

Pelican Island Audubon Society

Peligrum

- founded in 1964 to serve Indian River County -



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

Our 50th Year Vol. 50 No. 2 February 2014

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

February 10, 2014 ❖ 6:00 p.m.

Native Bees: A Gardener's Best Friend with Michelle Peterson

North Indian River County Library

1001 Sebastian Blvd. (CR 512), Sebastian

Even though the honey bee is not native to Florida, their role in our ecosystem is very important. Recently there has been a great decline in their populations but did you know that Florida is home to over 300 species of native bee? Join Michelle Peterson as she discusses the value of having native bees visit your garden. Michelle will talk about the different types of native bees you can discover foraging in your garden, and demonstrate the many types of bee condos you can make to encourage these "stingless" bees to roost around your home.

An avid gardener, Michelle Peterson started beekeeping five years ago after noticing a scarcity of honey bees pollinating her flowers and later learning about Colony Collapse Disorder. She became an active member of the nearest beekeeper club, the Palm Beach County Beekeepers Association, and, in 2011, founded the Treasure Coast Beekeepers Association to support beekeepers and bee advocates in St. Lucie, Martin and Indian River Counties. Michelle continues to serve as President of the Treasure Coast Beekeepers Association. She is a Florida Master Gardener in St. Lucie County, a Master Beekeeper in the UF/IFAS Master Beekeeper Program, with a specialization in Native Bee Apiculture. Michelle has a strong interest in supporting backyard beekeepers, promoting and encouraging native bee pollinators in residential gardens and landscapes, and discouraging the use of pesticides, particularly *clothianidin* and other *neonicotinoids*, that are harmful to bees and other pollinators. Michelle lives and works in Port St. Lucie, Florida.



Photo: Bob Montanaro

Masthead photo: Florida Scrub-Jay by Bob Montanaro.

February 17, 2014 ❖ 7:30 p.m.

The Secret Life of the Florida Scrub-Jay with Bob Montanaro

Vero Beach Community Center

2266 14th Avenue, Vero Beach

The Florida Scrub-Jay is an attractive and personable bird with many unique qualities. They are cooperative breeders often living in extended family groups with young from previous years staying around as helpers to help raise and care for the latest offspring. As Florida's only endemic bird they are found only in peninsular Florida and nowhere else in the world. They are fairly sedentary birds that do not travel very far and have evolved to live successfully in only one type of Florida habitat; oak scrub unique to the well-drained, dry, sandy conditions found in parts of central Florida and along the Atlantic coastal ridge---areas that are also highly prized



Photo: Bob Montanaro

by developers. Habitat loss is the bird's greatest enemy causing an almost 90% decline in population over the last one hundred years leading to the bird's designation as a threatened species back in 1987.

To illustrate the life history of the Florida Scrub-Jay, Pelican Island Audubon Society office manager and wildlife photographer Bob Montanaro spent considerable time this past year under the guidance of wildlife biologist Joe Carroll waiting for opportunities to document Florida Scrub-Jay behavior through still photographs and digital video. "The Secret Life of the Florida Scrub-Jay" brings to life the often-elusive behavior of these birds and why the preservation of their habitat is one of the best ways to preserve the Florida Scrub-Jay along with the myriad other species that make the scrub their home.

Field Trips

February 1 & 15 - Saturday - Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area at 9:00AM - guide Ken Gonyo

February 22 - Saturday - Indrio Savannahs Preserve - 8:00AM - guide Tina Marchese

*For more information call 772-567-3520
or visit www.pelicanislandaudubon.org*

Bird of the Month by Juanita Baker

Photo title: "Waiting for a fly" by John Waite
Eastern Phoebe *Sayornis phoebe*

Who can recognize this little nondescript bird? What major ways can we use to identify it? First, notice its shape and size to categorize this as a perching bird or passerine, because we can identify some birds just by their silhouette (small - 7 inches, pointed bill, thin legs, short tail). Next, the small, thick bill suited to catching insects in flight identifies it as a Flycatcher species. Then, observe its colors carefully to see the dark head, white throat and breast, gray/brownish sides and, most especially, its all-dark bill, with neither eye ring nor wing-bars. These features distinguish it from other North American Flycatchers as the Eastern Phoebe--photographed by John J. Waite with a Cannon Rebel XT, Sigma DG 500 at 5.6.



Eastern Phoebe December 2013 © by John J. Waite

However, we don't confine identification to size, shape, and color. All birds have their own unique call. And the Phoebe gets its name from its voice, "Fee-ee—Bee," in a rasping but characteristic 3-note call that often rings out across the garden especially on its breeding grounds. The Phoebe is only a winter visitor to Florida, leaving at the first hint of spring to go north, sometimes all the way to Canada, to breed.

Behavior is another major way to identify birds. The Phoebe will alight by itself on an open branch, pumping its tail up and down, then flit out to catch an insect and return to the same or another open perch. The diversity of bird species is partly explained by their adaptations to a variety of different food sources, and we can use the food the bird is pursuing as another way to identify it. Phoebes catch sawflies, grasshoppers, crickets, leafhoppers, wasps, and bees. Why don't they get stung? Evidently the quick kill with their strong bills prevents stings.

View a large color image and learn how to enter your own photos at www.pelicanislandaudubon.org

Bird ID Help? by Linda Chancellor

Her eyes brightened as she talked. The bird had flown into her garage and had landed on the ceiling track of the open garage door. It took me a moment to process what she was telling me. You see I had known her for over twenty years but had never known she was enthusiastic about birds. Sure we shared a love of plants and gardens and once she had told me how much she liked to walk the beach and pick up things that interested her but she had never once mentioned her interest in birds until now. She continued her story, describing her futile attempts to persuade the bird to fly out of the garage. Her voice quickened as she said she realized she had not seen this kind of bird before. She continued the story saying she had run into the house to retrieve her phone that had an Audubon app on it. Using the app she was then able to determine that the bird, still in her garage, was a Blue-headed Vireo. Again by using the app she checked and found one had recently been spotted in Fort Pierce. She was almost breathy as she said, "It was a new species for me." I had to admit I was totally impressed, amazed and curious. As I have said before I am not a techy person but I was curious about this bird identification tool she had just used.

It was another two months before I thought about the Audubon app again. I decided I would take a leap and order it for my phone. Apparently my phone was not receptive to the idea (I will save that story for another time) and so my husband loaded it onto his phone. Purchasing, downloading and being able to operate the app require different skills in which I am apparently lacking. Our first trial was to use it to identify a group of shorebirds standing on the beach at Jaycee Park but we had trouble retrieving several images. Back to the instruction book but wait there is no instruction book. The second trial was done at the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge where the images on the app allowed us to identify Blue-winged Teals (with white cheek markings) and Shovelers. We were able to even figure out how to record a sighting. The third trial we used it to identify a Yellow-throated Warbler on the Greenway Lagoon Trail. Hoping practice would help us to use the app quicker we tried to look at images of birds at home but the app would not cooperate until finally we reloaded the program. We are still working our way through this but I wish I could ask for help from my friend.

Remembering Betsy who passed away December 23rd, 2013.

Second Conference - February 21-22, 2014

Communities Coming Together to Heal Our World and Ourselves

Location: Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Vero Beach, Florida

Five Keynote Speakers, 16 additional speakers/panelists, and musicians, artists, healers, and interactive participation by attendees.

Keynote Speakers - Healing of the Earth by Restoring Rights

Visit the web site: <http://healingourworldandourselves.org>

View the brochure: http://healingourworldandourselves.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Brochure_Feb2014.pdf

Healing our World & Ourselves

Certainly, our planet Earth and all its inhabitants, plants, animals including humans need healing and restoration. The decline in our environmental health worldwide including the rapid loss of habitats, plant and animal species, fresh clean water, toxic contaminants in our foods, and human caused climate change, seems sudden but has been simmering for decades. Wars and violence contribute to these environmental issues. Closer to home, we woke up one morning to find our treasured Lagoon was in deep trouble with the loss of 47,000 acres (60 %) of its fundamental support of marine life, our seagrasses gone. Yes Gone! Manatees, dolphins, fish dead by the 100s. Although we do not know yet why this happened, maybe just a perfect storm of related factors, our over-populated human presence and activities are contributing to the Lagoon's demise.

Fortunately, many have responded in an effort to heal the planet and ourselves. Except for the City of Sebastian, our county and city officials have passed strong fertilizer ordinances and are looking into limit the harmful effects of the 36,864 septic tanks polluting our county's surface and ground waters. Our citizens are committing themselves in the following ways:

- Indian River Lagoon Coalition's Call to Action
- Floridians' Clean Water Declaration Campaign-to insure its purity, availability, essential to life
- UF/ Pelican Island Audubon's Stewardship and Environmental Classes
- Requesting administrative hearings to stop further destruction of our seagrasses and mangroves
- Forming new connections and organizations to promote a healthy environment

Now churches and religious groups are heeding the Bible's entreaty to be stewards of the earth, not just consume its resources unsustainably. Humans have the responsibility to keep our Earth healthy for generations to come. Bringing in spirituality shows concern for creation and for our fellow humans.

One such effort, started by Reverend Gregory Wilson and Helen Wilson from the Unitarian Universalist Church of Brevard is holding its Second Annual Conference, Healing Our World & Ourselves at the Emerson Center, 1590 27th Ave., Vero Beach, on Feb. 21-22, 2014 from 9:30 am Friday to 6:00 pm Saturday. The Conference addresses the question "How do you see the problem of climate disruption in relationship to the earth and her most basic relationships with us and the rest of creation?" Specific focus will be on food and water, with solutions through earth rights, democratic/legislative rights of the people, mobilizing nations,

science and technology, inspiration, and the effect of globalized addictions/need for recovery.

There will also be music, time for small group interaction, opportunities for dance and movement- a time to "feed" and heal body, mind, and spirit.

To help cover expenses, the suggested donation is \$75 for both days, which includes two continental breakfasts, lunches and the dinner on Friday. If you want to attend MET singer Shyla Nelson's concert on Friday night, it is \$15 extra. She is excellent. For those who find that \$90 pinches their budget, there are partial scholarships.

Keynote speakers include:

Pat Siemen: On the Rights of Nature. A Dominican Sister from Adrian, Michigan, and an attorney, she currently serves as the director of the Center for Earth Jurisprudence, Barry University School of Law in Miami.

Will Allen: Community Supported Agriculture. An organic farmer, teacher and activist, Cedar Circle Farms, E. Thetford, VT (www.cedarcirclefarm.org). Will is a self-identified "food freak", author, and a lifelong farmer.

George Friday: Building Communities to Action. He is a consultant to nonprofit organizations seeking to build capacity and organizational strength while acknowledging and addressing issues of oppression and privilege in ways that build community.

Shyla Nelson: One Earth, One Voice to Respond to the Planetary Crisis in Humanity's Relationship with the Earth. She is an internationally renowned classical singer, public speaker, voice trainer, author, and environmental advocate. As an artist, she has been acclaimed as a soprano of "consummate artistry and vocal grace" whose concert and operatic appearances have delighted audiences throughout the U.S. and abroad

Bruce Alexander: Earth Recovery Support Groups to Heal Our Earth. A Canadian psychologist who has devoted four decades to the study of addiction. His two books on addiction are *Peaceful Measures: Canada's Way Out of the War on Drugs* (University of Toronto Press, 1990) and *The Globalization of Addiction: A Study in Poverty of the Spirit* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

Join us! Register by mail or on the WEBSITE: www.HealingOurWorldAndOurselves.org or call 772-486-4029 (Rev. Wilson) or email gvwilson@bellsouth.net

Pelican Island Audubon Society Officers & Directors

Officers: President **Richard H. Baker, Ph.D.**, 1st Vice President **Bob Bruce**, 2nd Vice President **Susan Boyd**, Recording Secretary **Darlene Halliday**, Corresponding Secretary **Peter Sutherland**, Treasurer **Steve Goff** — Elected Directors: **Joe Carroll '14, David Cox, Ph.D. '14, Nancy Irvin '16, Bill Loftus, Ph.D. '15, John Orcutt, Ph.D. '15, Toni Robinson '16** — Appointed Board Members: **Graham Cox, Ph.D., Bill Halliday, Jim Kirley, Tina Marchese, David Peabody, Jane Schnee, (Billi Wagner - Ornithological Consultant)** 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.

Birds migrate-and members can too!
Please consider “migrating” up to
one of our Sustainable Memberships-
Scrub-jay (\$100) or Osprey (\$200).

Anyone who contributes \$100 or \$200 per year to the Annual Fund is automatically recognized as a Pelican Island Audubon Society Sustaining or Double Sustaining Member. Think about a \$25 or \$50 per quarter donation, which works out to only \$2 to \$4 a week to support our mission.

Sustaining Members are critical to the Society. If every Society member contributed \$100 or \$200 every year, PIAS could increase its efforts to help fulfill our mission in Indian River County and support the continued growth of our programs. This is a tax-deductible contribution to a 501(c)(3) organization and includes your membership renewal to Pelican Island Audubon and a free gift cookbook!

- \$100 Florida Scrub-Jay Level \$200 Osprey Level

Other Annual Membership Options:

- \$20 Individual \$30 Family

Is this a membership renewal? Yes No

- Join National Audubon Society for an additional \$20 a year.

- I want to make an additional tax deductible donation of \$ _____

Total \$ _____

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

Credit card payments call (772) 567-3520 M-F 9AM-1PM

Please email us if there is a local environmental issue which concerns you at piaudubon@bellsouth.net

Plant of the Month by Janice Broda
Florida Privet

Unassuming and often overlooked by humans Florida privet (*Forestiera segregata*) is a powerful plant for pollinators and for birds. If you wish to attract pollinators and birds to your garden, then this plant should be on your A-list.

Fancy, highly-cultivated, and often very needy, ornamental plants from other Lands are not the plants prized by and known to our wildlife. Florida privet has co-evolved with a bevy of pollinators and birds.

The yellow-green flowers that form along its stems are described as ‘inconspicuous’ from an anthropocentric point of view, but bees, wasps, butterflies, and other pollinators seek out the nectar-rich flowers. Flowering, in our area, often occurs now and again in the spring “timed” to coincide with the migrations of insect-loving snow-birds. Florida privet usually has male and female flowers (dioecious) on different plants, relying upon insects for its pollination.

Abundant, small, single-seeded blue-black fruits follow on female plants of this member of the olive (Oleaceae) family. Also commonly known as wild olive, these fruits are favored and spread by birds. Florida privet plants often ‘volunteer’ beneath power lines, fence, and other favored bird perches.

Left to its own devices, Florida privet will grow into a small (to 20’), densely-foliated tree, likely with many trunks of pale grey bark. With small oblong to elliptical (3/4 – 2”) leaves, this plant is very tolerant of clipping and shearing.

Left to its own devices, Florida privet will grow into a small (to 20’), densely-foliated tree, likely with many trunks of pale grey bark. With small oblong to elliptical (3/4 – 2”) leaves, this drought-tolerant plant can be clipped or sheared into a shaped hedge. Fast-growing, Florida privet thrives in sun or partial shade and can be used as a scrub or tree in your landscape.



Janice Broda



Bob Montanaro