

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 52st Year Vol. 52 No. 3 March 2016

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

March 14, 2016 ❖ 6:00 p.m.

Turkey Talk with Edward Northey

North Indian River County Library

1001 Sebastian Blvd. (CR 512), Sebastian

Turkey Talk with Edward Northey features the biology, distribution, and habits of the Florida native subspecies of the Eastern Wild Turkey with an emphasis on “calling” techniques and how one would use them in order to persuade a male turkey into a courting and dominance display at close proximity to you, the caller. Samples of some taxidermy items include a number of “fans” (mounted tail sections) from a few age classes, turkey spurs, and “beards” to help recognize birds in the field. Mr. Northey will demonstrate use of the various call styles/types, and encourage practical calling from those in attendance (which usually leads to many laughs by all). Edward D. Northey is an Environmental Specialist II and Operations Supervisor for Volusia County Mosquito Control.

March 21, 2016 ❖ 7:30 p.m.

Exploring the In-water Life of Sea Turtles with Cody Mott

Vero Beach Community Center

2266 14th Avenue, Vero Beach

Cody Mott of Inwater Research Group will discuss the latest research being done with Sea Turtles.

March 28, 2016 ❖ 6:00 p.m.

Bird Art Through The Centuries with Juanita Baker, Ph.D.

Riverhouse - 305 Acacia Road, Vero Beach

From early primitive art 40,000 years ago through Western and Eastern history, bird art reflects our human sensitivity, appreciation, and growing understanding. Birds are important parts of our lives, can be seen daily almost anywhere we are outdoors; a source of food, beauty, curiosity and wonder. Portrayed in symbol, myth, and art in all their diversity in a great range of bird art with different styles from elaborate exotic birds to detailed scientific illustrations. Even ornithology illustrations, some of the most artistic and beautiful volumes in printing history, have evolved depicting the *Continued on next page*

Spoonbill Watch Volunteers Needed

PIAS is beginning a pilot project to track Roseate Spoonbills in Indian River County in cooperation with scientists from Audubon Florida and National Audubon. Data show that Roseate Spoonbills are abandoning historical foraging/nesting sites in southern Florida because of sea-level rise and are moving northward. We have one known colony in our county at the Stick Marsh northwest of Fellsmere. It is possible that more birds may move into our county to feed and nest. PIAS needs the help of citizen-scientist volunteers to document foraging and nesting areas. Those data will be shared with Audubon scientists trying to understand the response of this species to climate change.

Volunteers are needed for two different initiatives:

1. Monitoring of nesting and foraging at the Stick Marsh colony: this requires volunteer(s) to visit the colony once a week before nesting begins and twice a week until the chicks fledge. Volunteers will be trained to identify the plumage stages of Spoonbills, examine birds for presence of bands, determine the flight lines of adults flying to and from the colony to identify foraging locations, and alerting scientists to the presence of chicks.

See the new page on the PIAS website for more information about plumage stages, flight-line observations and banding types.

2. From anywhere in the county observations of feeding aggregations of Roseate Spoonbills (more than 5 birds feeding together), any indications of courtship, and any nesting activity would be most helpful. If you see any of these behaviors, please note the time, date, exact location and behavior observed. Report those observations to the PIAS office by phone (772)567-3520 or email piaudubon@yahoo.com and scientists will verify your observations.

Your observations will be invaluable to scientists studying this lovely bird and you will be helping conserve this iconic Florida bird in our region.

Upcoming Events & Field Trips

Call 772-567-3520 for reservations and directions.

March 2 - Pelican Island NWR with Graham Cox

March 9 - Padgett Creek Ranches with David Heuberger

March 12 - Bee Gum Point with Jim Shea

March 17 - Wakodahatchee Wetlands/Green Cay with Bill Loftus

Masthead photo: Anhinga by Bob Montanaro.

Bird of the Month by Juanita Baker

Isn't she a beauty? Often the female of many bird species is less colorful than the male, and we do not appreciate her. In her own right, this Northern Cardinal, with her bright orange, seed-crushing bill, reddish wings and tail would be touted as a unique, colorful bird if she did not have such a flashy partner. Viewed by herself alone, in the details allowed by John A. Middleton, Jr.'s 300mm f4 with Nikon TC14E-II for 420mm telephoto lens, we can savor even the tiny red-orange facial feathers, her erect crest and watchful gaze. Often during mating season, male Cardinals may attack your windows or even your car's side-view mirrors. What is he doing? He is likely warning the apparent rival Cardinal he perceives in his reflection that this is his territory and not to intrude!

Unfortunately, human structures often have done tremendous damage to our birds. The reflection of trees and sky in your windows may deceive a bird into thinking it has a clear escape path to freedom, especially when it is startled or is being pursued by a predator like a hawk. Though you may notice only one or two birds each year that have perished from impacting your windows, it is estimated that many millions to as many as one billion birds in the U.S. die from window collisions annually. Scientists have found that birds, which can see into the ultraviolet spectrum, will avoid windows if we use ultraviolet decals on windows that are nearly invisible to human eyes. If all us made our home and business windows less reflective, either by pulling shades during migration and breeding seasons, designing buildings differently, or using glass with decals or implanted UV patterns, we could save millions of bird's lives.

Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis* Order PASSERIFORMES – Family CARDINALIDAE



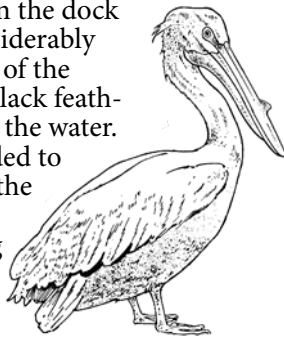
"So easily overlooked!" Northern Cardinal

© 2015 John A. Middleton, Jr.

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

Snowbirds of a different kind by Linda Chancellor

I was searching for the American white pelicans that migrate to our area from November to March. I spotted five, in the company of three brown pelicans, sitting on the dock next to the Sebastian Yacht Club. They were considerably larger than the brown pelicans. Suddenly several of the white pelicans lifted their large wings, revealing black feathers underneath, and jumped off the walkway into the water. Using their large yellow-orange bills they proceeded to scoop up small fish that were swimming close to the surface. How different from the brown pelican's approach of flying and then performing headlong dives in pursuit of fish. However, both species had learned that the sight of man near the fish cleaning station meant a possible easy handout. As the white pelicans paddled over to the station I noticed how high their bodies rode in the water. Their bright orange legs and webbed feet were easily seen just below



the water's surface. This time they were disappointed as there was no scraps tossed their way. They lifted their huge wings, gained lift and glided over the river.

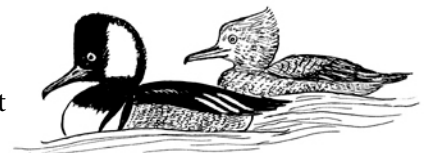
FYI: White pelicans migrate inland to breed. Many pelicans that have spent the winter in the Gulf of Mexico return to Marsh Lake on the Minnesota River for the summer breeding season. During this time they develop a nuptial tubercle - a fibrous knob on the top of their bill, which is shed after the mating season. An Audubon article from July -August 2015 reported that biologists from North Dakota State University and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources have collected these tubercles. They analyzed them and have found traces of chemicals from oil and the dispersants that were used to clean up the Horizon Deepwater oil spill.

Bird Art Through The Centuries with Juanita Baker, Ph.D. from Page One

evolving human knowledge of birds. Come hear stories and appreciate art of artists and ornithologists, pioneers in creativity and exploration of the world of birds before photography.

Life long history of interests in art and birds has come together after a professional life of helping others as a licensed clinical psychologist. Professor emerita Juanita Baker, Ph.D. joined Florida Tech in 1984, the Department of Psychology whose focus is training graduate students to be psychologists. She taught, carried out research, supervised clinical work, and founded in 1991 and was Director of the Family Learning Program until 2007, a sexual abuse treatment program for children and adolescents who were victims of sexual abuse, their nonoffending caregivers,

siblings and their offenders. Her Psychology Science Minute project on WFIT educates about interesting and useful facts. Getting out in nature observing birds always has been a restoring retreat. As a youth, showing an early interest in birds...marveling at back yard birds, collecting bird nests, going on field trips with a science teacher, and loving art, a friend started her on an interest in bird art when she gave her a book of Audubon's bird prints. With the internet, a world of bird art has opened to humankind, leading her to study bird art throughout art history. She will share this stunning artwork that reflects the history of art as well as ornithology.



Keep Indian River Beautiful gives PIAS its Environmental Organization Award

The President's Hoot by Richard H. Baker

PIAS and our Audubon House received two awards within a year. First the Indian River Chamber of Commerce for our architectural "Birdhouse" design by Richard Bialosky, Jeff Ray, and Amy Thoma gave the first award to us, services gratefully provided pro bono. Now Keep Indian River Beautiful (KIRB) honored us for our nature landscaping: saving and transplanting 27 cabbage palms and other native plants from the Audubon House construction site and placing them around our new building. Robin Pelensky, Surlatterre Landscape Architect, in collaboration with Janice Broda, did the native plant landscaping design also *pro bono*.

At their Environmental Awards Luncheon, KIRB gave awards to several organizations and individuals helping to maintain the beauty of our county. Their impressive 2015 annual report reveals they have 1,600 volunteers who have removed 20,000 lbs. of trash and litter from our roads, beaches, and lands; they planted 32 trees, and reached 52,000 residents. We are particularly proud of their efforts since the first coastal clean-up was started by PIAS and was recognized in 1986 by the U.S. Dept. of Interior for this effort. Beach and coastal clean-ups are now worldwide events. We are happy KIRB continues to make our county a better place to enjoy nature.

Now our focus is on our Indian River Lagoon (IRL), to restore it to its original beauty with clean, clear waters, so that it may be healthy again for both wildlife and people. We now have again another Brown Tide in the northern Lagoon and highly polluted water being released from Lake Okeechobee into the southern Lagoon via the St. Lucie River. This must STOP! We have hope in the new IRL National Estuary Program Council, with its Executive Director, Dr. Duane DeFreese. While City of Vero Beach and Sebastian elected council members participate in the Council, unfortunately our county commissioners have chosen not to join

though they profess to want to help the Lagoon.

The County has made progress by installing a Main Canal Screening System developing the Egret Marsh Stormwater Park, South Canal Algal Nutrient Removal Facility, West Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility, and passing a strong fertilizer ordinance. However, those alone are insufficient to the challenges at hand. We need everyone working together to stop pollution from agricultural and residents that are fouling our beautiful Lagoon. What else would help? Let's use our imaginations. Here is a sample

list: aggressive expansion of sewer services to reduce the number of septic tanks; stopping the indiscriminate herbiciding of canal and ditch banks; planting native plant alternatives to lawn-grass (reducing high use pesticides, fertilizers, herbicides) around all water margins, including inland lakes, canals and ponds; filtering water going into the lagoon; and protecting lands through purchase or perpetual easement, such as for water storage and cleansing.



Robin Pelensky, Richard Baker, KIRB Executive Director Daisy Packer, and KIRB Treasurer Art Spilios

In a new effort, PIAS and number of organizations, including Ocean Research & Conservation Association (ORCA), Marine Resources Council (MRC), Sierra Club, and Audubon chapters along the Treasure coast are forming a new independent-citizens, Indian River Lagoon-wide coalition that will encourage greater political support to Dr. DeFreese and the IRL NEP Council, and encourage our elected officials who have not yet protected our plants, animals, water and environment for us and the next generation to act. If you are interested in helping as an individual, a member of a business, or an organization that cares about the health of the Lagoon, please call our Audubon office, 772-567-03520 or email piaudubon@yahoo.com.

On March 21 at our annual meeting in Vero Beach, we will be honoring some individuals and groups who have helped PIAS and our environment.

Like Pelican Island Audubon on Facebook at
www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org
for all the latest news and information

NEW E-MAIL ADDRESS

Make a note that Pelican Island Audubon has a new e-mail address: **PIAudubon@yahoo.com**

Pelican Island Audubon Society Officers & Directors
Officers: President **Richard H. Baker, Ph.D.**, Vice President **Bob Bruce**, Recording Secretary **Darlene Halliday**, Corresponding Secretary **Diane Morgan**, Treasurer **Steve Goff** — Elected Directors: **David Cox, Ph.D. '17**, **Graham Cox, Ph.D. '17**, **Nancy Irvin '16**, **Bill Loftus, Ph.D. '18**, **Toni Robinson '16**, **Bonnie Swanson '18** — Appointed Board Members: **Donna Halleran**, **Bill Halliday**, **Tina Marchese**, **Karen Schuster**
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.

Plant of the Month by Janice Broda



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

or join online using your credit card at:

<http://www.pelicanislandaudubon.org/membership.html>

Questions: call 772-567-3520 or e-mail piaudubon@yahoo.com

Have you noticed plants flowering unusually early this year? Both temperate plants like red maple (*Acer rubrum*) and tropical plants including simpson's stopper (*Myrcianthes fragrans*) began to flower in January at the Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area due to record-breaking rains in December and January coupled with warmer than usual weather.

Some tropical plants, unlike their temperate counterparts, are known to flower throughout the year, or, as is the case with simpson's stopper, flower twice per year – early spring and early summer -- when conditions are favorable. So, it was quite surprising to first smell and then see the simpson's stopper in the Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area parking lot flowering in mid-January. This landscape was designed and installed in 1999 by past PIAS President Jens Tripson.

Once well-established, simpson's stoppers flower profusely in full sun. The dime-size white flowers contain many stamens and are quite attractive to bees, love bugs, butterflies, and other pollinators. Simpson's stoppers naturally grow as hammock plants, so they will tolerate substantial shade and with time develop a smooth ruddy thick trunk giving rise to the common name nakedwood stopper. The exfoliating bark on younger trunks rivals the bark of the commonly-planted deciduous non-native crepe myrtle.

Twinberry stopper is another common name for simpson's stopper since its fleshy, bright red fruits are borne in pairs. Birds and other wildlife enjoy the fruits. Inside each fruit are 1 to 3 green seeds that germinate readily.

Simpson's stoppers often are found growing near Indian middens. The wood reportedly was used to fashion handles for tools, and likely the fruits were consumed. The pebbly textured leaves are quite aromatic when crushed, and Jim Haeger, who was a researcher at the Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory and was instrumental in the saving and development of McKee Botanical Garden, conjectured that the Indians made an insect repellent from simpson's stopper leaves.

In any case, simpson's stopper can be an excellent landscape plant that attracts pollinators, feeds the birds, creates a sense of place, and, once established, is quite drought-tolerant and pest-free.