

Pelican Island Audubon Society

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- 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. 5 May 2017

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

May 8, 2017 ❖ 6:00 p.m. Hummingbird Habitat with Lavon Silvernell

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

Lavon Silvernell shares what you will need to do to make your yard hummingbird friendly. Native plants and other habitat needs that attract hummingbirds are also beneficial for other birds and insects. Lavon is a long-time member of the Florida Native Plant Society, Audubon Society, and before retirement, served for 12 years as Naturalist at Trout Lake Nature Center in Eustis.

May 15, 2017 ❖ 7:00 p.m. Butterflies with Ken Gonyo

Vero Beach Community Center
2266 14th Avenue, Vero Beach

Ken's presentation will include an outline of the taxonomic relationship of butterflies, their morphological characteristics, and interesting butterfly factoids, with a Monarch migration update. Ken will also discuss how to create suitable habitat through gardening for butterflies in your yard. The presentation features a slide show of 30 or so Central Florida Butterflies representative of the various representative families as well as the native plants that serve as host to the larvae.



Green Orchid Bee in the pollinator garden at Audubon House.
Photo by Bob Montanaro.

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.



Nature Summer Camp for kids

Visit PelicanIslandAudubon.org to learn about our weekly summer camp program. Our goal is to connect each camper with nature, respect, and an appreciation of conservation while increasing independence and self-esteem.

Masthead photo: Blue Jay by Bob Montanaro.

Bird of the Month by Juanita Baker

If you are out looking for birds, you are likely to find them! Will Johnson was looking for neotropical warblers migrating through our region on the Atlantic Flyway in March through April from South America, Mexico and the Caribbean on their way to northern US and Canadian breeding grounds. Only a few species breed in Florida. Johnson has found that the isolated vacant lots in his private community on the ocean in Indian River County are ideal places to look for migrants, especially when insects and the berries of the palm, the strangler fig, and the Brazilian pepper are available to provide ample restoration of energy for further migration.

A rare bird is one that normally does not pass through the area on migration, reside, or is usually not found there during that particular season. What excitement a rare bird causes! How surprised Johnson was when he was pishing (making a sound that often alarms a bird or incites their curiosity and thus attracts them) and a small, 5” long bird appeared with a striking black and white striped head, black back, white wings and underside, and deep orange breast. This Western Spindalis male usually only occurs in the Bahamas, Cuba, the Cayman Islands, and southern Florida (West Palm Beach and south) where there was even one observed breeding. But never had it been recorded before in Indian River County. While It feasted on berries, Johnson was able to photograph its beauty with his Nikon D3300 and a 300-mm lens to share his positive photo ID with other birders.

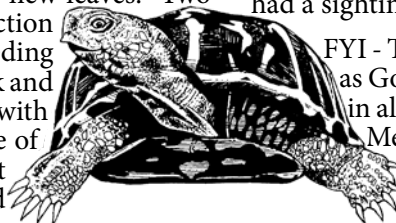


Western Spindalis, *Spindalis zena zena*
The thrill of the hunt and a beautiful reward
© William Lewis Johnson
Nikon D3300, 300-mm lens

One of the reasons birders are so drawn to this sport, in addition to the skill required in finding, identifying and obtaining a good photograph of the bird, is that one never knows when a rare bird might chance to be just where you are! It is thrilling to participate in the hunt and to observe such beauty!

**Incidental observation of a different kind
by Linda Chancellor**

eBird lists observations as incidental if that was not your original purpose. Our purpose was birding when we decided to walk the Nature Trail at Gamble Rogers State Park but I am always open to the possibility of seeing other wildlife. The air was hot and humid after a previous night of downpours, thunder and lightening. The narrow trail meandered through dense scrub consisting of scrub oaks, mature red cedars, stands of yaupon holly and palmetto. Foot high native Maypop vines edged the path and we found several Gulf Fritillary larvae feeding on the fresh new leaves. Two people approached from the opposite direction and informed us they had seen a turtle feeding around the corner. We continued our walk and finally discovered a small gopher tortoise with a shell about the size of a salad plate. One of the smallest I had ever seen. He looked at us for a moment, ignored us and continued



to feed. Nibble, swallow, nibble and swallow. We continued to watch as he moved along the edge of the trail devouring the new tender young leaves of ground hugging plants. After several minutes I noticed that he seemed to favor the basal rosette leaves of lyre leaf sage and if the flowers were low enough he would stretch his neck a little to consume those also. Blades of grass, smilax leaves or other green plants less than three inches high were also eaten but not with as much gusto as the leaves of the sage. I was amazed at how quickly he ate and the amounts of plants he consumed. After several more minutes we slipped past him. He stopped, crossed the trail and continued feeding. We saw no birds that day but had a sighting to remember.

FYI - The Gopher Tortoise Council adopted April 10th as Gopher Tortoise Day. Gopher tortoises are found in all 67 counties in Florida. This year's 38th Annual Meeting was held January 12-15, 2017. Check out their website www.gophertortoisecouncil.org

Thank you to Jim Shea for **Society News** providing a boat and his time to take Bill & Becky Loftus, Donna Halleran, & Richard Baker to continue the Osprey count being carried out over the past few years at Blue Cypress Lake.

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

Volunteer on Wednesday and Sunday mornings 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



Use Your Zip Code to Attract Brilliant Birds and Butterflies to Your Yard, and Make Indian River County and our Lagoon Great Again!



Many of us use birdfeeders to attract birds to our home. Feeding may not really help the birds, but we enjoy watching them. A more natural and better way to help birds is to grow bird- and butterfly-friendly native plants. Audubon's Native Plant database makes ecologically friendly landscaping choices a snap (<https://www.audubon.org/native-plants>).

Using Audubon's Plants for Birds nationwide public database, anyone can access a list of native plants that benefit their favorite local bird species just by typing in their zip code. Once established, natives not only provide birds and wildlife with food and shelter, but they save our environment by requiring less fertilizer, no pesticides and much less watering than lawns require. Using native plants thus help keep our lagoon and environment healthy.

Gardens can be our outdoor sanctuaries for birds, insects and other wildlife (<http://www.audubon.org/news/why-native-plants-are-better-birds-and-people>).

Do you know what 96 % of our land birds feed their chicks? - insects and spiders - but these do not thrive on non-native trees. Native plants, including trees, host many more caterpillars of butterflies and moths. Do a comparison in your own yard - around what plants do the butterflies and bees flutter and feed?



By adding native plants

to one's yard, balcony, container garden, rooftop or public space, anyone, anywhere, can not only attract more birds but **give them the best chance of survival** in the face of urban development and climate change <http://climate.audubon.org/>.

"Birds and native plants are made for each other, thanks to millions of years of evolution," says Dr. John Rowden, Audubon's director of community conservation. "As plants grow and bloom earlier because of warming temperatures, there is a growing mismatch between bloom times and the arrival of the birds that depend on them. Habitat provided by native plants can help climate-threatened birds adapt and survive <http://climate.audubon.org/geographical-search>." By growing native plants, you can help protect birds while turning your home into a private wildlife paradise. If you plant it, the birds and butterflies will come.

At our Audubon House, we have model demonstration gardens that will show you how: in collaboration with Nickie Munroe (Indian River County Environmental Horticulture Agent), Robin Pelensky (Landscape Architect,

Surlatterre Landscape Architecture), wonderful master gardeners, and great volunteers, we are expanding our native landscaping designed by Robin Pelinsky, and our Butterfly Gardens designed by our own ORCA Volunteer Coordinator, Ken Gonyo, to include a series of Rain Gardens (we call them Lagoon Gardens as they protect our Lagoon) in our dry retention area. We will be planting different gardens in the spring, summer, fall, and winter. If you would like to learn while helping, please contact our office (772-567-3520). Watch the gardens' progress on our website (<http://www.pelicanislandaudubon.org>) and Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/Pelican-Island-Audubon-Society-36559826359945>).

The native plants will attract Birds (i.e. Cardinals, Grosbeaks, Crows, Thrushes, Waxwings, Sparrows, Hummingbirds, Finches, Nuthatches, Vireos, Woodpeckers, Wrens, Mockingbirds, and Warblers), and **Butterflies** (i.e. Monarchs, Zebra Longwings, Common Buckeyes, Giant Swallowtails, E. Black Swallowtails, and Sulphurs).

Some native plants to consider (also see list based on your zip code at <https://www.audubon.org/native-plants>):

American Beautyberry, American Pokeweed, Black-Eyed-Susan, Tropical Sage, Firebush, Common Buttonbush, Corky-Stem Passion-Flower, Dahoon Holly, Marsh Blazing Star, Fakahatchee Grass, Blanket Flower, Florida Privet, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Live Oak, Long-Leaf Pine, Maypop, Red Maple, Red Mulberry, Coral Bean or Cherokee

Bean, Satinleaf and Shinyleaf Wild Coffees, Southern Bald-Cypress, Goldenrod, Wax Myrtle, Florida Fiddlewood, Dotted Horsemint, Standing-Cypress, Sweet-Bay, Virginia-Creeper, Water Oak, Winged Sumac, Yellow Necklace Pod, Frog Fruit, Twinflower, Butterfly Weed, Swamp Milkweed, and Coontie.

Where to Buy Native Plants Near You? This is not easy. We need to support our local nurseries. Unfortunately they do not yet see a big demand and therefore do not have many native plants. Every time we visit our local nurseries, let's all ask for natives so they will see the demand for them. **Maple Street Natives** has the best selection of natives: 7619 Henry Ave., West Melbourne, FL 32904, (321) 729-6857, and a great website: <https://squareup.com/market/maple-street-natives-inc>. A closer possibility that provides natives frequently at the Saturday Morning Vero Beach Farmers Market Oceanside, adjacent to Humiston Park in Vero Beach is **Native Butterfly Flowers**, which can be reached at (321) 626-7386.

With native plants, our Lagoon and Indian River County can be Great Again.

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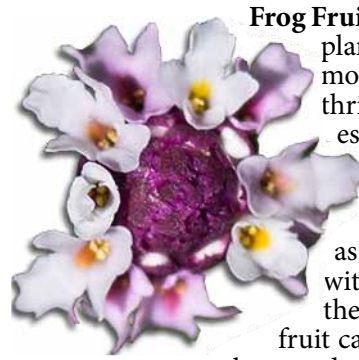
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Two Native Host Plants Attract Six Butterfly Species by Ken Gonyo

In our native butterfly/pollinator gardens we plant both nectar plants and host plants for adult butterflies and their larvae respectively. Nectar plants are easy as most flowering plants attract an array of pollinators. Host plants are much more specific as to the number of species a particular plant can attract.

It is desirable to find multi-purpose host plants which may attract more than one species of butterfly whose larvae can feed upon the leaves. Two such plants are Frog Fruit (*Phylla nodiflora*) and Corkystem Passionvine (*Passiflora suberosa*). Each serves as a larval host plant for three Central Florida species of butterflies thus attracting six species to only two plants.



Frog Fruit is a diminutive ground cover plant that tolerates full sun in moist soils. Although the plant thrives in moist conditions once established it can withstand periods of drought while it waits for the next rain. This plant does well in planters as well and can be combined with other plants to drape over the edges of the container. Frog fruit can mingle with other plants in a lawn and can withstand being trod upon.

For a native lawn it can be mixed with White Clover and Sunshine Mimosa and it will also blend well with other lawn grasses.

The butterfly species that use this plant as larval host are the White Peacock (*Anartia jatrophae*), the Common Buckeye (*Junonia coenia*), and the Phaon Crescent (*Phyciodes phaon*).

Corkystem Passionvine as the name suggests is a climbing vine that tolerates various levels of moisture and sun exposure. It thrives nicely in our hammocks and often starts out in the shade of the understory then climbs to reach some sun. As a hammock plant, it demands a soil rich in organic matter. It bears very tiny flowers and small passion fruit.



The lobed leaves of this passiflora can take on variable shapes from a simple oval lance shape to a multi lobed shape. Plants side by side can be taken for two distinct species. Conjecture is that this attribute is a deception play to thwart butterflies from recognizing it as their host plant.

This plant can be used as a leafy ground cover or it can be a climbing vine on a bush, tree, or trellis. If planted in containers it needs nutritional supplementation after the vines are stripped of leaves by foraging butterfly larvae.

The butterfly species that use Corkystem as host are our Florida state butterfly, the Zebra Longwing (*Heliconius charitonius*), the Julia (*Dryas iulia*), and the Gulf Fritillary (*Agraulis vanilla*). The latter species is particularly aggressive in devouring the leaves.

Photos: Frog Fruit by Bob Montanaro. Passionvine by Ken Gonyo.

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