anything better than:

We envision a community where people and wildlife thrive.

Our new MISSION statement gives our reason to exist and what we do to accomplish our vision:

Through education and advocacy, Halifax River Audubon fosters understanding and care of the environment that provides quality of life for people and wildlife.

Continued on the following page

Calendar & Events

Monday, September 17th, Program Meeting- We begin our new season with a program from Dr. Duane DeFreese, Executive Director of the IRL Council & Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program. His presentation will give us an update on restoration efforts in our nation's most biologically diverse estuary. We meet at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Ave, Holly Hill, FL 32117. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. We hope to see you there.

* * * * *

Field Trips

Friday, September 14th, Canaveral National Seashore- Join David Hartgrove for this trip to see both shorebirds and migrant warblers. Meet at 7:30 am behind Panera Bread, near Target on Dunlawton Ave. just east of I-95. Bring lunch. Questions, call David at 386-235-1249.

* * *

Field Trips With Others

Volusia County Environmental Management- This month's offerings include paddling adventures at DeLeon Springs and High Bridge Park; Eco-buggy tours of Deep Creek Preserve and Longleaf Pine Preserve and lots more. Click on this [link](#) and scroll down to the "Upcoming Events" section for all of the information.

* * * * *

Here's a [link](#) to an eight minute You Tube video of an Allen's Hummingbird nest in Los Angeles. It progresses from hatching to fledging and is quite well done. Enjoy!

* * * * *

National Audubon Photography Contest Winners

Audubon's annual photography contest sees some amazing entries. Here's a [link](#) to the top one hundred photos from this year's event. Relax and enjoy the view.

* * *

From the Quotable Birder

"Imagine if birds were tickled by feathers. You'd see a flock of birds come by, laughing hysterically!"

Steven Wright

Conservation Notes

While HRA values all habitat that supports wildlife, especially birds, we recognize it's essential to preserve large conservation areas that support the level of biodiversity necessary to have a healthy, functioning ecosystem. In keeping with that recognition, we will focus three of our core priorities geographically, on nearby areas: Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge (MINWR), The Indian River Lagoon (IRL) and Lake Apopka. As part of our actions to support these priorities, our speaker for September 17th is Duane De Freese, Ph.D., Executive Director of the IRL Council & Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program. We will also have a big announcement about MINWR. Stay tuned!

Our remaining two priorities are education and advocacy. HRA believes that education is key to understanding, and that understanding is key to action. We therefore prioritize educating our community about the importance of healthy ecosystems and the joining with others to advocate for their conservation, whether as leaders or collaborators. As part of these efforts, we want to expand Audubon Adventures to more classrooms and from the classroom to the field; create or participate in more signature and allied events; and expand our Conservation Committee work to local government.

I believe we have a moving vision and mission, a relevant set of priorities and ambitious goals for each one. Our work is both meaningful and fun! We need you and your ideas to make sure that this will be a great year for Halifax River Audubon and to propel us to achieve even more in the years to come!

Melissa Lammers

* * * * *

Tracking Wildlife With New Technology

The word "motus" is Latin. It means movement. The MOTUS Wildlife Tracking System is a program developed by Bird Studies Canada in partnership with Acadia University and a grant from the Canada Foundation for Innovation. It's an international cooperative research network that uses a coordinated, automated radio telemetry array to track the movement and behavior of all kinds of flying organisms. Butterflies, dragonflies, bats, the endangered Kirtland's Warbler and Bald Eagles can all be tracked using tiny micro transmitters attached to the individual species. There are a number of cooperating automated radio telemetry stations that scan for signals from the devices around the clock. When results from many stations are combined, the array can track animals across a diversity of landscapes covering thousands of miles. One of the receiving stations is located on the top of the lifeguard station in Ponce Inlet.

Michael Brothers, Director Emeritus of the Marine Science Center, was instrumental in getting this station up and running. From late April to the end of May the following birds were detected by the station. Due to multiple "hits" by the tracking devices we know that some birds stayed in the area for several weeks; like a Gray-cheeked Thrush, an American Redstart, several different Red Knots, a Sora, a Pectoral Sandpiper, an "Ipswitch" Savannah Sparrow, a Clapper Rail, a Blackpoll Warbler and a Kirtland's Warbler.

Data from this system is already giving us new insights into the lives of birds, especially those that are on the cusp of extinction. Here's a [link](#) to a lengthy article in the "Proceedings of the Royal Society B" on the latest research into Red Knot migration that utilized data from the network. And here's a link to a MOTUS [video](#) that helps explain how the system operates. It's short and full of great photography.

David Hartgrove

Here in Volusia and Flagler Counties our beaches are open and the tourists are playing in the surf and getting a sun burn. In other parts of the state things couldn't be much different. In Southwest Florida, from Everglades City to Tampa Bay, red tide and algal blooms are wreaking havoc with local tourist economies. Walking onto the beach in the Fort Myers/Sanibel area visitors are suddenly aware of stinging eyes, trouble breathing and the overpowering aroma of millions of dead fish.

Apparently anxious that any negative statement might further impact the tourist economy, a Lee County Health Department press release stated that, "there is no evidence that acute exposure to the toxins have long-term health impacts." This ignores evidence from an Ohio study that people living in areas with prolonged exposure to significant algal blooms can develop a liver disease. A recently published study in a British medical journal that studied a 2016 algae bloom on Florida's east coast concluded that those exposed faced an increased threat of liver cancer. If state and local health agencies have reason to believe these studies are flawed and that their own rosy prognosis is correct they should publish their conclusions and be prepared to defend them in the court of scientific research.

Meanwhile, as heavy rains fall, the lake levels are again rising in Lake Okeechobee. This will mean more releases of nutrient laden water into the St Lucie and Calooshattee Rivers. They will carry these toxins to the Indian River Lagoon and San Carlos Bay to further feed the algae blooms. It's going to take a lot of money; for research, monitoring and implementation, to correct the problems.

As the election approaches most of the candidates blather on about cutting taxes and regulations while paying lip service to the environmental problems we face. You can't have both. By fostering a climate of run away growth our leaders are killing the goose long after the golden eggs have been taken. It's going to take a lot of tax money and stiff regulations to deal with the mess we've made.

* * *

You're about to see what may look like a destruction of salt marsh and shoreline near Gamble Rogers State Park. It isn't. The Environmental Council of Volusia/Flagler Counties heard a brief presentation on the project by Paul Haydt, who until last year was the area's manager for the St Johns River Water Management District. Weather permitting, the project will commence sometime in September and take as much as a year to complete. A large, wide tracked backhoe with a 60' boom will be utilized to scrape down the remnants of old mosquito control dykes in a 125 acre section of the Tomoka Marsh Aquatic Preserve. Digging shallow canals in the salt marsh was thought back in the late 40's and 50's to be the best way to control salt marsh mosquitoes. Research has shown that these ditches were an ineffective way to control the pesky blood suckers and the destruction of the natural marsh damaged the fragile balance necessary to a healthy ecosystem. Those of us who've been in the area for a while might remember this same restoration technique done some years back in Tomoka State Park. Just after the work was complete the area looked like a moon scape. Now there's a thriving mangrove and salt marsh area there that's again acting as the nursery for all kinds of aquatic wildlife. Just like so many other issues facing the state, we're spending time and money correcting things that were done by our well meaning but misinformed predecessors. Life goes on...

David Hartgrove

**NEWS FROM CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL
CONSERVATION COMMITTEE (RCC)**

Charles Lee, the Director of Advocacy for Audubon Florida, reminds us all about the proposed changes to the Lake County Comprehensive Plan. Of particular concern is a change in the definition of "Open Space" from undeveloped or minimally developed, such as trails and boardwalks..."; to the uses as "...sports fields, playground equipment, and golf courses..." and "...plazas and urban squares..." to count for up to 20% of required Open Space in any development plan (throughout unincorporated Lake County, and within the Wekiva Protection Area and Wekiva Study Area).

This change would have a negative impact on the Wekiva River Protection Area in particular and could impact all rural and semi-rural Lake County residents as new developments are built. Any change to the carefully thought out and much debated Comprehensive Plan should be carefully considered and monitored by all residents who wish to protect the life style we are so fortunate to enjoy in Lake County.

Charles has requested that interested citizens attend the Planning & Zoning Workshop on Wednesday, September 5, at 315 West Main Street, Tavares, FL. The meeting will be held in the Board of Commissioners' Chambers on the second floor at 9:00 am. The final version of CP-18-01 and other materials will be posted to the Board's [website](#) about 5 days prior to the meeting.

The next meeting of the Central Florida RCC is scheduled for September 16 at 10 a.m. at Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland. At this meeting we will approve one or two regional conservation goals which will be ratified by the general membership at Audubon Assembly in October and become part of Audubon Florida's work plan for 2019. These goals coordinate the work of all Audubon chapters in the Central Florida Regional Conservation committee and align with State and National priorities. Should you know of a project of regional scope and concern that you want to nominate for discussion at our meeting, either contact your chapter president or conservation chairperson.

Paula Wehr,

C FL Chapters Representative, Audubon Florida Board of Directors

* * * * *

Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Phyllis Campbell, Jesus Castro, Wallace Gowett, Elizabeth Hilderbrandt, James & Mary McGrew, Janis Robinson and Patricia Walsh. We hope to see you at our next meeting or on one of our excellent field trips.

* * * * *

Sunday Morning Viewing

"CBS Sunday Morning" is a news magazine show that many of us catch whenever possible. Hosted by Jane Pauley it has all kinds of interesting segments. Recently one episode closed with a visit to Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge. Here's a [link](#) to this three and half minute video. You'll have to watch a short commercial first but it's worth it for the great shots of an immature Little Blue Heron, a dancing Reddish Egret and much more.

Editor

Skinny Pete Photography



This lovely little guy is one of Florida's favorite beetles. It's in the Chrysomelidae family and was imported to eat air potato, one of our worst invasive species. *Text and photo by Dr. Peter May*

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3 Florida Power & Light, Colonial Colony and the Spruce Creek Garden and Nature Club.

HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE 2018-2019

Date	Time	Meet At	Trip	Level	Lunch	Leader	Tel #
Fri., Sept. 14	7:30 AM	TAR	Canaveral Nat'l Seashore	3	Y	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Fri., Oct. 12	8:00 AM	Park	Washington Oaks	3	Y	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085
Sat. Oct. 27	7:00 AM	KRY	Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive	1	Y	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Thurs., Nov. 8	7:00 AM	TAR	TM Goodwin Marsh	1	Y	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Wed., Nov. 28	7:30 AM	TAR	Orlando Wetlands	3	Y	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085
Fri., Dec. 7	7:30 AM	TAR	Merritt Island NWR	1	Y	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Sat., Dec. 8	7:30 AM	TAR	Merritt Island NWR	1	Y	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Tues., Jan 8- Fri., Jan. 11			St. Marks NWR	3	Y	Betty Butcher	863-224-4922
Fri. Jan. 18	7:30 AM	TAR	Hatbill Park/Riverbreeze Park	3	Y	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Fri. Feb 1	7:00 AM	KRY	Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive	1	Y	Peggy Yokubonus	386-316-4085
Fri. Feb.15	7:30 AM	TAR	Orlando Wetlands	3	Y	Betty Butcher	863-224-4922
Wed., Mar.6	7:30 AM	TAR	Shiloh Marsh	3	Y	Joan Tague	386-871-6049
Wed. Mar.13	3-6 PM	KRY	Blue Heron Boat Trip	1	N	Celine Sullivan	386-5234182
Sat., Mar. 23	7:30 AM	CHK	Ocala National Forest	1	Y	John Roessler	386-212-6957
Wed.-Fri. Apr. 17,18,19			Fort DeSoto Park	3	Y	David Hartgrove	386-235-1249
Tues. April 4	8:00 AM	TB	Tiger Bay	2	Y	Ray Scory	386-290-0075
Thurs., May 1 6	3:00 PM	Bridge	Dunlawton Bridge	2	N	Ray Scory	386-290-0075

IMPORTANT: Call leader or check website, www.halifaxrivers.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

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

Washington Oaks State Park - 6400 N Oceanshore Blvd, Palm Coast, park fee or pass required

Buschman Pak - 4575 Spruce Creek Rd., Port Orange

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 Trip - requires a reservations made thru Celine Sullivan 386-523-4182. The Blue Heron trip is \$30 per person, cash only. Absolute deadline for reservation is Wed., 3/6/19. Limit 36 persons. Meeting place is St. Johns Marina, 2999 West State Rd. 44, Deland, FL 32720 by 2:00 with \$30.00 cash in hand per person. The boat does not wait for latecomers!

Reservations are required for the St. Marks and Fort DeSoto Trips. Contact Trip Leaders Betty Butcher and David Hartgrove for information.

HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON

Presents

Beginner Bird Watching Class



Cardinal



Crow



Dabbling Duck



Dove



Finch

2018

Learn how to identify birds, how to find birds, how to develop birding skills, how to improve your binocular use and many other birding facts. Join our class for fun, information and fellowship.

Donation: \$25.00 check, payable to **Halifax River Audubon**, noting "Bird Class" in the comment section. Mail to:

Halifax River Audubon
PO Box 166
Daytona Beach, FL 32115

Place: Port Orange Public Library Auditorium, 1005 City Center Circle, Port Orange.

Classroom instruction will be held on **Tuesday October 23, November 13 and December 6 at 9:00 to 12:00 p.m.** Classes begin promptly at 9:30 AM.

Thursday, October 25 – 8:00 AM - Dunlawton Bridge, Port Orange – meet at West side of Halifax River under bridge at parking lot next to the pavilion and boat ramp.

Thursday, November 15 – 8:00 AM -Tomoka State Park, 2099 N. Beach St., Ormond Beach - meet at entrance to park. \$5.00 entrance fee per car.

Tuesday, December 4 –7:00 AM - Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, Titusville, FL. - meet at the West end of Target parking lot, Dunlawton Ave., Port Orange just East of I-95. \$10.00 per car entrance fee or "Golden Age Pass".

* All outdoor workshops are subject to change depending upon extreme weather conditions or unforeseen emergencies.

Bring your **binoculars** to all classes, especially the first class, as well as to all outdoor workshops.

Contact **David Hartgrove 386-788-2630** or birdman9@earthlink.net.

Class size is limited to 28, so sign up early. You do not have to be a member of Halifax River Audubon to attend.

✂Cut here and mail with your check-----

BEGINNER BIRD WATCHING CLASS - 2018

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

Perhaps the most important knowledge we received from Dr. De Freese is that there is no single, easy remedy but that all of us can play at least one role in making improvements. Pollution in the estuary affects water quality, habitats, living natural resources and the health of the communities on its shores so it should be no surprise that we can help in many ways, whether through citizen science projects, approaching local businesses to be friendlier to the waterway or speaking to our elected officials as well as through our own behavior, especially when it comes to our lawns.

Another important way you can assist is to go to the IRL Council's website and read as much as you can of the IRL National Estuary Program Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. The public comment period has been extended and your comments are welcomed. You can find the report [here](#).

You can also attend the [SHORE](#) Symposium to be held November 30th at the Brannon Center, in New Smyrna Beach. Here's a link to [registration](#).

At home, you can follow the Volusia County Fertilizer Ordinance, summarized as

- * Don't apply nitrogen and/or phosphorus fertilizer on your lawn between June 1st and September 30th or when the ground is saturated (when there is runoff).

- * Don't let yard waste go into the street and down a storm drain. Bag it or use it as mulch.

- * If you live on the water, don't fertilize within 15 feet of the body of water. Leave that as a buffer zone.

You can find answers to frequently asked questions about water-friendly gardening at this [site](#).

As our year progresses, we will surely have more ways for you to get involved in the health of our spectacular estuary but if you do just one thing among the items included here, you'll have made a huge step in the right direction!

Melissa Lammers

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Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: M Alzona, Greg Anest, Karen Berkowitz, Renita Bethell, Lenore Cowan, Donna Dross, Dolores Jackson, Diana Kaufman, Patricia Klein, Karen Leonard, Karen Madigan, June Sefscik, Margaret Snyder, Ellen Tate, Richard Verstay and John Young. We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting or on one of our excellent field trips. Welcome aboard!

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Great News For Lake Apopka

On September 19th the City of Apopka voted to accept the 69.5 acre Hickerson property (at the beginning of the wildlife drive) for the Gateway Birding Park! This was in exchange for the St. Johns River Water Management District's option to build its service center on Binion Road near the University of Florida's IFAS Field Station. Our Regional Conservation Committee was lobbying the Apopka City Council to accept this land swap. But it was Orange Audubon Society's President, Deborah Green, who really spent the hours working the phones and attending meetings to make this happen. This new facility will enhance an already great experience.



Festival of Flight and Flowers

Oct 12-14, 2018

Ocklawaha Valley Audubon Society, in Lake County, is sponsoring a three day birding and nature festival where you'll likely see birds like this immature Yellow-crowned Night-Heron. [The Festival of Flight and Flowers](#) promises to be a fun event. Click on the link and register for the exciting field trips and enjoy listening to presentations by Greg Miller, of "The Big Year" fame and Naples resident Yve Morrell, who last year became the first woman to win the Big Year contest with 817 species! A good time will be had by all.

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Donating To The Future

After a unanimous vote by the board in August, our chapter made the largest donation in its history (5,000.00) to the Merritt Island Wildlife Association. Our donation will help fund the exhibits and amenities in the new Visitor's Center at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. The Department of the Interior is funding the construction of the new building but they provide no funding for all of the exhibits and amenities that make for a quality experience. Below is a photo showing MIWA President, Chris Fairey, receiving the check from President, Melissa Lammers and yours truly.

David Hartgrove



Photo by Luis Villalon



John Carr participating in the Big Sit. *Photo by Ray Scory*

John Carr, One Special Guy

...lasting memories are created by extraordinary experiences.

A few I hold closely come from the second Sunday in the month of October at the Dunlawton Bridge over the Halifax River in Port Orange, Florida. I have sat there this one special day every year since 2001 at a table next to the river. I sit from sunrise to sunset counting birds that I see or hear from an imaginary circle seventeen feet in diameter. I can't leave this circle to ID the birds, thus abiding by the rules of **The Big Sit**.

Throughout the years as I entered the parking lot before sunrise to begin my Big Sit birding day, my first sighting was of John Carr already at the table identifying the night time birds. This sighting made me very happy, because I knew the coming new day would be about birds and stories about birds and other related things.

And could John tell a story. He told his stories delivered in a smoothly, deliberate style. I would anxiously await John's climactic ending to his stories when a sly, whimsical smile (ever so slight) would inevitably appear revealing his worthy conclusion. John had many stories to tell - many about his family, many about Halifax River Audubon, many about how special it was to produce the HRA newsletter with his wife, Fran, and the pleasure it gave them both, many about his career in the medical field and many about his birding experiences. And did he have many. All very interesting, none tedious. All voiced with a "sense of humor" and a dedication reaching far beyond. At the end of the day, when we walked away from our circle, John would always turn and say, "I can't wait for next year."

John, you will again be with me Sunday, October 14 at the Dunlawton Bridge, I will be there and happy your spirit is too. John Carr was one special guy, an extraordinary birder and an enduring friend.

Ray Scory

Ray Scory will again be at the Dunlawton Bridge on Sunday, October 14th for this year's Big Sit. The Big Sit was first organized by the New Haven Bird Club, of which Ray was President, before retiring to Florida. If you'd like to join him for all or part of the event you'd be welcomed. Editor

Conservation Notes

We've had a pretty wet summer and the road side ditches are full and wet once again. That doesn't mean we're flush with all the drinking water we need. In fact "flush" is a pertinent term when looking at future water use choices. Twenty years ago, seeing a looming water crisis ahead, Tampa came up with TWRP, the Tampa Water Reuse Project. Much to the chagrin of the engineers pushing this project the public started calling it "toilet to tap."

Of course the problem is that there's no way to make waste water safe for human consumption. Not because we can't purify it from a biological standpoint. We can surely do that. What we can't do is remove the antibiotics, antidepressants, hormones and other compounds we take into our bodies and excrete in our own bodily wastes. Our waste water now is pumped out of our treatment facilities and eventually into our rivers and streams. Its potential effect on wildlife remains to be seen.

In spite of the monstrous population growth our state has undergone over the past 50 years, municipalities are not the biggest consumers of our groundwater. It's agriculture that takes 60% of the water. No one would want to eat food irrigated with treated waste water. But in an effort to keep feeding the monster of growth we're considering drinking it.

From the [Birding Community E-Bulletin](#) we learned...

Every year along our coasts there are conflicts between beach nesting birds and people. On most public beaches there are too many people for the birds to attempt nesting. So they often go to small islands in an attempt to get some privacy. Unfortunately those islands are where people go to avoid abiding by the rules, like no dogs or drinking. Case in point locally, Disappearing Island.

This past July at the mouth of Mobile Bay, in Alabama, a new low for human behavior was set by a group of beach volleyball players. Andrew Haffenden, a biologist with Birmingham Audubon's Coastal Bird Survey was conducting a survey from his boat. There's a small island that juts off Dauphin Island called Sand Island. Haffenden counted 17 boats there and several tents. The island just happens to host the largest Least Tern colony in the state. Black Skimmers were nesting there too. Haffenden reported that, "The people had collected all the eggs from the nests to clear out an area to play volleyball. The people had actually made a little dome of sand and placed the eggs around it to decorate it." In photos of the destruction some of the eggs showed signs of pip marks, meaning they were about to hatch. Denied the attention of the nesting adults the eggs quickly cooked in the hot sun. The US Fish & Wildlife Service and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources were contacted. They erected fencing and posted the island but the damage had been done. To make matters worse, two weeks later high winds and tides caused an over wash of the island and many more eggs and nestlings were lost. A natural event but tragic nonetheless.

And speaking of tragedy, while all eyes have been on the Senate, the new EPA Administrator, Andrew Wheeler, has been further gutting the agency. Gone is Dr. Orme Zavaleta who's been at the agency since 1981 advising on the effects of chemicals in the human body. Gone too, Dr. Ruth Etzel, head of the Office of Children's Health. She too had clashed with Trump's agenda to put profits for his contributors ahead of the health of the public. Why base decisions on science when they can be based on what's good for polluters?

David Hartgrove

From Our Chapter's Facebook Page

Our President, Melissa Lammers, recently posted a [story](#) on our Facebook page about a plant often called heavenly bamboo. Also called nandina (*Nandina domestica*) it's an invasive exotic from China and the far East. Marketed by garden centers and big box stores as a beautiful foliage plant with bright red fruit, it's actually a killer. The long lasting red berries contain cyanide and every year birds like Robins and Cedar Waxwings are poisoned by them.

There are native plants whose berries are poisonous to birds too. These include nightshade, lantana, poke weed, castor bean and others. In 1970 over 1,000 ducks died near Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge after consuming castor beans found floating on the surface of a lake. There are enough threats to our feathered friends out there without our buying what looks like a tasty berry that turns out to be deadly.

Editor

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This month's bird photo



Roseate Spoonbill preening, *Photo by Peter May*

Roseate Spoonbills appear to be experiencing a population boom. Over the past few years they're being seen in more places and in larger numbers. Spoonbills are tactile feeders, meaning they feed by touch. Their bills are lined with very sensitive nerve endings which allow them to detect prey as they walk forward sweeping their bills back and forth in the water. Their diet consists mostly of small fish, shrimp and aquatic invertebrates. Next May a drive up to the St Augustine Alligator Farm will provide you with an opportunity to photograph these gorgeous birds close up as they're nesting.

Editor



Photo by Luis Villalon

Melissa and David discussing ways for students to get involved with Audubon with Tracy Grimes-Mayo and her daughter, Madison. We were all at the Natural History Day event at the Museum of Arts and Sciences on September 8th. We'll have our table at Tomoka Fest at Tomoka State Park on October 6th and we'd love to have you join us.

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THE PELICAN

is published monthly by Halifax River Audubon, a chapter of the National Audubon Society and a member of Audubon Florida serving eastern Volusia County.

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Meets monthly September through May

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We wish to thank our sponsors, whose contributions play a vital part of allowing us to continue our work:
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The Pelican

For wildlife & people since 1923

Volume 64-Number 11. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
November, 2018



The President's Column

Water

One of our first sensory experiences is of floating in our mother's womb. As adults, more than half our body is water. We may be able to survive several weeks without food but we cannot survive more than one week without water. We love to gaze upon water; to listen to the sound it makes as it falls from the sky; to move through it. We luxuriate in a bubble bath or wash our cares away in a warm shower. Water is part of us in every way. In Florida, water is everywhere --- salty waves lap and slap all three sides of our glorious peninsula; water runs beneath our porous karst limestone substrate; it bubbles up in springs and flows through creeks, streams and rivers giving life to us and the nature we hold so dear, including the water birds that grace our shores. But we are not taking good care of Florida's water. Not at all.

Last month, David Hartgrove and I attended Florida Audubon's annual assembly <http://fl.audubon.org/about-us/audubon-assembly> It was two wonderful days of great birding, intense learning from knowledgeable and inspiring speakers, and most of all, of sharing with State leadership and members from Audubon chapters all around Florida. We are part of a wonderful organization with committed and talented members. There were numerous opportunities to learn about Florida's water. The essential message about our fresh water, which was echoed at the Volusia Water Alliance [Fall Symposium](#) last week, is that we are using far too much of it (in Volusia County we are extracting 92% of our capacity); we are doing things that minimize replenishment of our aquifers by paving ever more surfaces and we are polluting the water we have through dependence on septic tanks, older wastewater treatment plants and through Florida UN-friendly landscaping practices. The encouraging news is that there are ways that our challenges can be addressed. However, I think what we, as people who love our environment, ask, "What can I do to make a difference?". Well here are a few things we can do that collectively will make a big difference

- * If you have a septic tank, get it inspected and if necessary, repaired
- * Install flow regulators on all your faucets
- * Install WaterSense toilets in your home
- * Take shorter showers
- * Turn off the faucet while you're brushing your teeth
- * Make sure storm drains on your street are clear of any and all debris

Calendar & Events

Monday, November 19th Program Meeting- Laurilee Thompson joins us this evening to share a story of hope in the Indian River Lagoon. The challenges existing in the Indian River Lagoon are well documented and create major challenges to the environment, the wildlife and the people of the area. Laurilee will tell a story this evening about a unique project organized by some unlikely partners that may hold one key to restoring this precious resource. She will also discuss the plans for the new visitor center at the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, to which our chapter recently made a donation. Laurilee is one of the owners of Dixie Crossroads Restaurant and a life long fisherman and resident of the Titusville area. We meet at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Ave, Holly Hill, FL 32117. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. We hope to see you there.

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Field Trips

Thursday, November 8th, T M Goodwin Marsh- Join David Hartgrove for a trip to south Brevard County to this FWC waterfowl management area. Access to this site is very restricted so Thursdays is the only day we can go. For lunch we'll stop at [Marsh Landing](#), an historic restaurant with very good and inexpensive food. It's a long drive so we'll meet at 7:00 am at Target in Port Orange behind Panera Bread. Questions, call David at 386-235-1249.

Wednesday, November 28th, Orlando Wetlands- Join Peggy Yokubonus for this trip to one of Central Florida's best birding spots. Crested Caracara, Purple Gallinule, Limpkin and others on visiting birder wish lists are possible here. Meet at 7:30 am at Target in Port Orange behind Panera Bread. Bring lunch. Questions, call Peggy, 386-316-4085.

* * * * *

[The Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival](#)

The Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival is the largest birding festival in the country and it's headquartered in Titusville just 35 miles to our south. Opening on Wednesday, January 23rd and running through Monday, January 28th there are great field trips, photography workshops and lots of fun. [Registration](#) is open and some field trips are already filled and have waiting lists. And if you've been thinking about a new pair of binoculars or a scope, this is the place to try them out. Every optics manufacturer in the country will be represented and they're often offering discounts.. Don't miss this exiting event.

- * Make sure the gutters along your street are also clean
- * Install / maintain a rain gauge so that your irrigation system doesn't come on when it isn't needed
- * Water your lawn only on the assigned days and early in the morning, even if you have a well
- * Don't apply fertilizer from June 1st to September 30th –the nitrogen contributes to algal blooms
- * If you fertilize between October 1 and May 31, use fertilizer that contains no less than 50 percent slow-release nitrogen
- * If you use reclaimed water to irrigate your lawn and fertilize, adjust the amount of fertilizer because the reclaimed water has a higher load of nitrogen than potable or well water
- * Don't apply fertilizer within 15 feet of a body of water, ever
- * Never apply fertilizer with phosphorous, unless you have tested your soil and know you have a deficiency (Florida is naturally phosphorous heavy)
- * Keep your grass clippings out of the storm drain – blow them back on your lawn for mulch or bag and discard them
- * Install a rain barrel or cistern and use that for watering
- * Consider replacing your turf grass entirely or increase mulch circles around your trees and large shrubs to reduce the amount of turf grass in your yard
- * If you live along a river or creek, consider planting a buffer zone of native plants appropriate for the area
- * Follow Florida-friendly landscaping principles or even better, plant Florida native plants (the birds will thank you!)

Beyond these significant things you can do on your own, think about getting involved as an advocate for Florida's water. Let your Audubon chapter board know if you are interested!

Melissa Lammers

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Conservation Notes

Rick Scott has been the worst thing to happen to Florida's environment since Hurricane Andrew. So it's no surprise that when he staged a photo op at the opening of a new section of the elevated Tamiami Trail project, he made sure that no members of the Everglades Coalition (Audubon, Sierra, the Conservancy of SW Florida, etc.) were invited. No sense letting facts get in the way of a story from only his perspective.

So in this political season let's switch to something far more pleasant. Like the habit of female Common Yellowthroats to show up in the least expected planes.

On our recent field trip to Lake Apopka we met in our usual meeting place behind Krystal on ISB. Barbara Loomis rode in my car and as she got in the car she said she thought there was a large moth in the car too. We looked but saw no sign of it. A few minutes later as we're headed west on I-4 she said, "Oh my gosh, it's a bird!" I looked in the rear view mirror and sure enough I could see a female Common Yellowthroat hopping along the edge of the back window. I alerted the rest of the caravan via radio that we had a bird in the car and would be pulling off at the SR 44 exit. I found a safe place for us all to pull over and stopped. I opened the back of the car and the bird appeared to be too stressed to get out on her own. I reached in and carefully took her out. I carried her to a nearby small cypress tree and placed her on a branch. After she sat there for a minute getting her bearings she flew off.



Saturday's bird on my hand, *photo by Paul Rebmann*

This is not my first experience seeing one of these birds in an unexpected place. On May 30th, 2016 we were on a pelagic trip sponsored by the Friends of the Marine Science Center. At 10:00 am that morning we were 35 miles offshore when a female Common Yellowthroat flew onto the boat and rested for about 2 hours before flying out and continuing her journey. Was she headed north or south? She flew west as she exited the boat. So who knows?



The bird from May 30th, 2016 with the Gulf Stream in the background. *Photo by David Hartgrove*

On a pelagic trip some years earlier that went out 100 miles we had another female COYE fly onto the boat about 11:00 in the morning when we were 60 miles out. She stayed on board the rest of the day. Off and on she could be seen hopping around under benches and tables in the cabin feeding on tiny insects. Later, around 8:30 pm, as we passed beneath the north New Smyrna Beach Bridge, I saw her fly out into the night. She'd hitched a ride to shore and rested and fed along the way. Common Yellowthroats weigh less than half an ounce. Granted, these two took advantage of a rest and a ride. Others make these amazing migratory journeys unaided. It's part of why we get hooked on birding.

David Hartgrove

Welcome To Our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Robert Auth, Gloria Barreto, Beth Bartholomew, Elizabeth Burns, Betty Butcher, Lucy Christman, James Cundari, Deborah Devolder, Camille Esposito, Victoria Green, Dan Gribbin, Virginia Groh, Charlotte Hall, Francis Heredeen, Nancy Herring, Nancy Jones, Lee Kimball, Richard Lester, Marion Monaghan, Patricia Monaghan, Tom Moran, Bob North, Ron & Mary Carol Ochipa, Andrea Pair, Mary Parks, Carol Roberts, Deborah SanFilippo, Karen Seiler, Celine Sullivan, Dee Townsend, David Walsh, Carolyn West, Anette Wilson, Michael Wolfe, Rosa Zidelis and Holly Zwart-Duryea. We hope to see you all at an upcoming meeting or on one of our excellent field trips.

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Here's a field trip report from the Washington Oaks trip.

Serendipity

The fall field trip to Washington Oaks Gardens State Park is a staple of our annual schedule. Over the years we have had some very good days at the park, but we have also had those days that leave us flat and off searching for smoked meat at Captain's Barbecue on A-1A. Such is birding.

Then there are the miracle days, when the stars and fates and luck and weather fronts line up and dump birds at the very place you have planned to visit for months. There are reliable places where this happens seasonally, like fallouts in Texas and along the shores of Lake Erie in the spring and the Autumn parade of migrating hawks over mountain ridges and in the Florida Keys. The lure of birding, the thing that keeps one hooked, however, is that this phenomena can happen at any time, anywhere. Friday, October 12 was that day.

10 HRA members met at the park as it opened and for the next 7 hours birded almost non-stop in the gardens. We may have covered less than 1/2 square mile. Some of the birds were easy to identify, while others were young birds facing their first winter in drab, confusing plumages. Others were in seasonal eclipse feathers. The only recognizable call from the migrants was the weepy call of the Eastern Wood-Pewee. Occasional chips and calls hinted at birds hiding in the trees and shrubs. A Wood Thrush here, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks in the trees, vireos whining in the pines.

Why did this happen? The fury and disruption of Hurricane Michael probably had an effect, sweeping birds towards the coast along the back side of the storm after holding them back for days. Then the humidity dropped from 99% to something very comfortable. Just speculation.....

We found 51 species. That is an average morning list in our neighborhood, but the number of species does not tell the whole story. It's the species on this list that are special. 15 of the species found were Wood Warblers. 4 vireo species, 2 Thrushes, 2 tanagers, and Baltimore Orioles for good measure. Most of these birds are only seen in the short period of migration. They were here in big numbers, all moving constantly above us. We could not tear ourselves from them. Ephemeral, transient, precious.

Birding with friends and future friends adds to the experience. More observers equals more birds found. The discussions over the migrants, listing field marks, observing behavior and drawing on a wealth of experience enriched the day. All of us grew a little as birders, drawing lessons from both birds and fellow watchers.

The bird list is available on our [web site](#). While there you can download a list of our [field trips](#) for the 2018/2019 season. More adventures await.

Joan Tague

We were too overwhelmed to even try to photograph the birds, but here are a two photos of representative species from the archives of Chuck Tague.



Blackburnian Warbler



Blue-winged Warbler

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Are You An eBirder ?

[eBird](#) is a free application that allows you to keep track of the birds you see when out in the field. Developed by Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and Audubon this valuable app not only allows you to enter your data from the field as you're looking for birds it can be your personal life list. It also has all kinds of features like how to find for the best place to see a bird you've been looking for. Now Cornell Lab has a [free tutorial](#) so you can easily learn how to get the most out of this great product. Click on the link above and start to learn and enjoy.

David Hartgrove

Bobolink Dream

The Bobolink - (Dolichonyx oryzivorus): dolichonyx translate from ancient Greek as "long claw". Translation of oryzivorus comes the Latin orza, "rice", and vorare, "to devour". A colloquial name for this bird is "ricebird".

Thus will begin the story of my crusade to photograph the "Bobolink".

For a dream to come true, diligence and effort must flawlessly merge into an energy of relentless pursuit. However in no other endeavor does luck play such an extraordinary role. Combining these attributes can foster rewards beyond a thrilling experience. Yet, at times the journey can be uncomfortable, maybe even painful. However, when the pieces begin to take shape and the goal is in sight. Wow, no better feeling. For me it came with the click of my camera's shutter, began many years ago and played out in Durham Meadows.

What is locally known as Durham Meadows is actually large open hay fields edged with stands of brush, oak and maple trees set within a 556 acre tract of land called Durham Meadows WMA. It is a popular birding spot because of its various habitats, including marsh, old hardwood growth, patches of open water and flowing fields of golden hay. The narrow Cogenchaug River weaves its leisurely course through the property. In June, Durham Meadows becomes the nesting grounds for the Bobolink. They build their nests on the ground camouflaged by the thick, knee high, hay fields. The female Bobolink blends in well to this healthy warm-colored environment tastefully dressed in her rich, soft array of stripes and colors of browns, both light and dark. Three black stripes on her head differ in contrast to her over all elegant appearance. The male Bobolink is the only American bird that is white on the back and black underneath with a large patch of yellow on the back of its head. This unique coloration only last until after the breeding season when it changes to a darker version of the female color for the rest of the year. I was fortunate to see an off season colored Bobolink for four years in a row at the same spot when I was conducting a waterbird survey for Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. They breed across lower Canada and the upper USA and migrate through to central South America.

I became aware of the Bobolinks at Durham Meadows in the early 1980's and listened to their repertoire of warbling, scratchy, gurgling sounds coming from a perch high in the trees. It reminds me of the shorter song but less active singing of the White-eyed vireo. From that year to this year I never again got close enough to photograph the Bobolinks. For years I tried, either I went at the wrong time of year or day or I didn't own a lens long enough to pull in that flittering, speeding black speck in the sky to make a decent photograph.

When I retired and moved to Florida eighteen years ago I resumed my quest. This time with a long focus lens (1200mm). Each year for the past seven, Jane and I return to Connecticut for vacation. I would stop at Durham Meadows just after landing at Bradley International Airport. This year when I went back, I met a lady who asked me if I'd seen any good birds. I said, "No, but can you tell where to find a good bird - the Bobolink." She enthusiastically led me through a cut of waist high hay to an area where she said I should see Bobolinks but, said, " get there just before daybreak."

For two separate mornings I went back and one half hour after sunrise they burst forth in all their glory from their fields of hay and my dream finally became a reality.

Ray Scory



Bobolink (female) - Once the female Bobolink accepted the nesting site she aggressively chased away all threatening and inquiring birds.



Bobolink (male) - Three male Bobolinks posture at a possible nesting site. Plenty of attacking, squawking, short burst flying and chasing going on. Farmers are very cooperative and sympathetic to the Bobolinks during the brief time the birds are nesting in their fields. *Photos by Ray Scory*

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From the Quotable Birder

"Perfect as the wing of a bird may be, it will never enable the bird to fly if unsupported by the air. Facts are the air of science. Without them a man of science can never rise."

Ivan Pavlov

Due to a number of factors we seldom get to run a column by Harry Robinson on time. Not so this month.

TOM RENICK COUNTY PARK BIRD COUNTS

OCTOBER, 2018

This was a better month. There were even two additions to the list. I did 31 surveys over 130 hours. I saw 118 species (there were 129 in October last year) it was still the fifth best month since the survey started. So far this year I have noted 208 species and 247 overall – I am still hoping to reach 250 by the end of the year. Not easy but possible. Now to the birds.

There were single Common Loons on the 28th and 30th and a Pied-billed Grebe was on the sea on the 14th. There were some shearwaters: there was a Cory's Shearwater on the 1st with single Scolopi's on the 1st and 2nd. There were two Greater Shearwaters on the 1st with singles on the 2nd, 3rd and 6th. On a calm day a Manx Shearwater flew to the south on the 23rd. The only Brown Booby was on the 25th and Northern Gannets were seen from the 22nd. Finally for this group there were single Magnificent Frigatebirds on the 2nd and 16th.

There was a Reddish Egret on the 30th with a late Yellow-crowned Night-Heron on the 14th. There were 24 Roseate Spoonbills on the 12th with 28 on the 20th, nine on the 26th and 14 on the 31st. Perhaps one day I will see one over the sea! The 28th was GOOSE DAY a cold front had gone through and they were flying back to the north. I said they first there was a party of four Greater White-fronted Geese (a new species for the park) followed 15 minutes later by a Brant (second record for the park). That was a crazy few minutes. There was a Greater Scaup on the 25th and Lesser Scaup were seen from the 17th. There was a Surf Scoter on the 30th with two on the 31st. Black Scoters were seen from the 23rd. There was also a Red-breasted Merganser on the 29th.

There was a Northern Harrier on the 20th with three on the 27th and two on the 28th. The first Sharp-shinned Hawk was seen on the 20th. There was a light morph Short-tailed Hawk on the 4th. During the month 15 Merlins and 13 Peregrine Falcons were recorded. There was an American Oystercatcher on the 5th with three on the 14th. Marbled Godwits seem to have been around forever but the last (two) were seen on the 25th. There were two Red-necked Phalaropes on the 3rd with one on the 10th. Much more unexpected there was a flock of 14 Red Phalaropes on the 3rd.

There was a party of five Pomarine Jaegers on the 26th and 23 Parasitic Jaegers were seen during the month. There was a passage of Lesser Black-backed Gulls with 16 counted through to the 23rd. There was a single Great Black-backed Gull on the 19th. An adult Black-legged Kittiwake flew to the south on the 19th. Common Terns were seen to the 21st. There was a single Bridled Tern on the 8th with a single Black Tern on the 3rd.

There were single White-winged Doves on the 18th and 29th with a Yellow-billed Cuckoo on the 19th. The last Chimney Swift was on the 12th and on that date there was also a Ruby-throated Hummingbird. There was a Northern Flicker on the 18th, a major rarity. There was an Eastern Phoebe on the 28th. American Crows were seen again. There were singles on the 18th and 24th with a party of three on the 31st. There was a Ruby-crowned Kinglet on the 17th with a Gray Catbird on the 18th. On the 25th just after a heavy shower there was a swarm of European Starlings on the utility wires I estimated 1,400.

Now to the second addition to the list there was a male Magnolia Warbler in the Sea Grapes on the 12th. Yellow-rumped Warblers were seen from the 27th and Palm Warblers from the 5th. There was surprisingly a Blackpoll Warbler on the 16th. American Redstarts were seen on the 12th and 18th. Finally for the warblers there was a Hooded Warbler on the 12th. There was a Savannah Sparrow on the 16th with two Bobolinks on the 4th. Finally there was a male Shiny Cowbird on the 24th.

There seems to have been a lot more to record this month, hopefully the trend will continue.

Harry Robinson

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Meets monthly September through May

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The Pelican

For wildlife & people since 1923

Volume 64-Number 12. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon
December, 2018



The President's Column

This month we have an essay by Deborah Green of Orange Audubon Society.

Audubon Assembly Panel Recap: Florida's Coastal Water Crises: What's Aggravating Algae Blooms and Red Tides and How We Can Help

A special session at this year's Audubon Assembly, during one of the worst red tide and blue-green algal blooms in Florida's history, featured leading experts who spoke on **Harmful Algal Blooms**. Panelists reaffirmed that a combination of excess nutrient pollution and increasingly warmer temperatures are causing the problems, and they explored the roles of septic tanks, biosolids, reclaimed water, fertilizer, agricultural wastes, and the loss of filtering wetlands in Florida's nutrient pollution.

The panel's headline speaker was Dr. Edith Widder, a bioluminescence expert, deep ocean explorer, inventor, 2016 MacArthur Fellow, and founder of Ocean Research & Conservation Association. Dr. Widder distinguished three types of Harmful Algal Blooms. First is red tide, which is caused by a dinoflagellate (a type of alga), *Karenia brevis* that occurs in saltwater. *K. brevis* occurs in the Gulf of Mexico and blooms almost every year, generally in late summer or early fall, particularly between Clearwater and Sanibel Island.

Red tide causes acute respiratory distress because the *K. brevis* microorganism releases a neurotoxin called brevetoxin. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) scientists routinely take water samples from shellfish beds throughout the state and if *K. brevis* concentrations exceed a given threshold, FWC closes affected shellfish beds to prevent sickness by people eating them. Red tide is stimulated by nutrient pollution, primarily nitrogen.

In early October this year, dead fish began washing ashore along the Atlantic Coast in Palm Beach County. Amounts of *K. brevis* were high enough to cause fish kills and respiratory distress. Since red tide is rare on the Atlantic coast, the *K. brevis* is thought to have traveled with currents from the Gulf Coast. Brown tide, also called Texas brown tide, was first documented blooming in state waters in 2012. It is caused by a type of marine algae called *Aureoumbra lagunensis*, which does not emit a toxin. Like red tide, outbreaks of brown tide have been linked to primarily nitrogen pollution. Occurring again in 2016 from Titusville to the Mosquito Lagoon near New Smyrna Beach, these algal blooms block sunlight needed by the seagrasses that support much of the lagoon's marine life. Oysters and scallops dependent on seagrasses die.

Monday, December 17th, Program Meeting- Shorebirds! If these birds have you scratching your head and looking for another field guide, our speaker, Michael Brothers, will be here to help. Michael is the recently retired Director of the Marine Science Center, member of the Records Committee of the Florida Ornithological Society and one of the best birders in the state. We meet at Sica Hall, 1065 Daytona Ave, Holly Hill, FL 32117. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. We hope to see you there.

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Field Trips

Friday, December 7th and Saturday, December 8th, Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge- Join David Hartgrove for Friday's trip and Joan Tague on Saturday. Each year we try to insure that those among us still working get a chance to go to this very special destination with our group. Winter at MINWR is about as good as birding in Florida gets and being with us means there are plenty of scopes to allow everyone good views of all those gorgeous ducks and other birds. We'll meet both days at 7:30 am at the Target in Port Orange behind Panera Bread. Bring lunch. Questions? Call David, 386-235-1249 or Joan, 386-871-6049.

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Out of Town Field Trips

Our chapter is sponsoring two out of town field trips that require overnight accommodations. The first is to St Marks National Wildlife Refuge, Tuesday, January 8th through Friday, January 11th. If you went with us last year you know what a great time we had. We will again stay at Shell Island Fish Camp ([website](#)) (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.

Our second overnighter is to Fort DeSoto, in Pinellas County. Spring birding at Fort DeSoto is an excellent opportunity to see migrants headed north. We'll be there from Wednesday, April 17th through Friday, April 19th. We have a block of rooms reserved at a new [Holiday Inn](#) in St. Petersburg. Call them at 727-322-0770 and request the discounted rate for Halifax River Audubon. Call David Hartgrove, 386-235-1249 for more information.

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See page 5 for info on our local Christmas Bird Counts.

Finally, in freshwater, there are blooms of a blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) called *Microcystis aeruginosa*. These blooms are also caused by nutrient pollution, but in this case primarily phosphorus. *Microcystis* releases a liver toxin (hepatotoxin) called microcystin, which can cause acute poisoning and chronic liver damage. Lake Okeechobee is an ideal habitat for cyanobacteria because it is shallow, sunny, and laden with nutrients from Florida's agriculture.

National headlines from 2016 were about "disgusting, 'guacamole-thick' goop" invading Florida's coastline. Excess water from Lake Okeechobee, pumped west to Port Charlotte through the Caloosahatchee River and east to Port St. Lucie through the St. Lucie Canal, is obviously the cause. Although a reservoir to accept excess water from Lake Okeechobee has been approved, it will take 9 to 10 years to build, and only if state and federal money continues to be appropriated.

Cyanobacteria die as they reach saltwater, but their impact is not over. The red tide microorganism *K. brevis* can actually feed on cyanobacteria directly, although it is not clear if it consumes *Microcystis*. According to Dr. Widder, as *Microcystis* cells die, they break down to release nitrogen and phosphorus, which stimulates growth of *K. brevis*. Cape Coral and Port St. Lucie, at the mouths of the estuaries, experience the compounded effects of *K. brevis* and *Microcystis*. Focusing on the sources of the nutrient pollution in Florida's water bodies, Dr. Widder stated that the major sources are agriculture's fertilizer runoff and human waste. She used Blue Cypress Lake in Indian River County to illustrate the problem of human waste.

As background, a wastewater (sewage) treatment plant receives what is flushed down our toilets. In the plant, much of the organic material is broken down through the work of beneficial bacteria. Through settling processes, the liquid, called effluent, is separated. After all the breakdown work by beneficial bacteria is completed, disinfection is applied to kill these beneficial and any harmful microorganisms. At this point the effluent looks like fresh water and is pumped to re-created wetlands like Orlando Wetlands Park or Viera Wetlands, spread on wetlands adjacent to the plant, or used for commercial or residential irrigation as reclaimed water. Most treatment plants are not required to remove phosphorus and nitrogen from reclaimed water. Recipients of the reclaimed water are generally pleased that, with its included nutrients, it greens up their lawns.

The sludge that remains after dewatering, called Class B biosolids, is a disposal nightmare for wastewater utilities. Special presses are used to dry it so it is compact enough to be transported, often to farms or ranches. The farmers receive this free fertilizer and actually make money by allowing the biosolids to be dumped on their land. Some wastewater utilities put the biosolids through further treatment so the waste can be incorporated into fertilizer that is safe enough to be sold to homeowners, a process pioneered by the City of Milwaukee with Milorganite. Other plants take it to a landfill or incinerate it. A very few make energy out of it. All of these options are much more expensive than land disposal.

In an effort to protect the Northern Everglades watershed and coasts, in 2007 state legislation was passed requiring any land application of biosolids in the Kissimmee, St. Lucie, and Caloosahatchee River watersheds to demonstrate no-net loading for phosphorus.

Now going back to Blue Cypress Lake, which is part of the northward-flowing St. Johns River basin—not in the Kissimmee River watershed and so not part of the 2007 restriction-

the disposal of Class B biosolids increased in this lake's watershed after the 2007 ban took effect in other areas in 2012.

Located in Indian River County near Fellsmere, Blue Cypress Lake is the headwaters of the St. Johns River and was one of the most pristine of Florida lakes. It hosts more than 300 osprey nests.



Osprey family on Blue Cypress Lake. Photo by Paul Eisenbrown

The St. Johns River Water Management District tests water in the Blue Cypress Lake and in June 2018 phosphorus reached its highest concentration in 39 years. Widder and staff found extremely toxic levels of microcystin measuring at 4700 parts per billion. The World Health Organization sets the limit for microcystin in water used for recreation at 10 ppb. This was a clear-cut case of the hazards of land application of biosolids when it reaches a certain amount, and the Department of Environmental Protection in 2018 shut down land application near Blue Cypress Lake through the current rainy season.

Dr. Widder reminded us that there are also "contaminants of emerging concern" in biosolids that are not removed by the treatment processes. Hormones given to stock animals, pharmaceuticals, and flame retardants are several she mentioned. The problem lies in our growing population: In 1980 there were 10 million, but there are now 21 million Floridians.

On a hopeful note, she cited that in the Chesapeake Bay area, utilities can only land apply a set amount of biosolids. The result: phosphorus has been reduced, and sea grasses have come back. Dr. Widder also pointed out that septic tanks have been correctly identified as culprits in water pollution in some areas. However, in Tampa only 4% of the nutrients are from septic and in the Indian River Lagoon only 9.6%.

Dr. Paul Gray, Audubon Florida's Everglades Science Coordinator, next informed us that nutrient pollution carried from Central Florida to Lake Okeechobee by large amounts of rain water after Hurricane Irma caused problems in 2018 by washing extra nutrients into the 450,000-acre lake from developments and farm fields. This is non-point pollution, in which rather than coming out of a pipe, it flows off properties in streams and waterways. For decades, farmers drained water off the fields and into the lake, making it unnaturally enriched with phosphorus and nitrogen. "Legacy nutrients" from 100+ years of fertilizing and solid waste dumping remain. In recent years, tougher regulations have curbed some of the practices, but agricultural runoff is still a major issue. He said there has been 2 too little emphasis on best management practices in agriculture.

The biggest months for algal blooms are July and August. This July at one point up to 90% of Lake Okeechobee's open water area was covered in algae. Dr. Gray said filter marshes, like the Stormwater Treatment Areas (artificial filter wetlands) south of Lake Okeechobee established by the South Florida Water Management District, are very good at cleaning water going south to the Everglades and the same type of treatment should be used elsewhere.

Jason Lauritsen, Director of Audubon Florida's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, spoke about how the hydrology of Corkscrew was affected by developments in the region. Short-hydroperiod wetlands—inundated less than 6 months of the year—have declined by 70%. Short-hydroperiod wetlands, essential habitat for Wood Storks foraging early in the nesting season, are relatively easy and inexpensive to drain or fill, so they have historically been lost in much greater proportion than other wetlands. Shallow wetlands are also vulnerable to degradation caused by non-native invasive plants that tend to flourish at the margins of the disturbed landscape due to rapidly fluctuating water levels.

Chris Farrell, Audubon Florida's Northeast Florida Policy Associate, who had worked on the Central Florida Water Initiative—the water management district/utility effort to plan regionally for water supply—said that overuse of reclaimed water introduces nutrients into the system. Julie Hill-Gabriel, Esq., Vice President of Water Conservation, National Audubon Society, then asked each panelist to name their top solutions to these water quality problems.

Paul Gray said it took 40 years to ban the killing of wading birds for their plumes for ladies' hats, so we can't expect solutions overnight, but enforcement of water quality laws would really help. Dr. Widder said that waste-to-energy plants utilizing dried biosolids could help and that she was watching a plant in Dakar, Senegal. For safety and effectiveness, there needs to be control of the phosphorus ash and liquid ammonia at the end of the process.

Chris Farrell said that treatment wetlands like Orlando Wetlands Park, Wakodahatchee Wetlands near West Palm and the new Sweetwater Wetlands in Gainesville are great solutions since they mimic natural wetlands and allow birdlife to thrive while providing people with a place to visit. Jason Lauritsen said we need enforcement of laws so there is no additional loss of natural wetlands. Elizabeth Perez said stormwater utilities need to be supported by their municipalities. Fertilizer ordinances, including those with a "black-out period" during the summer rainy season when no fertilizers are allowed to be applied, are important. Pinellas County and now Seminole County have good models with a black-out period. Dr. Widder added that grass clipping ordinances would help because the grass clippings going down storm drains add to nitrogen loading.

The panel helped us clear up a lot of confusion about what is going on and pointed to effective methods to reduce the problem. Here's hoping we have the political will to do as they suggest.

Deborah Green, President, Orange Audubon Society

Reprinted from the November 2018 Orange Audubon Society OASis newsletter.

As 2018 winds down, I would like to share my gratitude for the beautiful place in which we live and for the opportunity to share it with others who also appreciate its majesty. It is my great honor to work with you to preserve these areas for future generations of bird watchers and naturalists. Thank you for all you do.

Melissa Lammers

Conservation Notes

The [Birding Community e-Bulletin](#) is a valuable resource and the following information is from their latest posting. Black Rails are one of the most difficult birds for birders to see. Spending their entire lives in salt, brackish or fresh water marshes, these cryptic little birds are a nemesis bird for many a birder's life list. Now comes word that the bird is being considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act. Though the eastern population is estimated to have fallen 90% over the past half century, the proposal at this point is to list them as Threatened. Habitat loss due to shrinking wetlands and other land management issues are thought to be the reasons for the decline in the bird's population.



Black Rail, *photo courtesy of Audubon Field Guide*

The comment period for this proposed listing closes on December 10th. So I filed a comment on our behalf in support of the listing. The USFWS at this point is not designating critical habitat for the eastern Black Rail due to concern that identifying such areas might attract birders seeking out these shy and elusive birds, and placing additional stress on them. We've had them on our Christmas Bird Count (heard only) and there are the very popular Black Rail Trips hosted by the Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival to St Johns NWR. So they are in our area.

Some years ago I got a call one night from Glade Koch. Glade was our Education Chair at the time and she'd been on an evening walk at Lake Woodruff NWR, sponsored by the West Volusia Audubon Society. She called to see if I could help her identify a bird she'd seen. As she was walking back to the parking area she noticed her shoe lace had come undone. She stopped to tie it and so fell some distance behind the group. It was getting dark and she said she saw this small bird, dark all over with what appeared to be silvery spots walk casually across the trail about 20 feet ahead of her. She said she'd looked all through her field guides and was stumped. I asked her, "Glade, are you sitting down?" She said, "Yes, why?" I said because you just had a great look at one of the most difficult birds to see in North America. Glade passed away last year and donated a treasure trove of books on birds and wildlife to our chapter. They're for sale at our meetings and when we have our table set up at events here locally. Her educational legacy continues to contribute to the chapter and she's still one of the few people I know who've had a good look at a Black Rail.

David Hartgrove

Pelican History

When John Carr, our former Chapter Historian, passed away recently he had amassed copies of the Pelican dating back to April, 1996. At that time Carlton Smith was the Pelican editor and long time President, Roy Stevenson, was announcing his retirement. At our last board meeting on November 5th we decided that we wanted to get this valuable record of our chapter's history digitized so that it would be available for future members. This would be an expensive project. Unless someone stepped forward to volunteer their time and expertise to scan all of those copies. Quietly, board member, Steve Underwood, pulled me aside after the meeting to say that he'd be happy to do the job. He's already completed the task and we're now deciding where this valuable archive will be stored. Our chapter owes a Steve and big Thank You! And this is one way of saying it.

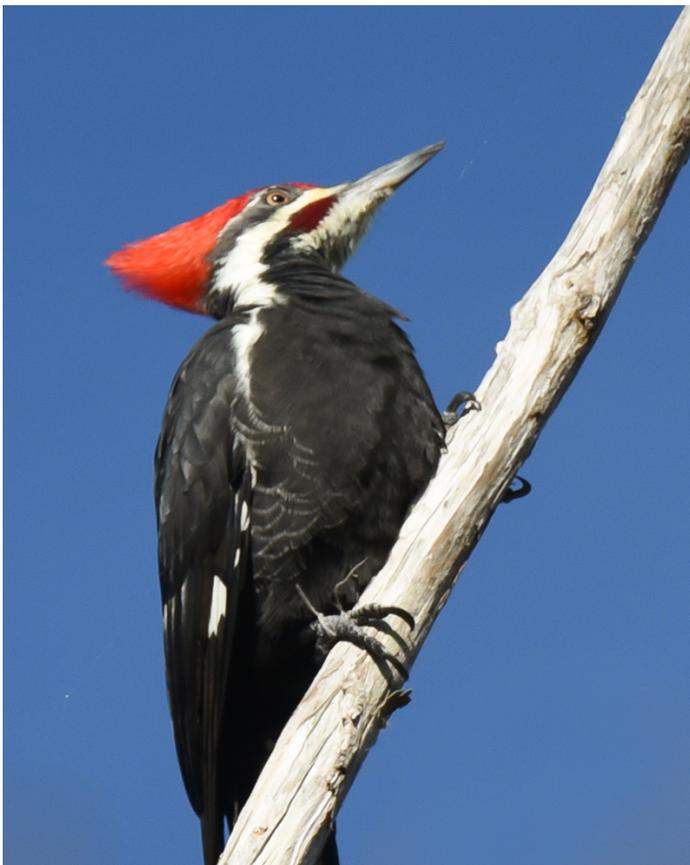
Editor

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Welcome To Our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Bishop Blackwell, Douglas Brown, Christine Castle, Anne Catinna, Cynthia Fowler, Ken & Patsy Hunter, Elizabeth Kelly, William Kisbany, Leslie Kolleda, Gary Lafond, Bernard Martin Jr., Donald Smith, William Sweeters and Donna Thomas. We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting or on one of our excellent field trips.

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Male Pileated Woodpecker, *photo by Dan Gribbin*

Identified by his red mustache and crest that extends from the nape to the edge of the bill, Dan caught this bird on a recent photo safari to Spruce Creek Park, in Port Orange.



Time for another in our series, "Everyday Birding"

Birds Looking at Us

Over the years, I have attempted to capture the expression of a bird looking at me. When I have been successful, I placed these special images in a folder called, "Birds Looking at Ray." The composite I share here is a sample of images from that collection.

Of all my longtime birding experiences, I have bonded most closely to birds because of this project. I have come to realize that birds experience similar events as humans, such as: finding food, raising a family, building a house, establishing protection, traveling and having fun. I feel a connection. I feel that these birds are asking me, "How am I doing?"

I dedicate this project to birds fulfilling the promise of a rich full life and to all people who help make it possible.

Ray Scory

Okay readers, can you identify all of the birds in Ray's collage? See the answers on the next page. Editor.

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From the Quotable Birder

"The sound of the harpsichord resembles that of a bird cage played with toasting-forks."

Thomas Beecham, British conductor

Christmas Bird Counts

The CBC is the longest running citizen science project in the world and your chance to help make a difference in the world of bird science. Yes, we're out there having fun and going to dinner afterward but the numbers we total are sent on to become part of a vast database that is used by ornithologists, students and researchers all over the world. There are four CBC's conducted here locally. First up is the Flagler count on Friday, 12/14. The next day, Saturday, 12/15, is West Volusia. Skip to the following Saturday, 12/22 and it's our own Daytona Beach count. Finally, on the following Saturday, 12/29, it's the Ponce Inlet count. The compilers for all of these counts (including yours truly for the Daytona Beach count) need your help to make these events a success.

If you're unfamiliar with a CBC, here's how it works. The count is done in a 15 mile in diameter circle, called the count circle. Ours is centered at I-95 and the Tomoka River. The count is an all day event but we compilers are happy to have your help and if that means you're available for only half a day we'll work with you to get you back to your car in time for whatever else you have planned. Teams are selected to cover areas within the circle. Ours is roughly split into 5 sections with some including stretches along the ocean and others out west of I-95. Please, if you plan to come out for ours, contact me so I can begin putting teams together: 386-235-1249 or by email: birdman9@earthlink.net. If you have a preference for a particular area you'd like to cover I'll try to make that happen.

Here's the contact information for the other compilers:

Flagler County, 12/14 Priscilla Reed shopcilla72@gmail.com

West Volusia, 12/15 Dr. David Stock dstock@stetson.edu

Ponce Inlet, 12/29 Don Picard
president@sevolusiaaudubon.org

This is about as much fun as you can have with your clothes on so please come out and contribute to the science of bird counts.

David Hartgrove

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Bald Eagle w/ Laughing Gull *photo by Michael Brothers*

It's Bald Eagle nesting season and they can get a mite peckish. Michael got this photo at the beach several years ago. Keep an eye on our local nests. It's about time for those eggs to start hatching.

Editor

It's Festival Time

January, 2019 will be full of birding festivals. Two of them are scheduled for the same weekend. [The Everglades Birding Festival](#) and what's now known as [The North Shore Birding Festival](#) will both run from Thursday, January 17th through Monday, January 21st. The Everglades Festival is headquartered in the Fort Lauderdale area and the North Shore refers to the North Shore of Lake Apopka and is sponsored by Orange Audubon Society.

Then there's Granddaddy, the [Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival](#). It's the largest birding festival in the country and attracts some of the top nationally known names in birding. It will run from Wednesday, January 23rd through Monday, January 28th.

And finally in February there's the [Birds of a Feather Fest](#) in Palm Coast. So clean up your binoculars and get your hiking boots oiled. There's going to be a lot of fun out there.

Editor

Answers to the Bird Photo Quiz

Top row: Barred Owl, Brown Pelican, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron.

Second row; immature Cooper's Hawk, Osprey. Least Bittern

Bottom row: Bald Eagle, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Red-shouldered Hawk.

THE PELICAN

is published monthly by Halifax River Audubon, a chapter of the National Audubon Society and a member of Audubon Florida serving eastern Volusia County.

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