

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. 6 September 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.

September 18, 2017 ❖ 7:00 p.m.
Lionfish with Bob Hickerson

Vero Beach Community Center
2266 14th Avenue, Vero Beach

Bob Hickerson and Maria Andreu first encountered with a lionfish in Caribbean waters. Upon their return home to Florida and witnessing the arrival of these unwanted visitors in their local waters, they went to work developing new tools to combat this threat. A small, compact spear was needed and the first version of The Frapper was born. They are joined now by an international collection of divers and environmentalists who volunteer their time in an effort to mitigate the damage these invasive lionfish cause.

October 13 - 15, 2017
Indian River Birding Festival & Nature Art Show

- Field Trips
- Birding Lectures
- Sunset Cruise
- Kayaking
- and more!

For more information, visit

www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org

Sponsored by:

• **Marine Bank**

- Linus Cadillac Buick GMC
- Home Improvements of Vero Beach

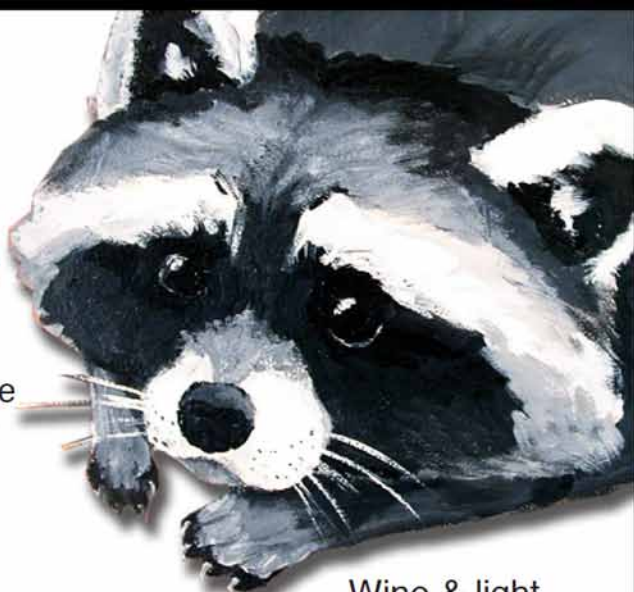
Mural Dedication & Mini-Gala at Audubon House

The first official public viewing of juried nature art show and the Grand Debut of artist Deanna

DeRosia's 12' x 47' mural at Audubon House depicting 70 species of plants and animals found at the surrounding Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area.



Detail of wildlife from mural by Deanna DeRosia.



Wine & light refreshments in the gardens.



Friday, October 13, 2017 ♦ 6PM - 8PM
Mini-Gala Tickets: \$50 donation per person
Tickets available at www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org

Bird of the Month by Juanita Baker

Why is the Northern Bobwhite one of the most important game birds? And why one of the most extensively studied bird species in the world? In the wild, Bobwhites forage on the ground in coveys, startling and confusing predators when they burst together in the air flying in different directions. Thus, hunters find them an exciting challenge, so have introduced them around the world, although Bobwhites are only native to the Eastern U.S. and Mexico. Bobwhites breed well in captivity and produce large broods of 25 or more from April to June, often two or more broods per season. Thus, hunting lodges can release captive-bred birds onto their properties for their client hunters.

Researchers favor studying Bobwhites due to the bird's large broods and thriving in laboratories. Because Bobwhites do not migrate, the local effects of environmental factors in different regions are easier to study. Thus, the Bobwhite played a major role in the first study of the impact of pesticides, habitat and environmental factors on population numbers (1931), and effects of prescribed fires on land management (1931, 1933). Overall, Northern Bobwhite populations have been declining for the last century. Human activities (land conversion, highways, big agriculture, solar farms, excessive use of pesticides and herbicides) have diminished natural habitats. Invasive, exotic grasses reduce native food sources (insects, leaves, and seeds) and like for other ground-nesting birds, fire ants weaken chicks.

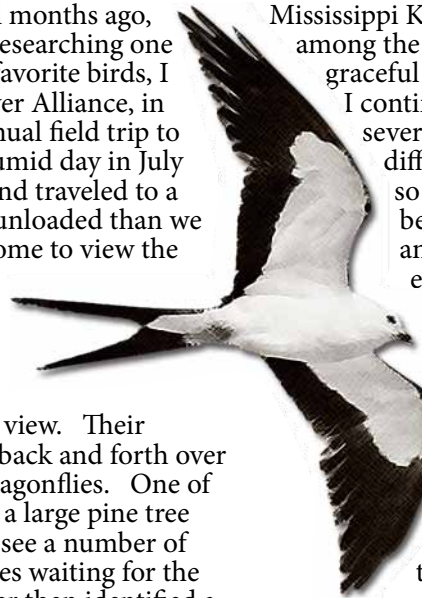
Yet, we still are able to hear their distinctive "Bob-White!" repetitive call in grassland and pine-hardwood forests (Maria Heffernan found this one foraging with others at Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park), and appreciate its lovely feather patterns while watching it forage in coveys on the ground, furtively running until danger is too close; then, with whirring wings, startle in surprise!



"Quail on the Loose" © Maria Heffernan,
Canon 7D Mark II, Speed 1200,
Tamron 150-600 lens, ISO 400.

Amazing, graceful birds by Linda Chancellor

Several months ago, while researching one of my favorite birds, I discovered that the Lower Savannah River Alliance, in Allendale S.C. was offering their 4th annual field trip to view Swallow-tailed Kites. On a hot, humid day in July we joined 48 people, loaded into vans, and traveled to a local farmer's field. No sooner had we unloaded than we were aware that other people had also come to view the kites - many with serious cameras. The birds did not disappoint. There were large numbers of them swooping and diving above the centre pivot irrigation machines located in the field. Lifting my binoculars brought them closer into view. Their beautiful white and black bodies glided back and forth over the fields snatching up June bugs and dragonflies. One of the volunteers had focused his scope on a large pine tree in the distance. Looking into it I could see a number of kites and he explained they were juveniles waiting for the parents to bring them food. My daughter then identified a



Mississippi Kite with his triangular tale dipping in and out among the Swallow tailed kites. But it was the beautiful, graceful Swallow-tailed Kites I had come to see and I continued to watch them dip and soar. Suddenly several flew right overhead - try as I might I had difficulty focusing my camera on them they were so fast. How quickly the almost two hours went before we loaded up and went back for lunch and to hear a speaker. Later reports on eBird estimated around 125 kites.

FYI: Swallow-tailed Kites nest along the Savannah, Edisto, Santee, Black and Great Pee Dee Rivers. Spanish Moss is used in their nest construction. The adult birds forage in nearby fields and then bring back food to the young. When the juveniles are old enough they join their parents flying to the fields. Juveniles can be identified by their shorter tails.

Society News



New staff members: Education Coordinator Debbie Jeffries and Environmental Educator Katheryne Nix lead the Audubon Advocate program.

Richard Baker, George Glenn, Darlene Halliday, and Bonnie Swanson receive a \$50,000 check from Jeffrey Pickering of the Indian River Community Foundation for the Audubon Advocates.

The Big Year



Welcome to our new season. Many of you are here supporting us all year, and also many will be returning to our beautiful Florida. Our sphere of influence at Pelican Island Audubon to keep our Florida natural has widened, with new activities, funding sources, and opportunities for members and volunteers. This is, one of our best, truly, **“The Big Year!”**

Our third year of our **Audubon Advocates** program is off to a great start. Last year, our 96 fifth graders from four Title I county elementary and charter schools showed a marked interest in being good stewards of our community by wanting to preserve our environment, removing invasive air potato plants by collecting bulbils and cleaning litter from spoil islands. Advocates hiked trails, kayaked the Lagoon, waded in mangroves, climbed trees, and learned about the plants and animals, even mosquitoes, spotted birds via binoculars, and snakes in Indian River County. Introduced to scientific techniques for collecting data, students engaged in hands on specimen collection from crab and tree holes, oyster beds, mangroves, bromeliads and examining them under microscopes. Students documented their experiences with journaling and GoPro cameras, and educated their parents, siblings and guests at their year-ending graduation presentations about our habitats.

Covering two years, PIAS received the following grants to support our Audubon Advocate and other chapter programs:

- \$62,500 - Indian River Lagoon Council National Estuary Program.
- \$20,000 - Indian River County Children's Service Advisory Council (another \$20,000 is coming for a second year).
- \$50,000 – Indian River Community Foundation (see photo of presentation).
- \$35,000 – John's Island Foundation for a new 15-passenger GMC van to transport our Audubon Advocates to and from their school to the Audubon House. This allows us flexibility and new opportunities for expanding field trips.
- \$1000 - National Audubon to partially support the new 49. X 12 ft. mural at Audubon House by artist Deanna DeRosia.
- \$1,500 - FPL for Butterfly Garden plants.
- **Fundraisers:** we hosted **A Taste of Honey from Around the World**; Partnered with **Dr. Jorge Cruz's the Magic Birding Circuit** for an **Ecuador Trip Raffle**; **Yard and Native Plant Sales**; and started the **Lagoon Business Alliance**, a new PIAS Business Membership for a healthy Lagoon. Armstrong Global Holdings and Dr. Rick Root are our first two members. Please ask businesses you frequent to join!

Bringing science and reaching out into our communities:

- **Developed Spoonbill Watch, a National Audubon Climate Change Initiative, citizen-science project**, to monitor Spoonbills on two small islands at the Stick Marsh in Fellsmere and successfully advocated for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to declare the islands as a Critical Wildlife Area. **Held a Spoonbill training course** for 26 prospective volunteers.

- **Ongoing Osprey Monitoring:** 306 occupied **nests** at Blue Cypress Lake, the largest population in the world.
- **Monthly monitoring of other local birds** at three sites (Indian River Club, Vero Beach Country Club, and Habitat Golf Course in Brevard County) and participated in Audubon's Eagle Watch and Jay Watch.
- **Developing & Monitoring Indicators** with Gifford, Wabasso, and Fellsmere communities, to measure environmental, economic, and social progress and/or concerns.
- **Public Education: booths, exhibits, and children's games** at the Pelican Island National Wildlife Reserve Festival, Environmental Learning Center EcoFest, and Pelican Island Elementary School Festival.
- **Annual Audubon Holiday Party** with 225 Audubon Advocates, their parents and sibs, and Audubon members and a **Spring Dinner Graduation Party** for our 2nd term Audubon Advocate class for 100 students, parents and special guests.
- **Volunteer Nature Stewardship Classes** partnered with **University of Florida/IFAS/EMEL:** 30 students.
- **3rd Annual Intensive Birding Course** for 32 students by Dr. Juanita Baker and David Simpson, one of Florida's best birders.
- **Square Foot Gardens:** continued in 14 elementary schools and developed two **Garden Clubs** in county schools.
- **Pelican Island Elementary School** partnering to develop an **Ecological Scrub Recovery Project** to restore and add new trails at the adjacent Pelican Island Audubon Society's Martha Winger Reflection Park.
- **Art@Audubon:** a beginning art and sketching class for youth, taught by Elise Carter.
- **Ten Florida-friendly Landscape UF/ Audubon workshops** for Master Gardeners and the general public
- **Art of Digiscoping Workshop** by **Clay Taylor from Swarovski**
- **The Great Air Potato Roundup and Contest:** 28 attending, removing over 320 lbs. of invasive air potatoes, and seeing biological agent (the air potato beetle) doing its job.
- **North American Butterfly Association Butterfly Census Monitoring:** 2 Sessions.
- **Audubon Adventurers Spring Camp** for 12 *Hope for Families* resident children
- **FPL Solar Initiative:** designed and recommended native plants around two new solar farms.
- **Florida-Friendly Landscaping Initiative:** Met with 16 of 17 HMO **Moorings development community** leaders to discuss using less fertilizer with more native plants and thus to reduce N and P in the surrounding Lagoon.
- **FAU/ Harbor Branch Indian River Lagoon Symposium:** **poster presented** on our Roseate Spoonbill & Osprey citizen community science projects.
- **CD: Developed and distributed “Pelican Island Audubon presents the National Audubon Climate Report, The Future of North American Birds.”** Funded by National Audubon. *Invite us to present this to your organizations.
- **Volunteer Involvement:** opened new trails at ORCA, and improve maintenance and invasive plant removal. Built new landscape gardens at Audubon House, rain (lagoon), and butterfly gardens, a native plant nursery, and led public tours at various habitats.
- **Open House** with county officials, speakers and ribbon cutting. Recognized our Audubon volunteers who opened the new trail at ORCA.

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- **Received National recognition** see “In the Garden with Laura.” Laura Callaghan spent 4 days with us at our Audubon House.
- **National Audubon’s Plants for Birds program:** participated to install rain (lagoon), and butterfly gardens that obtained **Monarch Watch** certification as **A Monarch Waystation**.
- **PIAS Online catalog:** use our website to see what books we have in our **2,000+ volume library**.
- **Educated and Advocated against IR County’s conservation lands in Sebastian becoming a bus terminal.**
- **Invasive Plants of Central Florida Brochure:** developed with support by the Friends of the St. Sebastian River, Florida Native Plant Society, City of Sebastian, and Minuteman Press
- **The Florida Urban Forestry Council’s Trail of Trees presentation** by Tim Womick to four elementary schools explaining the importance of trees, offered in **collaboration with the City of Vero Beach**
- **Continued our outdoor growing healthy square foot gardens programs** at 14 elementary schools to teach students where their food comes from and how to grow their own, while learning the importance of pollinators. The vegetables are then taken home and/or shared with other students.
- **Continued public, monthly membership meetings** at Vero Beach Community Center, North County Library in Sebastian, River House on the beach side and six presentations at Indian River Estates and one at Timber Ridge.
- **26 birding field trips.**

- **Met twice with each County Commissioner** to present our conservation priorities.
- **Outdoor Educational mural** of 70 plant and animal species at the Audubon House by artist Deanna DeRosia. ***Come to the Grand Opening Gala on October 13th 6-8 pm.** Your **\$50 donation** to Pelican Island Audubon will go towards supporting wonderful projects like the mural painting supported!

This Big Year, the great work is due to the many dedicated volunteers and PIAS board members who serve without pay, but put in many hours carrying out the above events and projects including maintaining and cleaning our Audubon House and folding the Peligram. Each contribution is important!

Many thanks to our great staff this last year and the new staff that have joined us this season:

- Bob Montanaro, Office Manager
- Kristen Hanson - Outdoor Education Coordinator (last year)
- Ken Gonyo, ORCA and Landscape Volunteer Coordinator
- Debby Jeffries - Education Coordinator
- Katheryne Nix - Environmental Educator (Our new staff Audubon Advocate leader)

Special thanks to the dedicated teachers at the **IRC Public Schools** and folks in the community for working with us the last 2+ years: Cari Berwick, Sonja Jones, Erica Garcia, Heather Smith, Zacharia Trahan, Dustin Strate, Rebecca Marr, Teresa Baird, Kim Slade, Laura Weaver, Maria Maul, Elise Carter, Susan Lovelace, and Nancy Hatcher.

Let’s work together to have another **BIG YEAR!** Join us! Volunteer! Advocate! Educate! Make the public aware!

Maiden Voyage of the PIAS Passenger Van by *Donna Halleran*



On Thursday, August 24, 2017, the van was loaded with 11 of us, and promptly at 8:00 a.m. we headed out for a three-hour trek to the Florida Museum of Natural History (Gainesville) for a self-guided visit of the *Butterfly Rainforest; Frogs!* and other exhibits. The van was comfortable, everyone has their own controls of air conditioning and the smooth ride ensued.

We encountered the exotic butterflies of the rainforest. Look left, right, up and down and there was a menagerie of fluttering beauties! You had to watch your step as some were attracted to your clothing and landed in from of you. Not only did we get to see these amazing butterflies but we learned that butterflies and moths can be found all over the world, however; the greatest diversity can be found in tropical rainforests. Butterfly and moth species live at specific heights in the rainforest, in at least four levels (or strata). The forest floor, the understory layer, the canopy, and the emergent layer. Most Lepidoptera species rarely leave their familiar environment. Some species

fly close to the ground and others live hundreds of feet high in the rainforest canopy.

Lepidoptera are insects like butterflies and moths meaning, “scale winged” in Greek. A fun fact: There are 125 Lepidoptera families and about 12 times as many moths as butterflies: approximately 240,000 moths and 20,000 butterflies.

We meandered over to the *Frogs! A Chorus of Color*. There were some strange and unusually large and small frogs, green, brown, red, camouflaged, and spotted.

It was a successful outing and fun. All of the participants wait to hear where the next sponsored trip will be. If you have a suggestion, let us know and you can join us on the next one! And leave the driving to us. The day trips help to support Pelican Island Audubon Society!



Summer Landscaping Delights by Ken Gonyo

The native plants and pollinators have combined to put on a wonderful show at our Audubon House this mid and late summer season. As the landscape and gardens flourish it is much more welcome to all wildlife. Butterflies abound this time of year and we now see

regularly see birds, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals on the property.

A star attraction in our Butterfly Garden of late has been the Queen Butterfly (*Danaus gilippus*). The Queen is one of our three milkweed butterflies – Monarch, Queen, and Soldier. All three host exclusively on plants in the dogbane family and with exceptions,

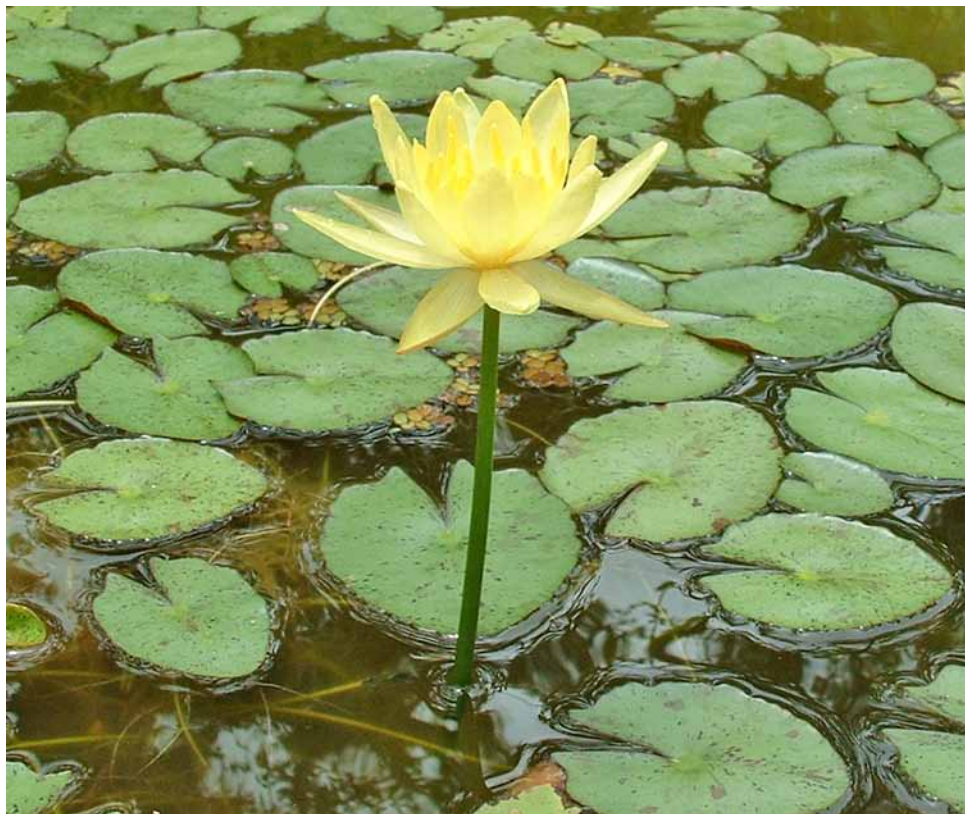
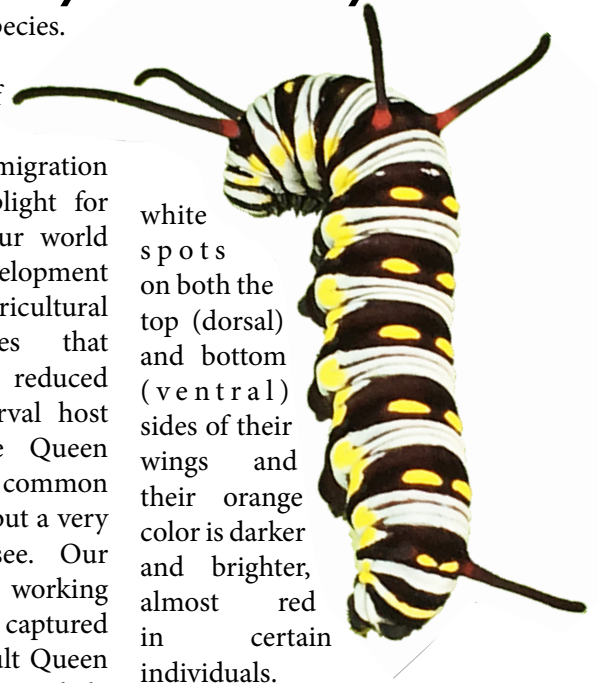
greatly prefer the milkweed species.

We all know the story of the Monarch by now with their phenomenal migration and their desperate plight for survival in our world of development and agricultural practices that have reduced their larval host plants. The Queen Butterfly is less common and less studied, but a very beautiful treat to see. Our diligent and hard working volunteer, Ed McCool, captured this picture of one of the adult Queen Butterflies that lingered with us daily for nearly a week. As one would expect, our milkweed plants are now hosting larval offspring.

At first glance the Queen looks very similar to the Monarch. The distinguishing differences are bright

white spots on both the top (dorsal) and bottom (ventral) sides of their wings and their orange color is darker and brighter, almost red in certain individuals.

Similarly, at first glance the larvae of the two species look very similar. The Queen caterpillar has darker and bolder black striping than the Monarch with red at the base of the antennae and the two pairs of filaments which resemble antennae. The Monarch larvae only have one pair of filaments in addition to their antennae.



Recent bloom treats in our native gardens include the beautiful Yellow Water Lilies (*Nymphaea Mexicana*)....



and the Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*).

Native landscaping is so beneficial to all wildlife and as you can see from our gardens at Audubon House a continual source of enjoyment for *Homo sapiens* as well.

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

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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.pelicanislandadubon.org

or mail in the application ⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨⇨

Pelican Island Audubon Membership

\$100 Florida Scrub-Jay Level \$200 Osprey Level

\$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.pelicanislandadubon.org/membership.html>

Questions: call 772-567-3520 or e-mail piaudubon@yahoo.com

Pelican Island Audubon Society Officers & Directors

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1st Vice-President

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Bill Halliday '20

Nancy Irvin '19

Bill Loftus, Ph.D. '18

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Bonnie Swanson '18 —

Appointed Board Members:

Susan Lovelace

Tina Marchese

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