

The Pelican

Volume 70- Number 10, Newsletter of Halifax
River Audubon October, 2024

For wildlife & people since 1923



The President's Column

Ready, Set, Go!

Our season has started with a bang! Our field trips are listed, we are reprising our successful Owl Prowl at Tomoka State Park in October, we are planning a terrific Plants For Birds Workshop for the spring. Many of us have already checked out the Audubon in Florida exhibit at the Museum of Arts and Sciences. Some of us had a moment to visit the Smooth-billed Ani at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. Then there was a hurricane...

On the conservation front, the welcome retreat from the "enhancements" to our state parks has been quickly followed by an assault on the minimum standards for beach conservation. Protecting our beaches is so vital, not just for wildlife, but to protect a major economic engine in Volusia County. I could go on, but we know the consequences of a diminishing beach habitat. Seawalls everywhere are never the answer. On this issue we should look to recent events along the Gulf Coast to see how infrastructure fared. You can't stand up to the sea. You must give it room to negotiate with a deep healthy shoreline that can support the give and take of not just tidal events, but can absorb some of the force of devastating challenges.

Audubon Florida will hold their annual Assembly here in Daytona Beach in November. Please consider attending. Information can be found here: <https://fl.audubon.org/news/audubon-florida-assembly>. I plan to attend to recharge my batteries, find inspiration and to connect with other chapters to find out what's happening across the state.

I will be conducting morning walks on Wednesdays in October in Central Park. I hope you stop by. We get quite chatty on these walks as we scan the trees. You'll get a sticker! National Audubon has initiated a campaign focusing on voter participation. This is a non-partisan reminder to all of us that our vote counts for so many things. Exercise your privilege and participate.



Keeping it short this month - I have to get to work. There's so much to do.

Joan Tague

president@halifaxrivers.org

Calendar & Events

We're back! Lots to report on. So let's get right to it.

Fall Morning Bird Walks- Joan Tague will be leading fall morning bird walks at Ormond Central Park on Wednesday mornings from 8:00 to 10:00 am. These will be on October 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th. Meet at the Ormond Beach Environmental Discovery Center, 601 Division Avenue Ormond Beach FL 32174. Binoculars are highly recommended. Check our [calendar page](#) for all of the information.

Thursday, October 3rd, Washington Oaks- Join Joan for this trip to Washington Oaks Gardens State Park, 6400 N.Oceanshore Blvd. Palm Coast. We will not carpool to this location but will meet at the park. We encourage you to arrange carpools with your friends before the outing. Meet at the parking lot in the state park just past the gift shop and across from the gardens. Bring lunch for a picnic and be sure to bring water. Questions, call Joan: 386-871-6049.

Tuesday, October 8th, Mead Gardens- Join Joan for a trip to this great migrant hotspot in Winter Park. We will carpool. Meet at International Square, 2500 W International Speedway Boulevard, behind Krystal's. Bring lunch. Questions, call, Joan: 386-871-6049.

Friday, October 18th, Buschman Park/Sugarmill Gardens- We want to maximize our migrating warbler spotting chances by going to both of these hotspots. Meet at 8:00 am in the parking lot at Buschman Park, 4575 Spruce Creek Road, Port Orange. This trip is scheduled from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. If time permits we'll move on to Sugarmill Gardens. Questions, call Joan: 386-871-6049.

Thursday, October 24th, Tomoka and Bulow Creek State Parks- Join Joan Tague for this walk through areas where John James Audubon walked nearly 200 years ago. We will meet at 8:00 am in the first parking lot past the check-in booth at Tomoka State Park, 2099 N. Beach Street, Ormond Beach. This trip is scheduled from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. Questions, call Joan: 386-871-6049.

* * *

See pages 3 and 4 for information on the Audubon In Florida exhibit at MOAS (with a coupon) and the Owl Prowl on October 25th.

Audubon Assembly Is Coming Soon

Audubon Florida's big annual event is coming to Daytona Beach this year, November 7-9. [Registration](#) is open and our chapter, along with our sister chapters, SEVAS and WVAS is hosting. We will be leading field trips and assisting with the event. This is an excellent opportunity to learn what Audubon is doing for our state's environment and to meet some of the people whose names you see on Audubon news releases. We hope you attend some or all of the events.

* * * *

Suwannee 22, Wow, What A Ride!

Many of you have wondered how migrating Swallow-tailed Kites manage in the face of a hurricane. After a calm night in the Fakahatchee Strand State Forest in Collier County, Florida, Suwannee 22 awoke on August 3rd to tail winds that should have easily carried her across the Gulf of Mexico to the migrating kites' traditional waypoint on the Yucatan Peninsula. Within 60 miles of western Cuba she became caught up in Hurricane Debby. Unable to fight the strong headwinds she relaxed and rode the storm back north. She and the hurricane made landfall at Steinhatchee, in the Big Bend, on August 5th. We know all of this because Suwannee 22 is outfitted with a solar powered GPS tracker, funded by the Friends of the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge Complex. We thank them so much.

Now, here's the rest of the story. Suwannee 22 spent 3 days in Taylor County resting from her ordeal. Then she headed up to Georgia, getting as far north as the Ogeechee River, near Statesboro. She spent over a week feeding over agricultural fields before heading south again. On August 20th, after 3 nights in Florida, she once again set out across the Gulf of Mexico. Her route was typical of what we have seen through years of tracking kites to the Yucatan Peninsula. It was about a 40-hour flight, passing the Dry Tortugas National Park and the western tip of Cuba before reaching land in the Sian Ka'an International Biosphere Reserve in Quintana Roo, Mexico, in the early morning hours of August 26th. As of September 7th, Suwannee 22 was right on track and progressing southward through Costa Rica. [ARCI](#) is tracking Swallow-tailed Kites not only to monitor their roosts, foraging areas, stopover sites, and winter destinations, but also to see how they use public and private lands throughout Florida and other Southeastern States.

Gina Kent

Gina is Senior Conservation Scientist at the Avian Research and Conservation Institute. This article is condensed from her posts to the [ARCI blog](#).

Editor



Conservation Notes

It seems that every time I start to write this column I'm forced to write about yet another move by our governor or the Florida Department of Environmental Protection that no one can comprehend. In 2016 the state Legislature passed The Florida Springs and Aquifer Protection Act. It was sponsored by then State Senator, David Simmons, R. District 9. Simmons was quoted in an article by Craig Pittman, saying, "Water is the lifeblood of the Florida economy, and clean water is essential for us and our children," The law says, "the department **shall** adopt uniform rules for issuing permits which prevent groundwater withdrawals that are harmful to the water resources and adopt by rule a uniform definition of the term 'harmful to the water resources' to provide water management districts with minimum standards necessary to be consistent with the overall water policy of the state." This was to be completed by 2017. However, when the due date rolled around, FDEP gave themselves an extension. And then did so again, FIVE more times.

Term limited out of office, Simmons became frustrated with the foot dragging by the department and finally wrote a set of rules and definitions himself and sent them in. He got no response. In the governor's most recent inauguration speech he said, "We promised to usher in a new era of stewardship for Florida's natural resources by promoting water quality and Everglades restoration efforts — and we delivered." Really, what's happening right here at Gemini Springs?

Our own Gemini Springs has been closed to swimming since 2000. Nearly a quarter century later and eight years after the Springs law was written Gemini Springs is too polluted to allow humans to swim there. If the spring had its once normal flow rate it might be able to flush itself clean. That is if there weren't so many septic tanks nearby supplying a steady flow of fecal coliform into its ground water.

The problem is obvious to those of us who've been here for decades and witnessed the primacy of growth over sound planning. The state's water management districts almost never deny a consumptive use permit. The Suwannee River Water Management District in 2021 approved a new permit for a company called Seven Springs Water. The new permit increased their withdrawal rate from from Ginnie Springs from 265,000 gallons a day to **984,000** gallons a day! Seven Springs sells its water to Nestle', which then bottles it and sells it to the public for a hefty profit. The only thing the state and we taxpayers get is the paltry cost of the permit. About \$2,000.00 per year. That's right, Nestle' makes millions selling the water we need to maintain our natural resources. Welcome to Florida, where profits for multi billion dollar corporations have a lot more say in state government than we, the citizens. We'll pump and pump till the wells run dry but nothing stops the growth machine. I'm going back to the Audubon In Florida Exhibit at MOAS and shake these "I wish I didn't know these things" blues.

David Hartgrove

Talk and Walk: Audubon's Birds of Florida
December 17, 2024 | 3:00-4:00pm

Take an extraordinary journey through the original *Birds of Florida* as captured in the painted studies by John James Audubon.

Audubon Speaker Series: Todd McGrain
January 18, 2025 | 1:00-2:00pm

Soar into the fascinating realm of avian wonders with our expert Audubon speakers during this ongoing series.

Audubon Speaker Series: David Hargrove
February 1, 2025 | 1:00-2:00pm

Soar into the fascinating realm of avian wonders with our expert Audubon speakers during this ongoing series.

Bird Bash & Audubon Speaker Series
February 22, 2025 | 10:00-5:00pm

A day filled with feathered fun and fascinating learning opportunities for bird enthusiasts of all levels!

Forest Bathing
February 23, 2025 | 10:00-11:30pm

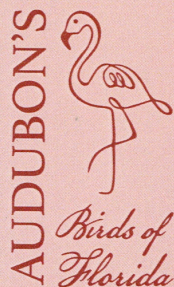
Escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life and join Singing Pines with the Southeast Volusia Audubon Society to embrace the environment around you.

Birds & Brews
March 20, 2025 | 5:00-8:00pm

Enjoy beer "flights" while learning about the various birds that were painted by John James Audubon.

Audubon Speaker Series: Kirsten Hines
March 29, 2025 | 1:00-2:00pm

Soar into the fascinating realm of avian wonders with our expert Audubon speakers during this ongoing series.



We Hope You
Flock to Us!

\$5.00 Off

your admission with this coupon

One coupon per transaction. Coupon expires on March 2, 2025.
This coupon is not applicable for special events and programs.

Take advantage of this discount by purchasing admission over the phone or online at MOAS.org with the use of the coupon code AUDUBONSOCIETY

AUDUBON'S *Birds of Florida*

OPEN September 21, 2024
THROUGH March 2, 2025

at the Cici and Hyatt Brown Museum of Art

Take an extraordinary journey through the original *Birds of Florida* as captured in the meticulously painted studies of John James Audubon (1785-1851), one of the most celebrated artists in American history. A masterpiece of printmaking, these exquisite, life-size illustrations are part of Audubon's ground-breaking 435-count compendium *The Birds of America*, the culmination of the artist's ambition to paint every bird species in North America. As part of this twelve-year venture, Audubon organized a special expedition to Florida (1831-1832) in order to document the birds, and their habitats, unique to the U.S. Territory.

Upcoming Audubon Events

Flamingo & Flow
October 2, 2024 | 5:00-7:00pm

Bring your flock and join us at the Cici and Hyatt Brown Museum of Art for Flamingo and Flow, a yoga in the gallery experience.

David Sibley Talk: "What It's Like to Be a Bird"
October 12, 2024 | 12:15-1:00pm

Enjoy a talk and book signing with author, David Sibley and his bestselling book, "What It's Like to Be a Bird."

Wine Tasting: Soaring and Pouring
October 17, 2024 | 5:30-7:30pm

Inspired by Audubon's environmental conservational efforts, all 5 wines offered will be grown and made in sustainable wineries.

Talk and Walk: Audubon's Birds of Florida
October 30, 2024 | 3:00-4:00pm

Take an extraordinary journey through the original *Birds of Florida* as captured in the painted studies by John James Audubon.

Legacy of a Naturalist
November 16, 2024 | 10:00-2:00pm

Soar on into a day of feathered flight at MOAS during this day of talks and tours!

352 S. NOVA ROAD,
DAYTONA BEACH, FL 32114
386.255.8285 | MOAS.ORG

MOAS
MUSEUM OF ARTS & SCIENCES

You can print just this page to get the coupon.

Owl Prowl at Tomoka State Park

Friday, October 25, 2024

5:30PM

Program Building



Join **Halifax River Audubon** and **Friends of Tomoka Basin State Parks** for a fascinating evening focusing on these mysterious creatures. The evening will begin with a short presentation discussing the owls that inhabit Central Florida. For the second part of the program we will explore the park searching for the owls that call the park home. Be prepared for the night!

Wear closed-toed shoes suitable for uneven terrain. Bring a flashlight and bug spray and water.

Tickets: \$30.00

Tickets on sale Now at Eventbrite

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/owl-prowl-at-tomoka-state-park-tickets-1026550348727>

Members receive \$5.00 discount with code HRATSP

Tomoka State Park
2099 N Beach St,
Ormond Beach, FL 32174

Sponsored by:



Once again, another in our continuing series, Everyday Birding, by Ray Scory.

On the Roof of a Bird Feeder

Can you imagine that on top of a bird feeder is the place to be? A place where you act out your most identifying behaviors and make it most blatantly obvious. A bird does.

I have watched from our kitchen window as birds pranced up, down, and around our tiny, wooden bird feeder. Apparently acts of behavior quite common to them - quite fascinating to me and Jane. Most of what I have watched are singularly framed, yet most are repeated time and time again.

A juvenile Eastern Bluebird came to our feeding station one day, and slowly began investigating the various facets of the station. After a deliberate search, he decided that the roof of the bird feeder was his comfort zone, spending most of his time just sitting there and looking around. Eventually, it softly flew off and away from the roof. Never to be seen again. Twenty-five years watching birds on our feeder, and the bluebird was a one time only visit.

Another noteworthy episode at the feeder featured a stand-off between a Brown Thrasher and a Mourning Dove. Both birds landed simultaneously on the side of the feeder and both let it be known to each other that they belonged to that one spot exclusively. Pecking at each other and the haranguing of angry squawks proceeded. Victory was decided when the Mourning Dove flew off and the Brown Thrasher flew onto the roof of the feeder. He began preening and just contently looking around, seemingly quite satisfied with itself.

Early one morning two Northern Cardinals flew onto the feeder's roof. The adult male looked worn out from child care. The other, a juvenile, chafed and begged for food. No help was forthcoming from the adult male. He kept trying to unshackle his parental obligations while the juvenile kept after the male - stretching low, head up raised, beak wide opened - begging, quivering its body relentlessly, poking continuously at the male. All to no avail. The adult male had had enough. Nature interfered and ended his obligation to the youngster. The adult flew from the roof, leaving the juvenile alone and looking bewildered. A new day was dawning and the juvenile rested. He eventually flew off from the roof. Alone.

Most often, the stationary roof of the feeder serves as a steady platform for birds needing access to a swinging seed bell hanging close by the feeder. It was not my intention to elicit such behavior. I originally thought they would fly directly to the bell, hang on, eat the seeds and avoid crashing off. Actually, one time a family of seven Carolina Wrens came to the feeding station. Five wrens were able to hang onto the bell with the other two waiting on the roof, ready to rotate in.

A few noteworthy birds that have occasionally visited my bird feeder's roof: a Brown-headed Cowbird, a Red-shouldered Hawk, a Blue Jay, an Eastern Bluebird, Common Grackles, a Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Painted Buntings, and many

Carolina Wrens.

It is a show of communal sharing, intense activity, and personally, downright interesting.

Ray Scory



To the winner goes the roof. The supposedly docile Mourning Dove surprised me with its combative display of resistance to the overly aggressive attack by the Brown Thrasher. The battle lasted longer than I expected, but the Brown Thrasher got the roof.
Photo by Ray Scory



The juvenile Brown-headed Cowbird takes a commanding position on the roof to successfully beg for food from its host, the Carolina Wren.
Photo by Ray Scory

This photo shows graphic proof of nest parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbirds. The hulking cowbird chick hatches quickly, hogs the food brought to the nest by the diminutive Carolina Wren adults and most likely causes the starvation of its nest mates. Like it or not it's a successful survival strategy by the cowbirds.
Editor

Celebrate
FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT MONTH
October 2024

WHY NATIVE PLANTS?

- ✓ Use less water
- ✓ Reduce / eliminate chemical usage
- ✓ Support our pollinators and wildlife

**Native Plant Demo Gardens
Guided Tours – October 5, 2024
9 AM to 12 PM**

Ormond Beach Environmental Discovery Center
601 Division Ave – Ormond Beach

Vadner Park
105 Seminole Ave – Ormond Beach

Sugar Mill Gardens
950 Old Sugar Mill Road – Port Orange

Marine Discovery Center
520 Barracuda Blvd - New Smyrna Beach

Mary Harrell Black Heritage Museum
314 N. Duss St – New Smyrna Beach

Ponce Preserve Municipal Park
4401 S. Peninsula Dr – Ponce Inlet

For more info, visit our Florida Native Plant Society
Volusia County chapter website:
<https://pawpaw.fnpchapters.org/>

Maypop Passionvine – *Passiflora incarnata*

Firebush - *Hamelia patens* &
Giant Swallowtail Butterfly

Cherokee Bean or Coral Bean -
Erythrina herbacea



Piping Plover, feeding in Ponce Inlet

Photo by Bob Kellogg

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THE PELICAN

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

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Meets monthly September through May

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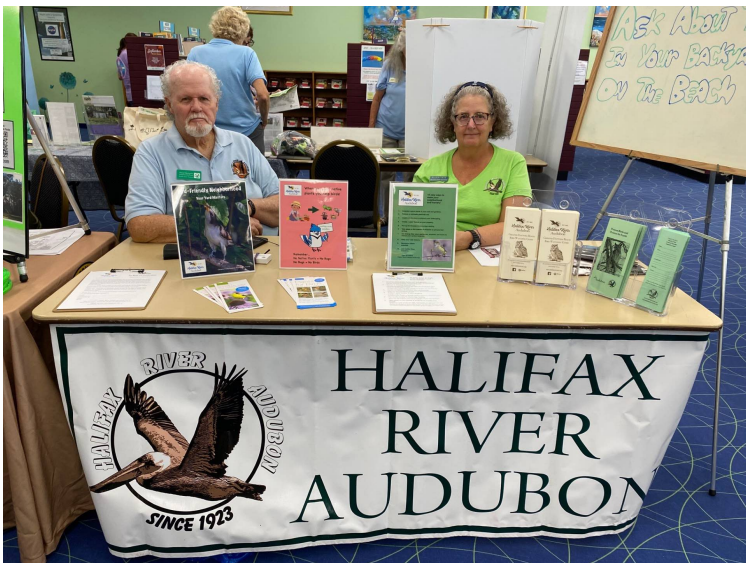
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We wish to thank our sponsors, whose contributions play a vital part of allowing us to continue our work: Florida Power & Light, Colonial Colony and the Spruce Creek Garden and Nature Club.

Our favorite plant expert, Leslie Nixon, is taking the month off from her regular column. However you can celebrate Florida Native Plant Month by joining our friends from the Paw Paw Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society at one or more of the native plant gardens listed on the flyer above. Just click on the image above for a link to all of the information.

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Our table at the How To Fest at Ormond Beach Regional Library was a hit with those who stopped by with bird questions. We also handed out copies of our new Bird Watching Guide.

Photo by Aggie Armstrong