



*The Pelican Island Audubon Society*

# *Peligram*

*- founded in 1964 to serve Indian River County -*

P.O Box 1833, VERO BEACH, FL 32961 772-567-3520 www.pelicanislandaudubon.org

Our 44<sup>th</sup> Year Vol. 44 No. 2 February 2008

*Our Mission: To preserve and protect the animals, plants, and natural communities in Indian River County through advocacy, education, and public awareness.*

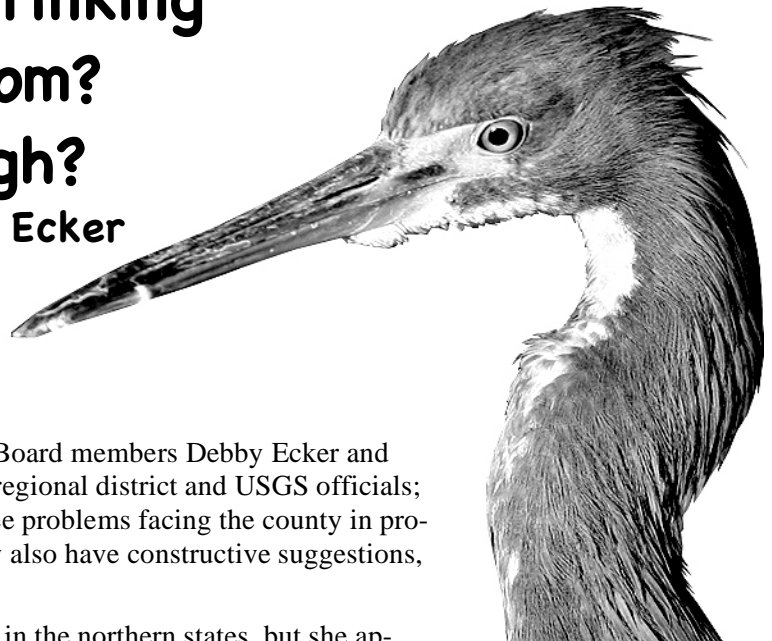
## **Where does our drinking water come from? Is there enough? Presentation by Debby Ecker**

**General Meeting**

**February 18, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.**

**Vero Beach Community Center**

**2266 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue in downtown Vero Beach**



In preparing this presentation Pelican Island Audubon Board members Debby Ecker and Jens Tripson interviewed city, county, control district, regional district and USGS officials; made on-site visits and researched the Internet. They see problems facing the county in providing adequate water to meet future demands, but they also have constructive suggestions, which could lead to solutions.

Until recently Debby Ecker's homes have been entirely in the northern states, but she appears to enjoy discovering the ins and outs of our Florida environment and the challenges to its preservation. Her work experience with both the executive and legislative branches of Massachusetts state government helped PIAS committees amend the county's land use regulations for tree protection and the way developers landscape their projects. Don't miss this important and informative meeting. Light refreshments will be served following the program.

*Tricolored Heron photo by Bob Montanaro.*

**All Field Trips require reservations to be made by calling 772-567-3520.**

## **February March Field Trips**

**Saturday, Feb 16 – Birding field trip to Viera Wetlands (aka South Central Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility).** Another premier birding location not to be missed, this time in Brevard County! Carpoolers will meet at 7:15 a.m. in the McDonald's parking lot located at I-95 and County Road 512 (Sebastian/Fellsmere exit). We will leave McDonald's at 7:30. Take I-95 to Wickham Road. Go westbound on Wickham to the South Central Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility. Leader: Rick Lucas

**Call  
772-567-3520  
to make  
reservations**

**Sunday, March 9 – ORCA Canoe Trip – 8:00am to noon –** Meet at the FMEL boathouse, 200 9<sup>th</sup> St. SE (Oslo Rd) east of US-1. Leaders: Richard Baker & Alice Rowe. Fee \$5 members/\$20 non-members

**Thursday, March 6 – Birding field trip to T.M. Goodwin Waterfowl Management Area –** Meet at Stick Marsh parking lot at 8:00am. Directions: I-95 to CR512, west to Broadway, north to Babcock, north on Babcock. Take left on dirt road along southside of C-54 canal to Stick Marsh.

### Officers

President, **Richard H. Baker**  
 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, **Jens Tripson**  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, **Susan Boyd**  
 Recording Secretary, **Darlene Halliday**  
 Corresponding Secretary, **Jean Catchpole**  
 Treasurer, **Robert Adair**

### Elected Directors

<b>Joe Carroll '08</b>	<b>Nancy Irvin '10</b>
<b>David Cox '09</b>	<i>Vacant</i>
<b>Debby Ecker '08</b>	<b>Susan Richardson '10</b>

### Appointed Board Members

<b>Joel Day</b>	<b>Melissa Tripson</b>
<b>Tina Marchese</b>	<b>Craig Weyandt</b>

### Advisory Board Members

<b>Janice Broda</b>	<b>Bob Smith</b>
<b>Kevin Doty</b>	<b>Paul Tritaik</b>
<b>Lynne Larkin</b>	<b>Billi Wagner</b>

**Pelican Island Audubon at Grand Harbor**  
 President, **Neil Stalter**

Pelican Island Audubon Society, Inc. is registered with the Florida Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Div. of Consumer Services by calling toll-free within Florida 1-800-435-7352. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the State.



## Pelican Island's Birds are Back

### By PINWR Refuge Ranger Joanna Webb

After missing for two years, colonies of water birds have returned to spend the winter at Pelican Island. Pelican Island is a natural mangrove island located east of Sebastian in the Indian River Lagoon between the Wabasso Causeway and Sebastian Inlet. During a typical winter day, there are hundreds to thousands of water birds flying in to roost at Pelican Island. Some birds, if arriving too late, will be unsuccessful in finding a vacant spot on the famed island. Brown pelicans, white pelicans, cormorants, wood storks, egrets, herons...over 30 different bird species in all...jockey for a position to roost for the night.

Nesting season on Pelican Island begins as early as January with great blue herons. Some of the other heron and egret species follow, while wood storks and brown pelicans dominate as the season gets underway. In all, over sixteen different species of birds nest together on this now 3.2 acre island during the spring and summer.

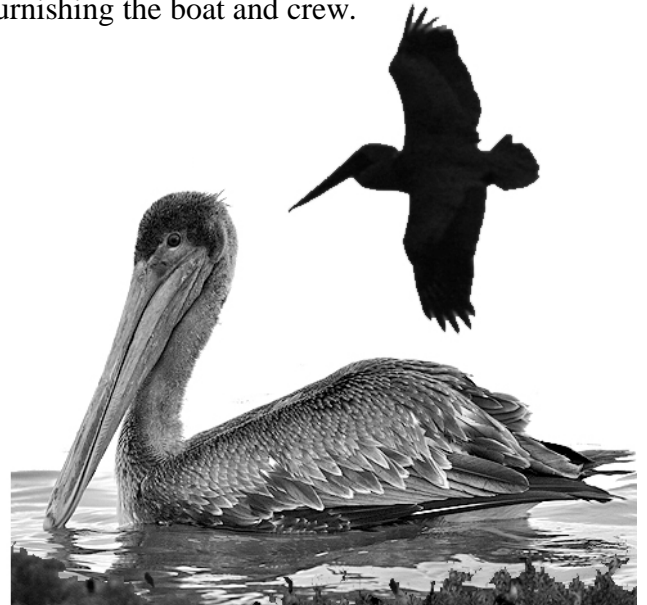


## Christmas Bird Count Results

By Roy Book, CBC compiler

The final results have been compiled for a very successful 41st South Brevard Christmas Bird Count. The 45 volunteers in the field came up with 154 countable plus 2 exotic species. The highlights were a Broad-winged Hawk, a Magnolia Warbler, two Great Crested Flycatchers, a Brown-crested Flycatcher, one Lesser Black-backed Gull and a Ruddy Duck. Pelican Island is recovering and 25 species including 225 White Pelicans were seen on the island by the water-borne team. The numbers of White-winged Doves seem to be increasing in the area with a total of 95 for the day. The American Robin had the highest specie count with almost 9,000. While the total number of birds was down from last year, the 29,858 tallied this year are still notable.

A Thank You seems inadequate for the efforts of all involved but many thanks anyway. And a special thanks to Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge for furnishing the boat and crew.



*Birds crowded on Pelican Island in January.  
Photo by Bob Montanaro.*



# The President's Hoot

## Will We Preserve our Quality of Life? Major Community Environmental Issues Face Indian River Folks

### Potable Water to Drink.

Debby Ecker, who serves on our Board, will be our speaker this month, discussing where we get our water in Indian River County. It is a timely topic as St. Johns River Water Management District has predicted that the Floridan Aquifer, where the county gets its water, will show problems as early as 2013, now only five years away! Water will be the dominant issue for Indian River County this century. Of course, we also will be facing global warming and environmental degradation on our beaches, and a population increase beyond our carrying capacity. Although in Indian River County, we get over 50 inches of rain, our agriculture needs irrigation water during the extended period when we do not have rain. Options available are 1) storing rain water, 2) removing salt from water from the boulder zone beneath the Floridan Aquifer, 3) removing salt from water from the Atlantic Ocean, or 4) reducing consumption.

As we learned during last summer's drought, storing water is problematical as even the largest freshwater lake outside of the Great Lakes, Lake Okeechobee, does not have enough water for agriculture, and much water is lost through evaporation. Getting the salt out of the boulder zone water or seawater requires lots of energy and technology and is expensive. In addition, disposing the brine from the desalination of the Floridan Aquifer is a serious environmental problem for the county without polluting the Indian River Lagoon as we are still doing. Our county with the blessing of the Florida's Department of Environmental Protection plans to put this **industrial waste called brine** in a marsh (now called Spoonbill Marsh in honor of all bird lovers) along the Lagoon. Prior to choosing this option, we hope that the county will do further research and afterwards continue to monitor the environmental impact on the Lagoon. Will we, the people, be able to reduce consumption by 50% using xeriscaping techniques? How do we educate ourselves?

### The Selling of Florida Forever Lands.

We still have not heard from Governor Crist about the two appeals one from the County and the other jointly by PIAS, Friends of St. Sebastian River, and David Cox concerning St. Johns River Water Management District's land swap giving up the Sand Lakes Conservation Area. This land was purchased with limited Florida Forever Funds, yes, land to be preserved in Florida for Forever and Ever and traded to a landowner to settle a threatened, yes threatened lawsuit. We are looking forward to presenting our case to the Governor and Cabinet that this is a bad deal, which makes no sense for the whole state, but is alas a sweetheart deal for the landowner. Alternatively, the Governor and Cabinet could just tell St. Johns that this deal must not go through especially since St. John's own biologists have rated the land highly for its native habitat. For further information see our website <http://pelicanislandaudubon.org/protectconservationlands.html>.

#### ORGANIZATIONS AGAINST THIS BAD DEAL

- |                                       |                   |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Pelican Island Audubon Society        |                   |
| City of Sebastian                     |                   |
| City of Vero Beach                    |                   |
| Indian River County                   |                   |
| Indian River Neighborhood Association |                   |
| Sierra Club Turtle Coast Group        | <b>NEWSPAPERS</b> |
| Friends of St. Sebastian River        | Press Journal     |
| Audubon of Florida                    | Orlando Sentinel  |
| Marine Resources Council              | Palm Beach Post   |

### Mining Ground Water.

The Indian River County Commissioners have asked the County's Planning & Zoning Commission to develop new ordinances related to sand, rock, and water mining in Indian River County. Four workshops are being scheduled. Hope you will attend and be involved.

Watch for meeting times at our website Advocacy box: [www.pelicanislandaudubon.org](http://www.pelicanislandaudubon.org) or send us your email address to be on our PIAS Audubon Alert.

Richard Baker, President



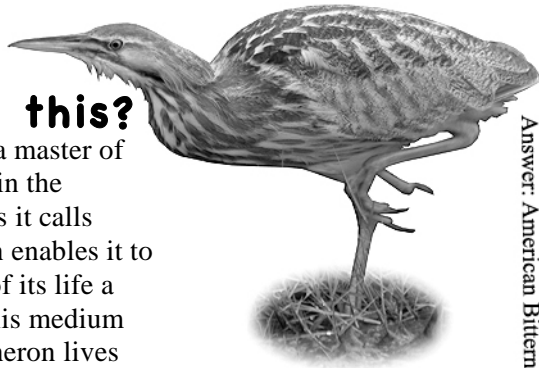
Pied-billed Grebe by Bob Montanaro.

Pelican Island Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 1833  
Vero Beach, FL 32961-1833

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## Who is this?

This bird is a master of camouflage in the marshy reeds it calls home, which enables it to keep much of its life a mystery. This medium size stocky heron lives and breeds in wetlands across much of the United States. Birders are more apt to hear its distinctive loud call rather than seeing the bird itself. *Bird info from the Cornell Lab Bird Guide. Photo by Richard H. Baker.*



Answer: American Bittern

## OUTREACH CENTER DONORS

We continue to recognize the generous donations made toward building the new Audubon Outreach Center to be located at the Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area. January donors include:

Richard & Juanita Baker  
Jean Catchpole  
David Cox  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert deCourcy  
Nathaniel & Jayne Huggins  
Donald Jackson  
Jenny Kelley  
Bud Kleckner  
Tom & Cathy Neal  
Wilbur Sachtjen  
Winston Wood  
Donald Wright

Thank you to all who contributed so far! If you have not done so, please consider giving to this wonderful cause to enhance environmental education in Indian River County.

## Thank you to Rosalind James

Pelican Island Audubon would like to thank Roz James for serving upon the PIAS Board of Directors. She has recently decided to leave the Board and we will miss the enthusiasm and birding experience she brought to our organization.

## BECOME A MEMBER OF THE PELICAN ISLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

Membership benefits include subscriptions to *Audubon* magazine, *Florida Naturalist*, and the PIAS newsletter *The Peligram*. Additionally, members have full borrowing privileges to the PIAS nature library and much more!

- \$20 one-year membership  
 Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 \$20 Friend (receive *The Peligram* only)  
 Check box if a **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please send your name and address along with a check payable to the "**Pelican Island Audubon Society**" to: Pelican Island Audubon Society, P.O. Box 1833, Vero Beach, FL 32961