

The Pelican

Volume 70- Number 11, Newsletter of Halifax
River Audubon November, 2024

For wildlife & people since 1923



The President's Column

Time To Recharge

Next week I will be attending Audubon Assembly. This will be my first experience attending this forum. Reviewing a rough draft of the schedule, I realized I will be a very busy person. The 3 Volusia County Audubon chapters are leading 5 different field trip adventures. I have responsibility for one of those outings. There are socializing opportunities and learning and breakout sessions.

I am greatly anticipating keynote presentations by Dr. Paul Gray, Everglades science coordinator and Charles Lee, Florida Audubon director of advocacy. Those 2 presentations will take us through the history and current efforts in conservation. Finally, we will have a presentation by the Chief Conservation Officer for National Audubon, Marshall Johnson who will project those efforts into the future under the framework of Flight Plan - a hemispheric assessment of where birds are now and what must be done to preserve what we love.

A lot of lofty, inspiring, challenging content to consume...

On Sunday I will be leading an outing to Orlando Wetlands. My birding crowd will meet me in the parking lot, follow me around the impoundments and turn to me to work out those tricky identifications when they arise. It will be back to HRA "as usual". I expect to be on an inspirational high from Assembly, and I hope I will be framing the outing from that new perspective.

How will the birding group receive that? How can I motivate them to make the leap from appreciation to conservation? How can I inspire them to action? How can I best accomplish this first and most important charge of my office in the organization?

Return to the first paragraph. There are 40+ Audubon affiliated chapters in Florida. I worked on an assignment for the museum a few weeks ago that involved identifying the chapters and contacts. That exercise was illuminating. Each chapter had a "personality" (Culture is too strong a word). I thought about how those unique entities melded the mission of the Audubon vision with the needs of their constituency. I think there were 40+ different answers. Just from the websites I found inspiration, great ideas and neat projects. It left me wanting more. Queue Audubon Assembly.

The icing on the cake for my next weekend is networking. I can't wait to connect, listen to presentations and soak up all

things Audubon from the experts and professionals to the "working stiffs" like me.

Look out, folks. You may not recognize me after November 9.

I urge you to check out "[Flight Plan](#)" from National Audubon.

Joan Tague

* * * *

Calendar & Events

Audubon Assembly will double as our meeting.

Field Trips

Monday, November 4th, Masters Tract and Faver Dykes- Join Joan Tague for this trip to north on US 1. We'll meet at 7:00 am to carpool at Ormond Towne Square Shopping Center, behind Chik-Fil-A. The Masters Tract is a storm water treatment unit. Make sure to wear shoes you don't mind getting wet or dirty! Sunscreen is recommended, and bug spray is an absolute must. We will eat lunch at Faver Dykes. Questions, call Joan, 386-871-6049.

Sunday, November 10th, Orlando Wetlands Park- Join Joan Tague for this excellent outing. Expect to walk around 3 miles of easy, flat walking, including on their new boardwalk. We'll meet to carpool at the Port Orange Target, 1771 Dunlawton Avenue, Port Orange, behind Panera. Bring lunch. Questions, call Joan, 386-871-6049.

Thursday, November 14th, T M Goodwin WMA- Join David Hartgrove for what's become our annual trip to this excellent birding spot. Afterward, we'll drive to [Marsh Landing](#), in Fellsmere for lunch. We'll meet at 7:00 am at Target in Port Orange to carpool, 1771 Dunlawton Avenue, behind Paneras. Questions, call David, 386-235-1249.

Tuesday, November 19th, Lyonia Preserve- Join Joan Tague for a trip to Scrub-Jay heaven. We'll meet at 8:00 am at the Deltona Library, 2150 Eustace Avenue, Deltona FL. Hiking is in deep, soft sand. Be sure to wear close toed shoes. There are picnic facilities, so bring lunch if desired. Questions, call Joan, 386-871-6049.

Friday, November 22nd, Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive- Join David Hartgrove for this trip. Meet at 7:00 am at Int'l Square, 2550 West International Speedway Blvd., Daytona Beach. Bring lunch. Questions, Call David, 386-235-1249.

Conservation Notes

Last month, USA Today published an excellent, long essay entitled, "Paradise Lost." Written by six authors, including Deb Haaland, Interior Secretary, Scott Weidensaul, renowned birder and author and our own, Clay Henderson. It's an excellent explanation of what's going on with the loss of so many of our birds and some suggestions on how we might help reverse the trend.

* * *

Some folks may be aware of the troubles that plagued National Audubon over the past 2 years. Beginning with the uproar over our namesake's life style and his having been a slave owner, to problems related to issues between staff and management, it was a rocky time at National. There were reports of sexual harassment, job discrimination, failure on the part of management to bargain in good faith with its employees, etc. The staff decided to form a union and affiliated with the Communications Workers of America. CWA Local, 1180, "the Bird Union," ratified its first contract unanimously. The three-year contract includes guaranteed, across-the-board raises and significant annual bonuses. It also improves important employee benefits, including paid parental leave (now increasing from two weeks to 12 weeks). This brings an end to a lot of rancor and disunity at National Audubon and bodes well for the organization's future.

* * *

Christmas Bird Counts begin on December 14th. So it's not too early to begin thinking about your participation. A Christmas Bird Count is done in a 15 mile in diameter circle. Our Daytona Beach count is centered at I-95 and the Tomoka River. So it takes in much of Daytona and Ormond Beach as far west as Plantation Pines and out into the ocean. So we're lucky to have Harry Robinson and his team doing a sea watch at Tom Renick Park, while the rest of us cover beaches and woods and neighborhoods. We average around 115 species every year and we have great fun. There are several other CBC's nearby that you can volunteer for too. Here's this year's CBC local schedule:

West Volusia CBC, 12/14/24, Contact David Stock, dstock@stetson.edu or (386) 736-1893.

Flagler CBC, 12/20/24, Contact Priscilla Reed, shopcilla72@gmail.com

Daytona Beach CBC, 12/21/24, Contact David Hartgrove, birdman9@earthlink.net or 386-235-1249.

Ponce Inlet CBC, 12/28/24, Contact Bill & Marsha Cox, billmarsha@pshift.com

You don't need to be an expert. In fact, going on a CBC is an excellent way to hone your birding skills. We need your help.

David Hartgrove

Time once again for a somewhat abbreviated report from our resident sea watch expert, Harry Robinson.

TOM RENICK COUNTY PARK BIRD COUNTS – SEPTEMBER, 2024

This turned out to be an exceptional month with 152 species the second highest monthly count ever (there were 156 species in April this year). In all 30 surveys completed over 182 hours. There were two additions to the list. For the year 261 species recorded way ahead of any other year, in all 336 species located since January, 2016. The best days were 1,222 birds on the 2nd and 72 species on the 22nd. There are two higher species counts 73 species on April 30, 2023 and 78 on March 23, 2024.

There were single Cory's & Scopoli's Shearwaters on the 25th as Hurricane Helene approached. There were ten Great Shearwaters on the 25th with one on the 26th. Finally for this group there were single Audubon Shearwaters on the 25th and 26th. Brown Pelicans peaked at 59 on the 4th. There were single Magnificent Frigatebirds on the 25th and 26th with four on the 28th.

White Ibis peaked at 49 on the 7th and 90 on the 21st. Glossy Ibis were seen on six days with 12 on the 18th. For Roseate Spoonbill there were eight on the 5th with nine on the 22nd. There was a Wood Stork on the 2nd. For the vultures there were 27 Black on the 30th and 149 Turkey on the 29th. There were 13 Blue-winged Teal on the 2nd with 705 on the 22nd, 425 on the 23rd, 680 on the 25th and 60 on the 30th.

There were two Parasitic Jaegers on the 26th with one on the 30th. Very unexpectedly there were seven Long-tailed Jaegers on the 25th a new high count one of them was travelling with a Common Nighthawk! The first Ring-billed Gull was on the 28th. There were two Lesser Black-backed Gulls on the 6th with three on the 25th and one on the 26th. There was a Gull-billed Tern on the 9th. Caspian Terns were seen on ten days with four on the 4th. Royal Terns peaked at 43 on the 6th and Sandwich Terns peaked at 61 on the 25th. There were eight Roseate Terns on the 25th a new high count. Common Terns were seen on 16 days with 48 on the 3rd. There were four Arctic Terns on the 25th. Forster's Terns were seen from the 3rd with five on the 3rd and 25th. Least Terns were seen daily to the 17th with four on that date. On the 25th a total of eight seen. Black Terns seen on ten days to the 18th with 47 on the 3rd. Black Skimmers were seen on seven days with four on the 6th and seven on the 20th.

Now we come to the first of the new spies there was an immature Black-billed Cuckoo on the 14th. Single Eastern Screech-Owls were heard on six days with two on the 5th a joint high count. Great Horned Owls were heard on seven days from the 10th with two on the 23rd. There were single Barred Owls on the 6th and 19th.

Harry Robinson

Click this [link](#) to see the entire September count., Editor



FALL FOR NATIVES!



Ormond Beach Environmental Discovery Center

Saturday November 2nd, 2024 from 9AM-1PM

❖ Native Plant Sale by Natural Beauty

❖ Educational Booth, Kids Craft, & an 11 AM Classroom Presentation by the Florida Native Plant Society's Pawpaw Chapter

❖ Self-guided tours of EDC Gardens & Exhibits



Natural Beauty Native Florida Landscapes, LLC



Audubon Assembly

Audubon Assembly is here in Daytona Beach this year, November 7th through the 9th. As locals we don't need to stay in the hotel. So the costs are reduced for us. Here's a link to the [Registration Page](#). Scroll down to the Register Today link. Then click the Reserve A Spot link. You'll be taken to the EventBright page. There's an option for just registering for the event and the Friday night banquet. This allows you to hear all three keynote addresses. You won't want to miss any of them.

* * * *

Don't Forget To Vote

As birders and Audubon members, we're engaged in our communities. That means we vote too. November 5th.

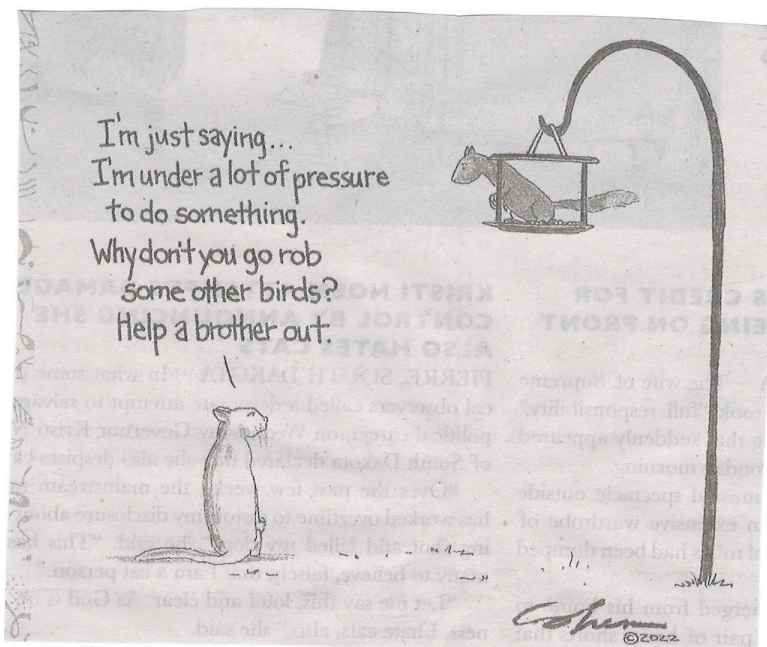


Audubon's Birds of Florida

This exhibit is on view until March 2nd, 2025. Our chapter has several events associated with this exhibit. More on these later. Don't miss this chance to see these beautiful prints up close. Here's a link to [more information](#).

* * * *

From the Pages of Funny Times



* * *

From The Quotable Birder

"Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly."

3

Langston Hughes

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

All Birds Welcomed

From the backyard to the front yard, all are welcomed that come dressed in wings. Come in the morning, come at night. Come when the sun rises, come when the sun sets. Stay when you need, leave when you must.

“You are a bird. You know what you are doing. You know where you are going. Stop by for a meal, no matter how big or how small, or just make a courtesy call. If you can’t make a call and are about to fall, come down anyhow. We are here to help. Have something to eat, along with our meet and greet.”

It is nice to have birds come to our yard. They are such fun visitors. Every so often, one or two Common Ground-doves visit. Slowly and deliberately, they will take fallen bird seed from the ground under the feeder, while wandering around content with their visit. When finished with their meal, they like to push their body up against the base of our bird bath pedestal, close their eyes and peacefully ease themselves into apparent ecstasy.

One time only, while sitting in our backyard screened porch, a Sandhill Crane strolled from the pond, up into the yard, turned left at the porch, and began to walk around our house. I rushed in, grabbed my camera, rushed outside to follow its first time visit to our home. At one point, it walked within four feet of me, so close that I could see through the nostril cavity of its beak. Eventually, it walked up to the front door of our house - stopped and waited long enough for me to photograph it from inside and outside the door. Naturally, I was moving at supersonic speed, enabling me to make the two photos and get back in position to capture the rest of its journey. During this exciting opportunity, I witnessed a Sandhill Crane’s behavior I never saw before, nor thought existed. It patiently stood in front of our front door as a well groomed, seasoned salesperson ready to charm a flattered potential customer into purchasing a valuable, needed product.

One early afternoon on a breezy, early Autumn day, I heard the strong, loud, repeated “Kaaauh” of the Common Raven. Looking up into the majestic blue of a coastal Florida sky, I saw two black specks with long, shovel-shaped tails, playfully barrel-rolling over each other as they passed by - miles high. While they didn’t stop, they did call out a greeting to say “Hello” to us on the ground.

And, let’s not forget the everyday visitor: the Blue Jay, noisy, and fast; the Tufted Titmouse, a one seed at a time feeder; the Downey Woodpecker, hanging like a lamp from an upright support; the Carolina Wren, always around our feeder; and the Northern Cardinal who graces our feeder, first in the morning, last to leave in the evening.

A backyard can be a wonderful place to watch birds.

Ray Scory



Common Ground-Dove - Eyes slowly closing, now resting after a hearty ground birdseed feast. *Photo by Ray Scory*



This Sandhill Crane, casually walked around our house like it had been here before, standing by our front door for the longest time. It was not intimidated by my presence photographing its visit. *Photo by Ray Scory*

Ray is hoping to get a photo of the Mountain Bluebird that has graced his backyard for several days here at the end of October. A real Florida rarity. Ed.

Once again, a word from our resident plant expert, Leslie Nixon.

Surviving the Flood

Alas, we dodged one bullet, got hit with another, and the battle is not yet over. Our latest skirmish, with Hurricane Milton, seemed to inflict more wounds with water than wind. If your yard suffered from flooding, you might be looking for plants that won't drown during the next storm. Fortunately, there happen to be two native groundcovers that will tolerate a week of inundation. These are frogfruit (*Phyla nodiflora* that we discussed in August) and swamp twinflower (*Dyschoriste humistrata*). Both of these lived at the bottom of a swale (buried under 2 feet of water) for over a week in this gardener's yard and survived the long swim beautifully. This was a repeat of the same success after Hurricane Ian in 2022.

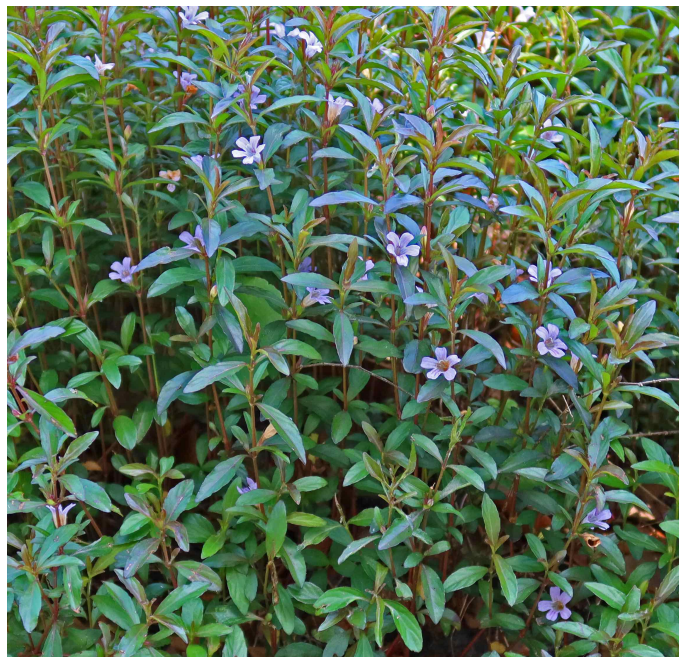
As discussed previously, frogfruit is a flowering, semi-evergreen groundcover that can grow by itself or in a freedom lawn. The other groundcover that likes to take a swim on occasion is swamp twinflower, a small evergreen that grows up to 6" tall with little lavender flowers blooming on and off all year. Like frogfruit, it can spread and bloom in turfgrass. Both plants typically grow in soil with average moisture - they don't demand constant inundation but do appreciate supplemental water in a drought. When not submerged, both host caterpillars that feed songbirds. They prefer full to part-sun, needing a bit of shade in a drier site. Both spread easily by runners and require no maintenance. Plant them in a low area of your yard, enjoy their blooms, and watch for birds hunting for insects.

Swamp twinflower has a sibling known as dry twinflower (*Dyschoriste oblongifolia*). As the name implies, it prefers dry to semi-moist soil and thus does not like being swamped for long. It is a worthy groundcover for drier sites, though, spreading quickly, attracting pollinators, and feeding caterpillars. For areas in your yard that are prone to flooding, make sure you plant the swamp twinflower. Then you won't fret so much about the next avalanche of rain.

Need plants? The last pop-up Florida native plant sale of the year will be at the Ormond Beach Environmental Discovery Center on Saturday, Nov 2 from 9-1. Natural Beauty Native Landscapes will be selling plants while the Pawpaw chapter will be present in support. This is barring any untimely weather events!

Leslie Nixon

* * * *



Swamp Twinflower Photo by Leslie Nixon

* * * * *

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.

PO Box 166
Daytona Beach FL 32115-0166

Email: editor@halifaxriveras.org

Web: <http://www.halifaxriveras.org>

Halifax River Audubon

forbirds@halifaxriveras.org

Meets monthly September through May

President: Joan Tague

Vice President: David Hartgrove

Past President: Melissa Lammers

Treasurer: Bob Kellogg

Recording Sec.: Catherine Kellogg

Membership Sec.: Joan Tague

Corresponding Sec: Vacant

Historian: Vacant

At-Large: Bob Kellogg

Committee Members

Conservation: David Hartgrove, Melissa Lammers

Education: Holly Zwart-Duryea

Field Trips: Joan Tague

David Hartgrove

Newsletter Editor: David Hartgrove

Welcome: Vacant

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.