

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. 8 November 2015

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

November 9, 2015 ❖ 6:00 p.m.

The Location Of The Paramount Town Of The Ais Indians And The General Location Of The Indians Of Santa Lucia with Alan Brech

North Indian River County Library

1001 Sebastian Blvd. (CR 512), Sebastian

Alan Brech is an archaeologist and the Chairman of the Brevard County Historical Commission. He has published two peer-reviewed articles on the archaeology and early history of the Indian River Lagoon. His most recent article, which is the topic of his upcoming lecture to the Pelican Island Audubon Society on November 9th, "The Location of the Paramount Town of the Ais Indians and the General Location of the Indians of Santa Lucia" (Florida Anthropologist 2010) was hailed by Dr. Jerald Milanich as "a major contribution to the early history of this area." Brech's article, which has gone unchallenged in the five years since its publication, overturns a 250 year old error in the Anglo-American geography of Spanish Florida. This article should be of especial interest to the members of the Pelican Island Audubon Society because one of its main hypotheses is that the main town of the Ais Indians was located at Barker's Bluff, also called the Kroegel Homestead--the same Kroegel who helped create the Pelican Island Wildlife Refuge.

Special Annual Holiday Potluck

December 14 - 6PM

Vero Beach Community Center

This year for the first time the ANNUAL HOLIDAY POTLUCK will include the 48 5th grade Audubon Advocates and their parents of the Indian River Lagoon after school program highlighting some of their experiences Celebrating Nature from the past 8 weeks for you. Join in the camaraderie on Monday, December 14, 2015 starting at 6pm at the Vero Beach Community Center, 2266 14th Avenue. Bring your favorite dish to serve 10 people and a dessert. Please bring plates & utensils. Drinks will be provided.

November 16, 2015 ❖ 7:30 p.m.

Flounder Fishing at Sebastian Inlet State Park with Ed Perry

Vero Beach Community Center

2266 14th Avenue, Vero Beach

Learn about Sebastian Inlet's fall migration of winter doormats! What's a doormat you ask? It's a flounder over about 6 lbs. How about a 14-lber? That's a real doormat. Park Ranger & Florida Native Ed Perry has fished Sebastian Inlet for over 32 years and will share tips and information teaching anglers the best baits, methods, rigs, and times to fish for flounder at Sebastian Inlet State Park. He'll even share tips on how to clean these oddly shaped fish and perhaps a favorite recipe or two.



Ed Perry with an eleven pound Flounder caught on 12/11/12.

Upcoming Events & Field Trips

Call 772-567-3520 for reservations and directions.

November 21 - Saturday - Sebastian Inlet State Park/Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge - Guide: David Simpson

December 16 - Wednesday - Viera Wetlands - Guide: Jack Casselberry

Audubon Advocates for the Indian River Lagoon," PIAS innovative After-school Program PIAS needs your help! Come volunteer! Provide healthy snacks! Launch our new after school education - discovery and out in nature for 5th graders. Come to set up Audubon House for the teachers, a healthy snack, and welcome the children each day and/or help children clean up. One afternoon a week or four you will help launch conservation-minded citizens. For details, please call PIAS office, 772-567-3520.

Masthead photo: Black-bellied Whistling-Duck by Bob Montanaro.

Bird of the Month by Juanita Baker

Dramatically, with outstretched wings, the Snail Kite sweeps down to grasp the freshwater Apple Snail. In shoreline vegetation of south-western Lake Okeechobee, this male extends long, curved claws to capture and transport the snail to a feeding perch. The Snail Kite uses its highly adapted, sharp sickle-like bill to insert inside the curving shell and slice the muscle holding the flesh to the shell. Instantly fresh escargot!

Snail kites were not discovered in Florida until 1844. The species was never painted by Audubon who may not have had access to the remote interior river basins and marshes of the St. John's and Kissimmee. Presently, Snail Kites occur from east Orlando wetlands to the Everglades where their exclusive prey, freshwater Apple Snails, are plentiful. Not breeding elsewhere in the U.S. or Canada, they are common in Cuba, Mexico, Central and South America (excluding Chile).



Snail Kite © 2015 Mac Stone

In 1967, Florida Snail Kites placed on the Endangered Species Preservation list led to research on why populations were rapidly declining from 3000 in 1997 to below 800 in 2009. Since 2013, estimates of 1200 seem stable, perhaps because Florida Snail Kites have adapted to eating the larger South American invasive Apple Snail *Pomacea maculata* that is replacing native Florida apple snails (*P. paludosa*).

Mac Stone spent many days in the water devising a means to photograph the capture. "I spend a lot of time working and talking with biologists. In order to make the images that really bring viewers in, I want to know as much about my subject as possible. I want to work with people who have dedicated their lives to these animals. The more time you invest behind the scenes will ready you for the decisive moment behind the lens when the real action happens."

Snail Kites are a Florida unique species to be treasured.

Appreciating Nature by Linda Chancellor

Soon you will feel the change in the weather and notice the cooler evenings. Winter is just around the corner and we will leave the windows open and consider it good sleeping weather but for me it will be time to put that extra blanket on the bed or maybe even a quilt. Today one can purchase a machine made quilt but long ago earlier settlers made their quilts by hand. It was a necessary skill learned by all women. The first quilts were often made using scraps from worn clothing. Many women created their own designs and gave each pattern a name. Examples included log cabin, Texas star, Jacob's Ladder and double fan. But



sometimes they derived their patterns from things they saw around them in nature. Patterns such as orange peel, turkey tracks, flying geese and bear tracks became popular. Two of my favorites are flying geese and turkey tracks - let your eye go past the colors and see the images in the sample quilt square.

FYI: The book *Florida Quilts* by Charlotte Allen outlines the Florida Quilt Heritage Project and includes many historical stories and photographs. Currently there are over 5,000 quilts registered by the Florida Quilt Heritage Project. 66 of them are on display at Museum of Florida History.

Florida Audubon Assembly 2015 by Donna Halleran, PIAS Board Member

The third weekend of October was the Assembly in Maitland, Florida. It was a wonderful opportunity to understand the process of how regional and statewide Audubon efforts are prioritized. This is accomplished by stating and documenting the regions' conservation positions through regional resolutions. The conservation action agenda is then discussed and approved by vote at the Assembly and subsequently ratified by the Audubon Florida Board of Directors.

Audubon's Florida Chapters are organized into seven geographical and ecological regions, and they meet together as Regional Conservation Committees (called RCC) quarterly. The Indian River Lagoon Region, encompasses six counties, which Pelican Island Audubon is a member. David Cox is our representative.

There are a variety of major issues across the state that are being addressed by different regions from: make and keep

water available for the environment ; educating people about the ecological benefits of Everglades Restoration; protect, enhance and acquire conservation lands; advocating for the implementation of Amendment 1; teacher ecology camp sessions; climate change education; bird related data and tools through citizen science efforts like e-bird; enforcement of strong fertilizer ordinances; and many, many more.

We were represented at the Assembly by six members, next year it would be great to double or triple that! It's not all about meetings, there were a variety of birding field trips, nationally known speakers, and a variety of learning sessions. The Assembly ended with the focus on; "Standing for the Future of Florida State Parks". There are nine principles that citizens care about. If you aren't aware of what our elected and appointed officials are proposing to do, please speak to a member of your board I would be happy to share more of my experience with you.

Blatant Injustice. Tyranny, not Democracy!

The President's Hoot
by Richard H. Baker

Were you one of the voters who carefully considered the issues, thinking we had a democracy, and voted for the Amendment 1? You thought it would help save our natural Florida from so quickly disappearing. You wanted to keep many unique and lovely Florida birds and plant species from extinction. Thus, last November, you were one of 4.1 million Florida voters (75%) who resoundingly approved Amendment 1, which requires that, for the next 20 years, 33% of more than \$750 million annual real-estate documentary stamp taxes be used to buy conservation and improve recreation lands. Yet in June 2015, the Legislature and Governor Scott chose to use most of these monies for other purposes, blatantly ignoring the will and directive of the majority of voters.

Local resident and columnist called it what it is: a “Brazen Amendment 1 bucks” (http://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/opn-columns-blogs/carl-hiaasen/article36702060.html). Orlando Sentinel’s Scott Maxwell in early June, 2015 stated, “Remember the Lottery?” where funds were supposed to add additional monies for our children’s education? “Florida Politicians may try the same shell game with the environment,” and they did! “They spent the lottery money on schools. But they took money they had previously spent on schools and started spending it on other things... like renovating the Legislature’s dining room.” Florida still ranks as having the 48th of 50 poorest-funded school systems in America.

They are doing this again with Amendment 1. The good news is that Amendment 1 is now in our Florida Constitution. The bad news is that the Legislature uses most of the money to pay for salaries and other routine expenses of environmental agencies previously funded by the state’s general revenue fund. This is Robbing Peter to Pay Paul; \$237 million went to DEP (Dept. of Environmental Protection) for salaries and benefits for their technology and information office and boating and hunting law enforcement officers. You know... to protect our Black Bears!...as the hunting season begins. The Florida Forest Service got new enforcement vehicles and the FL. Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services got some funds too. Actually, the state spent \$48 million less on conservation and the environment after Amendment 1 passed than before!

Our Legislature completely ignored Florida voters who thought they were voting for monies for the Indian River Lagoon, Everglades, and other places facing increasing population and pollution. This year, only about 7% of Amendment 1 money (\$59 million) went for new land purchases. Of that, only \$15.2 million was allocated to Florida Forever. Before Governor Scott and his legislators, and during Governors Martinez, Chiles, MacKay, Bush, and Crist, Preservation 2000 and Florida Forever monies from 1990 to 2009 allocated \$300 million annually to purchase conservation lands. During that period, Indian River

County citizens passed two local bond issues, \$26 million in 1992 and \$50 million in 2004, and with matching funds from these Florida Forever and Preservation 2000 programs, purchased 35 parcels of nearly 10,000 acres (http://www.pelicanislandaudubon.org/IRC_Special_Places/Conservation_Lands_brochure_2.pdf). Some of these lands help protect our Lagoon by preventing development along the Lagoon. Under Governor Scott, who came into office in 2011, and current Legislature Leaders, funding was cut for parks and conservation lands, staff were fired, and then Scott justified his Amendment 1 action by essentially saying, “We can’t buy any more lands, because we can’t care for what we have!” They also have tried to sell off some of our conservation lands and proposing golf courses to be placed on others!

The legislature will probably try to rob us again in the next session starting in January. Earthjustice, FL Wildlife Federation, St. Johns Riverkeeper, Sierra Club, and other organizations in a suit over Amendment 1 have asked that \$237 million be transferred into the Land Acquisition Trust fund and reserved for uses permissible under the state constitution. We must act. All of us with one voice. **Write your legislative leaders and the Governor demanding that they change course and follow the will of the people.** See piaudubon.org for details. Let’s join together for action here and across the state and in Tallahassee to pack the Supreme Court, House and Senate chambers and plan rallies as we did to get Amendment 1 passed last year. **Our voices must be heard!**

P.S. PIAS has been awarded two grants. \$500 from the Audubon Florida to bring the story of the Scrub Jay to Pelican Island Elementary students and \$5,000 from National Audubon, is to bring the story of the impact of climate change on birds to Indian River County. The project includes a Roseate Spoonbill Watch similar to the Jay Watch program.

Roseate Spoonbill photo by Bob Montanaro.



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 **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, 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.

Plant of the Month by Janice Broda

Tropical (Christmas) Tree



Florida pioneers used sand pines (*Pinus clausa*) as Christmas trees. In tropical places like Puerto Rico and the lesser Antilles, white indigo berry (*Randia aculeata*) was used as a Christmas tree.

Get out your protractor, and you will find that nearly every branch emanates from the main trunk at about a 60 degree angle, which is ideal for hanging Christmas ornaments. You could use a potted white indigo berry as your Christmas tree and then plant it in your yard after the holiday.

Found in coastal areas of Florida as far north as Brevard County and in the Caribbean, white indigo berry grows as a large shrub (to 8') in full sun or as a small tree in partial shade. Tiny, fragrant snow-white axillary flowers with five petals bloom throughout the year. Female plants bear fruits that are white initially. As they ripen, the dark indigo pulp inside begins to show through. Encased inside this indigo pulp are many tiny flat seeds.

Aboriginal people likely ate the edible fruits and used the indigo pulp for dye. If you sample the fruits yourself, be prepared to have a blue-colored mouth. Birds seek out the fruits and spread the seeds. White indigo berry plants often can be found growing beneath bird perches, and this drought-tolerant and salt-tolerant plant frequently is found growing on mosquito control dikes.

Its glossy, leathery leaves belie its drought tolerance. Its roundish opposite leaves vary from 1/2" to 2" ins size and are clustered at the end of the branches.

This plant sometimes is difficult to identify in the field due to its dramatic variability – except for its geometric branching structure. Its species name *aculeata* means thorny, but very few individuals found in Indian River County have thorns. Its genus name *Randia* honors Isaac Rand, an 18th century London apothecary.

With its straight branches white indigo berry has served as a Christmas tree and for fishing poles in the Caribbean. You can use it in your yard to attract birds. To learn more about white indigo berry and other native plants, the birds & other wildlife that utilize these native plants, butterflies & other pollinators, and the natural history of the Indian River Lagoon, consider participating in the 20th volunteer nature stewardship class offered by the Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory in cooperation with PIAS on Saturdays afternoons from January 16 through February 20, 2016. You can find out more at <http://ourorca.org>

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