

# The Pelican

For wildlife & people since 1923

Volume 65-Number 1. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon  
January, 2019



## The President's Message

Another year draws to a close and people speak of goals reached (or not) in the outgoing year and of resolutions and vows for the new. Advertisements entice us to lose weight, learn a new language, open a savings account, etc. But far from being a hollow, commercial exercise, ringing in the New Year is an invitation to think about our own humanity. Am I the person I wish to be? Am I living my life according to my values? For me, this is always a humbling yet inspiring exercise. I fall short on any number of details (you know, where the devil is) yet I remain excited about what is for me, the proper path. My path includes opening my senses to the wonder of nature every day and finding ways to show my respect and awe for her, in perpetuity. It means becoming ever more educated about how we can reduce or mitigate the harms we commit on our environment and finding ways to share that knowledge with others. Sometimes that last part goes well. Sometimes it doesn't. It is often uncomfortable for me but that's no reason not to keep trying, is it? It's so easy to take nature for granted but we really cannot! Over my lifetime, we've done some pretty awful things, like continuing to allow agricultural and development practices that cause toxic algal blooms in the Indian River Lagoon and our springs. But we've also been successful in turning around some very bad situations --- think American Bald Eagle or Brown Pelican; think Lake Apopka. Audubon offers us so many opportunities to experience and learn about our environment and to educate and advocate for her. I hope you will join in all these activities in the coming year!

Now, I need to vent a bit and hopefully provide an illustration of how we can all help make the world a better place. While walking on the beach to open my senses to the wonder of nature, I've had two experiences of sharing knowledge with strangers feeding "people food" to birds. Here's how they went:

I spy a woman walking and throwing bread to shore birds and gulls.

Me: Y'all like the birds, don't you?

She: "Oh yes!"

Me: "Are you feeding them fish?"

She: "No. Bread. I'm trying to feed the plovers. I don't like the gulls."

Me: "Oh, well you know we (not the royal we but the long-time North Peninsula beach-goers "we") don't recommend feeding them bread. It's empty calories and they need good nutrition to fly really long distances. They're just migrating through here."

*Continued on the next page*

## Calendar & Events

**Tuesday, January 22nd, Program Meeting-** Just a reminder that our January meeting day is changed due to the Martin Luther King Birthday holiday. Join us for a presentation on birding the Iberian Peninsula. The Iberian Peninsula, also known as Iberia, is located in the southwest corner of Europe. The peninsula is principally divided between Spain and Portugal, comprising most of their territory. João Jara was born in Lisbon and studied biology at the Faculdade de Ciências de Lisbon, from where he developed his professional career in the pharmaceutical industry, as senior manager and director of various multinational companies. With some 35 years of field experience, he has an intimate knowledge of the birds and birding in Portugal. He has travelled extensively in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas with birding as the main objective. His presentation will have you thinking about your passport and whether it's up to date. 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

**Tuesday, January 8th to Friday, January 11th-** Our overnight trip St Marks NWR. **This trip is filled.** Maybe next year?

**Friday, January 18th, Hatbill Park/Riverbreeze Park-** Hatbill is a stop on the North Brevard Hotspots trip offered by the Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival every year. The first part may be a bit muddy, depending on rainfall. So some shoes that can get muddy might be a good idea but the birding should be great. Then we'll stop in Oakhill at Riverbreeze to see what's there. Meet David Hartgrove at the Target in Port Orange, behind Panera Bread, at 7:30 am. Bring lunch. Questions? Call David, 386-235-1249.

**Friday, February 1st, Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive-** Join Peggy Yokubonus for this trip to one of Florida's best birding spots. A good trip if you're not into a lot of walking since we'll be driving this one with brief stops to get out for better looks at the birds. Meet Peggy at Int'l Square - East of I-95 on Int'l Speedway Blvd behind Krystal at 7:00 am. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Peggy, 386-316-4085

**Friday, January 4th, Birding With Friends at Lake Woodruff**

Join our friends from West Volusia Audubon Society for this easy walk to see the birds of Lake Woodruff. Meet in the Myacca Parking Lot at 8:00 am. That's the first parking lot inside the gate on Mud Lake Road. Questions? Call Eli Shaperow, 407-314-7965.

She: "I don't feed them enough to hurt them. I've been around birds."

Me: "Have a nice day."

Yes, I know I'm lucky I wasn't yelled at and told to mind my own business or worse but somebody has to speak up for the birds! How easy it is for us to place our own feelings above what is good for nature! Yes, it's fun to feed the birds. I did it as a kid now and then, but I learned how bad it is for them. Maybe she will, too. Like the man in my next story.

I see a man throwing Cheerios to sanderlings and ruddy turnstones.

Me: "Do you know about these birds?"

He: "No, I don't. What are they?"

Me: [I identify the birds] "Those little gray-white, hunchback ones are amazing! They fly all the way to the Arctic Circle to breed! They stop here to rest and fatten up for their journey (shout out to Michael Brothers here). That's why we shouldn't give them people food. It fills them up but doesn't nourish them. If you want to have a real blast, try getting fish bites at the bait shop (smiling)."

He: "I had no idea. That's really interesting! Do you live here?"

Me: "Yes. I've lived here off and on since (gulp) 1965---this same beach!"

He: "I've been here 14 years. It's beautiful. I love it!"

Me: "That's so nice to hear! Are you interested in knowing more about the birds we see here?"

He: "Yes, I am."

Me: "Why don't you come to one of our Audubon meetings. That's how I've been learning!"

The man might come to one of our meetings but even if he doesn't, his curiosity was stoked and I don't think he'll feed Cheerios to the birds again.

Best wishes for a beautiful 2019!

*Melissa Lammers*

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## Local Birding Festivals Are Here

Early 2019 will be full of birding festivals. First up is The [North Shore Birding Festival](#) from Thursday, January 17th through Monday, January 21st. The North Shore refers to the North Shore of Lake Apopka and is sponsored by Orange Audubon Society. Come out to support Orange Audubon and its efforts to enhance this spectacular birding hot spot.

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. Every binocular manufacturer in the country will be there to offer demonstrations. There will be great field trips, photography workshops and much more.

And finally in February there's the [Birds of a Feather Fest](#) in Palm Coast. Building from spartan beginnings several years ago, this festival is smaller but the experiences are great. So clean up your binoculars and get your hiking boots oiled. There's going to be a lot of fun out there.

*Editor*

## Conservation Notes

First it was Scott Pruitt, the deeply conflicted Administrator at the EPA who resigned in disgrace. Now comes the announcement that Interior Secretary, Ryan Zinke, is leaving under the same cloud of disgrace. Suspicions abound that his decisions regarding the use and misuse of public lands, the opening of vast tracts of offshore areas and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling and any number of other environmental travesties were directly related to his connections to energy and mining companies.

Mr. Zinke came into office saying he was a "Teddy Roosevelt conservationist." A comment that in light of his record since taking office probably has old TR spinning in his grave like a whirling dervish. There are at least 10 investigations underway into this guy's actions. They range from the minor: Tweeting an image of himself wearing socks with an image of the President and his "Make America Great Again" slogan. He later deleted the photo and apologized after several groups pointed out that he likely violated the Hatch Act, which prohibits federal employees from using their government positions to engage in political activity. To the more serious: halting a study of the effects on human health of mountain removal mining. The coal companies didn't like the possibilities of where that study might go.

So now Trump will select another person to serve as Interior Secretary. The Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, an organization that fosters TR's authentic goals for our nation's public lands, has published a list of qualifications they believe are needed in the next person to fill this important post. Here they are:

- \* A dedication to keeping public lands in public hands
- \* A commitment to ensuring that public lands are well-managed and accessible, including to hunters and anglers
- \* An unwavering fidelity to science-based management
- \* An appreciation of public input in the policymaking process
- \* An understanding of the importance of outdoor recreation, including hunting and fishing, to local economies and the national economy
- \* A willingness to fight for strong budgets for the department and a respect for its employees, who have dedicated themselves to upholding and advancing America's conservation legacy
- \* An eagerness to collaborate with the states, which hold primary management authority for managing fish and wildlife
- \* The foresight to promote long-term stewardship over short-term economic gains

In light of the hopelessly conflicted clowns the President has put forth for other positions ruling over our national treasures it's doubtful any of the goals above will be on his mind as his team scans the list of applicants. With the market in free fall, the Pentagon in near revolt and his staff afraid to say anything unflattering to his highness, perhaps we'll get lucky and the post will go unfilled. Not having anyone there can't be any worse than having another shill for the mining and oil industry racing to gut any and all protections for our health and the welfare of our country's conservation heritage. The damage done in this first two years of the Trump administration will take decades to repair. Let's hope something distracts the folks up there who are working so hard to kill us all in the name of quick profits.

By Ray Scory



Bald Eagle, Lesser Yellowlegs, Common Ground-Dove, House Finch (female & male)

Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-throated Warbler & Palm Warbler, Spotted Sandpiper

Northern Cardinal (fledgling & Male), Red-tailed Hawk, Sandhill Crane (sexes similar)

Mallard (female & Male) Painted Bunting (female & male), Brown Thrasher

Our FL Backyard, American Goldfinch (non-breeding), Carolina Wren (two fledglings)

article and photos by Ray Scory

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And Now News From [The Birding Community E-Bulletin](#)

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species maintains a record of how close species may be to extinction. [BirdLife International](#) is responsible for annually measuring the health of the world of birds for this tally. Every year, BirdLife updates which birds are stable, which are in recovery, and which have slipped toward extinction.

In the most recent release, there were a few surprises for us in North America. First the troubling stories:

Common Grackle populations have been dropping. With numbers plummeting by more than 50 percent between 1970 and 2014, the species has now been classed as Near Threatened by IUCN. Pest-control measures may have contributed to this decline.

Eastern Whip-poor-will data have revealed that the species population fell by over 60% between 1970 and 2014. With a dependence on flying insects for food, the species may be declining due to pesticides, intensive agriculture, and other factors reducing insect availability. The species has been up-listed to Near Threatened this year

Rufous Hummingbird could be sliding to extinction in plain sight, and the species has also been up-listed to Near Threatened this year. Its reliance on nectar and on insects during the breeding season may combine to put the species in jeopardy. This hummer may become a victim of climate change as early-blooming flowers in some locations could mean that hummingbirds arrive from migration too late to take advantage of this vital food source. Forest fires and changes in post-fire habitat conditions could also be contributing to the species' decline.

There's also some good news. Red-headed Woodpecker, with formerly declining populations, may have stabilized. Now placed in a "Least Concern" category, the species' population is considered healthy and stable enough that it is unlikely to face extinction anytime soon.

Henslow's Sparrow has stabilized, thanks in part to habitat management. In particular, the species has benefited from the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), where farmers are paid to remove land from cultivation and instead plant species that will improve the health and quality of the habitat.

*The Birding Community E-Bulletin is published monthly by Mass Audubon and the National Wildlife Refuge Association. You can sign up for it [here](#).*

Amazing Backyard Birding

"You never know what you will see when you look out the window." This very observant remark came from my wife, Jane. She had responded to my excitement, "Look a Carolina Chickadee at the feeder. I haven't observed one here in over ten years."

Amazingly Good Luck. I live in a residential neighborhood harboring no claims for the support of rare or exotic birds. However, for the past nineteen years I have looked out our backyard window and witnessed the most sensational behaviors and eye-catching colors. The color compositions of birds has long been a favorite interest of mine. Truly the work of a Master Artist. A seat by a window, while birding a backyard, can foster an awe inspiring moment and profoundly lead to a richer comfort of peace.

All the birds in this photo-montage have been photographed in my backyard. Their visits are most welcomed. They bring an amazing array of startling colors and incredulous behavior. So look out your window and enjoy the rewards of birding close by. The beginning of a new year is a good time to start.

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From The Quotable Birder

"Penguins mate for life. Which doesn't exactly surprise me that much 'cause they all look alike- it's not like they're gonna meet a better looking penguin someday."

Ellen DeGeneres

HRA board member, Steve Underwood, has a friend in Connecticut who's been out west recently. Chris Fisher has some great photos of the birds he's seen in desert southwest. Below are two of them.



Here's a Verdin, perched on cactus spines. Primarily feeding on insects, this tiny bird (4.5") is seen in dry, brushy areas from the Texas panhandle south to Central Mexico and west to the California desert areas.



This handsome devil is the male Pyrrhuloxia. It's diet consists of insects, seeds and fruit. Its crest is longer than that of a Northern Cardinal, even the ones in the desert southwest, where they tend to somewhat higher and bushier than their eastern brethren. Pyrrhuloxia range from Mexico into southern Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. A striking bird anywhere.

*Photos by Chris Fisher.*

## Our Fort DeSoto Trip in April

Our second overnight field trip for the season 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. Questions? call David Hartgrove, 386-235-1249.

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## Governor Elect DeSantis Names 40 Member Environmental Transition Team

Governor elect, Ron DeSantis, named a 40 member team to advise him on pressing environmental issues. Considering the wrecked environment his predecessor is leaving behind the team has its work cut out. "Water is the lifeblood of our environment and the lifeblood of our economy," said U.S. Rep. Brian Mast, R., Palm City and head of the advisory panel. "In my opinion, this is the most important conversation we can be having." A good start and let's hope they follow through. However, looking at the 40 team members, the vast majority of them come from real estate development, fertilizer companies, agri-business, etc. These are groups that must be engaged in any cleanup since they're the ones largely responsible for where we are today. *Editor*

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## THE PELICAN

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### Halifax River Audubon

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Meets monthly September through May

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Education: Holly Zwart-Duryea

Field Trips: Peggy Yokubonus

David Hartgrove

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Welcome: Pam Pinella

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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.

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February, 2019



## The President's Message

We love birds and the places they call home, which compels us to do some work now and then to ensure they have supportive habitat in which to live and breed. We're one month into the New Year with a new Governor and a new legislative session about to start. The Governor has moved very quickly and boldly to take steps that, if followed, will make good on his commitment to the environment, especially water and the Everglades. This focal change is very welcome and almost astounding, as it's been a long time since we had a Governor who tried to protect both what makes Florida special and is good for people and wildlife. Stay in touch with us to know how we can help with continuing efforts.

The legislative session kicks off on March 5th. There are a number of environmental bills that Audubon Florida (and HRA) are watching (see the list at the end of this article) in terms of how they align to our State priorities, which are: Water Quality, Water Quantity/Supply, Climate Change, Indian River Lagoon, Septic Tank Issues and Conservation Program Funding.

In terms of funding for conservation lands, springs and the Everglades, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and other state agencies have put forth budget proposals. In general, the funding levels (at minimum) should enjoy our support: Florida Forever, \$100million; Rural & Family Lands, \$75 million; Springs Restoration, \$50 million; Everglades, 321 \$million.

To track the preliminary bills listed below, go to either the [House's website](#) or the [Senate's website](#) and type in the bill number in the space provided. Then click the "Search" or "Go" buttons. There, you can read the bills, along with amendments and committee substitutes for the bills as the session progresses. Here are some of the ones we are watching for now: SB 54, Possession of Real Property; HB 63, Property-Assessed Clean Environment; HB 85, Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal Systems; SB 92, C-51 Reservoir Project; HB 151, Community Development Districts; HB 157, Fertilizers; SB 216, Water Quality Improvements; SB 222, Private Property Rights; HB 325, Coastal Management; SB 368 & 376, Land Acquisition Trust Fund.

While on the House site or on the Senate site you can look for a link to companion bills in the opposite chamber to save switching back and forth. The important thing is to be an aware voter and don't be afraid to pick up the phone. These people work for us and hopefully they'll do a better job if they're made aware of what we want.

**Happy 2019!**

Melissa Lammers

## Calendar & Events

**Monday, February 18th, Program Meeting-** "Right Whales - On the Brink or Just Nature's Cycle?" Join us for this talk about these gentle giants of the sea. Gallery owner, author, and conservationist, Frank Gromling, will share the latest information about North Atlantic Right Whales. A founding member of the Marineland Right Whale Project in 2001, Gromling will briefly give the whale's natural history before concentrating on the current situation where deaths are far outpacing births. These are the most endangered large mammal in the ocean. Frank has worked to protect them in Florida and Canadian waters for almost 20 years. 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, February 1st, Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive-** Join Peggy Yokubonus for this trip to one of Florida's best birding spots. A good trip if you're not into a lot of walking since we'll be driving this one with brief stops to get out for better looks at the birds. Meet Peggy at Int'l Square – East of I-95 on Int'l Speedway Blvd behind Krystal at 7:00 am. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Peggy, 386-316-4085

**Friday, February 15th, Merritt Island NWR-** Join Peggy Yokubonus for this trip that was supposed to go to Orlando Wetlands. That destination is undergoing some renovation so we're going to MINWR to look for the Cinnamon Teal (a western duck seldom seen in Florida) that's been there and any other feathered treasures we can find. We'll meet at the Target in Port Orange, behind Panera Bread at 7:30. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Peggy, 386-316-4085

## Field Trips With Others

**Tuesday, February 12th, Lake Woodruff Caravan-** Join our friends from West Volusia Audubon Society for this very special opportunity. Usually birding Lake Woodruff NWR means a lot of walking. However, having received this special one time permission, we will be driving along the dikes and stopping periodically, as is done at Merritt Island, Lake Apopka, etc. Space is limited and carpooling is a must. For information on this trip, call Eli Schaperow, 407-314-7965.

## Conservation Notes

All too often in this column I write about some politician or regulatory staff person who's doing a less than stellar job. And before the election I thought it would be all but impossible to write anything positive about our newly elected governor, Ron DeSantis. After all, the [League of Conservation Voters](#) shows an average of "2" out of a possible 100 on his environmental scorecard for his three terms in Congress. Hardly an environmental record of which to be proud, or to run on.

However, Governor DeSantis has come out of the gate at full gallop with an ambitious program to improve Florida's water quality and we in the environmental community owe him a round of applause. In what I thought was a shocking and very welcome development he asked for the resignations of the entire board of the South Florida Water Management District, saying that they were too cozy with Big Sugar. True as that assessment is I was bowled over by his request. His predecessor, Governor Scott, nominated those people. He also tried to do some last minute packing of regulatory agencies with corporate hacks. Governor DeSantis sent them packing too.

This is a refreshing course change and there are already signs of discontent among the governor's Republican colleagues in the House and Senate. For instance, the governor has asked for \$369 million for Everglades restoration. In their preliminary budget request, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection requested just \$321 million. The Legislature, many of whom look forward to those big donations from Big Sugar, may prove recalcitrant when it comes to appropriating the funds the governor is requesting. Let's hope he's willing to use the bully pulpit of his office to motivate them to do the right thing.

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Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-Arizona) is the new Chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee. He has quickly shown that the policies in force under his predecessor, when Trump cronies were in charge, will now be challenged at every turn. As a minority member sitting on this very important committee his many letters to the Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior and other regulatory agencies often were ignored. In December, for example, the Bureau of Land Management issued plans that would lift restrictions on oil and gas development on some nine million acres of Greater Sage-Grouse habitat on federal lands that had been protected under a 2015 compromise to keep the birds from being listed under the Endangered Species Act. The Interior Department is also moving quickly to facilitate drilling in the Arctic Refuge and expand energy development in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, along with taking a decidedly industry-friendly approach to enforcing the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA).

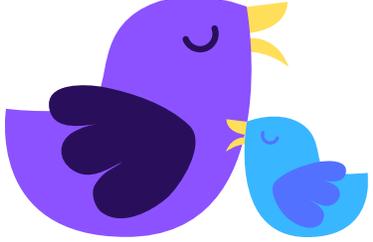
Under previous chair Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah), the committee-which oversees federal lands, wildlife, oil and gas, mining, tribal issues, and oceans-was sympathetic to the administration's agenda. Industry representatives made up nearly a third of the witnesses invited to give testimony before the committee in 2017 and 2018. Energy companies-especially fossil fuel interests-were invited most often. With Grijalva in charge a balance has been restored to the process.

The son of a rancher, he grew up near the Santa Rita Mountains. "The bird life around where I grew up was unbelievable," he says. Now he's in a position to do something about the terrible decisions made over the past two years. We wish the Congressman fair winds and smooth sailing.

*David Hartgrove*

City of Ormond Beach Department of Leisure Services & Halifax River Audubon proudly presents

# The Great Backyard Bird Count



**February 16th, 2019**  
**10 am - 2 pm**

Join us for a free community event featuring bird count stations, guided walks, activities, & more.



Ormond Beach Environmental Discovery Center at Central Park  
**386-615-7081**  
**601 Division Avenue, Ormond Beach, FL 32174**

## HRA and Ormond Beach Team Up

The [Great Backyard Bird Count](#) is an easy way for you to participate in citizen science and help our feathered friends. The GBBC as it's known is a four day event that begins on February 15th and runs through February 18th. Perhaps you have some mobility issues that prevent you getting out for field trips or bird counts. Here's the perfect way for you to help make a difference. Watch your backyard feeder and report the results. It's easy and a lot of fun.

Our chapter is partnering with the Ormond Beach Environmental Discovery Center to promote participation in this event by hosting a variety of activities at the center, located in Ormond Central Park on Saturday, February 16th. We'll have bird walks, bird related games for kids and much more. Come out and join us.

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## Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members. It's a big group this month: John Agett, E. Allan, David Baker, Robert Belsky, Alfred Blais, Susan Blank, Michelle Carlesimo, James Cundari, Barbara Davis, Patrick Forestell, Nancy Galdo, Barbara Gallant, Phillip Green, David Hartgrove, Carol Hjorth, Mark & Laura Ignoffo, Diana Kaufman, Leon & Lynn Kruse, Melissa Lammers, Raymond Lilly, Harriet Lytle, Shackera MacDonald, Sheila McClellan, Taylor Marsh, Diane Marzilli, Janet Mills, Shirley Parran, Anita Peck, Pamela Hanson-Peterson, Elza Phillips, Susan Plimpton, Sally Potts, Rick Seiler, Katherine Staley, John Sullivan, Becky Tate, Jon Troup, John Wagner, Ken & Margo Wenzel, Kathleen Wilson, William Wilson, Richard Winders, Dale Yeager and Thomas Ziegler. We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting or on one of our excellent field trips. Welcome aboard!

## A Good Walk - birding included

A walk - good for the body, good for the mind and with some birding sprinkled in, it's an adventure. Not the arm pumping, hip swinging kind or the power, record breaking walk. Just a walk in the park or around your neighborhood. A place close by where you can stop, take a rest and look around. Peaceful and content you say. What a way to begin your day.

In keeping with the theme of my series, "Everyday Birding, close by," I would like to suggest a leisurely walk from your home. This would be a nice way to begin broadening your birding skills. Continue your walks over and over again. No need to rush it. Let the seasons of the year whisper by. This is a leisurely walk. One to get to know your neighborhood, and the wildlife that inhabits it. You will discover where certain birds hang out, and they will meet you when you walk by. However, once in a while a stranger will fly in. That is the special treat.

Record this event - check your bird field guide, or your bird ID app, take a photograph and watch your bird life list expand. In fact on your first few walks, check the ID of each bird you see. Get in the practice, it will speed up your birding ID techniques when you go on subsequently big-time birding field trips.

For many years, three times a week, I stepped out from my front door and embarked on a three mile walk through my neighborhood. The birds I saw, the sunrises I watched, the photographs I made were enriching. Once in a while, a neighbor would ask, "see any good birds?" Thus opening for me some good old fashioned bird banter and a mention of Halifax River Audubon and their great field trips.

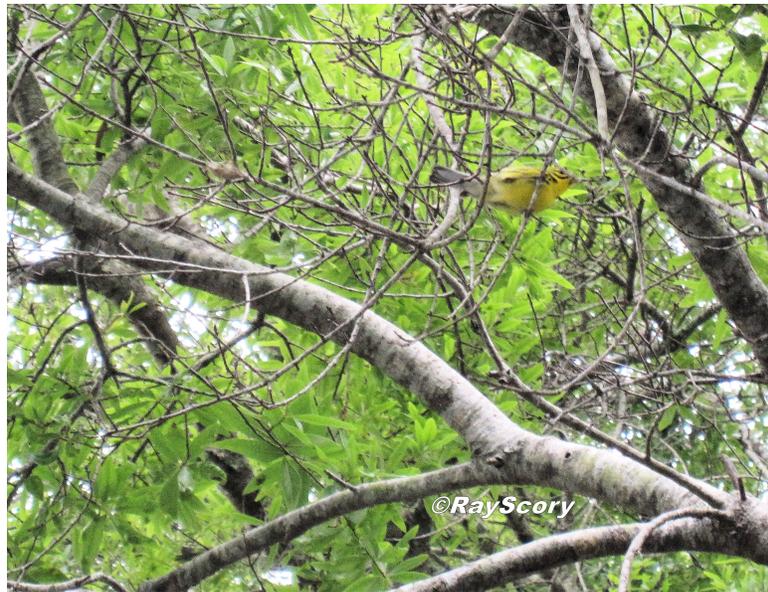
One of my most memorable moments was discovering a Prairie Warbler not far from my suburban home. A bird that winters in Florida. Here it was in my neighborhood and during one of my early walks. This bird mainly forages among branches for insects, prefers open scrub, old pastures, mixed oak-pine barrens and mangrove swamp habitats.

I found this bird in a Port Orange parking lot gleaning a lone, leaf laden tree. The Prairie Warbler also has a penchant for feeding on the ground or catching insects on the fly. This one was fun to watch, searching the tree for food and constantly moving into all manner of acrobatic positions, upside down and vertical. Difficult to photograph, a fast moving little bird in a tangle of branches. I didn't succeed very well on my first photo attempt, but the one illustrating this story shows a section of the tree where this neat little bird was feeding.

It readily eats sugar water, fruits and nut pieces, though it's primarily an insect eater. They're seldom seen at a feeder. However, that doesn't mean you shouldn't try these ingredients in your bird feeder. If this warbler appears, you will be looking at a tiny, five inch bird with a black eye stripe and slim upside-down quarter moon, black cheek stripe under the eye with black flank stripes and yellow underparts. Olive-green upper parts with a russet blush below the back of its head rounds out its descriptive features. A striking bird for sure!

Oh, the fun of birding and a walk close by. Something for everyone and a joy to all.

Ray Scory



*Totally ignoring me, This Prairie Warbler diligently went about searching for food in a tree in a parking lot near my home.*



*I was lucky to see this Wood Duck out in the open during my neighborhood walk and I leisurely admired its beauty.*

*Photos by Ray Scory*

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## Enjoy Spring Migration in The Dry Tortugas

[Florida Nature Tours](#) has been running birding trips to the Dry Tortugas longer than any one else. Their experience and low cost make for an exciting and affordable adventure. The Dry Tortugas is a cluster of islands 70 miles west of Key West. They're the first landfall migrants transiting the open waters of the Gulf of Mexico see and they're anxious to take advantage of the rest, food and water. You'll have a 4 day adventure that includes a day of birding Key West and southern Keys areas for birds like Mangrove Cuckoo, Gray Kingbird, White-crowned Pigeon, Black-whiskered Vireo and more. You'll sleep on board the boat in comfortable accommodations, dine on tasty meals and have the time of your birding life. There are three tours this year. Click on the website link above for all of the information.



Yes it's time for one of Florida's best little birding festivals. The City of Palm Coast sponsors this fun event from February 7th through the 10th. There are workshops, field trips, guest speakers and more. Here's the link to the [schedule](#) of events. And here's the link to [register](#). You won't want to miss the fun!

\* \* \*



Great Horned Owls making some little Great Horned Owls. This image was captured by Eddie Rizer at the Circle B Bar Preserve near Lakeland at the end of December. By now the eggs should be about to hatch. Our thanks to Eddie for sharing.

\* \* \* \* \*

### 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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### Halifax River Audubon

[forbirds@halifaxriveras.org](mailto:forbirds@halifaxriveras.org)

Meets monthly September through May

President: Melissa Lammers

Vice President: David Hartgrove

Past President: Jim O'Shaughnessy

Treasurer: Ellen Tate

Recording Sec.: Peggy Yokubonus

Membership Sec.: Joan Tague

Corresponding Sec: Vacant

Historian: Holly Zwart-Duryea

At-Large: Betty Butcher, Pam Pinella, Steve Underwood

### Committee Members

Conservation: David Hartgrove

Education: Holly Zwart-Duryea

Field Trips: Peggy Yokubonus

David Hartgrove

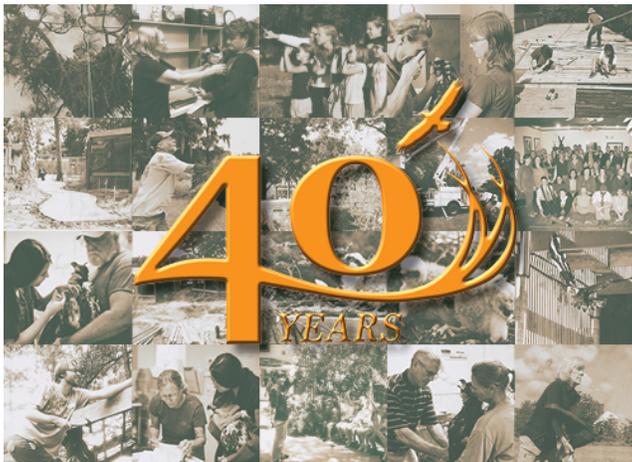
Newsletter Editor: David Hartgrove

Welcome: Pam Pinella

Webmaster: Joan Tague

\* \* \* \* \*

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



## Save the Date Audubon's Wind Beneath Our Wings Event 40 Years of Taking Flight

Featuring Guest Speaker  
Bill Shafer of Growing Bolder

February 24, 2019  
4:30pm-7:30pm

Harry P. Leu Gardens, Orlando, FL  
Tickets \$100

To purchase tickets please visit:  
[windbeneathourwings.org](http://windbeneathourwings.org)

Kindly respond by February 15, 2019

Join us for an enchanting evening to celebrate  
40 years of conservation in Central Florida.

The evening includes dinner, drinks, silent auction and  
special meet and greets with Florida's Raptors.

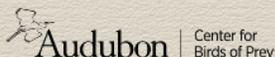
For questions or to RSVP by phone please contact  
Allison Niescier at 305-371-6399 ext. 127 or [aniescier@audubon.org](mailto:aniescier@audubon.org)

All proceeds benefit Audubon Center for Birds of Prey programs.

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# The Pelican

For wildlife & people since 1923

Volume 65-Number 3. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon  
March, 2019



## The President's Message

How many ways have you been involved in your Halifax River Audubon? Have you enjoyed our educational programs? Did you go on a field trip and see something you hadn't seen before? Do you enjoy reading The Pelican? Have you turned to our website for information about birds in our community and more? Are you proud to know that we have placed Audubon Adventures in more than 40 classrooms in Volusia County and are expanding the program to other venues? Did you join us as a citizen scientist and help with a bird survey? Have you made a friend or two? Have you attended our special programs or booths at festivals? Have you heard of Project Ibis and our unwavering commitment to educating future conservationists? Have you represented us at community meetings as part of our conservation efforts?

### HAVE YOU VOLUNTEERED?

All these activities and more are part of our strategic plan in support of our mission. Your hard-working board members, who also serve as multiple committee chairs, often of committees of one, have accomplished a majority of the tasks we set for ourselves this year. I'm incredibly proud of them and more grateful than I can say! But now it's time to ask for YOUR help so that all these activities can continue!

### WILL YOU VOLUNTEER?

In May, we will hold elections. While I have loved leading Halifax River Audubon for the past two years, I'm stepping aside to give someone else the opportunity to take the helm. I will remain on the board as immediate past president. Peggy Yokobonus will step down as Recording Secretary. We have three open at-large positions, and as I've said at every meeting since September, we need your help on a committee (or two!), even if you are a snowbird to our shores!

### WILL YOU STEP UP?

"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart."  
*Elizabeth Andrews*

We really do need volunteers to step up and help us keep this valuable organization moving forward. In these trying times your voice can and will make a difference. Thank you!

*Melissa Lammers*

## Calendar & Events

**Monday, March 18th, Program Meeting-** Join us for an evening of fascinating history when Laurilee Thompson returns to tell us of her experiences growing up on land that became part of Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. 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

**Wednesday, March 6th, Shiloh Marsh-** Join Joan Tague for this trip to a less visited section of Merritt Island NWR to look for sparrows, ducks and early migrants. We'll meet at 7:30 am at Target, East of I-95 on Dunlawton Avenue behind Panera's 1771 Dunlawton Avenue, Port Orange FL 32127. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Joan: 386-871-6049

**Wednesday, March 13th, St Johns River Boat Tour-** Join us for an afternoon boat tour on the Blue Heron, followed by an optional dinner at in DeLand. Reservations must be made by March 6th and fees (30.00 per person) must be paid in cash at the boat. We meet at 2:00 pm at the dock, St John's Marina 2999 West State Road 44, Deland, FL. **This trip is full but there is a wait list.** Call Celine: 386-523-4182

**Saturday, March 23rd, Ocala National Forest-** Join Peggy Yokobonus and John Roessler for this trip to look for the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker and other species. We'll meet at 7:30 am behind Chick-Fil-A at Ormond Town Square 1464 W Granada Avenue Ormond Beach FL 32174. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Peggy: 386-316-4085.

**Fort DeSoto in April-** Our second overnight field trip for the season 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. Please call David Hartgrove, 386-235-1249, if you're going. We'll be arranging a catered lunch on Thursday, April 18th, as we've done in the past. We have one of the picnic pavilions reserved for the 18th as well.

\* \* \* \*

"A bird does not sing because it has an answer. It sings because it has a song."

*A Chinese Proverb*

## On Any One Day

From a dark night a-wash in a solid gray sky; from a dark that is soon to pass by; from trees, bushes and artifacts that silhouette black against a creeping soft light, a singular morning takes shape. A special morning to be witnessed as one. This morning will usher in all manners of life. Some of it I never will see, but the goings-on of birds from my window I will see. A special morning in my backyard when I look out my window, and see a snapshot of what will never look that way again.

Two Northern Cardinals will certainly be there at my bird feeding station before the sun arises. They start things going. The male is cloaked in scarlet red of majestic importance wearing a mysterious black mask as a show of power. The female, garmented in queenly attire described in sheer, soft browns with tawny, elegant accessories and a rosy facial blush that leaves no doubt about her royal status.

The morning breakfast bell is early rung by two Carolina Wrens whose loud calls seem to say, "time can't wait." They sure are active, energy personified. Tiny birds that keep moving, dancing about the feeder, poking at the seeds, throwing some out, eating one, dropping to the ground, into the bushes, back to the feeder, off to the trees, never stopping. I tire just watching them from my window. I am impressed. Isn't it amazing that such a tiny brown bird flashing a prominent white supercilium (eyebrow) and using a slightly curved beak can be so fascinating.

Wait! Two small birds are slowly moving below my pole feeder, seemingly intent on feeding, yet with trepidation. They appear in no hurry and occasionally fly up into the bird feeder and may drop down to look at the birdbath. However, I mostly see them blending coyly with the ground cover. This small ground feeding bird is distinguished by a darkly streaked back with gray underparts. It carries on its head a brown cap in the winter season. The prominent black eye stripe and rufous cap are diagnostic in spring. The Chipping sparrow is one of my favorite back yard birds and is a regular winter visitor to my feeders.

Looking out my window at my backyard feeding station over many years has been a pleasurable treat. Not only am I happy to see the same winter birds returning, I equally cherish the daily appearances of my year round regulars. An unexpected visit from one time travelers is always welcomed. A Carolina chickadee, a White-winged dove, an Eastern towhee, a Sandhill Crane and four Canada geese have been a few that have stopped by to say , "Hello".

From changing weather patterns and the spinning cycles of night to day and to back again, from ever changing flora, to the qualities of light, to the caresses of the winds and to the passing of things - to the company of the birds. I look through my window. I am happy.

*"It has long been an axiom of mine that the little things are infinitely the most important."*

*Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes*

*Ray Scory*



Northern cardinals are daily all-year visitors to my backyard feeding stations. A welcomed guest.



The larger White-winged Dove visited my backyard feeder only for two weeks during the last twenty year period. A rare treat. While the smaller Mourning Dove is an everyday visitor.

*Photos by Ray Scory*

\* \* \* \*

## Welcome To Our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Renita Bethell, David Billmeier, June & William Campbell, Teresa Downey, Gary Dymesich, Eric Dzuiban, Billie Krueger, Marsha Leftwich, Carol McDonough, Lisa Mickey, Mary Nilsson, Betty Rutan, Nancy Saum, Rick Seiler, Ken Sipes, John Thompson, Margaret Venzke, Jeff Wedge and Bernard Yvon. We hope to see you at an upcoming meeting or on one of our excellent field trips.

\* \* \* \*

## From Cells To A Salamander

Board member, Steve Underwood, has been surfing the Internet again and sent us this link to this [video](#) from National Geographic. It's amazing!

# The Ballad of Chesterina

## A Lesson In How Nature Compensates For Loss

In 2016 Jim Meyer and Eileen Riccio arrived at her home in Inverness and discovered a Sandhill Crane in the backyard with an injured foot. Since the bird was capable of flight they were advised that there wasn't much that could be done and that they should adopt a "wait and see" attitude. The foot eventually dropped off and the bird, named Chesterina by them, continued to return to the backyard over the next two years. The name came about in reference to the character in the old TV series, "Gunsmoke." When Jim and Eileen realized that the bird was a female the name was feminized.

Florida Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis pratensis*) are also known as Lesser Sandhill Cranes, to distinguish them from their larger cousins, the Greater Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis tabidas*) that arrives in November from up north to winter in the state. Up to 25,000 of these big birds spend much of their time in Florida at Payne's Prairie, where their loud calls can be heard all day. Perhaps the reason the calls can be heard over such a great distance is that the syrinx (the organ birds use to make sounds) in a Sandhill Crane is 24 feet long! It's a coiled, fleshy tube that's wound around and around and the birds push air through it while on the ground and in flight. It's kind of like they have a french horn in their chests. Florida Sandhill Cranes are listed as a threatened species by the state and protected under both state and federal laws. The population is estimated at around 5,000 birds and they do not migrate, though they wander over the most of the state.

Monogamous, they begin nesting in late winter, building nests in shallow, fresh water wetlands. Both birds work constructing the nest and share incubation, which takes about 30 days. Usually 2 eggs are laid and the young are precocial, meaning they leave the nest and follow their parents in search of food within 24 hours of hatching. Cranes are omnivores, feeding on a variety of things, from seeds and roots to frogs, snakes, crayfish and even smaller birds.

Seasonal residents, Jim and Eileen returned this past September and saw no sign of Chesterina. They wondered if her damaged leg had maybe been the cause of her being taken by a coyote or some other predator. They spent some time in Brevard County and returned to their Inverness digs 2 weeks ago. They looked out back and there was Chesterina, now moving much better since it appeared that the upper portion of her left leg had grown longer in response to the loss of her foot. She has been seen in the company of other birds but so far she has not been seen engaging in the "dance" all cranes engage in as a courtship ritual. And they don't have to be out in the wilds to do this. Here's a link to a [You Tube video](#) showing the birds engaged in their dance at the Sarasota National Cemetery.

"Chesterina" should live a normal Sandhill Crane life now that her left leg has lengthened to compensate for the loss of her foot and she may yet mate and produce young. Let's hope that when Jim and Eileen return next year they witness Chesterina with a couple of "colts", which is what young cranes are called. It will be a happy ending to what could have been a tragic story.

David Hartgrove

Thanks to Jim Meyer, Eileen Riccio and Bev Hansen for posting information and photos on [BRDBRAIN](#).



2016, the injured foot is withered and about to drop off.



2016, Chesterina inspects the damage



2019, Notice how much longer the upper section (the tibia) of her left leg has grown to compensate for the loss of her foot.

Photos by Jim Meyer & Eileen Riccio

## Conservation Notes

### FROM CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE (RCC)

On Sunday, January 27, members of the Central Florida RCC met to discuss issues of regional concern and to report on progress toward our two regional conservation goals adopted at Audubon Assembly in October 2018. Representatives from five of our ten member chapters were able to attend. We encourage a representative from every chapter to attend our next meeting scheduled for Sunday, April 7th, at [Audubon's Center for Birds of Prey](#), 1101 Audubon Way, Maitland, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. The center has recently been renovated. Bring a bag lunch and stay to tour the grounds and bird aviaries and see raptors up close and personal.

Charles Lee, Audubon Florida staff advisor to our RCC, alerted us to a new issue – the Northeast Connector Expressway Extension – a proposed toll road from US 192 in Osceola County to State Road 50 in Orange County. The Central Florida Expressway Authority has undertaken a concept, feasibility and mobility study, raising issues regarding the future of the eastern part of the county which now consists largely of rural farmlands, natural areas and scattered rural homesteads and settlements. This proposal is in the beginning stages. Detailed plans are needed for each segment and all the land will be subject to wetlands testing. Our RCC action plan is for chapter leaders in Orange, Seminole and Osceola Counties to form a committee to meet with Charles Lee to create a comprehensive plan on how to advocate.

In preparation for the upcoming legislative session – March 5 through May 3, 2019 – Audubon Florida has selected bills to be watched and worked on with legislators. In general, AF's legislative activity will follow water quality, water quantity/supply, climate change, Indian River Lagoon, septic tank issues and conservation program funding. Governor DeSantis has requested larger amounts of money for environmental and conservation issues than previously recommended by the Scott administration. Follow all 2019 bills at [Welcome: Online Sunshine](#).

Contact your chapter president or conservation chairperson if you'd like to be involved in either of these initiatives. "The Advocate" is a weekly e-mail update distributed when the FL legislature is in session. Sign up [here](#) to ensure you receive legislative updates and action alerts in a timely fashion.

The following action has been taken on our regional goal to promote Lake Apopka Restoration, Visitor Access & New Audubon Nature Center: The 70-acre former nursery site adjacent to the Wildlife Drive entrance was transferred from St. Johns River Water Management District to the City of Apopka with deed restrictions. A Memorandum of Understanding between the City and Orange Audubon Society crafted over two years ago and signed in June 2017 is the working document and is referenced in the deed restrictions.

And late breaking news: Charles Lee announced that one of our "target" conservation properties in Central Florida, the "Lake X" or Lake Conlin tract in Osceola County, has come under the administration of Mitigation Marketing as a mitigation bank. This means that this environmental treasure will continue to host wildlife and enhance water quality in the region for future generations.

*Paula Wehr, Central Florida Chapters Representative  
Audubon Florida Board of Directors*

## Sea Watch With Harry Robinson

Harry has been doing a sea watch at [Tom Renick Park](#) for some years now and recently expanded the checklist to 252 species. You should have a scope to see what Harry sees but it's not required. Your binoculars might give you a look at what the's recording. He's there in the mornings nearly every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. From Common Loons to Common Eiders; Reddish Egrets to Roseate Spoonbills and all kinds of other birds flying by our coast, Harry logs them all. Join him one morning for an education in sea birding.

*Editor*

\* \* \* \*

## Audubon Adventures

[Audubon Adventures](#), is a wonderful program that helps engage kids in the natural world around them. Ranked as one of the most popular environmental education curricula in the country, our chapter has been donating to provide this valuable program to Volusia County school kids since its inception. Donations from members fund this program. Send your donation to Halifax River Audubon, P.O. Box 166, Daytona Beach FL 32115-0166. Please specify on your check that your donation is for Audubon Adventures. And thank you!

\* \* \* \*

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[forbirds@halifaxriveras.org](mailto: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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Webmaster: Joan Tague

\* \* \* \*

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

# The Pelican

For wildlife & people since 1923

Volume 65-Number 4. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon  
April, 2019



## The President's Message

*Having been swamped with things this month I'm "phoning in" my column this month. Here's an interesting piece from our friends at the [Eco-Voice Daily Digest](#). Melissa Lammers*

### The Cost of Horseshoe Crab Blood

Horseshoe crabs are fascinating animals. They may look like prehistoric crabs but are actually more closely related to scorpions and spiders. They also happen to be one of the most important animals when it comes to keeping humans alive.

The pale blue blood that circulates within the bodies of horseshoe crabs is extremely sensitive to bacterial pathogens. This has allowed biomedical scientists to use the blood of horseshoe crabs to test whether or not potentially life-saving medicines and medical devices are safe for humans. While this is extremely helpful for humans, it may not be so for horseshoe crabs. Scientists extract blood from the horseshoe crabs and then return them to the ocean. This is relatively safe; however, around 50,000 horseshoe crabs die during this process every year. Additionally, Asian horseshoe crabs have experienced dramatic population losses from habitat loss, as well as overfishing. In order to keep the horseshoe crab populations constant, some change needs to occur. If not, the biomedical industry could be seriously threatened.

Jeak Ling Ding is one scientist who has decided to expedite the change needed to preserve horseshoe crabs. Factor C is a specific molecule in horseshoe crab amebocytes (blood cells) that detects the bacterial toxins. If she could find the gene that made factor C and could manipulate the DNA, she could make the factor C without the need to harm more horseshoe crabs. After many trials and errors, Ding discovered she could splice the DNA from the horseshoe crabs into insects that would then manufacture the factor C. This meant it was no longer necessary to bleed horseshoe crabs.

Although Ding has arrived at a solution, biomedical companies have been slow to adopt her method. They could potentially lose money if they adopt the factor C method and drop the traditional way of bleeding horseshoe crabs. But the population numbers of horseshoe crabs are dwindling, and they will continue to dwindle if nothing is done to help them. Red Knots and many other bird species depend on horseshoe crab eggs for survival, as do the crabs. If we want to save the horseshoe crab, other threatened species, and our own biomedical industry, the factor C method should be adopted.

*One source for this article was "The Last Days of the Blue-Blood Harvest." by Sarah Zhang. It appeared in the May 9, 2018 issue of Atlantic.*

## Calendar & Events

**Monday, April 15th, Program Meeting-** Rob Diaz de Villegas is WFSU Public Media's Ecology Producer. This spring, WFSU Public Media is undertaking an ambitious ecology outreach, education, and media project called EcoCitizen. The project challenges community members to actively engage with nature through citizen science, and to integrate their homes with surrounding wild spaces by landscaping for wildlife. Rob will talk about creating this kind large scale project centered on the video production work he's been doing. This promises to be a fascinating talk. 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 hope to see you there.

\* \* \* \*

### Field Trips

**Thursday, April 11th, Washington Oaks Gardens State Park-** **Change of scheduled trip.** Join Peggy Yokubonus on this trip to one of the best spots in our area for migrating Spring warblers. Meet at the park, 6400 N. Oceanshore Blvd., Palm Coast in the garden parking lot at 8:00AM to look for spring migrants. We will walk the Gardens and search the beach across the street. There is a fee for park entrance if you do not have a current Florida State Park pass. Bring snacks, water and sunscreen and bug spray. We have been known to stop at Captain's Barbecue for lunch on this trip at Bing's Landing. Questions? Call Peggy, 386-316-4085.

**Wednesday thru Friday, April 17th thru 19th, Fort DeSoto-**

Join David Hartgrove for this overnight trip to one of Florida's premier birding spots, in Pinellas County. You should have already made your reservations at the Holiday Inn in St Petersburg. We will meet at 12:00 noon at the big flag in the park. If you've been there before you know where the flag is. If you haven't you can't miss it since it's right in front of you as you pay the entrance fee. Call David, 386-235-1249, so we'll know you're going. Then we can make arrangements for our lunch on Thursday, 4/18. Questions? Call David.

\* \* \* \*

If you're a member of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology you may have seen an article in the newest issue of "Living Bird" about Canadian artist, Calvin Nicholls. His art will leave you speechless. He creates paper sculptures of birds and other wildlife that seem to come to life before your eyes. Here's a link to a [Cornell Lab webpage](#). Be sure to click on the linked short video. *Thanks to Paula Wehr for this.*

## It Doesn't Take Much

Backyard birding begins with a window. That miracle of transparency that allows a wall to be pierced bringing in light and allowing a telescopic view of an outside perspective. Framed by a window and basking in backyard birding go hand in hand. It doesn't take much to stop and look out a window - to see what is out there, to look at birds.

That is exactly what I did this past first three days of Spring. The count for this 3 day period is 27 species of birds. Occasionally, I wandered outside to confirm my sightings of flybys, birds in my backyard trees, ducks and waterbirds in the backyard pond. However, looking at the view of my backyard window was the biggest treat of the three day period.

The morning of the 21st began quietly, gently easing in a blush of golden reds, mixing with the blacks of night. A fluid transition from night to day was happening. A golden, red sun electric and joyous rose above the treetops and a new day appeared.

A male and female Northern Cardinal were at the feeding station, brilliantly mimicking the explosive colorations of the morning sunrise. On the final day of this three day backyard safari a single male American Robin stood upon the eight foot pole of my feeding station, adding, significantly, to the first-time historical lore of the twenty year, in-place feeding station.

My cross-like bird feeding station is constructed of 2.5 inch PVC plumbing pipe and fittings with the four foot cross bar seven feet up from the ground. This height affords protection from the five feet high jump of clever and persistent squirrels. I can hang any make of bird feeder from the upper crossbar as long as the bottom of the feeder hangs no lower than five feet to the ground. A six inch stove pipe threaded on the pole prevents a climbing squirrel's assault. Finally I place the feeding station 10 feet from any jumping off point. Squirrels are amazing jumpers. I once saw one push off from a vertical tree trunk and land about eight feet away onto a 10x12 inch feeder tray. They are creatively acrobatic creatures.

Back in the yard I placed a green seed hopper feeder with four ports. Small sized birds eagerly feed on the small sized seeds, as: white proso. Occasionally Northern Cardinals will use this feeder, but prefer larger feeders with black oil sunflower seeds.

During the time between daybreak and 9:30AM of the first morning I counted 17 species of birds feasting at my feeders. The smallest are Chipping Sparrows. They normally eat on the ground. At times, I have seen them up higher in the hanging bird feeders. The largest are the Muscovy Ducks. They are so focused that they would pass between my legs on their morning waddle to my feeding station, if I didn't move. My most beautiful- the Painted Bunting for its explosive color combinations - chartreuse back with a red belly and a blue head and red eye ring (unmatchable). The female with her various shades of greens, a winner that regular comes to my feeders. One note of observation - the female is so much feistier than the male, especially when the male tries to get to an open feeder port.

I look forward to the semi-annual visits of the Spotted Sandpiper. Normally he visits alone. From my window, I recognize its rapidly beating wings and low to the water flight pattern. Upon landing, its body rocks to a steady eternal beat. I am fascinated by the stoic Mourning Dove, the light headed Mottled Duck, the grayness of the Gray Catbird, the frenzied movements of the Carolina Wren, the every winter presence

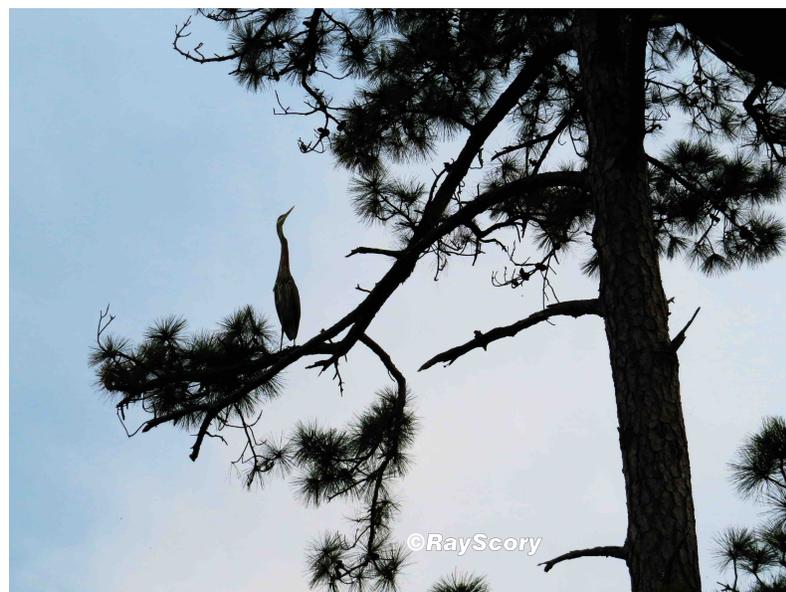
of the Yellow-rumped Warbler, the Great Blue Heron roosting 30 feet high in a pine tree and all the other magnificent birds that grace my yard.

Looking out my backyard window is a great birding activity. ...and I don't have far to go to begin.

Ray Scory



Bird Feeding Station with Brown thrasher feeding on "No Melt" suet and a Northern Mockingbird looking on.



Great Blue Herons normally walk through my yard and along the pond. This one got a better view.

Photos by Ray Scory

\* \* \* \*

## 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 a landscape as it was before."

2 Robert Lynd, 1879-1949, *The Blue Lion and Other Essays*

*Chapter member, Lisa Mickey, wrote this for the New York Times. It appears here with permission. Editor.*

## Not Just The Links Are Green

Minimizing manicured grass isn't the first thing that comes to mind when you think of improvements to a high-end golf course.

But Sailfish Point Golf Club on Hutchinson Island on Florida's east coast, did just that. Now, butterflies have moved in where native grasses and flowers have been allowed to grow tall.

Across the state, on Sanibel Island, the Sanctuary Golf Club ripped out concrete cart paths and brought in beehives to help pollinate the local wildflowers.

In Skidaway, Ga., near Savannah, the Landings Club dug a new irrigation system to lower water consumption, and it built nesting areas for a native terrapin rescue program.

Golf courses and environmental initiatives haven't always coexisted. But today, many course superintendents — the men and women who plan and maintain courses — hope to reshape that thinking.

Sustainability efforts are often “motivated by economics,” said Max Adler, the editorial director of Golf Digest. “The whole industry is seeing a correction away from the very manicured, over manufactured look of golf—and at the same time what really motivates golf courses to pursue that look is the bottom line. The less water you use, the less grass grows, the less maintenance you have to cover.”

In the last 10 years, he said, many clubs have replaced manicured areas of their courses “with sand, with native floras and shrubs that exist naturally on the topography and just leave it. And it looks beautiful.”

“If you're doing things that are economically sound, it's often in line with what you are doing environmentally,” said James Murphy, an extension specialist in turf management at Rutgers University in New Jersey. Players and residents also are demanding more eco-friendly practices.

“It's very important to people now that the community they live in respects the environment and takes care of it,” said Kristen Cheskaty, a broker and a managing partner at Sailfish Point Realty in Stuart, Fla.

Because of that, golf communities in the United States and elsewhere in the world are focusing on things as varied as eliminating plastic and foam cups in their snack shops and reducing fertilizers and chemicals in the upkeep of the fairways.

“All the little things add up,” Mr. Adler said. “Even though it's a small footprint for the day, over the course of the season it's real. More importantly it sends a message to people's minds that we want to be thoughtful and sensitive to the environment.”

Florida's Sailfish Point has followed guidelines created by a not-for-profit environmental education organization called Audubon International, which offers a certification program for good golf-course management practices. It is not affiliated with the National Audubon Society.

Sailfish Point is bordered on the west by the Indian River Lagoon, which in recent years has suffered extensive algae blooms. Most experts believe these are linked to discharges from Lake Okeechobee, which suffers from fertilizer and manure runoff from the extensive cattle and agribusiness properties around the lake.

Scott MacPhee, the director of golf course operations at Sailfish Point, said many residents were concerned about any role the golf course could play in contributing to such pollution.

“A lot of fingers could easily be pointed at our community and our operation, and I didn't want that for our members,” Mr. MacPhee said. “Whether the blame is on golf courses, farms or septic tanks, ultimately, we all want to do the right thing and we all want clean water.”

More than 800 golf courses in the United States and 2,100 courses in 34 countries have been certified by Audubon International. At Sailfish Point, earning the certificate took about two years. The work began in 2016 and included an environmental assessment and developing a wildlife and habitat management plan; reducing chemical use; and stepping up water conservation. In some areas, the golf course staff planted vegetation buffer zones, allowing growth of mangrove trees and aquatic plants to form a barrier between the golf course and waterways.

The Landings, with six Audubon International certified golf courses on Skidaway Island, near Savannah, Georgia is situated within tidal salt marshes and the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. It's also popular with native Diamondback Terrapins, which had a risky habit of depositing their eggs in golf course bunkers.

Carolyn McInerney, a local real estate agent who lives at the Landings, began the Diamondback Terrapin Rescue Project by placing the eggs in little flower pots on her back porch. “Now, we have five different nest boxes built around the golf course with community signs telling people about the program, as well as terrapin hatchling release parties,” Mr. Steigelman said. “It's become a big community project.”

In addition to the terrapin nests, the Landings has a system of bluebird boxes installed throughout its courses and monitored by community volunteers; pollinator gardens with native plantings for bees and butterflies; and a bird-cam to monitor owl, eagle and osprey nesting.

In southwest Florida, the Sanctuary stands out for its location. The community and its course, which has been certified by Audubon International, are surrounded by the 6,300-acre J.N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge — home to more than 300 species of birds, 50 species of reptiles and more than 30 mammal species. Two-thirds of the island is protected land.

Kyle Sweet, the superintendent at the Sanctuary Golf Club, the island's only private course not only maintains his course to Audubon International standards, but he also is guided by the wildlife refuge, as well as by rigid city requirements. Water quality and chemical nutrient loads are regularly monitored and the city issues an annual grade.

Even residences are regulated in regard to impermeable surfaces, such as driveways. The Sanctuary has removed more than a mile and a half of concrete cart paths from the course. They've installed salt tolerant turf grasses and upgraded their irrigation system for a 30% water reduction.

“We have a lot of members who are on the board at the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation and Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge,” said Kathryn Riggio, the membership coordinator at the Sanctuary. “They are very invested in our environmental responsibility.”

*Lisa D Mickey*

## Conservation Notes

Chapter member, Celine Sullivan, alerted me to some new construction at the south end of South Beach Street in Daytona Beach, near the property where the old WROD radio station sat for so many years. The land contains considerable amounts of red and black mangrove, a protected species. We will be watching this project as it develops. Current plans call for retention of the native vegetation and an Environmental Resource Permit has been issued by the St Johns River Water Management District.

\* \* \*

The President recently signed into law the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act. It reauthorizes the act which was originally passed in 2000. Now comes the sticky part. The Administration's proposed budget slashes funding for the parts of the Department of the Interior that deal with implementing the protections granted in the Act. Once again we see a feel good bill passed but with the knowledge among our legislators that there won't be any funding to actually make progress on keeping birds off the extinction list.

This same mind set is at work in our state legislature. There were speed limits set for our state's waterways to help protect manatees. Then, when it came to to fund the Florida Marine Patrol and FWC's enforcement arm, they made sure there wouldn't be enough to adequately fund the operations. That's why there are just a handful of officers to cover the entire east coast of Florida.

\* \* \*

Our own state Senator, Travis Hutson, has been busy. It seems that several municipalities around the state have had the temerity to pass ordinances that ban plastic straws. Racing to the plastic straw manufacturer's rescue, Senator Hutson has filed a bill, S. 588, which will prohibit local governments from banning single use plastic straws. There are over 750 million plastic straws used in this country every day. Is it any wonder that we see photos of sea turtles with plastic straws in their nostrils or that a rare whale recently washed ashore in the Philippines with over 400 pounds of plastic in its stomach? And when concerned citizens try to address the problem by getting their local governments to ban plastic straws along comes our state senator to file a bill to crush that effort. In case you'd like to let the Senator know your thoughts on his bill his number is (850) 487-5007. You'll probably have to leave a voice mail but it's good for him to hear from you.

\* \* \*

President Trump's little vanity monument at our southern border has finally been corralled a bit by an agreement that should save Bentsen-Rio Grande State Park, Santa Ana NWR and the butterfly preserve. However, the other conservation designated lands, many of which are part of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Important Bird Areas, will be bulldozed into oblivion. While there are all kinds of electronic monitoring devices and state of the art drones with special infrared imaging technologies that could do a far better job of protecting our borders, our President insists on antiquated technology developed thousands of years ago. Nobody built a better wall that China and Genghis Khan easily defeated that one. The same is true of France's vaunted Maginot Line. A lot of good it did them. So all kinds of wildlife will be sacrificed on the altar of Trump's enormous vanity. Will we ever learn?

*David Hartgrove*

## Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

We extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Jackie Anthony, Tom Arbogast, Cassandra Ballard, William Batchelor, Gwen Bills, Donald Boatner, Alyssa Bolt, Renate Calero, Larry Carrico, James Carter, Karen Collins, John DiCesare, Jeni Donald, Edythe Donnelly, Donna Dross, Elizabeth Edinger, Korin Ferris, Richard Goudey, Doris Grazulis, Jayne Hecker, Denise Hentze, Janet Hintz, Dana Jacobsen, Marion Jacobsen, Deborah Keith, Kim M. Klancke, Margaret Knight, Ed Kocis, Leslie Kolleda, Richard Langston, Tom Lynch, Paul McKinnon, Jacqueline Mirani, Joan Myers, Kathleen Mylotte, Jim O'Shaughnessy, Sarah Ostby, Penny Pierce, Shirley Porter, Dianne Reed, Janis Robinson, Patricia Sample, Ronald Schultz, Trudy Shoemaker, Chris Smith, Lynn Stackhouse, Rosella Stern, John Sullivan, Joan Tague, Becky Tate, Nicelette Triantatellu, John Wagner, Jean Young, and Rosemarie Zukas. We hope to see you all at an upcoming meeting or on one of our excellent field trips. And whether you're new to the organization or have been a member for years, we could use your expertise on our chapter's board. Please think about joining the board. Thanks!

\* \* \* \* \*

### 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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### Halifax River Audubon

[forbirds@halifaxriveras.org](mailto:forbirds@halifaxriveras.org)

Meets monthly September through May

President: Melissa Lammers

Vice President: David Hartgrove

Past President: Jim O'Shaughnessy

Treasurer: Ellen Tate

Recording Sec.: Peggy Yokubonus

Membership Sec.: Joan Tague

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Historian: Holly Zwart-Duryea

At-Large: Betty Butcher, Pam Pinella, Steve Underwood

### Committee Members

Conservation: David Hartgrove

Education: Holly Zwart-Duryea

Field Trips: Peggy Yokubonus

David Hartgrove

Newsletter Editor: David Hartgrove

Welcome: Pam Pinella

Webmaster: Joan Tague

\* \* \* \* \*

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

# The Pelican

*For wildlife & people since 1923*

Volume 65-Number 5. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon  
May, 2019



## The President's Message

### GOOD BYE AND HELLO

I've been struggling with my topic this month because it will be my last essay as president of Halifax River Audubon, a most privileged perch from which to speak of birds, nature and why they matter. Two themes keep pressing against my heart, yet refuse to knit together with the eloquence their emotional weight requires. The deadline looms, so I will do my best.

The first theme is service-- to something greater than one's self or even one's family or clan. For more than 100 years, Audubon has worked to protect birds and the wild places they call home. My great grandparents, my grandparents, my parents, I, my nieces and nephews, have all benefitted from the work of selfless volunteers and staffers who know how precious our natural resources are and how easily they slip forever from our grasp when we fail to pay attention to them. Those long-ago Audubon members worked tirelessly to preserve habitat for future generations, for people they would never know, and to educate and inspire others to do the same. Being president of Halifax River Audubon has been a great responsibility, to try to ensure we continue and build upon our work as we have since 1923. It has also been an immense joy. To continue, we need not just leadership, but volunteers who will step up once or repeatedly -- for a day or a year -- to research topics, find speakers, man tables at events, participate in citizen science projects, help us branch out to new groups of people, speak to elected officials about the topics that concern us, and more. The ways to serve are as varied as people willing to become involved. I hope you are willing and will find it in your heart to join us. So we can continue to protect birds and the places they call home. So that our children, our grandchildren and their children will know the joys of the natural world as we have.

My second theme is, what next? My first essay was about how Audubon's Plants for Birds program had compelled me to transform my yard to a haven of native plants that provide food, shelter and a safe place for birds to raise their chicks. The gardening practices involved in this transformation are far, far gentler to Florida's fragile water than the way so many Floridians manage their landscapes. Each day, we are assaulted with news of catastrophic environmental harms. It can be paralyzing for those who care, so I find it thrilling to know that there are things we CAN do in our own yards that will make a positive difference! That is why my next "job" with Halifax River Audubon will be to expand our outreach about Plants for Birds (please let me know if you have a group you would like us to speak to) and to tie this work to our delicate

*Continued below*

## Calendar & Events

**Monday, May 20th, Program Meeting-** Join us for this final meeting before our summer hiatus and learn about efforts to restore Lake Apopka. In the 1930's Lake Apopka was the premier large mouth bass fishing spot in the world. After WWII agriculture came to the lake's north shore. By the 1980's the lake was all but dead due to runoff from the fields. The St Johns River Water Management District began an intensive restoration effort that goes on today. Jim Peterson, SJRWMD Biologist, will give us a presentation on the history of the lake and its cleanup efforts. 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, during which we'll vote on new board members, follows. We hope to see you there.

### Field Trips

**Thursday, May 16th, Dunlawton Bridge-** Join David Hartgrove for this last trip of the season. We'll meet below the bridge at 3:00 pm, which will be peak low tide. So the nearby sand bar should be full of birds, we may see some recently hatched American Oystercatchers and nestling pelicans and egrets will be visible on Rookery Island. We'll finish by 5:00 pm. Questions? Call David at 386-235-1249.

### Field Trips With Others

Our sister chapters have completed their field trip schedules for the season but Volusia County Land Management has programs all year round. Here are a couple in which you might be interested:

**Thursday, May 9th, Eco Buggy Tour at Longleaf Pine Preserve-** Learn about Longleaf Pine Preserve's plant life and lands as you ride the county's eco-buggy. Bring lunch and a beverage. Participants will stop for lunch at the pavilion, where they will learn about local sustainability and its importance. Meet at the west entrance, 3637 E. New York Ave., DeLand. 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. Please register by calling 386-736-5927.

**Thursday, May 23rd, Guided Hike at Hickory Bluff Preserve-** Meet at 9:00 am for this 2 hour guided hike to explore and compare habitat characteristics on an upland and swamp hike of the St. Johns River watershed. Meet at 9:00 am at Hickory Bluff Preserve, 598 Guise Road, Osteen. Please register by calling 386-736-5927.

water supply. As I wrote above, Audubon offers and supports so many ways to make a difference right where you are, and I have found my way! I hope you'll come and find yours, too.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as president these past two years.

*Melissa Lammers*

**POST SCRIPT**

In case you were unable to attend our April 15th General Meeting, here is the list we shared of the things that Halifax River Audubon does on a regular basis.

- Field Trips
- Monthly Educational Programs
- Citizen Science Projects
- Birding classes
- On-site education tables at festivals
- Work with other environmental groups and with Park systems
- Provide speakers to other organizations
- "Audubon Adventures", a science-based scholastic program for 4th and 5th graders in Volusia County
- Project Ibis, where we work with Volusia County Schools
- Regional Conservation Committees (Central Florida and Indian River Lagoon)
- Review land management plans at parks
- Support bird rehabbers
- Provide judges and monetary awards to the Volusia County Science Fair
- Promote Plants for Birds, part of Audubon's Bird Friendly Communities.

\* \* \* \*



A male Summer Tanager on the fountain at Fort DeSoto. If the bird's eye looks a bit weird it's because the bird has closed its nictitating membrane to shield its eyes from the water spray. These clear membranes can be closed to protect the eye in flight or from possible damage. *Photo by Don Chalfant*

**Conservation Notes**

By the time you read this the legislative session will have ended and we'll know how our legislators voted on a variety of issues that will affect us all. I doubt anyone reading this is in favor of 3 new toll roads through the heart of the state. The only reason to build the roads is to open up new areas for wholesale destruction disguised as new developments. That, and as payback for the generous campaign donations to our legislators from road builders and developers. As I write this the bill sailed through the Senate with only one dissenting vote from Senator Jose Javier Rodriguez (D) Miami. Ignoring all of the negative comments from their constituents I have no doubt the House will vote in a similar fashion.

\* \* \* \*

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) dates back to 1970. Among other things it requires environmental impact statements from all government agencies whose mission or actions could affect the environment. This is also true for large corporations and developers. Trump and his evil minions have ignored the Act when it suited them but have not tried to amend it. If he's reelected to a second term they've already been working on ways to gut NEPA and we'll see a return to the days of polluted rivers catching fire and air so dirty you can't breathe it. All part of making America great again.

\* \* \* \*

Facebook and the News-Journal's editorial pages have been filled with angry comments about the ongoing restoration of the salt marshes in south Flagler County. In the 1950's and 60's a large dragline was brought in to dig mosquito control canals. This ham fisted approach was thought to be best management practices at the time. In the process of digging the ditches there were islands created that allowed the growth of trees, including invasive exotics like Brazilian pepper. The ditches also became favored fishing spots because they were deeper than the surrounding areas. So when the restoration plan was announced people from all sides of the political spectrum were up in arms about what they saw as destruction of their environment.

That's because the vast majority of them weren't here before man decided to intervene in nature with his well intentioned but destructive plan. One guy who's been a very vocal critic says, "I've lived in Florida a long time and part of that is that I expect to see cabbage palms." Well that's fine. It is after all the state tree. But they have no place in a salt marsh. As for the fishermen who stand to lose their favorite fishing spots, a restored salt marsh is the active nursery for both fresh and salt water species. That means more fish for all. And we're going to need all the salt marsh we can restore if we're to keep up with the expanding demand. Seafood is a multi billion dollar industry in Florida and we're in the process of vacuuming the oceans clear of just about every species in our quest to fill demand.

Recently I took a boat ride with Paul Haydt (who gave the chapter a report on this issue several months ago) to see the progress being made in the restoration. Twenty-two acres were removed from the project in response to complaints from nearby property owners. So they'll still have their Brazilian pepper to look at. The people doing the work are monitoring turbidity and other indicators of progress. Yes, it looks messy. In five years it will be a vibrant, restored salt marsh that will nurture burgeoning fish populations and offer storm surge protection. With rising sea levels that's going to be a lot more important than a few cabbage palms.

*David Hartgrove*

## April At Fort DeSoto

Sixteen of us met at the big flag on Wednesday, April 17th. It was the beginning of several days of fun birding, good food and great conversations. When I say we met at the big flag I'm referring to a landmark visible from just about anywhere in the park. On Friday afternoon the flag was about to be blown off the pole as a cold front came sweeping across the Gulf. That made for an exceptional day on Saturday. Though it was still a blustery day the park was awash in birders and photographers. At the Ranger's house we had 4 Dickcissels clinging to the swaying branches of a sea grape tree. A Merlin flew over and perched on a snag giving the photographers fits of excitement.

By Saturday we were down to just 5 of us left. Most of the group left just ahead of the storm on Friday. We searched the Arrowhead Picnic Area and other spots without much luck. Then I got a report from a friend of lots of activity along the road to the east beach turnaround. As we approached we could see a whole line of cars parked along the road. On the other side of the road, sheltered from the winds, was a long wall of sea grape trees in bloom. The long flower spikes were attracting tiny insects and this meant warblers, lots and lots of warblers. Tennessee Warblers outnumbered just about everything else. There were Scarlet and Summer Tanagers, Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, Rose-breasted and Blue Grosbeaks, Indigo and Painted Buntings, Prairie and Prothonotary, Yellow and Yellow-rumped Warblers and others. We saw 103 species in all, including 17 species of warbler.



Indigo Bunting feeding on lantana berries, *photo by Don Chalfant*



Rose-breasted Grosbeak, *photo by Don Chalfant*

We had a great time, saw some excellent birds, shared good food (especially at Billy's Stone Crab) and we'll be looking forward to another trip to this exciting spot in years to come.

*David Hartgrove*



Swainson's Warbler with a tasty morsel, *photo by David Baker*



Tennessee Warbler, *photo by Joan Tague*

## Some More Fort DeSoto Photos

Here are a few more photos from our trip. Enjoy!



Not seen in Florida often, this Dickcissel had everyone oohing and aaahing at the Ranger's house. Photo by *David Baker*



Hooded Warbler, Photo by *Joan Tague*

## The Wonders of Pollination

Board Member, Steve Underwood, sent this link to an amazing [four minute video](#). In slow motion you can see the intricate flight of hummingbirds (one doing barrel rolls chasing a bee), butterflies and bats. Don't miss the female bat feeding at a cactus flower while carrying her youngster about half way in. Enjoy!

## From The Quotable Birder

"Cranes carry this heavy mystical baggage. They're icons of fidelity and happiness. The Vietnamese believe cranes cart our souls up to heaven on their wings." *Northern Exposure*, 1992



And of course we're not just into birds, here's a mangrove skipper. Photo by *Don Chalfant*

\* \* \* \* \*

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Field Trips: Peggy Yokubonus

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Newsletter Editor: David Hartgrove

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\* \* \* \* \*

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

# The Pelican

For wildlife & people since 1923

Volume 65-Number 6. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon  
June, 2019



## Comments & Conservation Notes

Regular readers will note the change in the title of the president's column. Yes, we have a new president. Actually, we have a returning president. One who does so reluctantly. But since I was vice president and no one else stepped forward to accept the role, it fell to me. I've been Conservation Chair since 1987 and have served in several other positions over the years. We have a very experienced and capable board to help me over the next two years and I look forward to working with them as we carry on our mission to protect our environment and the quality of life we hope to leave for others.

We all owe a debt of gratitude to our our immediate past President, Melissa Lammers. It says a lot that someone who had just joined the organization volunteered to accept the position of President. She served with distinction and showed us all new ways to communicate our message to the community at large. Thankfully she remains on the board to help us even more.

One big duty the board has over the summer months is to plan our field trip schedule for the 2019/2020 season. If you have any suggestions for field trip destinations please contact [Peggy Yokubonus](#) or [me](#) with your suggestion. And thank you.

\* \* \* \*

The wetlands restoration and dragline ditch mitigation in Flagler County is moving right along. In the latest report we learn that the project is just over 25% complete, that turbidity levels are well below permitted requirements and that new vegetation is already growing in Section A, on which barriers were recently removed. Members of the St Johns River Water Management District's governing board toured the project on May 5th to see the progress for themselves. Look for a new kayak trail through the area to be announced later this year. Stay up to date on the project by visiting their [website](#).

Nesting birds are all around us now and one pair is new to our area. The first documented nesting by a pair of Roseate Spoonbills in Volusia County is playing out now in New Smyrna Beach. Chapter member, Lisa Mickey, who leads kayak and pontoon boat trips for the [Marine Discovery Center](#), discovered the nesting pair on one of the small islands just south of the North Causeway. The colony there includes Brown Pelicans, Great and Snowy Egrets, Tricolored Herons and others. It continues to be monitored by Lisa and others for the [Florida Shorebird Alliance](#). In addition to the spoonbills there are other shore and water birds nesting here, including on rooftops. Least Terns have returned to the roof of City Island Library.

*Continued below.*

## Calendar & Events

*As we're in our summer hiatus the only meetings to announce are our monthly board meetings. All chapter members are invited to attend and they are held on the 1st Monday of the month at the Ormond Beach Regional Library at 1:30 pm.*

## Field Trips

*Again, as we're in our summer hiatus there are no chapter field trips to announce. However, there are other choices out there.*

## Lyonia Environmental Center Programs

The Lyonia Environmental Center, located at 2150 Eustace Avenue, in Deltona has programs for all ages. Below is a sampling.

**Saturday, June 8th**, "Incredible Insects" Creature Feature from 2:00-3:00 p.m. Have you ever wondered how insects grow? Or how fast is the fastest flying insect? Join LEC staff and experienced Animal Care volunteers to learn the answers to these questions and more fun facts. This program is designed for all ages and we encourage participants to ask questions, explore and have fun!

**Saturday, June 15th**, Animal Coverings: Fur, Feathers & Scales from 1:00-2:00 p.m. Humans wear jackets, hats and boots to stay warm, and protect us from the elements. However, animals have these layers already built in. Whether it helps them to stay warm, or provides protection from predators, animal coverings all have a role to help them survive in their natural habitat. Join LEC staff and volunteers to get an up close encounter with some of our scaly reptile animal ambassadors as we discuss what role their coverings play in their own survival.

## See Nesting Sea Turtles At Canaveral National Seashore

If you've never been on the beach at night and watched a massive loggerhead or green sea turtle crawl ashore, dig her nest and lay her eggs, this is your chance. Canaveral National Seashore programs will take place in both districts: Apollo (NSB) and Playalinda (Titusville). The schedule is for Wednesday through Saturday nights in June and July. Reservations are required and can be made by calling 386-428-3384 ext. 223 or in person at the Visitor Center daily 9:00am-5:00pm. The fee is 14.00 per person for ages 16 and older. Fifteen and under are free and children must be 8 years old to participate. Spaces fill up quickly so they'll appreciate your patience when scheduling for this very popular program.

I was able to scope the rooftop from the nearby Broadway Bridge and counted 89 incubating adults and estimated 109 adults in the area. They've been nesting there for about 2 weeks now as I write this. So hatching should begin soon. In addition, we all have cardinals, mockingbirds and lots of other species nesting in our neighborhoods and yards. Keep an eye and ear out for the special moments that allow us to witness this miracle of adaption to their living with us.

**Spoonbill update!** As we got to press Lisa sends word that she lead a kayak trip today (5/31) and was able to confirm at least 2 and possibly 3 chicks in the nest.

David Hartgrove

\* \* \* \*

### Our New Board Roster

President: David Hartgrove

Immediate Past President: Melissa Lammers

1st Vice President: Vacant (you could volunteer)

2nd Vice President: Vacant (we haven't had one in years)

Recording Secretary: Pam Pennella

Corresponding Secretary: Steve Underwood

Treasurer: Ellen Tate

Membership Secretary: Joan Tague

Historian: Holly Zwart-Duryea

At Large Members: Barbara Northrup, Steve Underwood and Peggy Yokubonus.

There are two At Large positions unfilled. There's still time for you to volunteer for one of the vacant positions or to join one of our standing committees: Conservation, Education, Field Trips or Welcoming. Please consider volunteering. We, and you, will be glad you did.

\* \* \* \*



Roseate Spoonbill standing with American Avocets at MINWR, January, 2016. Photo by David Hartgrove

## Saying Goodbye To Hope

The following is taken from [The Birding Community E-Bulletin](#) Published by Massachusetts Audubon and the National Wildlife Refuge Association. I wrote about Hope in a previous issue. Editor.

“Hope” was one of seven Whimbrels banded in 2008 and 2009 as part of a joint project between the Nature Conservancy and the Center for Conservation Biology at the College of William & Mary in Virginia. She was initially tracked with a satellite transmitter and became a living symbol of the challenges faced by migratory shorebirds throughout their lives. Hope was the last of her group of seven that continued to be monitored for years. Unfortunately, she is also considered to be one of the many casualties of Hurricane Maria in September 2017.

Hope was originally captured as an adult on 19 May, 2009 while staging in Boxtree Creek in Virginia where she was banded and fitted with a satellite transmitter as part of a study focused on Whimbrel migration. Hope was then tracked for more than 50,000 miles back and forth four times between her breeding site on the Mackenzie River in far western Canada and her wintering site on Great Pond, on St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. Once her transmitter antenna was lost in September 2012, shortly after she arrived at Great Pond, researchers decided to remove the transmitter rather than replace it. After removing the transmitter in late November 2012, Hope simply had to be identified by her coded leg flag (AYY).

Hope was featured on a website that allowed the public to potentially track her movements. She rapidly attracted a near-cult following of shorebird biologists, bird watchers, and school children from across the hemisphere and beyond. Over the years, she became a virtual ambassador for shorebird migrants making impressive nonstop flights, sometimes moving great distances out over the open Atlantic Ocean, and navigating with great precision to specific stopover sites. Hope reliably exhibited high fidelity to her breeding site, her wintering location, and several staging areas along the way.

One of the more dramatic events during Hope's tracking life occurred in August of 2011 when, after taking off from South Hampton Island in Hudson Bay, she encountered Tropical Storm Gert over the open ocean off the coast of Nova Scotia. Hope flew through the storm for 27 hours against powerful headwinds. Once she broke through the storm, she immediately made a turn toward Cape Cod, and after an unplanned layover to refuel, she ultimately continued to her winter territory on Great Pond.

In mid-August 2017, Hope arrived at her usual wintering site at Great Pond where she was positively observed and photographed. St. Croix was hit by Hurricane Irma on 6 September 2017 as a category five storm with heavy rain and major damage. Unfortunately, less than two weeks later, on 19 September, St. Croix was hit by Hurricane Maria, with the eye of the storm passing directly over Great Pond. In spite of careful searching Hope was not seen again.

In a thoughtful homage to Hope, Bryan Watts, from the Center for Conservation Biology, wrote the following: "Over a short period of time, by just living out her fascinating life, Hope unknowingly taught scientists important lessons about the requirements of Whimbrels through the annual cycle, educated the broader community about the challenges faced by migratory birds, demonstrated that local actions can contribute to international movements, and left a legacy that will educate children for generations. Fair winds and following seas, Hope."



Black-bellied Plovers in basic and alternate plumage

*Photo by Ray Scory*

### The Last Field Trip

The Dunlawton Bridge never disappoints. I stand by my proclamation that at anytime of the day, any day of the week, any week of the month or any month of the year, you should be able to observe at least twenty-five species of birds in one and a half hours at the bridge. At our chapter's recent, last field trip of the season, it happened again - twenty-eight species of birds in a two hour time frame. In the last twenty-one years, I have led many Halifax River Audubon field trips and have birded the bridge hundreds of times. Always, I target the magic twenty-five number and again and again and again I have not been disappointed.

Usually I experience at least one special birding treat per visit, such as: an American Oystercatcher nesting, a lone American Avocet, a small flock of migrating Black-throated Blue Warblers resting at my feet, a Brown Booby bucking October hurricane force winds and a glorious Rainbow closing out a rainy December afternoon. Memories. Not replaceable.

Our last of the season field trip again provided memorable birding. A special treat, this late afternoon, was watching 30 to 40 Black-bellied Plovers in full breeding plumage feeding on the sandbars south of the bridge. Stop, go and poke is their feeding technique. A few, fast steps forward, a stop, a drop of their bill, a short probe into the sand and then again repeat, over and over again. A theater of activity and black and white contrast radiantly displayed on a sandy stage illuminated by a sunny warm day.

I get to see them more frequently in their non-breeding plumage of a light brown/gray appearance, white underparts with a softly mottled back and two large dark eyes. Their breeding plumage is a study of extreme contrast - a rich black face and belly with white under parts and black and white speckled wings and back. Flying overhead, a black patch under the armpits of each wing is diagnostic.

*To be so bold as to memorialize the birds that graced our last field trip, I list the following:*

Rock Pigeon, American Oystercatcher, Black-bellied Plover, Semi-palmated Plover, Rudy Turnstone, Sanderling, Least Sandpiper, Semi-palmated Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper Willet, Laughing Gull, Herring Gull, Least Tern, Royal Tern, Brown Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron,

Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Reddish Egret, Green Heron, White Ibis, Bald Eagle, Fish Crow, Red-winged Blackbird, Boat-tailed Grackle and Common Grackle.

*Ray Scory*

\* \* \* \*



Tom Colvin, Melissa Lammers, Ranger, Celena Zimmerman and Sande Habali

*Photo by Luis Villalon*

### Cross-Pollination Makes Us Better Together!

Partnership for the environment truly pays off. On Saturday, May 25th, at North Peninsula State Park, Ranger Celena Zimmerman, Gamble Rogers / North Peninsula State Park, hosted a "Landscaping for Wildlife" event and invited Halifax River Audubon (HRA) and the Pawpaw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society (Pawpaw) to participate as co-presenters. A very attentive group of about twenty-five people took in valuable information and stayed post-event to ask many good questions of Sande Habali, Tom Colvin, Melissa Lammers and Ranger Zimmerman.

Based on Audubon's "Plants for Birds" program, HRA and Pawpaw (Melissa Lammers, Sande Habali and Don Spence) have been speaking at events and to homeowner's associations about the essential role native plants in home landscapes play in stopping the decline of North American song bird populations, and indeed, in maintaining the biodiversity that supports all life. We emphasize that planting native plants for birds is far kinder and gentler on our environment, and especially our water, than typical Florida landscape practices, and we provide a "roadmap" to help others begin to go native. If you know of a group or homeowner's association that would be interested in learning about Native Plants for Birds, please contact Melissa Lammers, [melissalammers@gmail.com](mailto:melissalammers@gmail.com).

*Melissa Lammers*

\* \* \* \*

### From The Quotable Birder

"I wish the Bald Eagle had not been chosen as the representative of our country; he is a bird of bad moral character; like those among men who live by sharpening and robbing, he is generally poor, and often lousy. The turkey is a much more respectable bird, and withal a true original native of America."

*Benjamin Franklin, in a letter to Sarah Bache on eagles*



## Articles Needed

I know there are a number of you out there who could write an excellent article for this publication. You've had an interesting experience watching birds in your backyard or on a trip to somewhere to see birds, like the Biggest Week In Birding, which I know a number of you have attended. Please, send them to me. The deadline for articles to be published is the 25th of the month. You can include photos if you have them. We may not have room for all of the photos and your article may have to be edited for length but this goes with publishing. Send them to me at [editor@halifaxriveras.org](mailto:editor@halifaxriveras.org) and many thanks! *Editor.*

\* \* \* \*

## Membership News

Regular readers may notice that this is the second month without any information on new and returning members. The national office has been experiencing some issues with what we're assured are upgrades to their system. Look for a very large list in an upcoming issue of the Pelican. *Editor*

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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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Field Trips: Peggy Yokubonus

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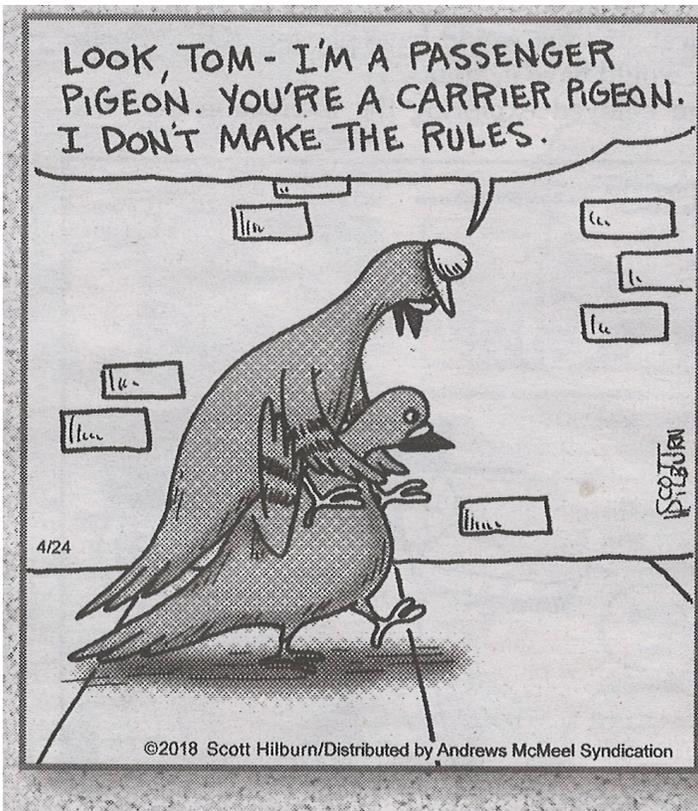
Newsletter Editor: David Hartgrove

Welcome: Pam Pinella

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.



# The Pelican

For wildlife & people since 1923

Volume 65-Number 7. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon  
July, 2019



## Comments & Conservation Notes

One of the big stories locally is the renewed effort on the part of a small but vocal group of ATV enthusiasts to have the roads and trails in Tiger Bay State Forest opened to them and their machines. Six years ago they prevailed on the City of Daytona Beach to write a letter to the state endorsing such an ill conceived plan. Then they tried to get the Volusia County Council to do so also. That effort failed when the environmental community turned out in force and offered overwhelming testimony outlining the many ways that this was a bad idea.

That was in 2013 and with an almost entirely new Council in place the ATV folks thought it was time to try again. So at the County Council meeting on June 4th, after a long day, former sheriff, Ben Johnson, made a motion to have the Council send a letter to the state endorsing opening TBSF to ATV's. The timing was not accidental. Nor was the fact that this wasn't an agenda item. The advocates knew this was a very controversial issue and it was hoped that the vote would slip through unnoticed until it was too late. It passed unanimously. Luckily, former Councilwoman, Joie Alexander, had been listening to the meeting online. Though the meeting had ended she immediately called several current Council members and former Councilwoman, Pat Northey. By late that night Councilwoman, Heather Post, had called Dan Eckert, the County Attorney, to have her name removed from the letter. The combined wrath of the environmental community fell on the Council and within 2 weeks the decision was reversed on a 4 to 3 vote to rescind the letter.

There's a rumor that the next step for the ATV folks will be to ask members of the Volusia legislative delegation to file a bill in next year's legislature to open Tiger Bay to their vehicles. We will be watching this issue closely. Stay tuned.

\* \* \*

Two more issues have arisen locally: a proposed landscape and tree advisory committee in Ormond Beach and the possibility of seeing the conversion of all those septic tanks in Ormond By The Sea to a sanitary sewer system. Ken and Julie Sipes have undertaken an effort to have the City of Ormond Beach reestablish a Landscaping and Tree Advisory Committee. Our chapter certainly supports this effort. Had such a committee been in place, perhaps the destruction of all those beautiful oak trees on Granada Blvd. for yet another gas station wouldn't have happened. The septic tank issue will be contentious and take a longer time to reach resolution. In the interest of finally doing something meaningful to address water quality issues we support the conversion.

David Hartgrove

## Calendar & Events

*While we're in our summer hiatus and not having field trips there's still a full list of events sponsored by Volusia County.*

**Friday, July 12th, 9:00 to 11:00 am, Hike Doris Leeper Spruce Creek Preserve-** Learn about the importance of estuaries while hiking through beautiful scenery. Participants will have the opportunity to pull a seine net and learn fish, plant and bird identification. Meet at 3251 N. Dixie Highway, NSB, FL 32168. Please wear closed toed shoes and be sure to register by calling 386-736-5927.

**Tuesday, July 23rd, 9:00 to 11:00 am, Bike the Lake Beresford Trail-** Ride the Lake Beresford Park trail and a segment of the spring to spring trail. Participants will learn about the local environment, and the importance of protecting the water quality of our springs. Emphasis will be on the connectivity of our local water bodies. Participants are required to wear a helmet and bring their own bicycle. Meet at Beresford Park, 2100 Fatio Rd; DeLand. Please be sure to register by calling 386-736-5927.

**Saturday, July 27th, 10:00 to 11:00 am, Butterflies at Lyonia Environmental Learning Center-** Laura Cash, 4-H Extension Agent at University of Florida IFAS Extension, will be presenting on Florida's native butterflies, their host plants and how to create a wildlife friendly yard. Laura will also have multiple butterfly framed displays for participants to view. The address is 2150 Eustace Ave. Deltona, FL 32725.

\* \* \* \*

## Volunteer and Make a Difference

The Marine Discovery Center, 520 Barracuda Blvd. New Smyrna Beach, has a wide variety of volunteer opportunities. Do you have any experience running a drill press? Oyster shells, collected from restaurants across our area, need holes drilled in them to make oyster mats used in shoreline restoration. If you've never even seen a drill press a few short minutes of training will have you drilling like a pro in no time.

Interested in becoming an exhibit docent and helping guests explore the tanks, critters, and other exhibits? Join them for the next docent training session, Wednesday, July 17th. Docents introduce guests to the tanks and other displays in the exhibit area as well as assist guests in handling animals in the touch tanks. To sign up for this training and any other opportunities, Contact Logan Rohrbach at [logan@marinediscoverycenter.org](mailto:logan@marinediscoverycenter.org)

***Your life will be a lot better if you spend part of it volunteering!***

## Kite Watching, 2019

On February 23, Avian Research and Conservation Institute (ARCI) asked if I'd participate in a new official Kite Watch program because I had reported a nest in my sub-division in previous years. When I signed up I didn't realize how invested I'd get in these birds.

The nest has been located in tall pine trees near the sixth hole on our golf course for as long as I've lived here—15 years. Miraculously, when over 1,200 trees were damaged during Hurricane Matthew in 2016, the nest tree and a dozen or so surrounding pines were spared.



*Mom and Junior in the nest tree. Photo by Paula Wehr*

Sight lines to the nest are only available from the golf course, so I secured permission from a homeowner to walk across his property, and since I couldn't be on the course during play, I visited about an hour before dusk. Every visit showed mama on the nest. Weeks went by and still she sat on the nest. I was beginning to think this was the longest incubation in history.

Then one afternoon it rained and I decided to go earlier at 5:00 p.m. since the course would be empty. That's when I saw movement in the nest. Eureka! The chicks had hatched. A scope view gave me a surprise when two downy chicks about half the size of the adults sat up in the nest to receive a tasty lizard brought in by one of the parents. How could these chicks be so large?

Then I realized that by visiting the nest so late in the day, I was seeing mama after she tucked the chicks into the nest and put them to bed. Apparently, they had hatched at least a week earlier—maybe more. Lesson learned for the future.

Visits over the next few weeks showed the chicks growing every day and changing from fuzz-covered chicks into mottled juveniles with white patches on their black wings and buffy stripes on their white heads and necks. One chick was clearly

*Continued in the next column*

older than the other, showing feathers earlier and standing up and exercising his/her wings earlier.

On June 8 there was only one chick in the nest. An adult flew in with a meal and left again. I believe this was the younger chick. He/she perched on the branch above the nest and took long looks down toward the ground, but made no move. This same scene was repeated on June 10. Five adult kites were soaring around the nest tree, calling to each other. Or maybe they were calling to the chick to join them. Two adults, I assume the parents, flew into the nest tree near the chick and then flew off. Apparently the chick was not ready to leave the nest.

Storms took over the afternoons and evenings of the next few days. When I visited the nest on June 13, I found it empty. I scanned the nearby trees and didn't see any kites. I heard a kite calling and watched as the bird flew into the nest tree. I really thought it was the younger chick because there was a faint tinge of buffy yellow on the neck. He perched near the nest and flew off. The more labored flapping (as opposed to the effortless gliding of adult swallow-tailed kites) and the shorter tail with a shallower notch also gave the impression the bird was newly-fledged. Then I heard another kite calling and flying toward me. This bird, too, flapped rather than glided and had a somewhat bulkier profile than an adult. The two birds flew several circles above me and then flew off over the tree line.

It wasn't until I came home and was entering my last sighting into the Kite Watch website that I realized these were the two chicks who came to say good-bye to me. I know we should not anthropomorphize animals, but that's my story and I'm sticking to it.

*Paula Wehr*

\* \* \* \*

## Volusia's First Spoonbill Chicks ?



*Photo by Cade Cresap, FWC*

The photo above was shot with an iPhone through a pair of binoculars. So while not the best quality it clearly shows a 2 Roseate Spoonbill chick with 2 White Ibis. We think these might be the first spoonbills ever to nest in the county and there's another nest in New Smyrna Beach! *Editor*



Photo montage by Ray Scory

### Birds In My Pool

*Can a bird and a pool be as one?*

*Of course, when the bird splashes in a newly found pool.*

*Sending traces of water up and about  
into crystalline bursts of radiant cheer,  
finally rising to the wonder of a high day's sun.*

*Doesn't it say, that we all can be one.*

Birds come to my yard as a daily occurrence. The need for a bath seems paramount. One to three at a time, they appear at the birdbath. Infrequently, five at the most and then all about the same size. and same species. However, I have watched four different species in the water at the same time - A Yellow-throated Warbler, a Palm Warbler, a female Painted Bunting and a female Brown-headed Cowbird. They quickly disperse when a larger more raucous bird flies in. A few minutes in the bath and the intruder flies out and like an incoming tide the five return to continue their watery cascade. Patience is a virtue. Not only because it maintains good health but assures longer survival in the wild. Palm Warblers seem to like the bird bath above all others that frequent my yard. I have watched four Palm Warblers in the bath at the same time. Brown Thrashers and Northern Mockingbirds are next in line.

A study showed that starlings deprived of a bath had poorer feather conditioning than starlings that were able to take frequent bathes. The birds, able to bathe, had better flight mobility thus able the out maneuver advancing predators.

*Continued in the next column*

A birdbath is a good thing to have in your yard, as important as a bird feeder, I believe. This comes from my observations over many years of having a birdbath in my yard and not from any scientific facts. I have placed the birdbath near a saw palmetto and a bushy lemon tree which offers good protection from marauding predators. It is interesting to see how clandestine a tiny bird can be entering and exiting my birdbath.

I have included in my bird bathing photo-montage three images of waterbirds that have not used my back yard birdbath. The Great Egret, Snowy Egret and Green Heron were photographed under the Dunlawton Bridge. While the small pond at the Dunlawton Bridge is not in my backyard, I call it my pool. I have visited the bridge so many times in the last twenty-one years that it has become one of my favorite spots to bird near my home. One of my spots. A very familiar spot. My close to home birdbath.

I am fascinated by avian behavior outside of their typical environment . I am fascinated by the behavior of birds coming to my birdbath. I like watching what they do while at a bird bath. I like to personalize their expressions. To see their expressions to feel what I think they are feeling - to interpret. To see more into the mystery of birds by watching them at my birdbath.

Ray Scory

\* \* \* \*

### Some St Marks History

*Since our trips to St Marks NWR have become an annual event we thought it was time for some history of the place. Our thanks to Melissa's brother, Jonathan, for this well written and concise article. Thankfully malaria isn't a problem for us.*

What is today the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge was originally established in 1931 as the St. Marks Migratory Waterfowl Refuge. In the summer of 1933, Civilian Conservation Corps Camp BF-1 was established near Newport to begin work on various improvements to the refuge. It was one of the few all African American camps in the CCC. The camp was briefly closed in 1934 due to a malaria outbreak, and then relocated near Woodville, Florida. Between 1934 and 1942, camp workers made a number of improvements at the refuge, including constructing Lighthouse Road, building earthen levees to create large water impoundments for waterfowl, and clearing more than 20 miles of firebreaks. They also constructed a diversion dam, two lookout towers, dwellings and other camp buildings, and strung dozens of miles of telephone and electrical wires on poles cut on the refuge. From the camp's base in Woodville, the workers also assisted private owners in fire control and forestry replanting.

Jonathan Lammers

\* \* \* \*

### 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 his life... The beautiful vagabonds, endowed with every grace, masters of all climes, and knowing no bounds-how many human aspirations are released in their free, holiday- lives- and how many suggestions to the poet their flight and song."

John Burroughs, *Birds and Poets*

## Can the New Solar Farm Help Birds?



Before construction began on Florida Power & Light's new solar farm on SR 44 they reached out to Audubon and the Native Plant Society to see if there were ways to enhance the facility for wildlife. Representatives from the Paw Paw Chapter made suggestions for plantings that wouldn't grow too high and block the panels and I suggested a gravel area to attract nesting Common Nighthawks. This is a species that has seen precipitous drop in population over the past 25 years. Once a common sight at twilight and just before dawn, they're all but impossible to find in our area now. The average Common Nighthawk will eat 900+ mosquitoes a night. So we need them



almost as much as they need the correct nesting habitat. The sub-station yard above, which is adjacent the solar farm, provides perfect habitat for the birds, which nest on the ground. While I didn't see any native plants from the road, other than dog fennel and Spanish needles, there were Mourning Doves, Red-winged Blackbirds and a Red-shouldered Hawk feeding or trying to feed inside the fence. So the solar farm, in addition to providing clean, cheap, renewable energy (something we've been begging for for decades) is also providing habitat for birds and other wildlife.

*And yes, FPL is our biggest contributor and has been for a long time.*  
*Photos by David Hartgrove*

## Welcome to Our New & Returning Members

*We haven't been able to acknowledge our new and returning members for a couple of months due to problems Audubon was having with their database. Those have now been corrected. So we extend a warm welcome to our new and returning members: Suzanne Allen, Helen Anderson, Ursula Battaglia, Charles Bell, Jonathan Booraem, Elizabeth Brown, Rosemary Capocci, Candace Curtis, Janet Damiano, Vince Decapite, Carleen Eberhardt, John Erickson, Irene Fennell, Angelo Fiore, Timothy Gudukas, Josette Halin, James Henson, Susan Higgins, Delores Jackson, Carolyn Keene, Daniel Kerr, Virginia & Anthony Knull, Diane Lapham, Debra Larson, Rowland McDowell, Paul McKennon, Shiela McKay, Dale Meagley, Raymond Mercer, Debbie Powell, Kim Ramos, Rachel Ramsey, Paul Rebmann, Bette Rutan, Stewart Spar, Alyce Switzer, Ellen Tate, Jon Troup, James Welcher, Connie Wilson and Joanne Wright. We hope to see you in September at our first meeting or on one of our excellent field trips.*

*Editor*

\* \* \* \* \*

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## Comments & Conservation Notes

At our next board meeting we will be reviewing our bylaws. Last revised in 2012, it's time we look at them again to see if an update is called for.

Last month the new duck stamp for 2019/2020 went on sale. It features a handsome, male Wood Duck. There is simply no better way to contribute to bird and nature conservation than to annually purchase a duck stamp. Ninety-eight percent of funding for the nation's national wildlife refuges comes from duck stamp sales. They're available [online](#), at refuges, like Merritt Island and supposedly at post offices, though I've yet to find a post office that sold them. It's the best use of 25.00 I can think of.

The National Environmental Policy Act, NEPA, is one of the most important pieces of legislation to come out of the early rush to do something right at the end of the 60's. Scenes of the Cuyhoga River on fire in 1969 that flashed across TV screens, coupled with the huge reaction to the publication of Rachel Carson's book, "Silent Spring" helped serve as a catalyst to public opinion. Suddenly the terrible things that we'd been doing to our world in the name of profits and a "better life" were seen for what they were, destroying the things that make life worth living.

The greed heads who were working so hard to make a fast buck at the expense of our quality of life didn't suddenly turn into enlightened entrepreneurs when those laws, like NEPA, the Clean Water and Clean Air acts were passed in 1970. They started think tanks, like the Heritage Foundation. Founded in 1973 they, along with others of their ilk, are funded by the country's largest polluters. They spend a lot of time and tax exempt money writing position papers that whine about how NEPA and other environmental regulations are keeping the US at a competitive disadvantage in the world market. Anyone who's been to India or Brazil or China would quickly tell you how polluted and dirty the air, water and everything else is in those countries. This happens because they do not have laws to protect the environment. Or if they do they're so poorly enforced as to have no impact. That's the future we have if Trump and his henchmen are not held in check. One concern now is that the big infrastructure spending bill that's been a work in progress for over a year will contain language that weakens or does away entirely with NEPA. All legislation is a product of compromise. It's a cinch we need billions spent on road and bridge repair, our national parks and water quality projects. We should not be asked to sacrifice laws protecting our quality of life for those long ignored maintenance items.

*David Hartgrove*

## Calendar & Events

*One more month until we're back to our field trips and meetings. Till then check out these offerings from Volusia County Land Management.*

**Monday, August 5th, HRA Board Meeting, 1:30 pm-** We meet at the Ormond Library. Members are welcome to attend.

**Tuesday, August 6th, 9:00 to 10:15 am-** Hurricane of Knowledge at Doris Leeper Spruce Creek Preserve. As we are coming into the core of hurricane season, Florida Master Naturalist, Terry Bledsoe, will lead a discussion on the history and significance of these natural phenomenon. Terry will talk about local impacts and give information on hurricane preparedness. She will also incorporate historic information on Doris Leeper. Meet 2317 Creek Shore Trail, New Smyrna Beach, Florida.

**Wednesday, August 14th, 8:00 to 10:00 am-** Snorkel/Swim Adventure- Lighthouse Point Park. Bring your snorkeling gear and sense of adventure to learn about the wonders of this underwater ecosystem. Participants will learn about various marine species, while snorkeling the high slack tide near Ponce DeLeon Inlet. Participants must be able to swim, have their own equipment, and anyone under the age of 18 will be required to wear a Personal Floatation Device (PFD) and be accompanied by an adult guardian at all times. Meet at Light House Point Park 5000 S. Atlantic Ave., Ponce Inlet.

**Tuesday, August 20th, 9:00 to 10:30 am-** Sharks!- Indian River Lagoon Preserve Park. Sharks are one of the most fascinating creatures in our waters, from their importance at the top of the food chain, to their incredible abilities to detect changes in the geomagnetic field. Join us for a wonderful shark presentation by Marilyn Sullivan. Meet at 700 Sandpiper St. New Smyrna Beach.

**Wednesday, August 28th, 8:30 to 10:30 am-** Snorkel Program- Blue Spring State Park "paid Entry". Bring your snorkel gear to explore the wonders of the spring habitat. Participants will get the opportunity to learn about the importance of springs while enjoying crystal clear "72°F" water. Participants must be able to swim, have their own equipment, and anyone under the age of 18 will be required to wear a Personal Floatation Device (PFD) and be accompanied by an adult guardian at all times. There will be a park entrance fee for admittance to the park (\$6 per vehicle. Limit 2-8 people in vehicle, \$4 for Single Occupant. Meet at the park, 2100 W. French Ave. Orange City.

Check out this link to the [Volusia County](#) website for information on all of their offerings.

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

## Shoreline Greenway Walk

Wind, rain and sun, with a refreshing chill comforting a soft foggy morning set the tone for my daily walk into Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison Connecticut. Early June is the time.

My walk has begun. A short half mile of visual pleasure to the main gate through overhanging oak trees and a green/golden salt marsh brought me past the Yellow Warbler tree, where I am always welcomed by the delightful cadence of, "sweet, sweet, sweet, oh so sweet." A happy singing Yellow Warbler, bright as the sun in a child's painting, halts all my mental and physical endeavors. I just listen. Amazing therapy.



Yellow Warbler, Photo by Ray Scory

As I crossed the bridge leading over a the salt marsh enclave, a series of rapid gurgling outbursts and excited flute-like melodies greeted me. A House Wren is loading soft grasses into the hole of a woodpecker's abandoned nest anticipating security in a dead snag situated at the edge of a tidal salt marsh. Moving on, I waved to the friendly ranger at the main gate and crossed the narrow road to begin an exploratory walk along a string of active marshes.

As I walk there are Gray Catbirds, territorial Marsh Wrens bursting with song and Song Sparrows calling out three distinct notes then a jumble of sing-song trills, each bird different in melody except for the same first three notes. Red-winged Blackbirds bounding out from the tall salt marsh grasses and making themselves known but expertly hiding their nests. Always evident are Common Terns, Herring and Ring-billed Gulls and Osprey flying about their high towered, stick nests. The view along this section is randomly broken by salt marsh plants, raspberry bushes, pine, beech, beach oak trees and water trenches made long ago to control mosquitos. They don't. Half way along this walk a soft, light rain added glitter to the landscape with crystalline drops of water clinging delicately to lush green leaves. It doesn't get much better than this.

Continuing on I stumbled upon an active Killdeer nest with three eggs. The nest was in the middle of a manicured stretch of lawn between a busy, beach access road and a parking lot. No cover at all. Such is the nature of Killdeer nest location selection. How they survive is a wonder considering the many dangers ahead- marauding gulls, crows, various small ground

animals and thousands of cars and people that pass by. But some do.

I marched on along the beach trail under threat of heavier rain and it eventually came. But not until I reached Meig's Point. Meig's Point is the tip of a two mile beach that juts out from the shoreline into Long Island Sound. The glacier of 18,000 years ago stalled here for 5000 years, disappeared and left behind a half mile swath of glacier strewn boulders and impressive sand dunes. Out in the salt marshes, remnants of a melting glacier, Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows live and hide. This particular area is a must stop for people who like looking at birds at any time of the year.

The rain came. I got back to cover at a pavilion near the Killdeer nest. My ride came. I look back on my six mile walk that day, to the gifts and expression provided by the land.



Willet in flight across the salt marsh, Photo by Ray Scory

\* \* \* \*

From Bird Studies Canada comes this welcome reminder

### Three Ways You Can Help Birds This Summer

1. Watch birds while volunteering for a citizen science program. [Project Feederwatch](#) is a great way to get started. It's easy to sign up and every entry goes into a database that can be accessed by scientists and students doing papers on a variety of topics. They also have good information on cleaning and maintaining your feeders.

2. Garden for birds, using native plants. Our chapter has been encouraging the use of native plants as both water wise and bird friendly alternatives to the plants often sold in big box stores. Wax myrtle, fireweed, butterfly bush, beard tongue, trumpet creeper and others are guaranteed to bring birds to your yard. Here's a link to the [Florida Wildflower Foundation's](#) webpage.

3. Keep birds safe and healthy. One of the biggest causes of avian mortality is crashes into glass. Large windows and glass doors take the lives of many birds when they fail to see the obstacle there. An easy and inexpensive solution is a product called [Feather Friendly](#). It's a tape you can install on your windows and doors that doesn't interfere with your vision but makes the glass visible to a bird fleeing a predator so that it doesn't crash into it. And there's a coupon code to use if you decide to order some. Type in BSC2019 when prompted and Feather Friendly will donate 1.00 per roll to Bird Studies Canada. It's a win win for everyone.

Paul Rebmann is a long time chapter member and current President of the Paw Paw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society. Here's part of a recent article he posted on his [blog](#).

## Backpacking Hopkins Prairie

I have backpacked different parts of the Florida Trail from the Rodman Dam to Clearwater Lake in the Ocala National Forest on several occasions, but there was a section between Salt Springs and Juniper Springs that I had never done. This March I closed this gap during a three day backpacking outing. Some of this hike covered parts of the Florida Trail in the Juniper Wilderness that I had done on two separate day hikes 22 years earlier. Another part of this year's hike was around Hopkins Prairie, which I had not visited before this.

After a relaxing pre-hike car-camp night at Juniper Springs campground with Virginia, I parked my car and she dropped me off where the trail crosses Salt Springs Highway(314). Unlike the time when I started from there hiking north to the Rodman Dam, I instead headed southbound. The trail here passes through several different habitats, one of which was some really pretty sandhills.



Trail In the Sandhills

One of the things I like about sandhills is the wide spacing of trees and the forest floor of mostly grasses and wildflowers. After about four hours of hiking with many pauses to photograph various subjects, I reached the prairie just in time to see a Northern Harrier cruising above the grasses and occasionally swooping down after something to eat. I set up camp in a small peninsula between the trail and the prairie under some slash pines.

While I ate my dinner I enjoyed a serenade of Sandhill Crane calls across the prairie. As dusk approached a soft buzzing sound slowly increased in volume and a dense layer of mosquitoes appeared above my head. When they started landing on the tent and my gear I quickly prepared camp for the night and ducked into my tent, where the constant buzzing reminded me of sleeping in a canoe in the everglades years ago. I went to sleep to a chorus of what sounded like bullfrogs, although I could not be sure that they were not alligators grunting, which made me think of William Bartram's story of camping on Dexter Point along the St. Johns River in 1774.

As the lightening sky signaled the approach of dawn, I emerged from the tent with my camera to see what sights the morning would bring. One of these was the mist rising from the little pond by the trail where I got my water.

Not an ideal source since the 'frog water' - as one passing hiker called it - required filtering through a cloth before treating.

Hopkins Prairie is about three miles long and varies from about one quarter to a half mile wide with the Florida Trail following the north and east edges of the prairie for about five miles. Despite the name, this natural community is probably more like a basin marsh than a typical wet prairie. On one side of the trail is the prairie and on the other side the habitats varied between hardwood hammocks, various mixed wooded areas and scrub. As I was hiking past one of these scrub areas a family of Florida Scrub-Jays were moving through the trees along the trail and dropping down to the ground to forage. A pair of Brown Thrashers and a male cardinal were also here and seemed to be hanging out with the scrub-jays.

For much of this day's hike small lizards would run from just ahead of me on the trail into the undergrowth. I finally captured photos of several of these. Some of them were the Florida scrub lizard, a state endemic.



Florida scrub lizard

After passing the big bat house and the Hopkins Prairie Recreation Area campground, where I topped off my water bottles at the hand pump, I came to a live oak hammock that appeared to have been used as a campsite. I walked down towards a dry depression and found a flatter spot with a ground cover of pine needles surrounded by small sand pines. Deciding that this would make a nice campsite, I then set down my pack and photographed some [jester lichen](#) and [deer moss](#).



3

Hopkin's Prairie and clouds

I then went for a cooling and cleansing swim in the large

*Continued below*

*Harry Robinson's surveys at Tom Rennick Park and the Dunlawton Bridge offer fascinating looks at what's flying by when most of us aren't watching. Here's his report from June.*

Well the quietest month of the year is now over. As expected there were no additions to the list. This year, as in 2016 and 2018, just 71 species were seen. There were 77 species in 2017. There were 30 surveys over 120 hours i.e. just four hours a day. On most days even that seemed too long. A total of 37 species were seen on the 19th and there were 476 birds on the 14th. For the year to date 186 species were seen with an overall list of 256 species.

Unexpectedly, there was a Cory's Shearwater on the 28th (east wind at 3 mph). There were single Brown Boobies on the 6th and 10th, both were immatures. There were single Northern Gannets on the 2nd, 3rd and 15th. Switching to the herons there were single Reddish Egrets on the 8th, 15th and 30th. There was a Green Heron on the 7th. Roseate Spoonbills were seen on seven dates with 16 on the 4th, ten on the 13th and 16 again on the 25th. On the 23rd a flock of six Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks flew to the north OVER the park; this is just the third record for the park. There were two Swallow-tailed Kites on the 1st with one on the 2nd and two again on the 7th.

Out at sea Black-necked Stilts were seen flying to the south on three dates, five on the 7th, seven on the 12th and five on the 19th. There was a Greater Yellowlegs on the 26th. Willets were seen from the 3rd with 14 on the 27th and 13 on the 29th. There were three Semipalmated Sandpipers on the beach on the 4th. There were two Gull-billed Terns on the 15th. Common Terns were seen on four dates with one on the 10th, two on the 19th, two on the 21st and seven on 24th. Another rarity was three Arctic Terns on the 17th. This is a joint high count. There was a first summer Black Tern on the 9th and Black Skimmers were seen to the 8th.

There were single White-winged Doves on the 11th and 28th. Single Downy Woodpeckers were noted on the 19th and 21st. There were single Great Crested Flycatchers on the 26th and an Eastern Kingbird on the 11th. There was a Loggerhead Shrike on the 30th. Single American Crows were seen on the 6th and 30th. There was a Northern Rough-winged Swallow on the 19th. Finally House Finches peaked at 24 on the 25th.

Highlights from Dunlawton Bridge include a high count of 360 Brown Pelicans, 43 Great Egrets, 4 American Oystercatchers, 187 Laughing Gulls, 5 Chimney Swifts, 1 Gray Kingbird.

*Harry Robinson*

*Harry's data from all of his observations at both locations is stored on our website. Check out this [link](#) to learn more*

\* \* \* \*

## Marine Discovery Center Lecture Series

### Sea Squirts And Heart Disease

Sea squirts and their role in treating heart disease will be the featured topic at the Marine Discovery Center's August monthly lecture.

Dr. Heather Evans Anderson, assistant professor of health science at Stetson University, will be the guest speaker.

The lecture will be held Thursday, August 15, starting at 6 p.m., and will be hosted by the Marine Discovery Center, located at 520 Barracuda Boulevard in New Smyrna Beach. MDC's August lecture is open to the public at no charge and no reservations are required. Seating in the center's Learning Lab is limited and early arrival is recommended.

sinkhole nearby. As I was returning to what I thought was going to be my campsite for the night I heard someone whistling loudly and calling out. I found the attendant from the campground standing by my backpack. He kindly explained that I can't camp there as it was still in the recreation area boundary, and also there was a concern that the only road exiting the campground would be blocked if a wildfire got started. I did not bother to explain that I was unlikely to have a campfire in 80 degree weather and was only using a little whisper-lite stove.

Glad that I had not unpacked very much, I reloaded my backpack and continued on the trail, passing the swimming hole and soon crossing the next forest road to leave the recreation area. I hiked about a half mile to where I found a tiny clearing off to the side of the trail with a spot where a campfire had been and just enough room for a one man tent. This was my home for the night. The next day's hike took me into and through the Juniper Prairie Wilderness, a subject for a future post.

*Article and photos by Paul Rebmann*

*Paul will be giving a presentation at our March meeting next year.*

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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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### Halifax River Audubon

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Meets monthly September through May

President: David Hartgrove

Vice President: Vacant

Past President: Melissa Lammers

Treasurer: Ellen Tate

Recording Sec.: Pam Pinnella

Membership Sec.: Joan Tague

Corresponding Sec: Steve Underwood

Historian: Holly Zwart-Duryea

At-Large: Barbara Northrup, Steve Underwood and Peggy Yokubonus

### Committee Members

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Education: Holly Zwart-Duryea

Field Trips: Peggy Yokubonus

David Hartgrove

Newsletter Editor: David Hartgrove

Welcome: Pam Pinella

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.**

# The Pelican

For wildlife & people since 1923

Volume 65-Number 9. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon  
September, 2019



## Comments & Conservation Notes

As I write this on Friday, August 30th, Hurricane Dorian is bearing down on our state's east coast and it's still a puzzle as to where its eye will make landfall. It's a cinch that there will be major damage to our environment, as well as a lot of homes and businesses. It's been a wet summer. Lake Okeechobee is already high and the forecast says there could be as much as 20 inches of rain. This doesn't bode well for the estuaries on the coasts of our state. I hope we all weather the storm with minimal damage to our homes and property. Our first field trip of the season will be to Biolab and Black Point Wildlife Drive, at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. Based on past experience I'd say there's a good chance we may have to change that destination. Damage from Hurricane Matthew in 2016 kept Biolab Road closed for well over a year. Stay tuned for updates to our field trip schedule just in case.

Our board was here meeting through the summer and we decided that it was time for an update of our chapter's bylaws. Board member, Holly Zwart-Duryea, took on the job of researching and drafting the new bylaws, with input from other members. We owe her a debt of gratitude for her long hours of work. The announcement of the changes will be made at the September meeting and the changes will be published in next month's Pelican before we vote on their acceptance at the October meeting.

Those of you who've been to Ding Darling NWR, on Sanibel Island, know that the island itself isn't too large. So the news that 68 acres adjacent to the Refuge, known as the Wulfert Bayous, has been purchased and added to its boundaries is welcome news. The cost was 9.5 million dollars. Lee County's Conservation 20/20 program will fund \$6.5 million of the total. The [Ding Darling Wildlife Society](#) raised the remaining funds through donations. We congratulate them on their hard work!

Don White, from [Flagler Audubon](#), sent along [information](#) on a new problem for the Florida panther. As if these endangered cats didn't have enough problems already, it's been announced that several (adults and kittens) have been found exhibiting symptoms of a neurological disease that makes it hard for them to walk. At least one adult bobcat has been observed with this debilitating disease too. The cause remains a mystery. So far a number of potential causes have been ruled out.

Finally, from our friends at Bird Studies Canada, comes this story about a bird we see here in Volusia County. Chimney Swifts are amazing little birds that breed here and winter in South America. They arrive here in mid March and are headed back south by mid October. Here's a [link](#) to a You Tube video that gives a lot of good information.

David Hartgrove

## Calendar & Events

*It's September and that means we're back to our regular schedule of meetings, events, field trips, etc.*

**Monday, September 16th, Program Meeting-** For our first meeting of the 2019/2020 season we have a real treat. Michael Brothers will give a program on the geological history of Volusia County. This fascinating presentation will provide you with information you never knew. 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

**Saturday, September 14th, Merritt Island/Biolab Road-** Join David Hartgrove for a trip to Merritt Island NWR. We'll drive Biolab and Black Point Roads looking for migrants and others. Bring lunch and we'll meet at 7:30 am in the Target parking lot behind Panera Bread to carpool. Questions? Call David at 386-235-1249.

**Thursday, September 26th, Dunlawton Bridge-** This easy walk around Port Orange Causeway Park will be to see what migrants we can find and to check the status of the newly fledged birds from nearby Rookery Island. We'll meet under the bridge at 4:00 pm. Questions? Call David Hartgrove, 386-235-1249.

## Field Trips With Others

**Thursday, Sept. 5th, Guided Hike at Longleaf Preserve-** Join our friends from Volusia County Land Management for this hike in one of the County's environmental gems from 9:00 to 10:30 am. Meet at the west entrance, 3637 E. New York Ave, DeLand, FL 32724. Registration is required. Call 386-736-5927.

**Tuesday, Sept. 17th, Eco Buggy Tour of Deep Creek Preserve-** Want to see a Sherman's fox squirrel? Here's your chance to see it and a number of bird species while riding in the County's eco buggy. Meet at 964 S. State Road 415, New Smyrna Beach. Reservations are required. Call 386-736-1249

\* \* \* \*

## This Month's Quote

"I speak for the trees, for the trees have no tongues."

Dr. Seuss, in "The Lorax"

## Flagler Marsh Restoration Project

In September 2018, Halifax River Audubon was asked to join Audubon Florida in supporting a marsh restoration project in Flagler County. The natural flows of the marsh had been interrupted by dragline ditches that were dug for mosquito control decades ago. This drastically altered the benefits a functioning wetland provides such as improved water quality, critical wildlife habitat, and most important, a resilient response to rising sea levels. HRA members attended meetings in Flagler Beach and Palatka, and we provided a letter of support for the project. In early August, 2019, we had the opportunity to tour the ongoing restoration work. It's wonderful and fascinating! I don't know why, but I'd never asked, "How do you restore a wetland?" The great team from the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), Friends of Gamble Rogers (FROGRS), and the company performing the restoration gave us answers.



Melissa Lammers, Rob Bird and others at the site.

The spoil piles (small islands) that resulted from digging the mosquito-control ditches are cordoned off by turbidity barriers to contain sediment-laden water to the area being worked on.



Salt wort (*Batis maritima*) and fiddler crabs (*Uca pugnax*)

If you look closely you'll see a male fiddler crab to the left of center in the photo. Behind him and to the left is a broken off claw. A sign that Yellow-crowned Night-Herons were feeding in the area. Ed.

Then the spoil piles are scraped down to marsh level. The marsh level is determined by looking for large areas (100 square feet or more) of "high marsh," typified by certain types of vegetation like saltwort (*Batis maritima*), perennial glasswort (*Sarcocornia perennis*), black mangrove (*Avicennia germinans*) and sometimes saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), growing next to transitional vegetation that tends to grow between high marsh and upland, like seaside oxeye (*Borrchia frutescens*). In effect, Mother Nature says, "here is the marsh and here is where it begins to become dry land." The scraping begins at the high marsh level. Helpful Hint: As we walked some of the transition zones, we met the needle rush plant (*Juncus roemerianus*) and were sagely advised not to touch the tops of the stalks. They are very pointy and can hurt you! But if you grab the middle of the stalks, they provide much needed stability as you try to lift your feet out of the muck and ambulate forward. Once the scraping is done, the marsh plants move back in, followed closely by animal life. Looking for small crustaceans and small fry were juvenile white ibis (*Eudocimus albus*), snowy and great egrets (*Egretta thula* and *Ardea alba*), and great blue herons (*Ardea herodias*). Can there be anything more beautifully, authentically Florida than that? And that's it for the restoration! Give the ecosystem a chance to heal itself. Stand by and watch the wonder!

Melissa Lammers

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**NATURAL HISTORY Festival**  
**09.14.19 10:00AM TO 3:00PM**

Join us for our annual celebration of all things natural history. Enjoy natural history specimens on display from rarely seen MOAS collections with many examples of fossils, mollusks, corals, insects, and more!

**10:00am DRAGONS FROM DEEP TIME**  
 Discover the amazing fierce carnivores from deep time going all the way back to Permian Age through the last ice age. Join James "Zach" Zacharias, MOAS Senior Curator of Education and History, for this family show and learn about top predators such as dimetrodon, szechuania, superco, megalodon, titanoba, and many more.

**11:00am FOSSIL HUNTERS TV SHOW: WOMEN IN PALEONTOLOGY**  
 Join the cast and crew of The Fossil Hunters TV Show from Channel 15 WDSO for a talk and video presentation on women in paleontology. Believe it or not, the first serious fossil hunter in history was Mary Anning (1799-1847) who collected fossil along an ancient exposed Jurassic shoreline in England collecting for museums and other scientists. Learn about female paleontologists past and present in this unique presentation.

**12:00pm WETLAND AND CORE CLIMATE CHANGE WITH DR. BENJAMIN TANNER**  
 Climate change is one of the greatest environmental threats currently facing humanity. Mud recovered from wetland deposits can also provide a record of how climate has changed in the past because these deposits often contain things like preserved plant parts and pollen that can be used to reconstruct a local environmental history. Dr. Tanner is a field-oriented environmental geoscientist and outdoor enthusiast who seek to inspire the next generation at Stetson University.

**1:00pm THE TAKEOVER OF THE EVERGLADES BY THE BURMESE PYTHON WITH CONSERVANCY WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST, IAN BARTOSZEK**  
 Ian Bartoszek is a wildlife biologist within the Conservancy of Southwest. Ian has been the primary field biologist on a research project funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service studying the recovery of threatened and endangered species through aquatic refugia in the Pinyun and Fakahatchee Strands of eastern Collier County. He currently serves as the invasive animal lead for the Southwest Florida Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) and is collaborating on a radio telemetry research project tracking Burmese pythons in Southeast Florida.

**2:00pm GOING DRY IN THE LAND OF WATER? FLORIDA'S HYDROLOGICAL HISTORY AND IDEAS FOR AVOIDING A FUTURE WATER CRISIS WITH DR. DAVID KAPLAN FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA**  
 Florida is a landscape defined by water. Abundant rainfall supports a diversity of natural environments, while also supplying water for human use and to support a large portion of the state's economy, from agriculture to tourism. Despite this seeming abundance, multiple pressures on Florida's water resources threaten the health of both natural and human communities. Dr. David Kaplan is an Associate Professor in the Department of Environmental Engineering Sciences within the Engineering School of Sustainable Infrastructure and Environment at the University of Florida and Director of the H.T. Odum Center for Wetlands.

We will also have a special appearance by several New Smyrna Beach artists from The Hub on Canal who will be painting and demonstrating their techniques.

**MOAS MUSEUM OF ARTS & SCIENCES**  
 Free for members or with paid museum admission.

Look for us at this event. HRA will have a table and we'll be providing information on plants for birds, membership and our outreach efforts. We'll also be selling books and t-shirts. We hope to see you there.

Time once again for another adventure with Ray Scory and his Everyday Birding series.

## Black-necked Stilt With Class

I like looking at the Black-necked Stilt, observing its showy tuxedo attire, a classy look appropriate for a "Grand Ball of the Year" appearance. Cloaked in classy high contrast; with upper body black and lower body spotless white, two red eyes and teetering on startling, bubble gum colored legs round out the dramatic appearance of this bird. I certainly don't get to see Black-necked Stilts from my backyard position, but watching them in the wild has left a lasting impression. One of elegance, intelligence, self assurance and a note of fragility.



Male Black-necked Stilt Photo by Ray Scory

Fascination with this bird is one of my key observational pleasures. They perform an amazing act of balance with every step they take. In proportion to their body size they have the second longest legs of any bird in the avian kingdom. Second only to the Greater Flamingo. This bird showcases a Cary Grant movie star demeanor - sophisticated, cool and poised. Likewise, a hint of comedic charm is a plus.

A direct forty mile driveway from my driveway to the doorsteps of Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge (MINWR) brings me to their nesting area. A trip there is a worthy birding adventure, when backyard birding might temporarily lose its blush. My recommendation is to make at least one trip before daybreak to witness the marshes coming awake with birds exploding from their nightly wetland roost. A trip to MINWR at any time of the year is a delicious treat.

I participated in many Christmas Bird Counts, led many field trips over the years and conducted a waterbird survey for seven years at the refuge. April is the earliest month I have recorded Black-necked Stilts coming into MINWR and have observed them nesting in June. Their nests at the refuge are generally set on a flimsy pad of reeds and grasses resting on a shallow sandbar located in quiet marshy waters, just awaiting a heavy Florida rain to float the nests away.

And it happened, one June I counted seven active nests along the drive. Ten days later I returned and 7 of the nests were gone. Wiped out by an early June rain. At this location the nests were not rebuilt that year. According to a report I read, the Black-necked Stilt times their breeding process before the rainy season. Thus preventing underwater disasters. Also,

their population is considered stable and not threatened by a radical decline. Their straight line flight determines their steadfast resolve. No crazy zigzag flight pattern for this bird. They know where they are going and they show it with purpose. I close this reflective narrative privileged knowing that this stately bird stands as a reminder to the importance of purpose and resolve which rises above the norm with class and dignity.

Ray Scory

Female BNST on the nest. Note the slight brown wash on her back (actually the scapular wing covers). One of the few ways of differentiating between males and females.



\* \* \* \*



Mississippi Kites Photo by Lois Posey

I got a call from Jennifer Reinoso, who lives in DeLand, about some Mississippi Kites that were roosting each evening in trees on her property. I grabbed my camera a day or so later and headed over to see if I could locate them. I never saw the birds but Lois Posey did and got some great shots of them. The birds are staging for their fall migration down to Central America. They don't go as far south as their relatives, the Swallow-tailed Kite. They go all the way down to western Brazil and eastern Paraguay. We'll see both species back here next February.

David Hartgrove

## Plant This, Not That

September 28th is National Public Lands Day, which promotes the connection between people and the environment by inviting everyone to get outside. North Peninsula State Park is ready to celebrate by offering the public Plant This, Not That!

This FREE one-day event is designed to provide the community with information on the benefits of removing non-native invasive plants and planting Florida natives. We will have literature on how to identify invasive exotic plant species that occur in our area and how to remove these plants. We hope attendees will share this information with their neighbors and friends.

Funding through Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council's Kathy Craddock Burks Education Grant made this event possible. All participants will receive a native yaupon holly plant and will have educational opportunities through exhibits from various organizations. The state park's very own "Pepper Picker" volunteers will demonstrate how they remove invasive Brazilian pepper from the park and will be available for questions. Park volunteers will offer short kayak tours of the Smith Creek marsh restoration site. So remember to dress for this event if you want to go kayaking. There will be activities geared towards children as well.

Exhibitors will include: Florida Park Service staff and volunteers, Pepper Pickers, Friends of Gamble Rogers State Park (FROGRS), Flagler County Master Gardeners, Native Plant Society Paw Paw chapter, Halifax River Audubon, Ormond Beach Environmental Discovery Center, Volusia County Environmental Management, Ormond Scenic Loop & Trail and Yaupon Brothers.

Attendance at Plant This Not That is free and public parking is available at Smith Creek Landing North Peninsula State Park with overflow parking available across the street at Highbridge Park. The event is scheduled from 9:00 to 11:00 am and the park is located at 40 Highbridge Road, Ormond Beach.

*Celena Zimmerman, Florida State Parks*

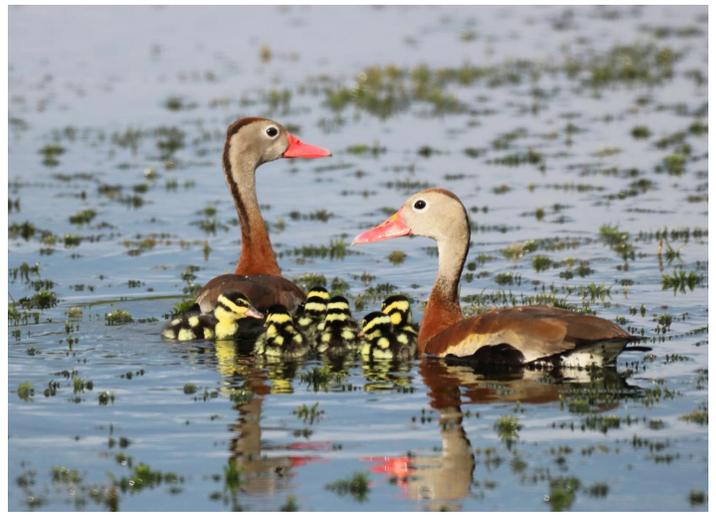
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Solitary Sandpiper *Photo by Michael Brothers*

Here's a shot of a Solitary Sandpiper Michael photographed back in 2011. Michael will be our guest speaker at our first meeting of the season. See you there?

*Editor*



Black-bellied Whistling Ducks *Photo by Ed Riser*

Winter Haven bird/photographer, Ed Rizer, was at Saddle Creek Park, east of Lakeland and saw these ducks with their brightly striped youngsters. This species is increasing all over the state.  
*Editor*

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# The Pelican

For wildlife & people since 1923

Volume 65-Number 10. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon  
October, 2019



## Comments & Conservation Notes

Last month I mentioned that our board was busy over the summer with a variety of items, including a rewrite of our chapter bylaws. I said that we would vote on those revised bylaws at our October meeting. However, in order to do that we needed to follow the protocols, which mandate that the changes be announced at the September meeting. Those in attendance that night, where we were all enthralled by Michael Brothers' presentation, will recall no mention of bylaws. That was an oversight on my part and now we'll have to announce the changes at our October meeting and vote on them in November.

President Trump has surrounded himself with some of the least qualified people in the country to advise him on issues like climate change, water quality issues, land management, you name it. If some groveling, ignorant bozo praises the President's ill informed opinions on an issue, his or her name is immediately moved to the top of the list for nomination to a regulatory agency so that destruction of that agency's mission can be fast tracked. Look no further than the Environmental Protection Agency. EPA Administrator, Andrew Wheeler, spent his entire adult life as a shill for extraction industries trying to subvert the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act and common sense regulations designed to keep us all safe. He replaced Scott Pruitt, who arrived in Washington with the same agenda as Wheeler but was forced to resign in disgrace after lavishing millions of tax payer dollars on his office furnishings and travel expenses. Wheeler is now spearheading the reversal of regulations put in place by the Obama administration that strengthened the definition of waters covered by the Clean Water Act. Clean water, who needs that ?...

Another opportunity to do the right thing is blown away when those in power in the administration look northward. In spite of overwhelming evidence that we need to reduce, not expand, our dependence on fossil fuels, the administration is seeking to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas exploration. ANWR has long been on the wish list of those who see the world as a place to grab a quick buck at everyone else's expense. There's only about 18 month's worth of oil under that section of Alaska's North Slope. It's a pristine wonderland that birds, mammals and some of the world's most ferocious mosquitoes call home. Efforts by Congress to protect this treasure are about to be tanked by the Trump administration, which is racing to sell leases and lock in the path to destruction before any more objections can be made. In the 1987 movie, "Wall Street", Gordon Gecko proclaims, "Greed is good." That odious quote seems to be the mantra of the administration.

David Hartgrove

## Calendar & Events

**Monday, October 21st, Program Meeting-** Mangroves are trees that are adapted to salt/brackish water growth. Danny Young, environmental consultant and avid birder, will give a presentation on these very important trees and how they're critical to all kinds of wildlife. 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. Be there!

\* \* \* \*

### Field Trips

**Friday, October 11th, Washington Oaks State Park-** Join Peggy Yokubonus for this trip to look for migrant warblers, tanagers, etc. Meet at the park, 6400 N Oceanshore Blvd, Palm Coast, at 8:00 am. Bring lunch. Questions ? Call Peggy, 386-316-4085.

**Friday, October 18th, Marl Bed Flats-** Join Joan Tague for a trip to this Central Florida jewel. Shorebirds, warblers, waders, this place has them all! You might want to bring an extra pair of shoes in case the first pair gets muddy. We'll meet at Target on Dunlawton, east of I-95, behind Panera. Bring lunch. Questions? Call Joan, 386-871-6049.

### Field Trips With Others

**Wednesday, October 23rd, Sugar Mill Gardens-** Join our friends from West Volusia Audubon as they search this great spot for migrant warblers and the resident Barred Owls. Meet them at the Gardens, 950 Old Sugar Mill Rd, Port Orange, FL at 8:15 am. Questions? Call Eli Shaperow, 407-314-7965.

**Wednesday, October 9th, Spruce Creek Park hike-** Join Trey Hannah, Volusia County Land Management, for this guided hike and learn about the value of an estuary. You'll have an opportunity to get out in Rose Bay and pull a seine net, learn about the plants and birds and have fun doing it. Please wear closed toed shoes that can get wet. You'll need to register for this hike by calling 386-736-5927. Meet at the park, 6250 S. Ridgewood Ave., Port Orange.

\* \* \* \*

## This Month's Quote

"I would feel more optimistic about a bright future for man if he spent less time proving that he can outwit Nature and more time tasting her sweetness and respecting her seniority."

E. B. White 1899-1985

## Piping Plovers, A Genuinely Rare Bird

Piping Plovers are an endangered species that nests on beaches from Cape Hatteras to Newfoundland and in other areas. Since some of those beaches must be shared with increasing numbers of people. The birds have come up with a way to evade the crowded conditions. Here's a [link](#) to a video. Thanks to Jennifer Winters of Volusia County Environmental Management for sending it.

*Viewing it reminded me of a blog post by our late friend, Chuck Tague. Parts of it are posted here with permission. Ed.*

### Ponce Inlet Lighthouse Point Park, November 20, 2008

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

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

Piping Plovers are only in Florida during the non-breeding season. They are beach birds that blend perfectly with the dry strip between the high tide line and the dunes. Their upper plumage precisely mimics dirty sand. Their countershaded light underside deadens any telltale shadows so thoroughly that they disappear in plain sight. Piping Plovers feed on invertebrates above the tide line but they also forage in the intertidal zone as the tide recedes. The foot tapping causes sea worms, clams and other buried animals to move and give away their position.



Piping Plover foraging, *Photo by Chuck Tague*

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

There are three distinct breeding populations of Piping Plovers. Those that nest on the Atlantic coast from North Carolina to Newfoundland are listed as threatened, as are the plovers that breed in the midwestern prairies. The endangered

population around the Great Lakes declined drastically during the Twentieth Century. Historically Piping Plovers bred in all the Great Lake states and provinces. Several pairs nested on Presque Isle in Erie County through the late nineteen-fifties. Their breeding range is now limited to northern Lake Michigan. The plover's main threats are habitats lost to coastal development and disturbance by beach-loving humans. In 1986 there were only 17 breeding pairs in the Great Lakes region. By 2011 there were 54 pairs.

**October 27, 2012**

Hurricane Sandy passed far off central Florida's shore the night before. Volusia County felt the storm's immense power but the destruction was minimal compared to the damage that would occur farther north. Although we were still under a hurricane warning I met my friends Patsy and Ken Hunter at Ponce Inlet to scan for seabirds. Huge waves broke high over the rock jetty; the northeasterly winds were brutal. The full moon had just set so the tide was already at its monthly high. The surf crashed over the dunes and forced the small shorebirds to take shelter in the sea oats. We had to wait for the tide to recede to walk the beach.



Piping Plover with colored leg bands, *Photo by Chuck Tague*

Several hundred shorebirds foraged in the fresh canyons, sheltered from the wind. There were three Piping Plovers among the Sanderlings and turnstones. One had colored bands and a red flag on its leg. Later I obtained this band information from my photos and sent it to the [Bird Banding Laboratory](#) in Patuxent, MD

They forwarded the information to the bander, Alice Van Zoeren. She sent this reply:

"Thank you for taking the time to report your sighting of a Piping Plover from the Great Lakes population."

The plover you saw and photographed was hatched in 2009 on North Manitou Island in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore and banded as an adult last summer (2012) at Gulliver, MI along the north shore of Lake Michigan in the upper peninsula."

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

*Chuck Tague*

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

## Walk With Me

I love to walk in the woods. Where my world closes behind me and an atmosphere of change drifts down upon me. Sounds of silence prevail and whispers of other things enter me. Time slows down and other measures float by sealing a cocoon of difference. A walk is an experience of Nature - my Nature, your Nature. Who we are, what we do, what matters will show. When we allow it to. No matter the physical effort of the walk, relaxation and a sense of peace seems to surface and becomes all encompassing.

A mind-drifting walk and then a tiny brown bird appears on the metamorphic stones at the side of a trap rock ridge of the Sleeping Giant State Park. I watch the bird scurrying among the stones. In and out of crevices, hopping up onto a low hanging branch - always moving. This is where the Worm-Eating Warbler nests and I am all in for this wondrous moment.

I first heard the deep guttural "cuk-ruk" sound of the Common Raven on their first nesting expansion into Connecticut. My cousin, Jim, once asked me to walk with him in this park during a brief troubled time. A walk is great therapy. Takes your mind off everyday noise.

I remember walking through the woods near my home when I was a boy, especially when I was looking for birds in pursuit of the Bird Study merit badge from the Boy Scouts of America. My prescribed walk began through a small swamp, along side a wooded hill, onto an open field, and ended at a roadside marsh. Here I observed my first Song Sparrow. He of the, "black spot on a light breast streaked with dark brown stripes", fame. I covered this exciting discovery with my mom's 2.5 power opera glasses and a Roger Tory Peterson early field guide. This young boy found heaven.

My friend and I hiked the Appalachian Trail one week every year for ten years in an October cloaked in Autumn colors. I cannot forget how special it was to watch millions of blackbirds migrating south, speeding though the valley below us. This daybreak sighting was mesmerizing, breathtaking! The memory continued long after we put our packs on our backs and continued on. While the racket of their boisterous, incessant chirping carried for miles.

Many times I walked the trails of the Sleeping Giant during a cold, blustery Winter day, sat on a 250,000 year old metamorphic stone and listened to the snow fall on undisturbed, fallen leaves.

Spruce Creek Park, close to my home in Port Orange Florida, offers the same peace of mind. The same release of everyday problems. Along the trails, bordering a long brackish marsh, I experience the energy from the vegetation and the presence of wildlife. Throughout the year, a variety of bird species are seen. Ducks, raptors, waterbirds roosting in trees, Great Horned Owls, Clapper Rails and migrating songbirds visit and live here. This is a good place to start a Life List of birds or begin observing birds for a Bird Study merit badge.

Take a walk with me. If I can't be with you. I might be.

Ray Scory



Meig's Point, Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison CT

The tip of this recessional moraine juts two miles into Long Island Sound. It was created when a glacier eighteen thousand years ago stalled for five thousand years. When the glacier disappeared, debris, called "till", consisting of boulders, sand, mixed clay, and stones caused by the moving glacier remain. Today a historic and scenic, walking trail is a memorable and exciting experience along this ancient landscape.



Spruce Creek Park, Port Orange, Florida

Palm trees, various southern fauna, an abundance of various bird species and life producing wetlands all describe this remarkable slice of early Florida landscape. Clapper Rails are heard and seen here. Migrating birds find this area a welcomed stopover and ocean going fish begin their lives in surrounding Spruce Creek wetlands. A walk here is not only a visual argument for continued land preservation but a soothing, adventurous treat for those who walk its land.

Photos by Ray Scory

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## Good News For PIPL's

More news on the Piping Plover front from Bird Studies Canada: the Great Lakes breeding population has increased from 67 pairs in 2018 to 71 pairs in 2019! In Chuck Tague's article above he mentioned that in 1986 there were just 17 pairs. That's a 400% increase in 33 years but it's still an Endangered species.

Editor

## KIRTLAND'S WARBLER DE-LISTING

Here, at least, is a positive ESA story, a success story involving a highly threatened migratory songbird, the Kirtland's Warbler. If anything, this is proof that when the FWS can document that a population of a species is healthy and exists in adequate numbers, delisting should not be onerous.

Kirtland's Warbler nests almost exclusively in central Michigan in young jack-pine forests that are about 80 acres or larger in size, and include a multitude of small, grassy openings. The impact of habitat reduction and Brown-headed Cowbird parasitism originally led the FWS to list the Kirtland's Warbler when the Endangered Species Act was passed into law in 1973. In actuality, the estimated population had already plummeted to about 400 birds in 1971.

The goal of the conservation plan between the FWS and the state of Michigan's Department of Natural Resources was to eventually reach 1,000 pairs of nesting warblers per year, but that number has now been surpassed. Currently, about 2,000 pairs of this species highlight the success of this species' recovery. The FWS more than a year ago proposed to remove the Kirtland's Warbler from the ESA list, and the final decision is expected any day now.

The future of the Kirtland's Warbler still will depend on continued and regular hands-on management. Indeed, while the species awaits a de-listing, the FWS says that without continued human involvement, the birds' numbers would once again plunge. A specific designation - conservation reliant - indicates as much.

Right now, there many creative plans being implemented - including even arrangements with private forests and golf courses - across the warbler's breeding range to provide the specific on-the-ground habitat mix that these birds will need into the future. Of course, this will also have to include some creative and long-term funding.

Fortunately, the forces behind the Kirtland's recovery insist that the ESA works and that the Kirtland's Warbler federal/state and public/private model can serve as an example to help other fragile species.

## IBA NEWS: BACK TO SANTA ANA AGAIN?

For more than a year we have assumed that Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, a vital Important Bird Area (IBA) in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas was excluded from border-wall construction by a specific Congressional prohibition against such construction. But alas, Santa Ana NWR may not be quite as safe as we thought.

According to supporters and advocates on the ground, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol are seeking creative ways to circumvent the intent of the prohibition. CBP may be splitting hairs, citing non-FWS ownership of the land directly under the levee going through the refuge (on which the wall would be built) and essentially thwarting the will of Congress.

When Congress gave Trump funds for border wall construction in the Rio Grande Valley in 2018 and 2019, they stipulated that the funds could not be used for border walls in Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge.

For readers wishing to access all the past E-bulletins on the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) website, click on this [link](#).



[Registration](#) is now open for the Festival of Flight and Flowers weekend of hikes, field trips, workshops, presentations, and a fabulous keynote dinner. Sponsored by Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society the weekend event runs from Friday, October 11th through Sunday, October 13th. There will be birding trips, boat rides, full moon migration observations, educational presentations, hands-on workshops and more. Festival headquarters will be located in the Eustis Community Center, 601 Northshore Dr, Eustis, FL 32726. Grab your binoculars. It'll be a fun weekend for sure.

\* \* \* \* \*

### 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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### Halifax River Audubon [forbirds@halifaxriveras.org](mailto:forbirds@halifaxriveras.org)

Meets monthly September through May

President: David Hartgrove

Vice President: Vacant

Past President: Melissa Lammers

Treasurer: Ellen Tate

Recording Sec.: Pam Pinnella

Membership Sec.: Joan Tague

Corresponding Sec: Steve Underwood

Historian: Holly Zwart-Duryea

At-Large: Barbara Northrup, Steve Underwood and Peggy Yokubonus

### Committee Members

Conservation: David Hartgrove

Education: Holly Zwart-Duryea

Field Trips: Peggy Yokubonus

David Hartgrove

Newsletter Editor: David Hartgrove

Welcome: Pam Pinella

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.

# The Pelican

*For wildlife & people since 1923*

Volume 65-Number 11. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon  
November, 2019



## Comments & Conservation Notes

I attended the Audubon Assembly in Gainesville last month and heard some encouraging news. The state legislature has finally accepted that we have a serious problem with water quality. Those of us in the environmental movement have been trumpeting this issue for decades and hearing the sounds of crickets in response from elected officials.

I think the deciding factor came in 2017 when the south end of the Indian River, near Stuart, was suddenly covered in a foul smelling goo with the consistency of guacamole. Suddenly those multi-million dollar water front mansions were unsellable because potential buyers ran screaming in the opposite direction. There were multiple causes for this environmental disaster, untreated storm water runoff being one.

One of the workshops I attended was titled "Treatment Wetlands." These are man made wetlands designed to allow storm water or treated waste water to flow through a series of ponds where aquatic plants bind up and remove pollutants from the water column. A couple of examples of these facilities include Viera Wetlands in Brevard County, Wakodahatchee Wetlands in Palm Beach County and Sweetwater Wetlands in Alachua County. All three of these places, in addition to others around the state, have become tourist destinations for the birding opportunities they offer. So not only do they offer a low cost option for cleaning waste water, they've become revenue engines for the local tourist economy. When Sweetwater Wetlands was being considered the other option for Gainesville was to spend 45 million dollars expanding their existing treatment plant. Instead they spent 25 million building the wetlands and last year over 9,000 people came from outside Alachua County just to go birding there. In addition, some had driven far enough that they decided to spend the night so over 1,200 spent money to stay in a hotel. That's the kind of good news local chamber of commerce types pay attention to.

There was also good news on the conservation lands issue. Audubon has long worked with ranchers and farmers to try to ensure that their lands can stay in agriculture. The problem often is one of increasing land values that drive up tax bills to the point that it makes no sense to maintain a ranch or farm on the property. Another workshop I went to was titled "Trees, Cows and Wetlands." We were told that Audubon and agricultural property owners are approaching the state legislature to increase funding for the Rural and Family Lands program and for Florida Forever. Working together we might just be able to get adequate funding to insure a better future for the state and those coming after us.

*David Hartgrove*

## Calendar & Events

**Monday, November 18th, Program Meeting-** Dream Green Volusia is an organization dedicated to finding solutions to our problems with single use plastics. Join us when founder, Suzanne Scheiber, gives us a presentation on the group's activities and how we can all become a part of the solution. 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, November 1st, Lake Apopka-** Join Peggy Yokubonus for this trip to one of the state's premier birding destinations. There's very little walking on this one. Bring a lunch and we'll meet for carpooling at Int'l Square - East of I-95 on Int'l Speedway Blvd. behind Krystal. Questions? Call Peggy, 386-316-4085.

**Friday, November 8th, Guana River Preserve-** Join Joan Tague for this trip to St Johns County and some fine birding in a maritime hammock and in pine flatwoods. We will meet to carpool at Ormond Town Square, 1464 W Granada Blvd., Ormond Beach, behind Chick-Fil-A. Bring lunch. Questions?, Call Joan, 386-871-6049.

**Thursday, November 14th T M Goodwin Marsh-** Join David Hartgrove for this trip to a special place in south Brevard County. Gray-headed Swamphen, Crested Caracara and Fulvous Whistling-Ducks are our target birds. Then for lunch we'll go to Marsh Landing, located in the historic Fellsmere Land Company building. We'll meet to carpool at Target, East of I-95 on Dunlawton Avenue behind Panera's in Port Orange. Questions? Call David, 386-235-1249.

### Upcoming Out of Town Trips

We'll have two overnight trips this season: January 7th-10th to St Marks NWR and April 21st to the 24th to Fort DeSoto. We'll stay at [Shell Island Fish Camp](#), 850-925-6226, for the St Marks trip. For Fort DeSoto we have a block of rooms reserved under the Halifax River Audubon name at the [Holiday Inn, St Pete West](#), 727-322-0770. It's not too early to begin planning for these two exciting trips. Last year we had a fantastic time at both locations. We hope you'll join us.

\* \* \* \*

### From the Quotable Birder

"The sparrow is sorry for the peacock at the burden of its tail."

*Rabindranath Tagore*

*Over this past summer the board began considering an update of our chapter's bylaws. We owe a special word of gratitude to Holly Zwart-Duryea for the many hours she put in researching and rewriting our bylaws. We will vote on their adoption at the November meeting. In keeping with the bylaws we're required to publish them in the Pelican before the vote.*

## **BY-LAWS**

### **of**

## **HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC.**

### **Article I: Name and Affiliation**

This organization shall be a not-for-profit corporation known as the HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. and shall be a chapter of the National Audubon Society. The relationship between this Chapter and the National Audubon Society shall be governed by the Chapter Policy. Neither Chapters nor National shall enter into any commitment binding on the other without written authorization to do so.

### **Article II: Purpose**

Through education and advocacy, HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. fosters understanding and care of the environment that provides quality of life for people and wildlife.

### **Article III: Membership**

HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. membership shall consist of three categories of members: National Members, Chapter-Only Members and Honorary members.

**Section 1:** The National Audubon Society membership shall include membership in Audubon Florida and HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. and shall pay annual dues to the National Audubon Society. Memberships shall receive the official publications and have all other membership privileges of those societies with which such membership is maintained. National dues are established by the National Audubon Society.

**Section II:** Chapter-Only membership shall be in HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. only. Chapter-Only members shall have the full privileges and voting rights as the National Audubon Society members in the Chapter functions. Chapter-Only dues shall be established by the Board of Directors of HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. These monies are to remain in the Chapter.

**Section III:** Honorary members of HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. shall be elected by HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. in recognition of outstanding service in the promotion of HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. objectives. Their membership shall be continuous from the time of their election and there shall be no annual dues required. They shall have no voting privileges in HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. unless they are joint members with the National Audubon Society, thereby becoming voting members of the local chapter.

**Section IV:** The membership year for members shall be from the time of enrollment in the National Audubon Society or Chapter-Only to the anniversary of their enrollment. Delinquent membership status shall be as defined in the By-laws of the National Audubon Society.

### **Article IV: Meetings**

**Section I:** Chapter membership meetings of the HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. shall be held monthly from September through May each year on dates established by the Board of Directors.

**Section 2:** The Annual Meeting of HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. shall be the chapter membership meeting in May at which time the program shall include elections and such business as the membership may desire.

**Section 3:** The time and place of the chapter meetings shall be determined by the Board of Directors or the President.

### **Article V: Board of Directors**

**Section 1:** The control and conduct of the property, business, long term objectives and overall policies of HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. shall be vested in a Board of Directors. The elected officers of HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. shall be ex-officio members of the Board of Directors. The remaining members of the Board of Directors shall be appointed by the President subsequent to discussion and approval by the Board of Directors. When a new president assumes office, the past president shall remain a member of the Board of Directors for one additional year.

**Section 2:** Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held on the first Monday of every month or as directed by the Board of Directors. Additional meetings may be called by the President or a quorum of the Board of Directors when deemed necessary.

**Section 3:** A simple majority of the members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum. The Board of Directors shall conduct business by majority vote, provided a quorum is present. In the event of a tie vote, the presiding officer, who shall normally not vote, shall cast the deciding vote.

**Section 4:** All expenditures of the HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. shall be in accordance with a Board of Directors approved budget or shall be approved by majority vote of the Board of Directors.

### **Article VI: Officers**

**Section 1:** The Officers of HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The officers shall be elected at the annual meeting of members, occurring in odd years, and assume their duties immediately following the close of the meeting. They shall hold office for two years. The President may not succeed himself for more than one term for a total of two consecutive terms. In case of a vacancy occurring among the officers before the end of their term of two years, the office may be filled for the balance of the term by the Board of Directors.

**Section 2:** The President shall conduct the meetings of the HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. and its Board of Directors and supervise the work of other officers and, in cooperation with them, the work of all committees, and appoint the chairmen of all committees and any replacements for them that may be necessary.

**Section 3:** The Vice-President shall assist the President by giving leadership and supervision of the chairmen of the committees assigned to them, and shall substitute for the President as directed by the Board of Directors whenever he is unable to perform his duties.

**Section 4:** The Secretary shall prepare minutes of the meetings of HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. Board of Directors. The minutes shall be made available for uploading onto the Chapter's website accessible by HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. Board of Directors for the carrying on of HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. business. The Secretary shall perform any other such secretarial duties as HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. directs.

**Section 5:** The Treasurer shall receive and deposit in a public bank all funds of HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC., and make all payments of the HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. funds as directed by the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall keep an accurate record of all financial transactions of HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. and report all receipts and disbursements to HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. and its Board or Directors at their regular meetings.

#### **Article VII: Nominating Committee**

**Section 1:** The Board of Directors shall annually appoint at the February Board of Directors meeting the Nominating Committee to consist of at least three members of HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. The names of the members of the Nominating Committee shall then be made known to the members of HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. in the March issue of the HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. newsletter and suggestions for nominations for members of the Board of Directors and officers may be submitted to such committee by any other members of HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC.

**Section 2:** The Nominating Committee shall nominate candidates for officers of the HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. and shall present its slate of nominees to the membership at the April chapter meeting. This slate of nominees shall also be published in the HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. newsletter prior to the May chapter meeting.

**Section 3:** In case any member of the Nominating Committee shall be unable to serve, then the President shall appoint a person to fill the vacancy.

**Section 4:** The month of May shall be designated as the Annual Chapter Meeting of HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC., at which time the election of new officers shall take place. Prior to the actual election, the presiding officer shall call for additional nominations from the floor. The newly elected officers shall assume their duties at the start of the new fiscal year.

#### **Article VIII: Standing Committees**

**Section 1:** A Membership Committee shall conduct membership campaigns and bring into HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. all who are interested. It shall also be the duty of the committee to maintain a current membership roster.

**Section 2:** A Program Committee shall make all plans and arrangements for the meetings of HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON INC.

**Section 3:** A Field Trip Committee shall organize and arrange for the appropriate conduct of field trips.

**Section 4:** A Publicity Committee shall strive to secure through newspaper, radio, TV and other media the maximum of publicity covering the activities and objectives of HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC.

**Section 5:** A Conservation Committee shall endeavor to keep HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON INC. informed of conservation developments and legislation on local, state and national governmental levels and submit recommendations to the Board of Directors for their consideration and possible action.

**Section 6:** An Education Committee shall endeavor to promote the interest of youth in nature and conservation by whatever means deemed effective.

**Section 7:** The Historian shall keep a continuous record of the highlights of HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON INC. activities, field observations, inventory and location of HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON INC. property and personal history of its leaders.

#### **Article IX: Finances**

The Fiscal Year of HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON INC. shall run from July 1 to June 30.

#### **Article X!: Amendments**

**Section 1:** These By-laws may be amended at any chapter meeting of HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. by a majority vote of those members present and voting, provided notice of the proposed amendment has been given at a previous meeting and in any subsequent regular official HALIFAX RIVER AUDUBON, INC. newsletter.

**Section 2:** A copy of any amendments to these By-laws shall be submitted to the National Audubon Society with the next annual report.

These By-Laws were adopted on [Oct. 15, 2012] and most recently revised on [date].

\* \* \* \*

### **It's Festival Time Again**

January is right around the corner and there are three birding festivals around the state to vie for your attention. First up is the [Everglades Birding Festival](#). It runs from January 16th through January 20th. If you're hoping to add birds like Gray-headed Swamphen, Short-tailed Hawk or Mangrove Cuckoo to your life list, this might just be where you want to go.

If the Miami area seems a bit far to go then you have another choice on the same dates, January 16th through January 20th. The [North Shore Birding Festival](#) is sponsored by Orange Audubon and though centered around the north shore of Lake Apopka it will feature trips to Ocala National Forest, Emeralda Marsh, bird banding at Lake Lotus Park and many others.

Then we come to the Grand Daddy, the largest birding festival in the country, the [Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival](#), in Titusville. It runs from January 22nd to the 27th. Every binocular manufacturer in the country will have a booth in the headquarters building at East Florida State College and it's by far the best place to try them out before purchase. There will be a pelagic trip, several trips to look for the elusive Black Rail, Scrub Jays and more. All three festivals will feature photography workshops lead by some of the country's best photographers, art competitions, keynote addresses by leading authorities in fields beyond birding and much more. Registration is now open for all three festivals and some of the field trips are already filling up.

\* \* \* \*

### **Audubon Adventures**

The Audubon Adventures program is aimed at third, fourth and fifth grade classrooms. Each sponsored class receives four sets of a newsletter with materials for 32 students in each set. They are filled with information and learning activities. There is also a teacher's manual with support ideas, activities, and evaluations. They are specifically designed to mesh with the science curriculum offered by our local schools and help the students prepare for their end of class exams.

Please send your donation to Halifax River Audubon, P.O. Box 166, Daytona Beach FL 32115-0166. Any donation is welcome; \$45 will supply a classroom. Please specify on your check that your donation is for Audubon Adventures. And thank you for thinking of our future leaders.

## A Red Cardinal Watch

Sheets of wild rain pounded down. Thunder crashed and lightning flashed. Outside my window felt the impact of a late Florida storm. The wind and rain was the boss - sending unforgiving missiles loose in all directions. Scary weapons of power whipped stationary trees into a mad and uncontrollable frenzy. The reedy branches of thick leafed "Fire Spike" slap relentlessly against my office window and I watched as the blistering storm shed its watery sustenance upon a cowered landscape. No other birds were seen but one lone gull. Caught in the turmoil, it sailed by sideways trying desperately to get back in control.

As a sunny day turned wildly dark, I sat by my desk in utter fascination. Not six feet from my nose on the outside of my window sat a female Northern Cardinal on her nest as driving rain beaded on her protective feathers. The "Fire Spike" bush, where nestled the nest, swayed to the rhythm of the ongoing storm. We stared at each other, the cardinal and me, for the longest time. The storm seemed to stop and faded into a noiseless blur. What I remember most about that wild crashing storm was those dark penetrating eyes looking straight through at me and the composed, stoic beauty of this bird. Just me and the bird alone, no storm.

Out of a global population of approximately 120,000,000 Jane and I are so fortunate to have two Northern Cardinals coming to our neighborhood yard every day. During the summer months, their fledglings will also appear at our feeders. They look similar to the female cardinal but with a dark bill instead of the coral color of adults. They will stay a few weeks but then are gone. The two adults will stay and later introduce another family.

They are not a picky bird. While we are accustomed to seeing Northern Cardinals feeding on black oil sunflower seeds, a wide variety of food sources grace their palate from wild seed to suet, insects and fruits. They also live in various habitats from suburban areas to swamps, including wood edges, water edge thickets and vegetation around houses, ranging over a vast territory of about 2,239,393 square miles.

I feel close to the Northern Cardinal. I have a history with them. While the cardinal is a southeastern bird. A little more than a century ago they began moving north along the Mississippi River and by 1895 they had reached the Great Lakes. By 1903 early field guides listed them in lower New York. Now here is where my connection with the cardinal begins. In 1948 they were found nesting in Connecticut. During the WW2 years my mother fed the birds but I don't remember any cardinals in our yard at that time. In 1947 I joined a local Boy Scout troop and two years later I began my year long study for the BSA Bird Study Merit Badge. I didn't list a cardinal during this period. But during the early 1950's I began to see a few harvesting cherries in both of my grandfathers's yards. By the mid 1970's they were well established in Connecticut, coming to my yard year round - but only two, the male and female. Northern Cardinals are quite territorial keeping other cardinals away from my feeders in both my Florida and Connecticut yards.

However, one day a raging snow storm clobbered Connecticut, leaving over 20 inches of snow and drifts much higher. The next day as the storm cleared, we sat by the large backyard window, looking out at a white, shimmering yard posing as a magnificent winter wonderland. Northern Cardinals were everywhere. I estimated a grand total of forty cardinals in the yard at one time. Many at the feeders. Others resting on the snow drenched boughs of the backyard white pine trees.

Red on white clinging to dark green branches all moving to the whims of a receding snowstorm. Picture postcard perfect.

Truly "A Red Cardinal Watch."

Ray Scory



A raging winter storm does not deter the Northern Cardinal from their appointed feeder watch rounds. Other small birds are experts at finding food during blustery Connecticut winter storms.



A female Northern Cardinal built her nest secretly in a tangle of thick leaves and scraggly branches directly in front of my office window. So well hidden was this nest that I did not discover it until this wide eyed chick was ready to fledge. From this nest two fledged that day, adding to the vast number of cardinals inhabiting our planet.

Photos by Ray Scory

\* \* \* \*

So here's some "Steve" humor, from board member Steve Underwood.

Q: What birds spend all their time on their knees?

A: Birds of prey!

Harry Robinson's monthly surveys at Tom Rennick Park and at the Port Orange Bridge offer an opportunity to learn from one of the best birders in the state. Here's his report from September for Tom Rennick Park. Ed.

The year is nearly over or so it seems, September is now done and gone. This month I did 30 surveys over 144 hours (a record for this month). For the year I have seen 197 species and 257 ever. To date I have added six species this year (none this month) as against the five that I had hoped to add for the whole year. This month I saw 108 species, the second best year. The best days were 4,286 birds on the 5th and 42 species on the 7th.

That was the dull bit, now to the birds. There were two Pied-billed Grebes on the sea on the 25th, a new high count. For a change there were a few shearwaters. There were single Cory's on the 15th and 21st with a Scolopi's on the 20th. There were two Greats on the 1st and 20th with one on the 21st. There were also two on the 22nd with one on the 24th. To round out the shearwaters there was single Sooty on the 14th and an Audubon's on the 20th. There was an adult Brown Noddy on the 30th. There was a Magnificent Frigatebird on the 4th with a party of five on the 11th. This is a new high count. Finally there was one on the 28th.

There were single Reddish Egrets on the 8th and 18th. There were four Roseate Spoonbills on the 6th with six on the 24th. Blue-winged Teals were present all month with 505 on the 16th and 1,130 on the 22nd. There was also a Northern Shoveler on the 28th. Green-winged Teals were seen from the 21st with 20 on the 27th. There was a Northern Harrier on the 6th. On that date there was also a light morph Short-tailed Hawk. There were single Merlins on the 7th, 16th and 28th. The only Peregrine Falcon was seen on the 26th.

A party of eight American Avocets flew to the south on the 14th. There were two Greater Yellowlegs on the 6th with two more on the 28th. There were 14 Lesser Yellowlegs on the 4th with six on the 5th. The only Spotted Sandpiper was one on the 5th. There were single Whimbrels and Marbled Godwits on the 3rd. The last Semipalmated Sandpipers were noted on the 5th. There were 40 Western Sandpipers on the 8th with 12 on the 10th and 18 on the 14th. Least Sandpipers were seen to the 6th. There were two Pectoral Sandpipers on the 1st with one on the 16th. There were two Dunlin on the 5th with 35 on the 29th. There were also two Long-billed Dowitchers on the 8th with ten on the 28th. For Red-necked Phalaropes there were eight on the 14th, ten on the 15th and 25 on the 21st this is a high count. Finally for this group there was a Red Phalarope on the 1st.

There were single Parasitic Jaegers on the 11th, 21st and 28th. Herring Gulls were seen from the 13th. There were single Lesser Black-backed Gulls on the 2nd and 29th. Of special interest were two adult Sabine's Gulls on the 14th. Common Terns were seen all month with 141 on the 19th and 98 on the 26th. There was an adult Arctic Tern on the 15th. Forster's Terns were seen from the 2nd. Least Terns were in contrast were seen to the 29th. With the hurricane there were two Bridled and eight Sooty Terns on the 4th with a single Sooty on the 13th. Black Terns were scarce this year with a high count of 34 on the 4th.

There was a White-winged Dove on the 10th with a Yellow-billed Cuckoo on the 5th. There was a Common Nighthawk on the 30th. Chimney Swifts were only seen to the 7th. There was a Belted Kingfisher on the 11th. There was a Downy Woodpecker on the 24th with a single Pileated Woodpecker on the 3rd. During the hurricane 273 Eastern Kingbirds flew to the south on the 4th a new high count. There was a Gray Kingbird

on the 6th. As usual there was an American Crow on the 27th. There was a Purple Martin on the 9th with a Tree Swallow on the 4th. There was a Northern Rough-winged Swallow on the 5th. There was a Bank Swallow on the 3rd with two on the 4th and one on the 5th. There was also a Cliff Swallow on the 4th. Barn Swallows were only seen in low numbers except for 3,770 on the 5th. Again during the hurricane there were 20 Bobolinks on the 4th. There was a male Baltimore Oriole on the 7th. Finally the only House Finches were two on the 7th.

Please can I have a least one new species for the park in October?

Harry Robinson

Stay tuned to next month's Pelican to find out if Harry got his new species. If you'd like to rendezvous with Harry and see some of the birds he's been reporting you can contact him at [sirharrydeland@gmail.com](mailto:sirharrydeland@gmail.com) to see when would be a good time to come out and join him. He's often accompanied by Kim Ramos, Sam Krah and Eli Schaperow.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 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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### Halifax River Audubon

[forbirds@halifaxriveras.org](mailto:forbirds@halifaxriveras.org)

Meets monthly September through May

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Vice President: Vacant

Past President: Melissa Lammers

Treasurer: Ellen Tate

Recording Sec.: Pam Pinnella

Membership Sec.: Joan Tague

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### Committee Members

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Education: Holly Zwart-Duryea

Field Trips: Peggy Yokubonus

David Hartgrove

Newsletter Editor: David Hartgrove

Welcome: Pam Pinella

Webmaster: Joan Tague

\* \* \* \* \*

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

# The Pelican

For wildlife & people since 1923

Volume 65-Number 12. Newsletter of Halifax River Audubon  
December, 2019



## Comments & Conservation Notes

The sign below was installed in Port Orange Causeway Park on November 22nd, several weeks after I attended a meeting at nearby Seabird Island mobile home park. The meeting was



called by the homeowners association there so that they could hear from the developers of a proposed marina that would be crammed in between Seabird Island and what the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has named the Port Orange Colony. Our chapter has worked for 25 years or more to guarantee protection for the rookery on that island. Once again it's under threat from people who, while they mean

*Continued below on page 2*

## Calendar & Events

**Monday, December 16th, Program Meeting-** Join us for our annual holiday meeting and bring a dish to share while we share bird stories. The stories can be from the past year or from years past. The chapter will provide beverages and we hope you'll bring a favorite cookie or dessert recipe, hors d'oeuvres or a fruit or vegetable tray. All of us have a story we can share. It might be a spark bird, that experience that started you on the road to enjoying birds; or it could be a memorable sighting of a species in your backyard or on a trip. An added treat, a signed, framed Painted Bunting print by Kevin Doxstater will be auctioned off. See Ray Scory's article on Painted Buntings on page 3 below. 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, December 6th, Merritt Island NWR-** Join us for a trip to one of the country's best winter birding spots. We should see lots of ducks, shorebirds and others. Bring lunch. We'll meet to carpool at Target, East of I-95 on Dunlawton Avenue behind Panera's in Port Orange. Questions? Call David Hartgrove, 386-235-1249.

## Upcoming Out of Town Trips

We'll have two overnight trips this season: January 7th-10th to St Marks NWR and April 21st to the 24th to Fort DeSoto. We'll stay at [Shell Island Fish Camp](#), 850-925-6226, for the St Marks trip. For Fort DeSoto we have a block of rooms reserved under the Halifax River Audubon name at the [Holiday Inn, St Pete West](#), 727-322-0770. It's not too early to begin planning for these two exciting trips. Last year we had a fantastic time at both locations. We hope you'll join us.

## Christmas Bird Counts

We have 4 CBC's in our area and all of them can use your help. If you're thinking, "I'm a novice, they couldn't use me." Au contraire. There is no better way to learn than spending time with more experienced people. Please, if you're an old hand or a beginner, do this. You'll be a part of the oldest citizen science project in the world and have a blast doing it. Here's the schedule: Friday, 12/20, Flagler CBC, contact John Maluski, [jmaluski@att.net](mailto:jmaluski@att.net); Saturday, 12/21, West Volusia CBC, contact Eli Schaperow, [birdnerd@earthlink.net](mailto:birdnerd@earthlink.net); Friday, 12/27, Daytona Beach, contact David Hartgrove, [birdman9@earthlink.net](mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net); Saturday, 12/28, Ponce Inlet, contact Gail Domroski, [rdomroski@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rdomroski@cfl.rr.com).

well and claim the wish to be good neighbors, are determined to build in spite of the caustic effects their plan would have on the birds and the residents of Seabird Island. In 2008 a similar plan was put before the City of Port Orange. It was abandoned when the required dredge and fill permits were denied by the Army Corps of Engineers. Let's hope that the same course of events will play out this time. We, along with the residents of Seabird Island, will be watching for opportunities to comment and object at every stage as this proposal begins the permitting process.

\* \* \*

Archie Carr NWR, which spans a 20 mile stretch of beach in Brevard and Indian River Counties, had a banner year for nesting sea turtles. A total of 30,848 nests were documented this year: 13,349 loggerhead nests, an amazing 17,445 green nests and 53 leatherbacks crawled ashore here at the northern edge of their nesting range. While these numbers sound impressive we need to remember that only 1% to 1.5 % of the turtles that hatch from those nests will survive to nest as adults.

\* \* \*

In the last legislative session Senate President Bill Galvano rammed through a bill to add 330 miles of new toll roads to our state. Most of it will open what are now rural and forested lands to new development. Known as the M-CORES Project (short for Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance) this massive give away to development interests is yet another example of how business is done in Florida. If you're sitting up in Chicago having just purchased 25,000 acres of Florida real estate that lacks roads, infrastructure or a desire by the locals to have more development in their neighborhood, just look for a politician who needs help getting reelected and start sending them fat checks. You'll have his or her attention when that first one arrives. Then you just arrange a fun trip or two for the candidate and his entourage that can be called a "fact finding mission", send along a few more big checks and the next thing you know the taxpayers of Florida are funding access to your investment. And it's all passed off as a boon to economic development.

When Amendment 1 passed by a 75% majority it mandated that the Legislature properly fund Florida Forever and other programs that preserve our land and water. The politicians in Tallahassee hate being told by the people who elected them how to properly do their jobs. So they've ignored the will of the voters for the past several years by not following the law. They're happy to open the state treasury to fund developer's dreams though.

\* \* \*

Audubon's report, *Survival by Degrees: 389 Bird Species on the Brink*, released last month has now been added to with a new webpage called "[Audubon's Climate Visualizer](#)." Click on the link, then enter your zip code and email address and you'll see that Volusia County stands to lose some iconic birds. Red-headed Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Indigo Bunting, Piping Plover, Yellow-throated Vireo and even Boat-tailed Grackles are all on the list of birds that will disappear from our area by the end of this century. At every meet and greet by politicians, local, state and federal, we need to be pressuring them to enact concrete measures to deal with climate change and its effects. Many pretend it doesn't exist and are cow towing to powerful special interests with deep pockets for campaign donations. It's a recipe for disaster.

David Hartgrove



Board members, Joan Tague and Pam Pennella at the Marine Science Center's Wildlife Festival on Saturday, 11/9

Photo by David Hartgrove

\* \* \*



### Rookery Island Clean Up

On Friday, November 22nd, a group of us went out to Rookery Island to remove monofilament and other debris from the mangroves. It's not easy moving through the trees and often we're under them in the mud and shells. We removed over 150 pounds of debris, much of it fishing line and other junk brought in by the birds as they construct their nests. Seen above are people from FWC, Volusia County Environmental Management and yours truly. Pictured from left to right behind the bags of trash we collected: Jean Olbert, Tyler Turner, Samatha McCorkle, Michele Vandeventer, Debbie Wright, David Hartgrove and Jennifer Winters. We do this every year after the birds have completed nesting. *Photo by Jean Olbert*

\* \* \*

### A Victory For Common Sense

Down in Lee County, near Fort Myers Beach, lies Little Estero Island. A designated Critical Wildlife Area, the island was the target of a misguided plan to install a boardwalk. Our chapter contributed to a legal fund set up by Audubon Florida to block the plan. Here's a [link](#) to its outcome.

by Ray Scory

### The Day The Painted Bunting Departed

Here today. Gone tomorrow. Splashes of brilliant sun beams flash into space. Touching the sky, announcing a point of beauty. The colors of rainbows and then some. Extraordinary. A female counterpart. Vastly different in color but subtly beautiful in her cloak of greens. A myriad of greens softly spread over a small five inch body. Truly a pair of welcomed sunlight sparkling radiances in a suburban setting.

For the past five years I have awaited expectantly for their first appearance in late autumn at my feeding station. The females appear first. Then more green Painted Buntings appeared throughout the following week. Eventually the explosively colored male appears, not with the fanfare of a riotous brass band. But as the whisper of a soft feather floating on a quiet autumn breeze.

I observed my very first green Painted Bunting in my yard twenty years ago. It was my first Painting Bunting observed in Florida after many previous visits. I was excited. I expected to see Painted Buntings in my new backyard for years to come. It did not happen. Fifteen years later a few mysteriously appeared and stayed for the winter. I kept my emotions in check and my bird feeders clean and filled. Each year more came and stayed longer.

During this five year period between October and April, at least one visited my yard. The two years between 2017 and 2019 drew in the most Painted Buntings. April 16, 2019 was the date that the last Painted Bunting yard visitor departed. I was content and satisfied. Because this period was a banner stay with many buntings going to different feeders and visiting multiple times throughout the day- and using the bird bath.

However, the migratory behavior of Painted Buntings is changing, at least in my yard and the yards of my neighbors: Wilma, Rose, Toni and Ed. Twenty years ago local birders told me that the Painted Bunting's northern most Florida boundary for its winter territory was Titusville. Today, fifteen years later, it has reached my backyard in Port Orange. And that's confirmed too by Wilma, Rose, Toni and Ed.

I have read reports that within their lower east coast range during a period of thirty years, they have experienced a 55% drop in population and have been listed as "near threatened." Alarming, yes but they do have a global population of around 3.6 million individual birds. So there is still time to observe one of the most beautiful birds in America. Just clean out your feeder add some seeds, like millet, safflower, niger and grass seeds. Yes, grass seed. I haven't tried it yet but it might be interesting.

It is mid-November now and in September a female Painted Bunting appeared and another female in October. A male appeared at the end of October. All three stayed one day each and then departed. However, we are in the right place and now is the right time. Start looking for Painted Buntings at your feeders and when you see them, the first thing you are going to say is, "WOW!"

Ray Scory

*Our only native true green bird, female Painted Buntings have been seen feeding on the seed heads of sea oats. So Ray's suggestion to stock your feeder with grass seed is good advice. Editor*



This photograph illustrates the subtle beauty of the female Painted Bunting. While its impact is an indirect contrast to the stunning color display of the male, the female Painted Bunting is far from a drab little green bird. The varied shades of green have been carefully put in place to create an outstanding thing of beauty.



Three buntings at the feeder. During the past five winters, Painted Buntings have been regular visitors to my backyard feeders. The females have appeared first and have been the dominate buntings at this particular feeder, luckily this male bunting found a vacant perch to occupy.

Photos by Ray Scory

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### Audubon Adventures

The Audubon Adventures program is aimed at third, fourth and fifth grade classrooms. Each sponsored class receives four sets of a newsletter with materials for 32 students in each set. They are filled with information and learning activities. There is also a teacher's manual with support ideas, activities, and evaluations. They are specifically designed to mesh with the science curriculum offered by our local schools and help the students prepare for their end of class exams.

Please send your donation to Halifax River Audubon, P.O. Box 166, Daytona Beach FL 32115-0166. Any donation is welcome; \$45 will supply a classroom. Please specify on your check that your donation is for Audubon Adventures. And thank you for thinking of our future leaders.

## Traveling West ?

If you're thinking of traveling west next year, April will be a good time to be on the Olympic Peninsula. Our sister chapter, the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, in partnership with the Dungeness River Audubon Center is sponsoring a birding festival. Click on this [link](#) for all of the information.

Olympic Peninsula April 17-19, 2020

# BirdFest

Come bird with us!



- San Juan Island Cruise
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[www.olympicbirdfest.org](http://www.olympicbirdfest.org)  
[info@olympicbirdfest.org](mailto:info@olympicbirdfest.org)  
or 360-681-4076



## Looking For Something Closer To Home ?

Florida Nature Tours has been running birding trips to the Dry Tortugas longer than anyone else. Imagine walking into Fort Jefferson's 5.5 acre parade ground and seeing 300 Blue Grosbeaks all feeding while in the gumbo limbo tree outside Dr. Mudd's cell Black-whiskered Vireos and Scarlet Tanagers feed. In the burbling fountain are 5 species of warbler, just steps away from you and your camera. It's 4 days in birding paradise at the best price anywhere. Click on this [link](#) for all the information.

## FromThe Birding Community E-Bulletin

From the [E-Bulletin](#), published by the National Wildlife Refuge Association and Massachusetts Audubon comes news of a young Snail Kite that was a one day wonder in Pennsylvania. Yes, it really lit up the rare bird alert. This was the first time one was ever seen this far north. Hopefully he or she made it back home to Florida.

Restoration of jack pine habitat and Brown-headed Cowbird control have allowed the Kirtland's Warbler to be removed from the Endangered Species List. These birds usually winter in the Bahamas but with the damage from Hurricane Dorian there we may see more of them in Florida this year.

## Things To Do In January

There are three birding festivals vying for your attention in January. First is the [Everglades Birding Festival](#), January 16th to the 20th. At the same time, closer to home, is the [North Shore Birding Festival](#), sponsored by Orange Audubon Society and taking place around Lake Apopka. Then there's the biggest one, the [Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival](#) from January 22nd to the 27th down in Titusville. All of these offer great birding opportunities plus chances to learn from some of the best birders and photographers around.

Pelican Island Audubon Society is sponsoring its 3rd annual "[Transforming Landscapes](#)" workshop on January 25th. This all day event costs 25.00 and includes a box lunch. It's held down in Vero Beach and offers a native plant sale and learning sessions with experts that will help you turn your yard into a mecca for wildlife.

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