



Peligrum

January
2021



Common Yellowthroat Playing in the Pickerel Weed © Logan Peralta 10

On the cover

Common Yellowthroat Playing in the Pickerel Weed

© Logan Peralta 10 Family: *Parulidae* (new world warblers), *Geothlypis trichas*

by *Juanita N. Baker, Ph.D.*

Common Yellowthroats are one of our most common warblers in North and Central America, in all continental states including Alaska and Canadian Provinces except the farthest northern province, Nunavut. They breed and the females build cup-like nests at the end of April-June in Florida amongst sedges, reeds, and grasses on or near the ground. The surrounding plants like these wider-leaved aging Pickerel provide concealment from predators and protection from the sun. Both parents search for insects to feed the young when first hatching. In our Indian River County according to eBird.org data, there are fewer sightings and some scattered weeks with no sightings during July-August after breeding season. Perhaps our birdwatchers are less likely to get out during those hot months! The Yellowthroats' twitchy-twitchy-twitch song and various flight, chatter, excited, or "Teek" calls alert us to its lurking amongst the tall vegetation or you might catch a glimpse or hear movement noises of this small bird amongst the reeds.

We can tell the age of juveniles and season of molt, especially knowing the month when the bird is viewed. Observe carefully as males and females differ: the black mask wearer with top white edge and forehead is the adult male but no eye-ring with brighter, larger yellow throat and yellow under the tail and olive brown back and tail. The female has no mask, a slight buffy eye-ring, yellow throat and undertail coverts, and similar ochre color breast and light olive-brown back. First-month immatures are more brownish all over, with no yellow. However, this yellowthroat in Logan Peralta's photo taken in October has somewhat of a mask, so it must be male. But the mask is just growing, with greyish forehead and only a hint of white forming on the top edge of its mask. Its bill is not black. Thus, this is a Juvenile Male and will likely be fully mature to mate by the following spring. When identifying birds, look for their species' key features!

Submit your photos to the Birds Need Plants Photo Contest

Visit PelicanIslandAudubon.org for all the details.

Native Plants For Sale

Pelican Island Audubon is offering native plants 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

Beach (or Golden)-creeper	Coffee, Shiny Leaf	Florida Privet
Beautyberry, American	Coontie/Arrowroot	Frogfruit
Black-eyed Susan	Coral Honeysuckle	Goldenrod, Seaside
Blanketflower	Coreopsis, Lanceleaf	Horsemint
Blazing Star	Coreopsis, Leavenworth's	Lopsided Indiangrass
Blue-eyed Grass	Cross Vine	Porterweed, Blue
Broomsedge/Bluestem	Dune Sunflower	Purple Lovegrass
Buttonbush	Elliott's Lovegrass	Railroad Vine
Cabbage Palm	Fakahatchee Grass	Sea Oats
Cardinalflower	Firebush	Sea-Oxeye Daisy
Coastal Salt Grass	FL Gamagrass/Dwarf	Seagrape
Coffee, Satin Leaf	Fakahatchee	Shoreline Sea-Purslane

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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Audubon House

195 9th Street SE (Oslo Rd.), Vero Beach

M - F | 9AM - 1PM

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

Phone: 772-567-3520

E-Mail: piaudubon@yahoo.com

Website:

www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org



Order online at

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Simpson's Stopper
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Stokes Aster
Swamp Hibiscus
Tropical Salvia/Red Tropical Sage
Wax Myrtle
White Indigo Berry
Wiregrass

Plants subject to availability.

Lead Pollution in the St. Sebastian River

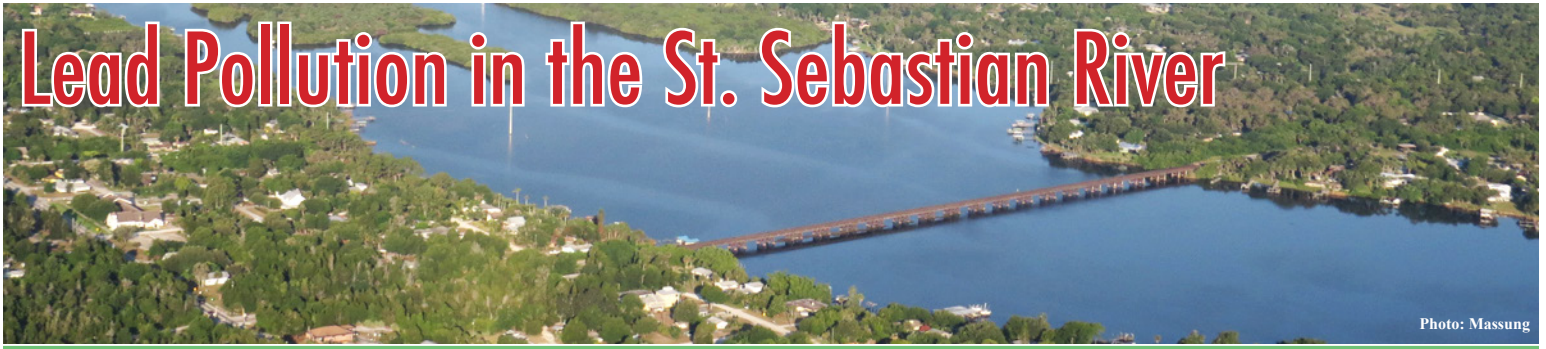


Photo: Massung

by Bruce Sabol

Several years ago a boater on the St. Sebastian River was passing under the old railroad bridge at the exact moment a freight train was crossing the bridge. Heavy blackish flakes were falling onto the deck. Curious about this, the boater sent these flakes to a chemist friend who ran an analytical laboratory. The chemist found that the flakes were almost 11% lead. This is a huge concentration for this toxic heavy metal. The boater dutifully reported this to the EPA's online environmental violations reporting website¹, but no response was ever received.



I recently heard this story and wondered how much lead had fallen into the river. This can be approximated if we know or can estimate painted area of bridge, density of paint flakes, lead concentration in flakes, and portion of painted area which has flaked off. These were determined and multiplied together yielding an estimated 1700 lbs. of lead having fallen into the river. A document was prepared describing this calculation procedure and its results and sent to the Ombudsman at Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Central District.

After an initially dismissive response and a rebuttal, a DEP survey team from the Compliance Assurance Program conducted a site visit and collected samples. They identified a "potential non-compliance item" and sent a warning letter to the FEC Railroad. No response was received. Since then laboratory results² from the DEP's site survey showed that lead leached from paint chips exceeded the allowable limit³ by 30 times. As a result DEP is pursuing "further assessment and examining cleanup actions that may need to be performed".

This is moving in the right direction, although slowly. The St. Sebastian River railroad bridge is currently being replaced with a new bridge for the high speed passenger train planned to be in operation by 2022. While removing old steel will cut off the

source of flaking lead, handling the old structure may generate lead-containing dust and accelerate flaking. There are several important points:

- Lead is a bad actor. In humans lead is known to cause nervous system damage, stunted growth, and kidney damage. It is most known for causing cognitive problems in children. In aquatic environments it can be toxic to organisms. It's illegal to discharge lead into the water.
- In accordance with the law, if I dumped 1,700 pounds of lead into the river I'd be subject to fines and potential imprisonment. Using lead-based anticorrosive paint was just standard practice of the time it was built in 1929. Growing recognition of lead's toxicity has led to legislation limiting lead in paints intended for household use to 0.009%. Industrial anticorrosion paints have no such restrictions. We look forward to seeing the DEP's cleanup plan. Certainly removal of the old bridge, source of the lead, is one obvious step. Perhaps a forward looking perspective would be useful. What paint formulation will be used for the steel on the new bridge? Can we be assured that we won't face this same problem in future decades? We do not currently have the answer for this but are pursuing it.
- This lead problem is not unique to our bridge. There are many old iron bridges, protected by the same type of lead-based paint, over water bodies throughout Florida and the nation. So look at the bridges in your area to determine if these bridges might similarly be polluting their waters with lead. If that is so, contact Florida DEP or other local environmental enforcement agency.



¹ <http://www2.epa.gov/enforcement/report-environmental-violations>

²EPA method 1331/7000B

³Resource Conservation and Recovery Act

New Year's Resolutions for our County and City Governments

by Richard H. Baker, Ph.D., *The President's Hoot*

While many folks showed up at an Indian River County Commission to decide on a mandate to wear a face mask or not, only 4 non-staff folks showed up to hear the very important Research Review Phase of the Indian River County Lagoon Management Plan-Update 2 and what has and should be done by the county to improve Lagoon management.



Audubon Advocates watching and photographing Sandhill Cranes back in the days when the levees were well managed.

This County Review provides basic information and analysis concerning the lagoon. The update focused on mangroves, spoil islands and their importance to bird populations and species of concern within the County's portion of the Indian River Lagoon (IRL). Removing discarded fishing line was highlighted as critically important. Fishing line kills thousands of birds and other animals, while many birds also die from fishhooks. Animals die from ingesting lead sinkers, which also contaminates the water.

We urge the county and our city governments to consider these very critical resolutions to save our Lagoon in 2021:

#1. Health and Tourist Problem: Boaters and campers are leaving trash and human poop with much toilet paper, thereby degrading our Lagoon Recreational and Conservation Spoil Islands: see DSC_3681.jpg. Solution:

1. For maximum control, require camping permits as is done in many national parks, and BLM backcountry areas. Regulation and educational pamphlets are distributed to permit holders who are required to carry out all

refuse, including their human waste.

- 2. Encourage the IRL Aquatic Preserves to install porta potties** on the most used recreational spoil islands as in the Everglades, and have a weekly inspection and sewage removal in consultation with the County Health Dept.
- 3. Install Signs on the islands** to remind visitors about the rules of leaving no trace.
- 4. Regular monitoring** by water rangers and volunteers to educate the public about the rules.

#2. Decrease the amount of stormwater permitted to leave suburban developments and institute a tighter low-impact development policy.

#3. Initiate 21st Century wastewater treatment options that produce usable biproducts from our human waste: potable water, transportable N & P, fertilizer, electricity and no biosolids! Stop sending human waste, poop (called by some "biosolids) to our county dump.

#4. Require all cities' septic tanks to attach via the hybrid system to existing sewage pipes. Require a certification of septic tank cleaning every 3 years for everyone not on sewer system. Septic Tanks are nothing but glorified outhouses.

#5. Require and enforce no turf grass within 10 ft of all ponds and seawalls, and only place native plants and trees along the edge both in and out of the water. Install islands as refuges for wildlife in



Abandoned levees full of tall plants and fire ants.

large development ponds. These would be attractive to residents and enhance their quality of life.

#6. Support the 0.10 millage increase in *ad valorem* rates for the St. Johns River Water Management District to help restore our Lagoon, which will cost \$4.6 billion.

#7. Stop chemical spraying in our canals. More and more research data show that the chemicals are harmful to humans and wildlife. Use hand cutting and mechanical harvesting methods (which will employ citizens and reduce health costs from toxic sprays). Recover the cut weeds; do not allow them to contribute to the much and the P and N loads in The St. Sebastian River and IRL.



Abandoned boardwalk

#8. Restore the West Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility Wetlands at 8405 8th St. and rename it Indian River County Wetlands Park. Restore it to be bird and birder-friendly site that has brought in many tourist dollars and visitors to our county. People from out of state and around Florida came to the wetlands to easily view and photograph 170+ bird species that comprise the real Florida's amazing wildlife. No longer. Apparently, due to treated water release into the adjacent canals during heavy rainfalls and getting money for reuse water to water turf lawns and golf courses, the wetlands have been generally abandoned. The wastewater is put through the treatment plant directly where only chemical cleaning of the water is mostly done instead of having the water flow through the beautifully created wetlands that cleaned the water as well as providing outstanding habitat for native wildlife and birds. This recreational facility serves not only for wildlife viewing but for exercise and peaceful meditation too. Rare Snail Kites, rails, and other water birds had made it their home.

Since the ponds are now overgrown with cattails, bulrush, exotic water hyacinth and other invasive plants and the levees are not mowed and full of fire ants, making easy walking and exercise impossible (see photos) and difficult to see the birds and wildlife, and safely walk the levees, our 5th grade Audubon Advocates and adult field trips have been cancelled. The county has abdicated its responsibility in maintaining this location for

visitors and is wasting an opportunity to develop the site into a world-class nature attraction as have other nearby counties (see below).

Additional land has been purchased by the county south of this facility but is not discussed in much detail in the report. A major tourist attraction could be designed and built linking the expanded lands and revitalization of the existing wetlands. This would attract nature enthusiasts worldwide and provide an economic boost to the western county. The nearly 300 acres south of the facilities could be used to handle any excess storm and treated water. **Outstanding examples of the contributions to their communities are Green Cay Nature Center and Wetlands and Wakodahatchee Wetlands in Palm Beach County, Viera**

South Central Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility in Brevard County, and Sweetwater Wetlands Park in Alachua County. These multi-use sites demonstrate how to handle stormwater and clean wastewater while providing recreation and education for the visiting public. Our county needs some vision and leadership to make this happen here.

#9. Update our landscape and tree ordinances to allow only 50% or less turf grass and stop clear cutting new homesites of all trees. Turf is our most irrigated, non-native invasive crop in U.S. - 3X more acreage than corn! No one eats it! Primary purpose is to makes us look and feel good! Per year, the American lawn uses 800 million gallons of gas for lawn equipment, emits 41 Billion lbs. CO2 from blowers & mowers, produces 13 billion lbs. of toxic & carcinogenic air pollutants, 100 million lbs. of pernicious lawn chemicals & fertilizers, and \$45 billion in Lawn Care. It is cheaper to pay people not to have a lawn which would benefit our native wildlife (see below).

#10. Establish a "Turf-Swap" Program. Copy Alachua County's "Turf Swap" program where they offer a 50% rebate up to \$1,500 to SWAP out a portion of homeowners irrigated turf and replace it with water-conserving Florida Friendly Landscaping to reduce outdoor water use in existing landscapes. **In Florida, 64% of drinking water goes to irrigation (In summer 88%).**

Volunteers Needed!

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

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

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Our Peligram newsletter reaches over 900 people!
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whole new audience at the rates quoted below.

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Business Card Size (3.5"x2") = \$30

1/4 page (3.75"x2.5") = \$85

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Special discount: Less 5% for nine issues

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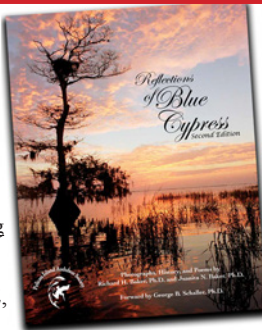
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More Than Once

by Linda Chancellor

It was late November when I visited the Indian River State College Brackett Library. As I pulled into the parking lot I saw several medium size birds standing on the asphalt between the parking stops and the grassy strips. They were Killdeer! Killdeer are so dapper looking with their brown head and upperparts, white eyebrow and two black bands on a white breast. It had been years since I had seen killdeer. I used to see them in the pasture next to my development but once the owner started rotating horses and cows in the pasture I never saw them again. I drove slowly through the parking lot and counted nine killdeer. Of course when I returned home I entered the sighting on my eBird. I went back a week later and counted fifteen. Male and female killdeer look alike so I couldn't determine the sexes. There were several birds in each row between the stops and the grass. The second week in December I returned to the parking area after a night of low 40 degree temperatures and I counted twenty-two killdeer. I returned the next day after still another night of cold temperatures and I again counted twenty-two birds. This time they were spaced out in different parts of the parking lot with just a few standing in the grass. When they ran their legs moved quickly like a sandpiper. Then something startled a group of seven and they lifted up revealing their brown wings marked with black and white and issued a high shrill call. Several days later I returned but this time there had been a drizzle all day long. I only managed to count nine of them. I intend to return next week to make another count.

FYI - Killdeer are considered shorebirds but are often found far from water. They also like urban settings with large grassy areas. It is the only plover with a double ring collar.

Can Birding enhance your quality of life?

by Bill Loftus, Ph.D.

We've all had a difficult year because of the pandemic. However, many people have found a release from the stresses of economic hardship, isolation and confinement indoors by pursuing outdoor activities. As members of an Audubon chapter, we know the pleasures of being outside and watching birds in beautiful places. We are able to socialize with fellow birders at a distance while getting some much-needed exercise and fresh air. Those factors combine to give us a sense of well-being. Now, science has confirmed that the presence of birds adds to our quality of life.

The beneficial effects of nature's diversity on human mental health have already been documented by studies at small scales. However, German scientists recently used data from the "2012 European quality of Life Survey" to examine the connection between the life satisfaction of more than 26,000 adults from 26 countries and the diversity of birds where they lived.* They discovered that the happiest Europeans were those who could experience many different bird species in their daily lives, or who lived in near-natural surroundings that were home to many avian species. The appearance of many bird species, their songs and the natural beauty of the habitats in which they live contributed to the enjoyment of the people interviewed. To the surprise of the scientists, they learned that avian diversity was as important to the satisfaction of the people as was their income! The scientists concluded that the conservation of nature not only ensures our material basis of life but also is an investment in everyone's well-being. Perhaps we need a similar study here in the United States! Regardless, the message is clear: humans need the connection to nature for our mental and physical well-being. So, watch the birds at your feeder, get outdoors, bird with your friends and fight off the pandemic blues!

* Web link to original paper:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0921800920322084>

Intensive Beginning Birding Course

Instructors: Juanita Baker, Ph.D. and David Simpson

Class will be held online using the Zoom webinar format

Intensive Class Schedule 2021

Four evening class sessions from 6:00 – 8:30 PM

Tuesday, February 09

Thursday, February 11

Tuesday, February 23

Thursday, February 25

Intensive Birding Class Field Trip Schedule

Saturday, February 13 from 7:00 AM to 12:00 pm – Sebastian Inlet State Park & Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge

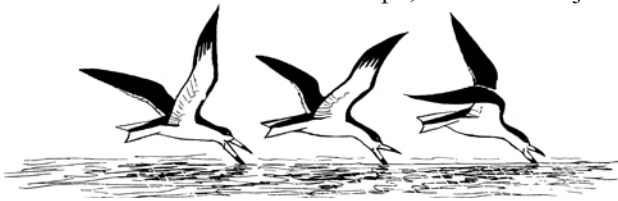
Saturday, February 27 from 7:00 AM to 1:00 pm – Stick Marsh area

You will see and identify over 75 bird species.

Intensive Birding Course Field Trip Details

Two Field Trips to Special Places: We will arrange to have 1 guide for each group of 5 trainees. Everyone must wear masks, ride in your own family vehicle and meet with your group of 5 and your guide at the two locations all outdoors with 6 foot social distancing. Bring your own binoculars although request PIAS binoculars if you wish to borrow a pair. They will have been wiped clean. Your guide might set up the scope for viewing and focus it on a bird to share the ID. Take turns, viewing and do not touch the scope. If the bird walked/flew out of the scope, and needs adjusting, then request the guide to move it.

Sign up limited to Pelican Island Audubon Society members only



Visit

[PelicanIsland Audubon.org](https://www.pelicanislandaudubon.org)

for details, fees, and to register

Jan. 18, 2021 General Meeting on Zoom: Climate Change: Changing Our Birds and Everything Else with Dr. Terry Root



Pelican Island Audubon hosts Terry L. Root, Senior Fellow at the Stanford University Woods Institute for the Environment presenting a program on climate change on Monday, January 18, 2021 starting at 7PM on Zoom. Dr. Root primarily works on how wild animals and plants are changing with climate change, with a current focus on the possible mass extinction of species

with warming. She actively works at making scientific information accessible to decision makers and the public.

Register for the meeting by visiting PelicanIslandAudubon.org and providing your name, e-mail address, and mailing address. You do not have to be a member of Pelican Island Audubon to attend.

Field Trips visit PelicanIslandAudubon.org for more information and to register

Jan. 9 - Sat.- 8AM - Osprey Acres with Bill Loftus

Jan. 17 - Sun. - 7:15AM - Birding & Bicycling at T.M. Goodwin Waterfowl Management Area with Steve Goff

Jan 24 - Sun - 6AM - Orlando Wetlands Park with Bill Loftus

Feb. 17 - Wed. - 7AM - Circle B Bar Reserve with Steve Palmquist

Feb. 20 - Sat - 7AM - Fort Drum with George Glenn

Registration required for all field trips. Space is limited.



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nature store at
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for environmentally-
themed gifts



Florida Scrub-Jay
© Bob Montano

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
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and education purposes.

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Members may sign up to have the Peligram emailed to them. Saves postage and paper. Email 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:
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	Or join online using a credit card at www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org