

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 53rd Year Vol. 53 No. 3 March 2017

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

March 6, 2017 ❖ 6:00 p.m.

Florida's Black Bears with Tom Shupe, District Wildlife Biologist, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

River House - 305 Acacia Road, Vero Beach

FWC wildlife biologist Tom Shupe will discuss Florida's black bears. The state's largest land mammal has come back from just several hundred bears in the 1970s to approximately 4,030 today and is one of Florida's conservation success stories. Increasing development has led to more conflict between humans and bears. This talk will educate people how to live with, vacation near, conserve, and enjoy our native black bear, the only species of bear found in Florida.

March 13, 2017 ❖ 6:00 p.m.

Sea Turtles of the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge with Celeste McWilliams

North Indian River County Library

1001 Sebastian Blvd. (CR 512), Sebastian

Barrier Island Center Sea Turtle Educator Celeste McWilliams will discuss the history of the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge and its role as critical nesting habitat for sea turtles.

March 20, 2017 ❖ 7:00 p.m.

"Ding" Darling - The Man, the Refuge, and the Legacy with Paul Tritaik, Refuge Manager, J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge

Vero Beach Community Center

2266 14th Avenue, Vero Beach

Former Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge Manager Paul Tritaik will talk about the life of J. N. "Ding" Darling, a renowned editorial cartoonist who advocated conservation of our nation's natural resources. Darling is also the Father of the Federal Duck Stamp Program, founder of the National Wildlife Federation, creator of the Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit Program and laid the groundwork for the system of today's National Wildlife Refuge.

Florida Friendly Landscaping Seminars & Workshops

with UF/IFAS Environmental Horticulture Agent Nickie Munroe
Free seminars and workshops offered at Audubon House, 195 9th St. SE (Oslo Rd) in Vero Beach, on Wednesdays from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

2017	Class Schedule
March 8	Introduction: Right Plant, Right Place
March 22	Water Efficiently
April 5	Fertilize Appropriately
April 26	Mulch
May 3	Attract Wildlife
May 24	Manage Yard Pests Responsibly
June 7	Recycle
June 21	Prevent Stormwater Runoff
July 5	Protect The Waterfront
July 12	Rain Gardens

The conservation and protection of Florida's water resources starts at home. Homeowners' landscaping choices can affect the health of ground and surface waters and the natural environment. The Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Homeowner program educates homeowners about how to design, install, and maintain healthy landscapes that use a minimum of water, fertilizer, and pesticides. The result? Low-cost, low-maintenance, attractive landscapes that add value to your community and reduce the chance of polluting the water supply.

Upcoming Events & Field Trips

Call 772-567-3520 for reservations and directions or sign up online at www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org

- March 8 - Three Lakes WMA - Guide: Carolyn Cimino
- March 16 - Green Cay Nature Center - Guide: Bill Loftus
- March 16 - Padgett Creek Ranches
- March 17 - Padgett Creek Ranches
- March 25 - Kashi Ashram - Guide: Felicity Rask
- April 7 - Sebastian Stormwater Park - Guide: Karen Schuster

Masthead photo: Great Crested Flycatcher by Bob Montanaro.

Bird of the Month by Juanita Baker

Drama at the tidal pool! At low tide the fish become concentrated. During breeding season in July, small bait fish are particularly being sought to feed their young, they work double time to gather food. The Reddish Egret discovers an interloper too close to its claimed fishing hole, and flies up in aggressive posture to ward off the other Egret. The intruder, another Reddish Egret but in the white phase, responds in sudden alarm and defense, then moves away. A marvelous photo catching the action by Dawn Currie!

White phase Reddish Egrets breed with dark phase Reddish Egrets as they are the same species, and mate each other. So, similar to human eye color, white and dark phases may occur within families and siblings. The bicolored bill, dark legs, eye and lores remain the same. Similar postures may be seen in mating, but neither of these birds have the breeding shaggy plumes on head, neck, or upper breast indicative of breeding plumage. Both have instead of bicolored bills, all black bills, indicating immature development, thus this is more likely sibling rivalry, than mating. White phase Reddish Egrets are easily miss identified as Great or Snowy Egrets, Immature Little Blue Herons all of which are white, but Reddish Egrets are distinguished by their bill (adult, bicolor blue, tip black) and leg color (black).



Reddish Egret (*Egretta rufescens*) Drama at the tidal pool! February 2017 © Dawn Currie

John James Audubon, 1843 remarked, "There [in the coastal mud or sand flats], twenty or thirty, sometimes as many as a hundred, may be seen wading up to the heel (or knee-joint as it is usually called) in pursuit of prey, or standing in silence awaiting the approach of an animal on which it feeds... until the advance of the tide forces them to the land. How plentiful then! Sadly, today in the U.S., the Reddish Egret is the rarest of all our heron species, mostly unknown as it's habit is to fish in isolation.

Death by Linda Chancellor

Death eventually comes to all living creatures. A large pile of feathers laid at the base of the huge white bird of paradise. Immediately I felt sadness for the death of this creature but then I was also curious as to what bird it had been. I knelt down to look more closely. There was no blood just a jumble of small downy feathers and two other kinds of feathers. I looked closer and found the upper part of a beak with just a few smaller feathers attached. I gathered a number of the feathers and took them inside to examine them. The small downy feathers were of the softest gray with light tan tips. Then I looked at the feathers that were a little over four inches long and a half inch wide. These were a dark gray black color with white half circles along the outside edges of the feathers and ended with a rounded edge. The third kind were about three inches long and had variable but more distinct black and

white markings. The tip of the feather came to a very narrow point that was divided into two smaller points. I suspected it was a Red-bellied Woodpecker as I had seen one frequent the white bird of paradise plant outside the window. But I wanted to use Feather Atlas to check my identification. After using



their simple identification system it appeared the feathers belonged to a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. I still could not determine what had killed it but further computer research suggested it could have been a hawk.

FYI: Feather Atlas is an online database for matching feathers with species. Dr. Pepper Trail, the world's leading criminal forensic ornithologist, working for the Dept.

of U.S. Fish and Wildlife created the database to help solve the many investigations involving birds.

Feather photo by Linda Chancellor.

Mark your calendar! March 25 - Yard Sale at Audubon House!

9:00am - 1:00pm

Refreshments for Sale!

Native Plants for Sale!

Rent a 10x16 foot space for \$20!

Sell your stuff!

Please bring your own table(s) to use in your space.

Donate items for sale to benefit Pelican Island Audubon. Donations will be accepted until March 18. Donations for sale currently include cameras, camera equipment, fishing rods, fishing equipment, pictures, odd and ends, binoculars, porcelain birds, and bird books.

Register for a space online at www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org

Notice of Annual Meeting

The March 20, 2017 general meeting of the Pelican Island Audubon Society to be held at the Vero Beach Community Center, 2266 14th Avenue, at 7:00 p.m. will be the annual

meeting of the Society. The Nominating Committee will put forth a slate of candidates for election to the Board of Directors to be voted on by the membership attending the meeting. Nominations for candidates will also be accepted from the floor.

Let's keep our Florida FLORIDA!



Many places in Florida are sacred. Scientists point out that harmonizing with nature is critical for our survival. Overwhelmingly, 75% of Floridians agreed in 2014 to pass Amendment 1, which reserved up to \$800 million for land-and-water conservation. Science-based plans, developed prior to the Scott Administration, intended to restore southward flows from the

Kissimmee - Lake Okeechobee into the Everglades and Florida Bay to save them while also protecting our coastal estuaries. But the Legislature diverted Amendment 1 monies to cover routine agency expenses. Now the assault on public environmental lands continues as politicians act to destroy them by roads or sell them for more development. How do we help our elected officials understand that public lands bought for preservation are off-limits?

Existing State Parks should be saved from development. I recently attended the memorial service for the Halpatiokee Trails/Buffer Preserve Section of Savannas Preserve State Park in St. Lucie County that will kill rare plants and wildlife to construct the Crosstown Parkway Bridge.

It is a nursery many marine organisms, including the young Tarpon and Snook. St. Lucie County Conservation Alliance and the Indian Riverkeeper are still fighting to prevent this. Let's not allow this State Park to set a precedent for all municipalities: Call 561-472-3517 or Email AlisaA.Zarbo@usace.army.mil to stop this destruction.

Maggy Hurchalla writes "Most folks in Martin County are proud and happy to live in a place that is more green than gray. However a local consultant proposed amending the county's comprehensive plan to allow filling in wetlands for cash payments to a state mitigation bank" (Press Journal, February 23). It's critical to save all remaining wetlands! Hurchalla rightly points out that destroying every wetland adds nutrients to our waterways including the Lagoon, making algal blooms and flooding worse, decreasing recharge to the shallow aquifer, and destroying wading-bird habitat. Let's add to our wetlands, not destroy them!

Indian River County faces similar land grabs. Vero Beach

wants to sell their green Dodgertown Golf Course to build 280 homes (Colleen Wixon, Press Journal, February 21). **Indian River Shores wants to auction their "Golden Sands" a 5.38-acre parcel of prime ocean beach property** (Janet Begley, Press Journal, February 24th). Taxpayers spent millions to purchase these lands why sell them today? These lands should be valued as long-term investments, deserving preservation - not liquidation at auction! Coastal greenspaces will provide recreational and health benefits for future generations of humans and wildlife to enjoy. Selling them to a developer will only increase traffic congestion, pollution, and resource use. The few remaining publicly owned greenspaces in our rapidly urbanizing region are more important gifts

to our children than flipped today for dollars to cover previous fiscal irresponsibility. Once developed, open lands are lost forever.



Florida is key to the great Atlantic Flyway for migratory birds. Birds require natural habitats for food and rest on their arduous migratory journeys. All wetlands and green spaces are essential for humans also. Research shows nature reduces depression and crime and adds to neighborliness, many feel peace and spirituality.

Conservation and protection of Florida's water resources starts at home. Your landscaping choices affect the health of ground and surface waters, and the natural environment. Audubon House hosts The Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Homeowner program, teaching homeowners how to design, install, and maintain healthy landscapes that use minimal water, fertilizer, and pesticides. Low-cost, low-maintenance, attractive landscapes add value to your community and improve water quality. These classes, led by Nickie Munroe, Environmental Horticulture Agent, UF/IFAS Indian River County Extension, (start March 8 for ten sessions noon to 1:30 p.m.) will teach how to make a Florida-friendly yard. This involves Right Plant, Right Place, Water Efficiently, Fertilize Appropriately, Mulch, Wildlife Attraction, Yard Pests, Recycling, Stormwater Runoff, and Rain Gardens. See details at <http://www.pelicanislandaudubon.org/>

You have power to make a difference: Call or write your local and state representatives. Have a healthy yard.

Zebra Longwing photo by Bob Montanaro.

Would you like to gain firsthand experience learning about native plants?

Volunteer on Wednesday and Sunday morning to help with the Audubon House pollinator garden, which is fast becoming popular with beneficial pollinating insects and birds. Learn how to bring a bit of Florida nature to your yard. For more information call 772-567-3520 or email piaudubon@yahoo.com

Art at Audubon Drawing Course

For youths age 11 - 15 years old
(maximum 8 students)
Price: \$75 for six weeks of classes
plus \$25 for supplies fee
Friday afternoons at Audubon House
195 9th Street SE (Oslo Road)
1:30 - 3:30 p.m.
March 28 - April 28, 2017
Call 772-567-3520 or
email piaudubon@yahoo.com

PIAS Roundup

Spoonbill Watch



Spoonbill Watch conducted a training session on February 11, 2017 for local volunteers to learn how to monitor Roseate Spoonbills. We are still looking for volunteers if you are interested.



Donna Halleran helps Alternative Center for Education students Cassandra and Caroline plant a Black-eyed Susan vine.



Learning about invasive plants, doing nature journaling, and just having fun is all part of being an Audubon Advocate!



Pelican Island Audubon Society Officers & Directors

Officers

President
Richard H. Baker, Ph.D.
 1st Vice-President
Donna Halleran
 2nd Vice-President
David Cox, Ph.D.
 Recording Secretary
Darlene Halliday
 Corresponding Secretary
George Glenn
 Treasurer **Steve Goff**

Elected Directors:

Graham Cox, Ph.D. '17
Nancy Irvin '19
Bill Loftus, Ph.D. '18
Toni Robinson '19
Bonnie Swanson '18 —
 Appointed Board Members:
Bill Halliday
Susan Lovelace
Tina Marchese
Maria Maul

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. 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