

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 48th Year Vol. 48 No. 6 September 2012

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

September 10, 2012 ❖ 6:00 p.m.

Climate Change

Adapting to sea level rise
and our changing climate
with Randall Parkinson, Ph.D.

North Indian River County Library

1001 Sebastian Blvd. (CR 512), Sebastian

Using the example of experience with the City of Satellite Beach, Dr. Parkinson will assess vulnerability to sea level rise and discuss planning recommendations to reduce risk. The talk will present a brief overview of the scientific evidence of a warming world, followed by a discussion of observed changes to the natural environment already taking place as a consequence of climate change, including sea level rise.

The talk will then cover an EPA sponsored study conducted on behalf of Satellite Beach; noting that the city never did anything but accept the report. The talk will conclude with ways to overcome inaction at government levels to plan for rising sea levels.

Randall W. Parkinson is president of RWParkinson Consulting, Inc., a firm specializing in geological issues associated with the management and protection of coastal resources. He received a BS in Environmental Science from Cornell College (1979), MS in Geology from the University of Iowa (1982), and Ph.D. in Marine Geology and Geophysics from the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, University of Miami (1987). He is an Eagle Scout, Fulbright Scholar (visiting professor, University of Costa Rica, San Pedro), NASA Summer Faculty Fellow, Registered Professional Geologist (State of Florida), chairman of the Selection and Management Committee/Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program (1990 to present), and Associate Editor of the Journal of Coastal Research. In 2009 he was granted the position of Courtesy Assistant Research Professor at the University of Central Florida.

Prior to starting his own business in 2006, Parkinson was an Associate Professor of Geological Oceanography at the Florida Institute of Technology (1987 – 2000) and thereafter employed as a Senior Geologist and Laboratory Director of a Florida coastal engineering firm (2000 – 2006).

In December 2007, Dr. Parkinson launched the Space Coast Climate Change Initiative (SCCCI).

September 17, 2012 ❖ 7:30 p.m.

Florida's Night Sky

with Indian River State College's
associate astronomy professor and
Hallstrom Planetarium Director Jon Bell

Vero Beach Community Center

2266 14th Avenue, Vero Beach

Indian River State College's associate astronomy professor and Hallstrom Planetarium Director Jon Bell will present a program about Florida's night sky and other astronomical topics, including recent discoveries and NASA activities such as the Curiosity rover on Mars.

A native of the Genesee River Valley and the Finger Lakes of New York State, Jon U. Bell graduated from the State University of New York at Plattsburgh with a Bachelor of Science degree in Earth Science and a Master's degree in Science Education from Columbia University in New York City. His work experience includes a two-year internship as Scientific Assistant at the Hayden Planetarium in New York and 14 years as the Planetarium and Observatory Director at Virginia Living Museum in Newport News. He has operated the Hallstrom Planetarium since it opened in 1993.

Besides being the recipient of numerous awards for his work, Mr. Bell presents high quality educational astronomy programs to college classes, K - 12 schools, and the public along with creating the "Constellation Shootout," which hones the star-identifying skills of planetarium lecturers around the world. Additionally, Mr. Bell writes and hosts, "Skywatch," a daily astronomy program on WQCS 88.9 public radio.

Field Trips

October 13 - Saturday - West Regional Water Reclamation Plant - Guide: Peter Sutherland - An excellent local site for birding numerous species - Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the entrance to the facility, 8405 8th Street, Vero Beach.

October 21 - Sunday - Sebastian Inlet State Park - Guide: Juanita Baker - 8:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m. - Catch the migrating shorebirds at Sebastian Inlet State Park at low tide when they gather to feed. Enter the North Gate to the parking lot on the right which is closest to the Tide pool where we will meet. Photographers welcome.

Masthead photo: American Robin on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., July 2012, by Bob Montanaro.

Bird of the Month by Juanita Baker

Photo Title: "Sandpiper on the Run" by Mary Lou Christy of the Pelican Island Audubon and Indian River Photo Club. It was taken with a 300mm lens and Nikon D700 at ISO 1600, 1/800s at F/10 exposure.

Sanderlings, small sandpipers, in groups of 3-4 are commonly seen on sandy beaches rushing after the receding waves probing for mole crabs (aka "sand fleas"). The life of the mole crab is spent in that wash zone, bubbles indicate where they are, the whole reason Sanderlings specialize in scuttling back and forth with each wavelet. With their backs toward the ocean, Sanderlings are so busy poking their bills in the sand that they don't look like they're watching. Yet amazingly, they run from the incoming wave just in time not to get their feet wet! How do those little legs carry them so fast? They rapidly move as if peddling a bicycle, their body level over churning tiny legs. Have you ever seen them get caught by a wave?

This photo by Mary Lou Christy effectively depicts one Sanderling in action. We see Sanderlings along our Treasure Coast beaches all year long except for June and July. During nonmigratory periods fat comprises 3-5% of their body weight. Two weeks before they migrate, they eat doubly to gain 40% fat tissue of body weight. Designed for minimal fatigue, bulging flight muscles contract aerobically fueling thousands of miles. Sanderlings fly to the high arctic-tundra shores with only a few stopovers to refuel. In their short ab-



sence they mate, nest, and raise a brood, then return south to their favorite beach.

Sanderlings are one of the most cosmopolitan, widespread maritime shorebirds. Sanderlings that nest in arctic Spitsbergen, Norway and Siberia winter in Southern Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. From the Canadian Arctic archipelago and Greenland, Sanderlings disperse to North America from Pacific to Atlantic Coasts and on tidal sand or mud flats and the shores of lakes and rivers all the way 6,000 miles to southern Chile and Argentina.

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

There's something about Flamingos by Linda Chancellor

There were seven of them, all in a line, with their heads held high. Their pink bodies shimmering in the morning sun. My first sighting last spring was in Heathsville, Virginia. Plastic pink Flamingos. I had heard of sightenings from most of the lower 48 states and even Hawaii. There's something about Flamingos. Their images are on beach towels, beach bags, yard sculptures, garden flags, t-shirts, hats, handbags, dishes, dishtowels, cocktail napkins and even Tervis Tumblers. They are also the symbol for the Florida lottery. The original pink plastic Flamingo was created by Donald Featherstone, an art school graduate, in 1957 for Union Products, a manufacturer of plastic animals. He named it *Phoenicopterus ruber plasticus*.

Whether real or plastic the image of a Flamingo always brings a smile to my face. Flamingos bring back memories of when my parents took me to the classic Florida attractions in the 60's. There you could see the beautiful, exotic looking birds with their big bills and feathers the color of a tropical sunset standing in groups around water ponds. I loved watching them stand on one leg, curl their long neck around and



stick their head under their wing. How did they keep their balance I wondered? Then one of the flamboyance would lift his head and sound off with others soon contributing to the racket. Birds in captivity are members of the Caribbean species *Phoenicopterus ruber ruber*. Any sighting in South Florida today are attributed to escaped birds or their progeny from attractions.

What are your memories of flamingos? Is it the famous painting of an "Old Male" Flamingo by James Audubon? Do you think of Lewis Carroll's rendition of a living croquet mallet from [Alice In Wonderland](#)? Maybe you remember seeing them in the center of the racetrack at Hialeah? I now have a new sighting to add to my list. The new Florida Welcome Center billboards picture a Flamingo with the messages "Wet your beak" and "Stretch your legs".

So dig out your Flamingo salt and peppershakers and hop on the bandwagon, let's make it our state bird...just kidding!

Photo: Flamingo by Bob Montanaro

◆ **Audubon Assembly 2012: Conserve Water to Sustain life**, Oct. 26-27, 2012 at the Hyatt Regency in Sarasota focuses on Florida's incredible natural water resources. Learn how Audubon is using cutting-edge science and policy to preserve and protect our state's most precious resource. Learn more at <http://fl.audubon.org/audubon-assembly-2012>

◆ **Treasure Coast Birding Festival**, October 26-28, 2012, Vero Beach. Lectures, birding trips, art show and more. Keynote speaker: Bob Montanaro. Learn more at <http://www.cultural-council.org/-b-Treasure-Coast-Birding-Festival-b-.html>

President's Three hoots and a holler: Welcome back! Hope you've had a good summer.

Audubon Community Center to train volunteers to help maintain county conservation lands is now finally becoming a reality! On July 10th, the county commission voted 3-2 to approve our site plan (Peter O'Bryan and Wesley Davis dissenting). On July 27th, thanks to board member and corresponding secretary **Peter Sutherland**, making final document arrangements, PIAS purchased one acre of land off of Oslo Road from the University of Florida Foundation for the Center which is surrounded by 440 acres of one of the county's best environmental lands (Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area with seven different habitats) on its south, west and north boundary and the Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory, University of Florida on its east boundary. We thank **Patrick Walther, P.E., Ben Seed, Carter & Associates, Inc.** for their pro bono surveying and engineering work for the site plan approval and leadership in this effort and also for project coordination: **Jimmy Sellers and Michael Walther, Coastal Technology Corp.**; Geotechnical work: **Dave Alker, Geotechnical Consultant, AM Engineering & Testing, Inc.**; Design: **Richard Bialosky, AIA, Amy J. Thoma, LEED AP, Tierra Verde, Inc., Jeff Ray, AIA, and Chris Crawford, AIA**; Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing Engineering: **Kim Stephenson, EIT, Formica & Associates, Inc.**; Structural Engineering: **Bill Stoddard, PhD, P.E., Schulke, Bittle & Stoddard, LLC.**; Landscape Design, **Robin Pelensky, Landscape Architect, Surlatterre**; and Legal: **George Glenn, Attorney**. We have also settled on a general contractor: **Phil Barth and Jason Fykes, Barth Construction**. We hope to complete the project in 9 months. I also appreciate the good work of our building committee (**Bob Bruce, Bill Halliday, Peter Sutherland, and John Orcutt**). For more details see our website.

School Gardening Project: Thanks again to **Peter Sutherland**, who provided the idea and Board members **Dr. Bill Loftus and Dr. Graham Cox** who helped write the grant and will help coordinate carrying out the project. PIAS received a \$9,890 Toyota Grant to introduce small-scale, square-foot gardening to students of Indian River County to provide them with a hands-on demonstration of the multiple benefits of home gardens. Students will learn many skills growing their own healthy vegetables outdoors in ways that saves water, avoids excessive fertilizer, and illustrates the benefits of a healthy diet. Students will learn that home gardening saves energy by decreasing food-transportation costs, and uses land -- their back yards -- more productively and efficiently. They will also see that, compared to monoculture lawns, vegetable gardens create plant diversity and, by absorbing carbon dioxide and creating more oxygen, help reduce global warming. The project will offer the program to all 29 schools in the Indian River County system and will also work with African-American and Latino communities already committed to community-garden projects. The ultimate goal is to distribute 40, 4' x 4' garden boxes and kit materials (soil, seeds, training booklets, etc.) to 40 classrooms.



Bonnie Swanson, Principle of Vero Beach Elementary School, was quoted in *Vero Beach 32963*, "We have many hungry children in Indian River County. It seems strange with all the wealth here, but we have kids who go home to no electricity, no food, and no water. We are hoping children and parents learn they can sustain themselves by growing their own food, even if they live in an apartment. The Audubon Society is wonderful. We are very excited to have this program at our school." **Martha McAdams, Ph.D.** Principal at Sebastian Charter Junior High, wrote, "I am thrilled our school is going to be a part of the square foot gardening project. **Cathy Tinder**, the teacher who will be involved, has many ideas on how to integrate the project across the curriculum, including math, nutrition/health, writing and science. Our Ecology Club will be the main students involved. There will be approximately 20-30 students who will be directly working with the garden, however, all 186 students in grades 6-8 will have some involvement with observations and predictions, measuring and maintenance. I believe the students will be highly motivated to learn more about plants and how they can get such bountiful crops from such a small amount of space. We hope to inspire our students to take the concept home and use their knowledge to have a square foot garden at their home or maybe with a group of friends."

Huge disaster: Seagrasses and game fish are all gone around Sebastian area (from Grant in Brevard County to the 17th Street Bridge in Vero Beach)! "This is a crisis," says **Dr. Grant Gilmore**. Grant and fishing guide, **Captain Paul Dritenbas**, have surveyed the above area and have found nothing but bare sand. The area includes the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge. They speculate that some toxin has killed the seagrasses including the rhizomes (root-like underground stems). Besides fish and many creatures in the food chain, seagrasses are essential for our manatees. Our dolphins depend on fish to eat. Fishermen are now following the fish down to Ft. Pierce where we have seagrasses. The seagrasses at the Oslo Road boat ramp appear to be not killed yet, and really provide the only nursery habitat for our game fish in Indian River County. Hopefully, now the county will stop pressuring the dredge and fill project there that will kill off that source of fish for our county. This also should spur on our city's council members and county commissioners to produce a strong fertilizer ordinance that so far neither our cities nor our county has done. **Dr. Gilmore** was quoted in *Vero Beach 32963*: "It's time for the government to come together with the scientists and work to solve this problem and restore the lagoon."

These three hoots and a holler demonstrate why Audubon is essential to enhance our quality of life for our community... and how we can use your help! **Darlene Halliday** is our new volunteer coordinator.

Richard Baker, President

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 **Peter Sutherland**, Treasurer **Steve Goff** — Elected Directors: **Joe Carroll '14**, **David Cox, Ph.D. '14**, **Nancy Irvin '13**, **Bill Loftus, Ph.D. '15**, **John Orcutt, Ph.D. '15**, **Toni Robinson '13** — Appointed Board Members: **Graham Cox, Ph.D.**, **Bill Halliday**, **Tina Marchese**, **Jane Schnee**, **Neil Stalter** (*Billi Wagner - Ornithological Consultant*)

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.

Become a Sustaining Member

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, Pelican Island Audubon 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 and a free gift cookbook!

Yes, I wish to become a Sustaining Member with an annual contribution of:

\$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

Credit card payments call (772) 567-3520 M-F 9AM-1PM

Please email us if there is a local environmental issue which concerns you at piaudubon@bellsouth.net

Plant of the Month by Janice Broda

It goes by the name of poorman's patch or stickleaf. *Mentzelia floridana* is a native plant that you may want to avoid – not because it stings – but because it sticks so, so well.

The leaves, stems, and fruits of this perennial plant are adorned with tiny hooked hairs that adhere wonderfully well to feathers, fur, cloth, skin, or most anything that brushes against it. Patches of the plant readily attach itself to whatever wanders by. Some people say that these hooked hairs were the inspiration for velcro, but velcro un-attaches far more readily. It is quite difficult to remove the green patches of this plant from your clothes, and laundering does not remove it. Repeated laundering does eventually wear down the green patches, but left behind frequently is a green stain.

The genus name of this plant, *Mentzelia*, honors Christian Mentzel, a 17th century German botanist. Its specific epithet, *floridana*, makes reference to its narrow distribution. This plant only grows in coastal areas of peninsular Florida and the Bahamas. You will encounter it in sunny places in hammocks, on shell middens, and on dunes.

The yellow flowers of this tropical plant are about 1 ½ inches across, produced throughout the year, and quite attractive to bees and other pollinators. Unlike many other plants in the Loasaceae (Eveningstar) family, poorman's patch will not sting you, but you may not find your encounter with this plant too pleasant.



Photos by Janice Broda.

PIAS needs volunteers in the following areas

To volunteer call 772-567-3520 or e-mail

piaudubon@bellsouth.net

1. Newsletter production/ mailing
2. Write letters to the Editor (PJ, Hometown News)
3. Special Projects for community involvement
4. Quality of Life Indicator Project
5. Audubon Alert - advocacy outreach
6. Fundraising - develop and help with fundraising projects
7. Field Trips - help organize or lead field trips
8. Cookies & Refreshments for our general meetings
9. Library - help with various library projects
10. Square-foot Gardening Project - help school age children with vegetable gardens on school grounds
11. Other - share your special skills