



# *Peligrum*

March  
2021



*Blue-headed Vireo — Bringing Home Lunch © Becky Loftus, 06/05/2020*



## On the cover

### Bringing home lunch!

**A tasty treat for Mama.**

© Becky Loftus 6/5/2020, Thornhurst, PA while the vireo was bringing food for the baby in the nest.  
Family: Vireo. Blue-headed Vireo *Vireo solitarius*  
Canon Power Shot SX60HS, ISO 800, 160mm, f/5.3.

by Juanita N. Baker, Ph.D.

Snug in the green-needled branches of a hemlock tree in Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains, the female Blue-headed Vireo sat on her tiny, lichen-crusted nest. Her mate brought her and the nestlings insect treats like this adult caddisfly in this photo by Becky Loftus. Unlike our year-round resident, the White-eyed Vireo, this species nests in summer in coniferous forests in the Appalachian Mountains and across Canada in elevation above 800 feet. After the young are reared, they return to Florida by mid-October and stay until mid-to-late April. After staying the winter here, they hurry to return north again—to breed. With its key features: eye spectacles and gray head, and thick bill (unlike the warbler's sharp, thinner bill), you can remember it as Grandma Vireo coming to winter in Florida, a true snow-bird!



When Blue-headed Vireos come to Florida, they seek out wooded areas, but use urban areas if these are well-treed with mixed broadleaf and pine trees. Their diet is 95% insects, obtained by foraging in shrubby thickets and Live Oaks, mostly along the interior branches. The birds pluck nutritious medium to large insects from the branches and leaves. They rarely forage on the ground or in the treetops. By planting native plants in your yard that attract insects of all kinds, but mostly moths and butterflies producing large caterpillars, you'll invite birds to feed and nest. Blue-headed Vireos even eat their vegetables as 5% of their diet is made of the plump fruits of bayberry, wax myrtle, sumac, viburnum, and wild grape. Many native plants are available for you and the birds at PIAS, like the Live Oak, Dahoon Holly, Beautyberry, Firebush, Florida Privet, Walter's Viburnum and Long-leaf Pine. Bring the birds home!

**Submit your photos to the Birds Need Plants Photo Contest**  
Visit [PelicanIslandAudubon.org](http://PelicanIslandAudubon.org) for all the details.

*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.*

#### Officers & Directors

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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.

#### Audubon House

195 9th Street SE (Oslo Rd.), Vero Beach  
M - F | 9AM - 1PM

#### Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 1833, Vero Beach, FL 32961

Phone: 772-567-3520

E-Mail: [piaudubon@yahoo.com](mailto:piaudubon@yahoo.com)

#### Website:

[www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org](http://www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org)

Thank you to everyone who  
donated to the  
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Society Annual Appeal  
to support our many programs.

# Native Plants For Sale

**Pelican Island Audubon is offering a large variety of native plants and trees for sale at the following prices:**

**\$5 – 1 gallon/1 quart (or greater)**

**\$3 – 3-inch pots, anything under 1 quart**

**2 for \$3 – Plugs/2-inch pots**

**Order online at**

**[PelicanIslandAudubon.org](http://PelicanIslandAudubon.org)**



# Unsung Heroes and Great Birding at the Egret Marsh Stormwater Park and Wildlife Sanctuary and Other Conserved Areas; a tribute to Keith McCully, Alexis Peralta, and Indian River County's Stormwater Division



We are so lucky in our county to have such diverse habitats in which birds thrive. Conservation areas create great birding opportunities in Florida and Indian River County (IRC) for the experienced or casual birder, and those who just love to be outdoors. All those areas were preserved thanks to dedicated and caring individuals despite the fact that we humans continue to pave

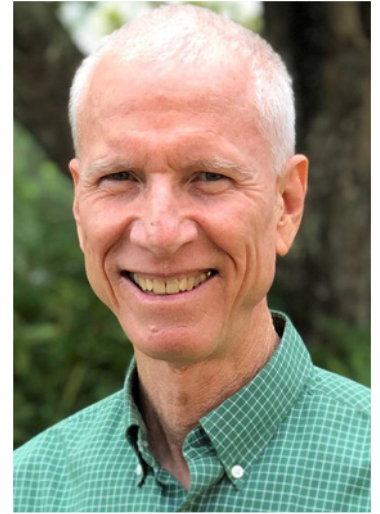
over such amazing natural areas. Those people realized that our precious natural areas needed to be preserved or restored and took the steps necessary to protect and care for them. Tourists come from around the world to visit our unique birds and contribute to our thriving economy.

By passing two referendums for \$26M and \$50M, and from grants, licenses, Duck Stamps and other funds, nearly 12,000 acres of conservation lands in IRC have been set aside. Some of these excellent birding areas include: Blue Cypress Lake, Blue Cypress Lake Conservation Area, Captain Forster Hammock Preserve, Environmental Learning Center, T.M. Goodwin Waterfowl Management Area, North Sebastian Conservation Area, Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area, Osprey Acres Stormwater Park & Nature Preserve, Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge, Round Island Park, Sebastian Inlet State Park, St. Sebastian River Preserve State Park, Wabasso Scrub Conservation Area, and West Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility (See links, details, and number of species on our website <https://pelicanislandaudubon.org/birding-indian-river-county/>).

The one site not on this list is the unique Egret Marsh Stormwater Park and Wildlife Sanctuary a terrific birding site with 54 bird species reported on eBird. Although visiting it requires an appointment, that is easily arranged. We are very fortunate to have Keith McCully, Stormwater Engineer who heads the county's Stormwater Division, and the designer of this site to have been an IRC employee. The site uses algae to clean canal water by removing nitrogen, phosphorus and other contaminants from agriculture and suburban lands before it reaches the Indian River Lagoon. The algae is harvested frequently, dried, and

removed to the landfill. The water then goes into a wetland to remove more contaminants before going to the Lagoon.

In addition to this one, you can also visit another Stormwater facility at Osprey Acres Stormwater Park and Nature Preserve, which is open every day but Tuesday without appointment. Under construction is a third one, Moorhen Marsh Low Energy Aquatic Plant System, that will remove pollution from the North Relief Canal.



*Keith McCully*

We are also fortunate to have Alexis Peralta, the Stormwater Division Educator, who also enforces the Fertilizer Ordinance. She does an excellent job to educate citizens, businesses, schools and clubs, and camps, and creates videos, new media and marketing. She has been an enthusiastic participant for the last 5 years in PIAS's Audubon Activist program where she teaches 5th graders in our afterschool Environmental Education program how to protect the Lagoon from stormwater pollution and encourages them to consider a career in environmental science.

We thank Alexis for the outstanding job giving educational tours at these stormwater parks, and educating our Audubon Advocates and also the public how these stormwater facilities work to save our Lagoon. For example, on February 9th, Pelican Island Audubon Society and the IRC Stormwater Division offered a birding field trip led by Alexis to the Egret Marsh Stormwater Park and Wildlife Sanctuary for the Sabal Circle of the Moorings Garden Club. Numerous birds were present as can be seen in the slide show <https://pelicanislandaudubon.org/2021/02/10/birding-egret-marsh-with-the-sabal-circle-of-the-moorings-garden-club/>

Many thanks to Keith McCully who is retiring next month after many years of dedicated and extraordinary service to all of us at the County.



**Alexis Peralta, right, talks to the Sabal Circle of the Moorings Garden Club at Egret Marsh Stormwater Park.**





# Birding Egret Marsh Stormwater Park with the Moorings Garden Club Sabal Circle

View more photos from the field trip at [PelicanIslandAudubon.org](http://PelicanIslandAudubon.org)

Photos by Bob Montanaro.



Red-shouldered Hawk



Anhinga



Great Blue Heron



White Ibis



Wood Stork



Alligator

**Election of Officers & Directors**  
Pelican Island Audubon Society will hold its annual elections during the March 15, 2021 general meeting starting at 7:00PM on Zoom. Please plan to attend to cast your vote.

## Come to South ORCA to see one of Florida's Most Beautiful Wildflowers Blooming Now!

Photos/Story by Richard H. Baker, Ph.D.

The Florida Native Lupine - Sky blue lupine, *Lupinus diffuses*, is blooming at the South Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area on the main trail. They should never be removed from the wild and will likely die if transplanted as it has a large, deep taproot that makes digging them up difficult. The plant survives in sandy, well-drained soil in sun. It is the only perennial lupine native to the U.S.





# Volunteering at PIAS' Martha Winger Scrub-Jay Sanctuary

by Richard H. Baker, Ph.D.

Under the leadership and guidance of PIAS board members, Bonnie Swanson and Dr. David Cox, the 18 acre PIAS Martha Winger Scrub-Jay Sanctuary surrounding the Pelican Island Elementary School (PIES) began renovations. The trails are being cleared, the split rail fence is being repaired and/or replaced, and a new entrance to the Sanctuary off Empire Terrace. On Feb 20th, 14 enthusiastic volunteers removed the broken split rail fence from the north entrance to PIES. Beth Powell and the Indian River County Parks and Recreation Dept. have also been helpful.

Other improvements will include:

- New signage for both the trail and the school.
- Trail cameras and a video cam for live continuous observation of the Osprey nest on our website.
- Open air shelter for students on the main trail.

TC Palm environmental reporter, Tyler Treadway, made this project as one of this years "12 Days of Christmas," which raised \$36,450 for the project with generous donations by Donna and Dennis Green, Judith Hansen, Kay Gibson, Hugh Stevenson, Paul & Donna Halleran, Pamela Cooper, James & Patricia Peterson, Sheila Mahan, Gretchen Locy, Peter Southard, and Charles & Letitia Makai.

While known for its Scrub-Jays, six Scrub-Jays is the highest number recorded in a single day at this Sanctuary on March 2013. Forty-nine other bird species are listed on eBird since March 2013.

Additional funding is welcomed.



Volunteers from left to right: Bonnie Swanson, Donna Green, Mark Lafurno, David Cox, Ricky Ray, Jeramy Keen, Meghan Carpenter, Nancy Duval, Donna Halleran, Tom Anderson, Steve Palmquist, Judy Nafzinger, and Graham Cox.

*Photos by Richard H. Baker, Ph.D.*



# Volunteers Needed!

Visit [PelicanIslandAudubon.org](http://PelicanIslandAudubon.org) to view the list of volunteer positions. Fill out the form online and let us know what you are interested in.

## Volunteer opportunities include:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| #1 - Office help,<br>Newsletter: fold, stuff<br>envelopes,            | #4 - Landscaping,<br>Nursery, Trees for Life<br>Project, repotting plants |
| #2 - Pullers: Join the<br>potato pullers: (invasive<br>species)       | #5 - Field Trip Leader  |
| #3 - Audubon House<br>Maintenance- classroom,<br>bathrooms, breezeway | #6 - Fundraising, Grant<br>Writing  |
|   | #7 - Publicity  |
|   | #8 - Trail Maintenance  |

**Working together we can do great things  
for the environment!**

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#### Contact Information

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by Linda Chancellor

It was a beautiful morning to enjoy breakfast on my back porch. I was not alone for birds were everywhere. A female yellow-bellied sapsucker was drilling holes in the trunk of a Chinese fan palm. I heard the “jeeb, jeeb, jeeb” call of a boat-tailed grackle which was sitting in the pecan tree. Three blue jays were screeching as they took turns bathing in the blue birdbath.

A mockingbird was bathing in the other birdbath. When the mockingbird was through a female cardinal took his place while her brilliant red mate watched from the fence. Some birds would drink before they stepped into the water to proceed with their bath. The rapid movements of their head, tail and wings created a constant

cascade of water around them. I was sure there would be no water left in the birdbaths. When there was a moment break in the line I went out and refilled them.

As soon as I returned to the porch another mockingbird came to take his turn. The blue jays had finished and the blue birdbath was vacant but not for long. A brown thrasher landed on the edge and took a few sips. I was thrilled to see him since it had been several years since I had seen one in my backyard. What a beautiful bird with his chestnut brown and copper back, long tail, distinctive black and white markings on his chest and his yellow eye ring. He carefully stepped down into the water. Down went his head into the water and then he threw his head back splashing water down his back. His wings and tail were flapping as well which caused the water to spray everywhere. He was certainly enjoying himself. But his bath was not complete until he lifted his left foot and scratched the side of his head. As he flew off I remembered the words to the song, “*Splish Splash, I was taking a bath Long about a Saturday night. . .*”

FYI - Bathing allows birds to rid themselves of parasites like fleas and ticks which may spread disease. It also helps to keep their feathers in good condition. If water is not available birds will look for dry dirt areas to take a dust bath.

*Brown Thrasher photo © Bob Montanaro*

## Rare sightings of a Purple Sandpiper at Sebastian Inlet State Park

by Richard H. Baker, Ph.D.

The Intensive Beginning Birding field trip were excited to find a rare bird that the Purple Sandpiper on the rocks just west of the Inlet bridge on the south side of the Sebastian Inlet State Park. Guide Bill Loftus called and alerted us to see it foraging along the rocks. The first recording for IR county in eBird was on Dec 1997, but after that only one or two are found during December to March period in subsequent years.

A subdued gray-and-white pot-bellied shorebird with a long, drooping bill, the Purple Sandpiper does have a seldom seen purple sheen to some of its wing-feathers. This hardy species breeds in the arctic islands, then spends winters on North Atlantic shores, farther north than any other shorebird yet some do make it down to Florida, nimbly exploring seaweed-covered rocks as they search for mussels, crustaceans, and flies, flashing bright orange on the legs and bill rocky, wave-battered coastlines as shown in the photo. ([https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Purple\\_Sandpiper](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Purple_Sandpiper)).



Photo © Richard H. Baker, Ph.D.

# March 15, 2021 7:00 PM General Meeting on Zoom: Butterflies & Birds In Your Yard with Diane Goldberg



Pelican Island Audubon's March 15 general meeting on Zoom starting at 7PM features Diane Goldberg presenting *Butterflies and Birds in Your Yard*. She will be discussing using native plants to bring wildlife to your garden while helping to slow climate change plus includes ways to keep our waterways clean.

Diane Goldberg is the Conservation Chair for the St. Lucie County Audubon Society, and a certified Master Naturalist and Master Gardener. She also served as an officer for the St. Lucie County chapter of the Native Plant Society and has audited a Florida native plant class from Sandra Wilson at the University of Florida plus took an on-line native class from George Rogers, a now retired teacher from Palm Beach College. Diane is a graduate of

**Field Trips** visit [PelicanIslandAudubon.org](http://PelicanIslandAudubon.org) for more information and to register

March 3 - Wed - 6AM - Three Lakes WMA & Joe Overstreet Landing - Guide: Ricky Ray

March 25 - Thu - 6AM - Wakodahatchee Wetlands & Green Cay - Guide: Bill Loftus

*Registration required for all field trips. Space is limited.*

Barry University with a bachelor's degree in profession studies. She has long been active with the Conservation Alliance of St Lucie County, and along with amateur botanist John Bradford, helped to survey the diverse native flora species at the former Halpatiokee Buffer Preserve in Port St. Lucie where she assisted park rangers in moving endangered bromeliads.

Register for Pelican Island Audubon's March 15, 2021 Zoom meeting starting at 7:00PM at [PelicanIslandAudubon.org](http://PelicanIslandAudubon.org).



Dragonfly at Audubon House  
© Bob Montanaro

## Wills and Living Trusts

Many people like to leave a gift to charity in their will or revocable trust, because it is a way to plan for a significant contribution, even if you feel that the time is not right for one today. A charitable gift through your will or trust can factor in your current lifestyle and commitments, and at the same time, ensure future support for Pelican Island Audubon and the birds you value.

### Including a Bequest in Your Will or Trust

The language below provides a template for including a gift to Pelican Island Audubon in your will. Please contact Pelican Island Audubon for more information. You may also wish to consult with your attorney.

### How to Say It

I bequeath \_\_\_\_\_  
(*dollar amount or percent of estate*) to the Pelican Island Audubon Society, Inc., a not-for-profit organization, with its principal offices located at 195 9th Street SE (Oslo Road), Vero Beach, FL 32961, for its ongoing environmental conservation and education purposes.  
Tax ID# 59-6197617.

## Go Green!

Members may sign up to have the Peligram emailed to them. Saves postage and paper. Email [piaudubon@yahoo.com](mailto:piaudubon@yahoo.com) with your name & email address with "Peligram" in the subject line.



### Pelican Island Audubon Society Membership Form

_____	Enclosed is my:
NAME	\$_____ \$25 for annual membership
_____	\$_____ \$30 for family membership
ADDRESS	\$_____ \$100 Scrub-Jay sustaining membership
_____	\$_____ \$200 Osprey sustaining membership
CITY, STATE ZIP	\$_____ contribution
_____	\$_____ TOTAL
E-MAIL	Please mail this completed form with a check made out to:
	Pelican Island Audubon Society
	P.O. Box 1833
	Vero Beach, FL 32961
	Or join online using a credit card at <a href="http://www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org">www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org</a>