

**Pelican Island Audubon Society**

# Peligram

**- 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. 8 November 2017

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

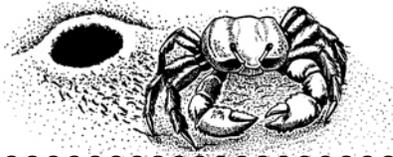
**November 13, 2017 ❖ 6:00 p.m.**  
**Creepy Crawly Land Crabs  
of Florida - and Beyond!**

**with Bob Montanaro**

*Wildlife Photographer*

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

This program explores the role of the crab in mythology and popular culture while presenting the life history of the Florida Ghost Crab and Great Atlantic Land Crab. An entertaining and informative program about most unusual creatures. This program is a mix of still photographs and video.



**November 20, 2017 ❖ 7:00 p.m.**  
**Wood Stork response to human-  
induced landscape changes**

**with Betsy Evans**

*Florida Atlantic University*

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

Wood Storks serve as indicator species for wetland restoration due to their reliance on hydrologic processes that produce high quality foraging habitat and prey. As a result of human-induced rapid environmental change, Wood Stork populations declined in South Florida during the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Despite the well-documented sensitivity of Wood Storks to changes in hydrologic conditions and human disturbance, storks are often seen foraging in anthropogenic water bodies along roadways, suggesting these novel habitats may provide adequate foraging habitat and prey.

## Here we go again!!

The County Commission, at their October 24, 2017 commission meeting, voted 4 to 1 to pave Oslo Road leading to the boat ramp and dredge the muck in the channel. When the existing ramp was installed in 2007, boats with bigger motors got stuck at the end of the ramp as the area was very shallow. The county then dredged about 30 feet towards the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) to allow boats with bigger motors to float. The muck they want to remove was caused by their original dredging of the clear sandy bottom at the dockside for boats that were too big, resulting in their props become stuck in the sand. Now they want to dredge much farther, 210 feet! Further dredging will result in more muck (decaying plant matter) being trapped in the new, longer channel, which will be stirred up by boat traffic. They will justify digging an already mucky trough deeper for bigger boats. Today, this wonderful, small boat, kayak and canoeing area provides fine access for many people who fish and watch wildlife. Moreover, the area is also a critical nursery habitat for our prized Lagoon game fishes.

There is no evidence that the “channel” to the ICW was ever actually dredged, and it is more likely that it was a natural channel used for years by small boats with small or no motors. New dredging is no longer allowed. Therefore the county should only remove muck at the small 30-foot channel and not extend the muck removal to 210 feet. Please note that the **existing sandy road has not harmed seagrasses** for the last 50 years as shown by seagrass maps done by St. John River Water Management District! **Paving will increase** oil, grease, rubber and pollution into our lagoon.

Anglers from the Coastal Conservation Association, fishing guides, boaters from the Power Squadron and kayak renters, Marine Resources Council, Save the Manatee Club, Sierra Club, and Audubon members, and scientists that filled the chambers three years ago must be brought into the discussion before decisions are made and tax dollars spent on this poorly conceived project.

# Bird of the Month by Juanita Baker

Yellow-rumped Warbler - *Setophaga coronata*

## Is this a Florida Bird?

What is this bird? We don't have snow here in Florida, which would allow this bird to be more camouflaged. On the contrary, it would stand out against all the tropical green. Being white makes it much more visible and thus vulnerable to predators, and perhaps not as attractive to mates. However, this small warbler appears healthy.

There are two primary pigments that color feathers: melanines (transferred to feathers and tissues by the enzyme tyrosinase) and carotenoids (obtained through diet by some species). Depending upon concentration and distribution, there are two melanin pigments: eumelanin (black, gray) and pheomelanin (red dark brown and in less concentrations, yellow).

Albinism is a rare, genetically determined result where there is an absence of the **tyrosinase** enzyme that is essential in producing **melanin**. This total absence of pigment from even eyes usually exhibits white feathers, but red beak, eyes, and legs as the blood underneath is the only color seen. Without color the eyes are more sensitive to light and have less depth perception so albino birds are vulnerable to predators and seldom reach adulthood. Yet through diet certain species of albinos can still have yellow/pink carotenoid coloring through their diet.

This is not an albino warbler, since this warbler has some color - dark eye color, yet similar to albinos, no coloring in its beak and legs, allowing its blood circulation underneath to give their red coloring. This bird is called leucistic (pronounced lu-sis-tic), an uncommon genetic phenomenon showing some but not full color, when pigment cells are unable to develop.

The normal eye color and yellow side patch and rump, are just like the Yellow-rumped Warbler! However, it shows lighter brown streaks on its sides, back, head, and wings where darker brownish-black concentration is usual for this species. The light brown is there but not the black pigment, indicating lack of the eumelanin pigment. So this is called partial leucism and appears that the eumelanin pigment did not differentiate, but the pheomelanin pigment did.

Very uncommon to see these odd genetic phenomena, and rarer still to catch a photo of it, as such birds likely do not survive long. Makes identifying the bird a challenge, doesn't it?



*This Yellow-rumped Warbler is Not even in the bird book!*  
© John J. Waite taken at West Regional Water Treatment Facility, Vero Wetlands - Canon Rebel T4i TV 1/500 iso200 Canon 75 to 300 lens

## Ahh! Fall by Linda Chancellor

The equinox has passed. The weather is still warm but the plants and birds seem to anticipate the fall season anyway. Some of the leaves have begun to lose their summer green colors. The female saltbushes are flush with their small, feathery, white flowers. Small white asters and seaside goldenrod add their colors to the show. The ruby-throated hummingbirds have been gone for several weeks and all but one osprey have left for the year. But fall also brings new birds to our view. Flocks of Canada geese are heard before their familiar "V" formation graces the beautiful blue sky. The belted kingfisher and his mate's wild rattling call were heard during the summer but were shy about showing themselves. Now they fly back and forth landing on the pier posts and watching the quiet waters. Their distinct black, blue and white feathers look as if they have been painted. Then

without warning one plunges into the water and comes up with a small fish in his bill. Off he flies to a tree to enjoy his catch. Previously we only saw the eagles when we kayaked in the back of the creek. But now that the ospreys have abandoned their nests for the year the eagles have come forward and claimed them for their own lookouts. How regal they look standing on the edge of the nest. Their white heads and gold beaks in sharp profile. They lift their wings to take flight and the sheer size of their wing spread is shocking. One is left seeing the telltale fan of white tail feathers when hit by the sun's rays. Fall is a wonderful time to enjoy wildlife and its habitats.

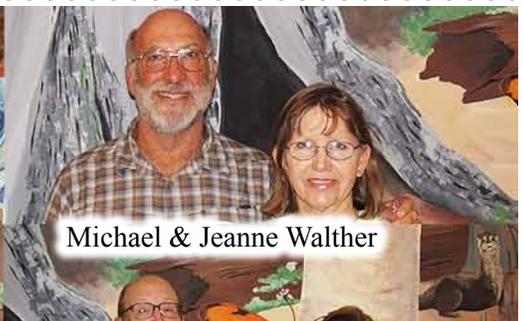
FYI: Be on the lookout for hummingbirds that have begun their migration South to winter in Florida. The kingfisher's winter grounds are from Central Florida South. I have often seen them on the wires along the canals on 8th Street near 58th Avenue.



Photos from the Mural Dedication & Mini-Gala at Audubon House on October 13, 2017.



Lorna Thibeault, Mariner  
Pete & Donna Halleran



Michael & Jeanne Walther



John & Judy Orcutt



Ed McCool & Barbara Riebe

Doug & Sheryl Derosia, parents of mural artist Deanna Derosia.



# Be an Audubon Activist to Avoid the Sixth Extinction and Save our Planet

**We need Audubon Activists.** All of us should be concerned about the possibility of an impending nuclear war, which is something that must never take place. Surprisingly, many are less worried about the longer term – the predicted Sixth Extinction on our planet as described in the 2014 non-fiction book, *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural*

*History*, by Elizabeth Kolbert, staff writer at *The New Yorker*. The author reports that many prominent scientists have stated that the Earth is undergoing a modern, human-caused extinction event. Ms. Kolbert writes that humans have become a geological force, driving vast swaths of creation over the brink. Terrestrial and marine ecosystems are collapsing, and the great majority of all plant and animal species, including ourselves, are in serious jeopardy.

**Scientists have confirmed that she might be right.** Global warming resulting from increased carbon dioxide and methane outputs is wreaking havoc on earth's delicately balanced ecosystems, threatening species in our web of life. Our oceans are becoming warmer and more acidic, depleting coral reefs that are our most diverse marine ecosystems on which one quarter of all ocean species depend for food and shelter, and affecting the base of marine food webs. Widespread droughts cause increased fires and dust storms. Melting freshwater stored in glaciers and Arctic ice causes the oceans to rise. Paving over nature and widespread use of chemicals like glyphosate and chlorpyrifos that harm many animals including humans are causing a massive decline in earth's species.

**Many of our animals including birds and butterflies are heading for extinction.** The National Audubon science team's seven-year study found that more than half of U.S. bird species (314 of 588) will be seriously threatened by 2080, and many of those could disappear forever. Of the 314 species, 126 were classified as "Climate-endangered" and are projected to lose more than 50% of their current ranges by 2050 and may face extinction (Bald Eagle, Osprey, and Brown Pelican, to name a few).

**This is not surprising. Professor Doug Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature home- How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native***

*Plants* quotes: "Most of our native plant-eaters are not able to eat alien plants, and we are replacing native plants with alien species at an alarming rate, especially in the suburban gardens on which our wildlife increasingly depends." Tallamy thinks we can still stop the extinction and save most of the plants and animals, by restoring native plants to our human-dominated landscapes. This is relatively easy to do. You can find out how from Dr. Tallamy in person, our keynote speaker at our January 19-20, 2018 Conference entitled "Transforming Landscapes for a Sustainable Future" at the Emerson Center (see insert)!

**Many species could live in sustainable harmony with us** if we redesign our landscapes to accommodate those species by providing food, shelter, and nesting sites using native plant species. Our conference is an opportunity for you, as a builder, landscaper, home-owner association board member, and/or homeowner in Indian River County, to learn how to landscape in a way that is sustainable, cost-effective and helps enhance our quality of life and our community's health

**Let's all** actively work together to preserve our native lands and also to help redesign our landscapes. Pelican Island Audubon invites you to become an **Audubon Activist** to learn how we can work towards transforming our community using, as an example the Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area (ORCA), which is one of Florida's natural habitats surrounding the Audubon House. This free monthly course "**How to be an Audubon Activist: Nature Education, Advocacy, & Volunteer Opportunity Class**" involves field walks with scientists and experienced naturalists exploring the outdoors together. Classes begin Friday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00 am -12:00 pm at the Audubon House, 195 9th St. SE (Oslo Road) in Vero Beach. See our insert and website [www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org](http://www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org) for more information about how to sign up for as many or all of the FREE classes you wish to attend. Tell your friends, neighbors, and those sharing conservation concerns who want to learn more about our natural resources, the plants and animals that inhabit our local area, volunteer opportunities, and ways we can all protect our fragile and imperiled natural resources.

**Also, find ways and reasons to bring Florida nature to your backyard.** Meet old friends and new people who share an interest in Florida's habitats. Help join our community to enhance natural habitats everywhere! Hope to see you there.



The crowd gathers for the mural dedication.

Kim Prado, Mariner Pete, & Georgia Irish from Mariner Bank & Trust.

## Audubon Advocates Wish List

- Please donate towards two new student cameras to replace two of our six new cameras that were recently stolen.
- Please send a check to Pelican Island Audubon Society P.O. Box 1833 Vero Beach, FL 32961
- This is a tax-deductible donation.

Pelican Island Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 1833  
Vero Beach, FL 32961-1833

Support Pelican Island Audubon.  
Shop our new nature store at Audubon House for all your holiday gift items.



Save the date for the annual holiday potluck on December 11, 2017.  
More info coming soon!

### Join or renew your membership in Pelican Island Audubon Society

- Membership benefits include:
- Monthly Peligram newsletter
  - Monthly meetings on the environment and wildlife
  - Birding field trips led by expert guides
  - Opportunities to volunteer to help the environment
  - . . . .and much more!

For more information and to join, visit [www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org](http://www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org) or mail in the application ⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨

Pelican Island Audubon Society Officers & Directors	
<b>Officers</b>	<b>Elected Directors:</b>
President	<b>Graham Cox, Ph.D. '20</b>
<b>Richard H. Baker, Ph.D.</b>	<b>Bill Halliday '20</b>
1st Vice-President	<b>Nancy Irvin '19</b>
<b>Donna Halleran</b>	<b>Bill Loftus, Ph.D. '18</b>
2nd Vice-President	<b>Toni Robinson '19</b>
<b>David Cox, Ph.D.</b>	<b>Bonnie Swanson '18 —</b>
Recording Secretary	Appointed Board Members: <b>Susan Lovelace</b>
<b>Darlene Halliday</b>	<b>Tina Marchese</b>
Corresponding Secretary <b>George Glenn</b>	
Treasurer <b>Steve Goff</b>	

### Pelican Island Audubon Membership

- \$100 Florida Scrub-Jay Level       \$200 Osprey Level  
 \$25 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](mailto:piaudubon@yahoo.com)

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