

# 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 51st Year Vol. 51 No. 1 January 2015

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

**January 12, 2015 ❖ 6:00 p.m.**

How to raise a seahorse with Nancy Pham

**North Indian River County Library**  
1001 Sebastian Blvd. (CR 512), Sebastian



Nancy Pham is the Site Manager and Research Associate at Florida Tech's Vero Beach Marine Laboratory. Her research currently focuses on seahorse conservation at which she is collaborating with government agencies and public aquariums to evaluate wild seahorse populations in Florida, Virginia, and New York. Nancy also facilitates various educational programs such as youth camps and adult workshops to inform the community about the numerous projects that take place at the Vero Beach Marine Lab. From evaluating marine plants as an alternative source of bio-diesel fuel, to farming tropical fishes for the pet trade, private companies and scientists have been able to test their methods by utilizing the Vero Beach lab's year-round access to filtered Atlantic seawater.

*Nancy Pham  
with seahorses.*



**January 19, 2015 ❖ 7:30 p.m.**

Fishing Through The Seasons at  
Sebastian Inlet State Park  
with Ed Perry

**Vero Beach Community Center**  
2266 14th Avenue, Vero Beach

Park Services Specialist Ed Perry will present a slide/PowerPoint overview of a year's fishing at Sebastian Inlet State Park entitled "Fishing Through the Seasons at Sebastian Inlet



State Park". The program is a compilation of fish species, calendar months, baits, times & tides, tackle, etc. and is a broad look at monthly "best bets" that can be targeted and caught at the state park. Ed Perry states that the program is based on a lifetime of observation that he has gained first hand through fishing at the park since he was about 16 years old (over 30 years now!). Photo: Ed Perry with an eleven pound Flounder caught on 12/11/12.

**Field Trips - Call 772-567-3520 for reservations**

**Jan 10 (Sat) North Sebastian Conservation Area** - Florida Scrub-Jays, Bald Eagles, migratory birds, wading birds, ducks, etc.

**Jan 17 (Sat) IRC West Regional Waste Water Treatment Facility** - raptors, wading & migratory birds

**Feb 14 (Sat) Treasure Hammock Ranch** - birding tour of a working cattle ranch

**Feb 15 (Sun) Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park**

**Feb 21 (Sat) Barrier Island Sanctuary** - tour the Sanctuary and search for pelagic birds

Masthead photo: Red-bellied Woodpecker by Bob Montanaro.

## December Bird of the Month by Juanita Baker

Shall we dance? Courtship has specific rituals, no matter what the species. With an offering of a tasty fish from the salty sea, the male Royal Tern holds out his offering to an interested mate. She seems to dance, responding with spirit. Circling each other, both have crests erect showing off their form and feathers to entice.

Robert Feldberg, with his Canon 7D 1/2500 at f/5.6, 400 mm lens, took the photograph at Ft. Desoto Beach on Florida's west coast in April, the beginning of the breeding season. Royal Terns choose nests near abundant saltwater small fish in extremely dense breeding colonies on remote and isolated sandy beaches. Both parents cooperate on nest building.

Nests are readily abandoned if disturbed. After hatching, the fledglings are moved in three days to crèches (nurseries for pre-fledging chicks). Parents plunge-dive from 30 feet to capture small fish to feed them. After fledging, juveniles stay with their parents for five to eight months, begging loudly and successfully for food. Young birds require much practice before becoming adept at plunge-dive fishing.

During the 1980s, Royal Terns nested in the thousands on Merritt Island and northeastern Florida Beaches as well as in North Carolina and Virginia. However, recent breeding-bird surveys reveal only two confirmed locations on our West Coast. From October to February there is an influx of often hundreds of Royal Terns migrating from breeding areas as far North as coastal Maryland and west as the Texas Gulf coast. Some continue on to Peru and Brazil, enjoying tropical seas.

After pairing, their solidly black crown will molt to white forehead and crown that we see the rest of the year. When weather chills or the tide is high, you can see terns on ocean beaches huddled together protectively, all heads facing the same direction into the wind.

*View a large color image and learn how to enter your own photos at [www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org](http://www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org)*



*Royal Terns being Royal! Shall We dance? © Robert Feldberg*

## Blue Cypress Lake by Linda Chancellor

Our destination was Blue Cypress Lake where we planned to join friends for a sunset boat ride. We left Vero and drove west on Route 60 for about twenty-two miles. Once we crossed under I-95 the scenery quickly changed from commercial to acres of citrus groves and wide open spaces. We finally arrived at Middleton's fish camp where we joined the others to board the pontoon boat captained by Bob Bruce.

We left the marina and entered the lake by way of a small canal. I had seen pictures of Blue Cypress Lake but they had not prepared me for the expanse of water that lay before me. Bob guided the boat slowly through the dark, tannin colored water close to the shore as our guide, Richard Baker, began to tell us about the lake. Dr. Baker has spent many hours, on this lake, learning its secrets and capturing its spirit in photographs. He began to tell us about the huge population of nesting ospreys but was interrupted by the piercing cries of the birds. Ospreys were everywhere, flying overhead, perched in trees and sitting on nests. Large nests, some more than six feet across were to be found in almost every bald cypress tree and we could see several had nestlings in them.

I tried to count the number of birds but it was the trees that supported these nests that began to mesmerize me. Their massive buttressed trunks rose from the dark waters. They looked incredibly ancient. Each one was different and unique and the distorted branches looked as if they had

been trained to be giant Bonsai trees. It was spring and the trees had sprouted new lime green feathery leaves which peeked out from the masses of silvery gray Spanish Moss that hung from the branches. Richard would alert us to the sight of little blue herons and egrets but still I couldn't take my eyes off of these magnificent trees. Richard continued to enlighten us with facts concerning this beautiful lake.

As refreshments and food were served we heard about flora and fauna, its history of hurricanes and droughts and the people who had inhabited this area. We motored passed another group of trees and saw they had large numbers of cormorants that had settled in to roost for the night. Richard proceeded to point out the largest eagle nest I have ever seen. The time went quickly and the sun was starting to set. It was time to head home. As we headed back across the lake the temperature began to cool. I was glad I had brought my windbreaker. I would really recommend this trip to see one of Florida's unique places. Be sure to bring binoculars and a hat that you can secure. I had taken my camera but I found it hard to take pictures from a moving boat so just relax, listen and take in all the beauty the lake offers.

Pelican Island Audubon Society offers this excursion to see the beauty of Blue Cypress Lake. Sunrise and sunset tours are offered for a donation of \$85 per person with all proceeds going to Pelican Island Audubon. The trip is limited to 8 persons and includes food and drinks. For information and reservations, call 722-567-3520.

**Like** Pelican Island Audubon on Facebook at

[www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org](http://www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org)  
for all the latest news and information

**facebook**

# A New Beginning for Us! Come join us!

## We need your skills and help!

2014: What an amazing year we've had thanks to your donations, volunteering, and advocacy this past year:

- Our new Audubon House is getting the finishing touches;
- The 4x4 School Square Foot Gardens are thriving;
- We stopped Indian River county from a disastrous dredge and fill project at the Oslo Road boat ramp;
- All fitting achievements for our 50th Anniversary Celebration!

Our continuing and now new exciting programs where we all can work together will be able to occur in the Audubon House with many new roles for volunteers to:

1. Meet and greet visitors to our new Office and especially look after the office when office manager Bob Montanaro is not present. This could involve helping guide folks around our Audubon property, removing exotics, or doing janitorial duties. We need lots of help to keep our office and grounds in great shape.
2. Co-lead a nature walk at the adjacent Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area with Ken Gonyo. This is a great way to learn the local plants and animals.
3. Take our Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory / Audubon Volunteer Nature Stewardship class that begins on Saturday January 24 from 1:30-4:30 and continues for 6 Saturdays of learning, all about the lagoon and Florida environment so you can knowledgeably help out.
4. Assist or lead various fundraising projects and developing fund-raising ideas.
5. Help with publicizing and promoting our education, science and advocacy projects. We need a publicity chair(s).
6. Participate in our School Square-foot Gardens project: helping school age children construct and plan vegetable gardens on school grounds, provide brief class instruction, working side by side with a teacher.
7. Assist with a new after school science program to educate students to understand, appreciate and respect the Indian River Lagoon in order to preserve it.
8. Many small tasks like providing cookies at our meetings, volunteering at festival booths or helping to fold, stuff envelopes, and mail our Peligram all contribute to

our Audubon efforts.

9. Co-lead a field trip: (you don't have to be an expert as another Audubon birder will join you, handling logistics, be a contact to coordinate attendees).
10. Work on selecting measurable 'quality of life' sustainability indicators to set community goals and mark progress. We are doing this for the Lagoon, in Gifford and Fellsmere as well as the county as a whole.
11. Work on various library tasks and help set up the library in the new building.
12. Monitor our birds, be a citizen scientist! Be involved with Scrub Jay, Eagle Watch, special Osprey or shore-



bird monitoring.

13. Write educational brochures or informational Letters to the Editor: research and write a 1-2 paragraph article on hot topics to share with local media (radio announcements, Press Journal, 32963, and Hometown News)

Just think, if each of our 900 members volunteered to further educate people, protect our Lagoon, wildlife and environment, or work on an issue, what we could accomplish for 2015! Please call 772-567-3520 or email [piaudubon@bellsouth.net](mailto:piaudubon@bellsouth.net) with what you would like to do or what special skills or ideas you have to share (e.g. student programs, monitoring Least Tern nesting, teach nature classes, 'greening' our community, and much more). We are open to your creativity and initiatives!

Happy New Year!

Richard Baker

**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: **David Cox, Ph.D. '17**, **Graham Cox, Ph.D. '17**, **Nancy Irvin '16**, **Bill Loftus, Ph.D. '15**, **Toni Robinson '16** — Appointed Board Members: **Bill Halliday**, **Tina Marchese**, **Diane Morgan**, **David Peabody**, **Bonnie Swanson**, **Corry Westbrook**

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!

- \$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](mailto:piaudubon@bellsouth.net)

**Plant of the Month by Janice Broda**

Christmas berry (*Lycium carolinianum*) is one of the red-berried plants that you may have noticed if you took a walk at the Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area or another preserve along the Indian River Lagoon. Like all salt marsh plants, Christmas berry is adapted to variable conditions – flooding and drought – and could grace a dry – wet spot in your home landscape. If the Christmas berries appear to be tiny tomatoes to you, you have discerned that this plant belongs to the economically important nightshade plant family, Solanaceae, which includes tomatoes, potatoes, egg-plant, tobacco, and peppers.



Flower

Habitat on dike

***Lycium carolinianum***



Fruit

You can learn about the birds, plants, butterflies, beneficial and benign native bees, reptiles, amphibians, and other wildlife – and their complex interrelationships – at the nineteenth free volunteer stewardship offered by Pelican Island Audubon Society and the Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory (FMEL), University of Florida. The 2015 class begins on Saturday, January 24, from 1:30 to 4:30pm and continues for 6 weeks. Each class includes classroom instruction and a field adventure at the Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area, the 440-acre nature preserve that surrounds the FMEL and the new Audubon House. Each session this year will include a new segment about birds given by PIAS Office Manager and excellent nature photographer Bob Montanaro.

In exchange, you are asked to volunteer and share your knowledge in way that suits your skills and schedule. This class can serve as an excellent introduction for volunteering at the Audubon House as a greeter or in the native demonstration garden around it. You also can volunteer at the nature center of your choice or at the Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area leading nature walks or working to control invasive pest plants. You can find out more about this class – and register – at <http://ourorca.org>