



Peligrum

March
2025



Female Blue Grosbeak at Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge. Photo by Will Johnson



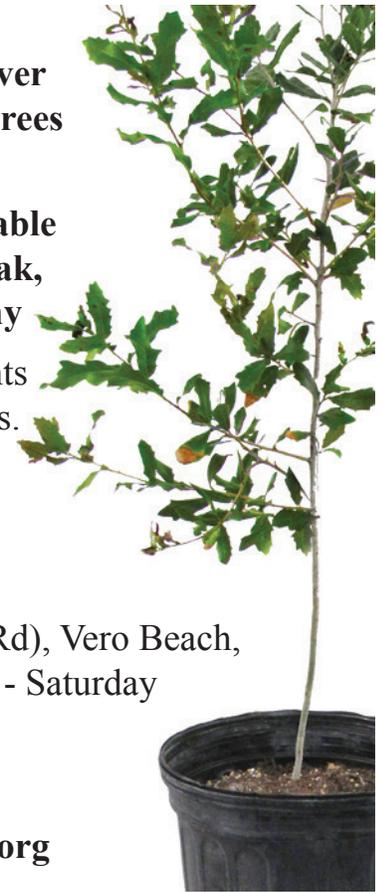
RiverKidz is a nature club that meets twice a month for the **WHOLE** family to enjoy. Our meetups consist of guest speakers, field trips, educational activities, service activities, kayaking, and more! If you ever wanted to be involved in helping your environment or you just want to explore the outdoors more, this is the group to join. **For more info, email piaudubonedu@gmail.com**

- 3/8 - Cleanup at Wabasso Causeway - 10am-12pm for the whole family 1pm to 3pm for teens
- 3/22 - Nature Journaling Workshop - 10am-12pm for the whole family 1pm to 3pm for teens
- 4/12 - 10am to 12pm - The Great Florida Eggscursion @ IG Center (Event for the whole family)
- 4/12 - 1pm to 3pm - TEEN RIVER KIDZ - Chill out zone - an afternoon of Lego building, puzzle building, and game play
- 4/26 - Hike - Osprey Acres - 10am-12pm for the whole family 1pm to 3pm for teens
- 5/10 - Recycled Crafting - 10am-12pm for the whole family 1pm to 3pm for teens
- 5/24 - Kayaking @ Round Island - 10am-12pm for the whole family 1pm to 3pm for teens

Stop by and browse the native plant nursery - over 28,000 native plants & trees distributed so far!

Free Native Trees Available in 1 gallon pots: Live Oak, Bald Cypress, Mahogany

A selection of native plants are available at low prices.



Audubon House

195 9th Street SE (Oslo Rd), Vero Beach, on Monday - Wednesday - Saturday from 9AM to 11AM

More at PelicanIslandAudubon.org

FIELD TRIPS

Space is limited. Registration is required. For more information & to register visit PelicanIslandAudubon.org

- March 2 - Fort Drum Marsh Conservation Area with George Glenn
- March 17 Wakodahatchee & Green Cay Wetlands with Bill & Becky Loftus
- March 18 Sebastian Inlet State Park with Steve Palmquist
- March 20 Joe Overstreet Landing with Lani York
- April 2 Wakodahatchee & Green Cay Wetlands with Susan Drew and Lani York
- April 10 St. Sebastian River Preserve State Park with Lani York

Tuesday Morning Hikes with Leader Ricky Ray

Various locations – Meeting at 7:00 a.m. at IHOP [westside] 88th Avenue & Route 60 – All levels welcome – For more information call/text: 928-853-9654 – Snacks, water, binoculars, and bug spray is recommended. No registration required.

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.

Executive Director **Donna Halleran**
Environmental Educator **Jennifer Satterly**
Office Manager **Bob Montanaro**

Officers & Directors

Officers
Board Chair **Richard H. Baker, Ph.D.**
1st Vice-Chair **Bill Halliday**

2nd Vice-Chair **Steve Palmquist**
Recording Secretary **Darlene Halliday**
Corresponding Secretary **OPEN**
Treasurer **Steve Goff**
Elected Directors:
Albert Alley, M.D. '26
Susan Lovelace '25
Bill Loftus, Ph.D. '27
Ricky Ray '25
Bonnie Swanson '27
Appointed Board Members:
Judy Davis
Nancy Irvin
William Johnson
Nick Polge
Hadi Shalhoub, D.O.



Join Pelican Island Audubon's trip to the Birder's Paradise Costa Rica

February 19 - March 1, 2026

Embark on a comprehensive excursion perfect for avid birders led by an expert Costa Rican birding guide. Visit hotspots encompassing a variety of habitats—such as Caribbean lowlands and Arenal Volcano. where you'll look for sought-after residents and experience the breadth and depth of the country's diverse natural beauty. **Holbrook Travel - Limited to 8 participants - Enrollment opens in March 2025.**

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
Website:
www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org

Poison in the Indian River Lagoon:

This is the sixth of six articles that started in the June 2024 Peligram.

Immediate Action needed to save the Lagoon

by Michael Walther, M.S., P.E.



There's hope! In 2024, via Senate Bill 1638, the Florida Legislature recognized:

- ◆ “the conservation and preservation of the land and water resources” of Florida “are essential to maintaining the quality of life enjoyed by Floridians and to sustaining and growing a thriving state economy, including ...tourism, agriculture, and fishing”;
- ◆ “the need for additional revenue sources to address the gap in funding that is necessary to address water quality impacts, and that the projections for significant population growth further exacerbate such need;”
- ◆ dedicated “revenues from the gaming compact between the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the State of Florida” for conservation lands, ...resiliency efforts, and clean water infrastructure” – including some funding for the FDEP Water Quality Improvement Grant Program, which prioritizes projects that have a cost-share by the local government applicant.

In March 2024, the City of Vero Beach adopted mandates for connections to the City's sewer systems by June 2028; the City also reaffirmed the City's seasonal fertilizer restrictions to avoid nutrient runoff that fuels algae blooms. In addition, the City is planning a new state-of-the-art wastewater treatment plant that will significantly reduce nutrient concentrations in the effluent discharged from the plant as compared to the existing plant. Indian River County is staged to engage a consultant to develop an Integrated Water Master Plan (IWIP) for the County's water, wastewater, and reuse utility systems over a 20-year planning horizon. The IWIP will update, replace, and expand upon the County's Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Evaluation & Appraisal of the County's Comprehensive Plan Lagoon Management Plan, Strategic Plan updates, Evaluation of the Urban Service Area (USA) Boundary, Stormwater Master Plan, Vulnerability Assessment, and an Economic Development Plan.

These progressive efforts by state and local governments clearly warrant public support. However, these efforts are not enough. Additional efforts are warranted to offset the Lagoon poisoning effects of septic tanks, agriculture, and stormwater. To ensure that these public efforts are effective or warrant modification, hydrological and water quality monitoring is critical to assessing performance of efforts, determining appropriate future efforts, and ultimately to restoration of the Lagoon.

The creation of the drainage canal system in Indian River County literally “drained the swamps” west of the coastal ridge, altered the hydrology of the County, and allowed for the development of the lands where most County residents live and work. Our existence directly poisons the Lagoon with the pollutants we add to our environment. It would be a disaster to our quality of life and our property values – if the Lagoon became a “dead body of water”. It will be expensive to fix the Lagoon; it will require significant public investment to improve all our water resources infrastructure to sufficiently reduce the poisons we discharge into the Lagoon.

All of us are responsible for the Lagoon's historical decline and the cost to restore the Lagoon. Each of us can:

- manage our homes and property to minimize our pollutant contributions, and
- actively encourage our local, state, and federal elected officials to appropriate sufficient funds to reliably restore all County water resources and save the Indian River Lagoon.

Mockingbird Scuffle

by Linda Chancellor

I tend to think of mockingbirds as the bullies in my backyard. They are always flying in to claim the birdbaths scaring off cardinals and even blue jays. But when necessary they will also display behavior to intimidate each other as I observed on several occasions. I have seen two mockingbirds, perched on my fence, approach each other and then move back and forth toward each other until one would acknowledge defeat and fly away. But one of the best displays I have observed was when one morning two mockingbirds alighted on top of the pool screen and stood less than twelve inches apart. One appeared to be an adult male of typical coloring and the other was a smaller, lighter colored bird –probably a juvenile. The two took up their positions opposite each other. One would hop to the left and the other would match his steps by hopping to the right thus again facing each other. Then the first one hopped to his right and the smaller one would hop to his left but with more spring in his step. Their movements reminded me of a pair of boxers sparring in the ring. And since boxers have names I named the darker feathered one Rocky and the other smaller, feistier one Cocky. I continued to watch them for several minutes as they continued these movements. But then their stances changed. The new movements involved Rocky stepping forward several steps thus making Cocky step backwards but then they reversed their steps. They matched each other step for step. Several minutes passed before they decided to end the display and call it a draw. But I had the feeling that this challenge had not been settled and I would see them again another day.

Mockingbird by Bob Montanaro.



FYI- Mockingbirds as well as other birds display different behaviors for different reasons. There are behaviors displays for mating, defending a nest and defending one's boundaries. Mockingbirds establish boundaries that are around 400 meters. This may depend on the availability of water, food and suitable nesting areas and they will aggressively defend it.

Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge Nature Beauties

Our First Refuge and Namesake

My Hoot

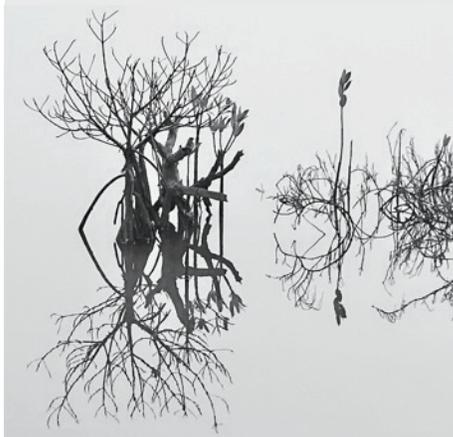


Happy Anniversary Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge. On March 14, 1903, encouraged by Frank Chapman and the Florida Audubon Society, President Theodore Roosevelt declared Pelican Island in the Indian River Lagoon as the first National Wildlife Refuge. To protect it and other wildlife areas, local conservationists named our Audubon chapter, Pelican Island Audubon Society.

Wow! What a great field trip on February 8th PIAS had to the Refuge, led by one of our best birders, Will Johnson, new PIAS board member and eBird.org authenticator. Will started birding when he was seven. We saw 42 species, including a female Blue Grosbeak uniquely found in Florida this time of year, which are usually now wintering in Central America <https://ebird.org/checklist/S212493339>. See photo on cover taken by Will.



It was a foggy morning with little breeze at Joe's Overlook on the Joe Michael Memorial Trail where we saw this Blue Grosbeak. Also, at Joe's Overlook, the beautiful "sculptures" of former plants and their reflection on the water were seen. I took some photos of these sculptures and their reflections on the water. Trees are beautiful even if dead.





Another artistic natural sculpture with a Strangler Fig on the trunk of a Cabbage Palm, at entrance to the Centennial Trail.



View a gallery of wildlife images by Bob Montanaro from the February 19, 2025 Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge tram tour led by refuge volunteers Dick & Lorna Thibeault at <https://rangetracking.com/2025/02/21/pinwr-tram-tour-wildlife/>



UNDERSTAND YOUR SOILS

Hamilton Freeman, a certified master gardener and organic landscaper, will discuss the need to understand your soils to achieve successful lawns and gardens. His discussion of soil structure and soil biology will give you a new perspective on how to approach the health of your lawns and gardens.

Wednesday, March 26, 2025 starting at 9:00AM

Audubon House

195 9th Street SE (Oslo Rd), Vero Beach - Free - No registration required

March 10, 2025 Meeting

6:00 P.M. - North County Library

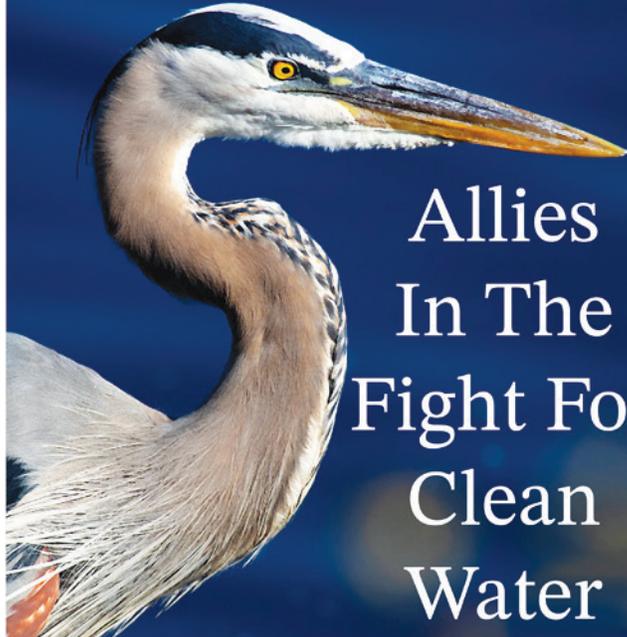
1001 Sebastian Blvd. (CR 512), Sebastian

March 24, 2025 Meeting

7:00 P.M. - Vero Beach Community Center

2266 14th Avenue, Vero Beach

This activity is not sponsored by the City of Vero Beach.



Gil Smart
Executive Director
VoteWater

**Allies
In The
Fight For
Clean
Water**



**Birding
Ecuador**

with
**Becky Loftus
&
Dick Thibeault**

Birding Graduates

The graduates of Pelican Island Audubon's Advanced Birding Class taught by Alexis Peralta show off their completion certificates at the end of the course in February 2025.



Photo: Alexis Peralta

Audubon Advocate Happenings

by Jennifer Satterly

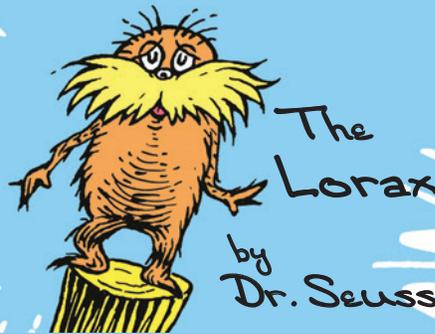
Environmental Educator

Our new semester of Audubon Advocates has started! The new advocates are prepared for the adventures we will embark on, and everyone is excited about the fun that awaits us.

We started this semester with Susan Lovelace teaching the Observations and Nature Journaling class. Susan does an excellent job guiding the kids through a nature journal experience step by step. She teaches them the three main steps of nature journaling: noticing everything around them, wondering about those observations, and allowing those reflections to connect with past experiences. When focusing on the “I notice” part, Susan has the kids really engage with the strawberry using all five senses. First, they look at their strawberries for a minute and a half, noting everything they see. The students commented that the strawberry is red, has green leaves, is hairy, has many seeds, has white parts, and so much more. Next, they explore the texture by touching it, discovering that the strawberry feels bumpy, cold, wet, squishy, rubbery, and fuzzy on the leaves. The next part involves listening to the strawberries, which can be quite amusing since strawberries don’t make noise, but this encourages the kids to stretch their imaginations. Watching the students’ reactions when told to listen to a strawberry is fun. Some heard crackling; others heard the leaves rustle when they shook it; some even heard juice noises when they squeezed it, and a few heard nothing. They then moved on to smell the strawberries, with the rule that they couldn’t say it smelled like a strawberry. They described the aroma as sweet, sour, natural, candy-like, grassy, and fruity. Finally, they tasted their strawberries, which is always the best part. Again, they were instructed not to say it tasted like a strawberry. The kids eagerly devoured their strawberries, with some even trying the leaves. Their descriptions included juicy, sweet, sour, bitter, crunchy seeds, tangy, delicious, and fruity.

After finishing, they shifted to the curiosity segment, where they reflected on all they had observed about their strawberries and formed three questions. Some students wondered if strawberries would taste different if grown in various locations, others questioned why they are red or why the seeds are on the outside, and a few even speculated about

how the first strawberry came to be. Ultimately, the students were encouraged to feel a bit nostalgic by considering what the strawberries reminded them of. One student said it reminded them of childhood, another mentioned a sunset, and one expressed feelings of anger. All of their responses were creative and enjoyable. Now that they grasped the activity, we provided them with their own journals to keep and use at home, but first, we gave them a chance to explore the woods at the Audubon House to practice their very first nature journal entry following the process we had just learned. When we called them back, the students were asked to share what they had journaled about with a partner at their table. They excitedly exchanged their observations, questions, and what the strawberries reminded them of. Hopefully, this will spark their interest in continuing their nature journaling at home.



Our second class of the semester, *The Lorax* and the Lagoon, is a new addition to our Advocate program, taught by Heather Stapleton from the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program. Heather begins the class by reading *The Lorax* to the students. After finishing the story, she initiates a discussion with the kids by asking what happened in the book.

After someone gives a quick overview of the book, Heather discusses the Onceler and his actions, questioning whether they were good or bad. She notes that the Onceler aimed to do good things, created a product with many uses, provided jobs for his family, and earned money, which everyone needs. Heather then asks what the Onceler could have done differently to help the environment while still producing Thneeds. The kids come up with various suggestions. He could have used the tufts without cutting down entire trees. He could use fewer trees. He could filter the chemicals emitted from the factory into the air and water. He could employ someone to plant trees while cutting others down. Heather points out that the person planting seeds would

need to be paid, prompting the question of how the Onceler could cover that cost. The students propose ideas such as charging \$5 for Thneeds instead of \$3.98 or using the remainder of the trees to create and sell other items for additional income. The ideas flow freely from the kids. After exploring the Onceler’s actions and possible alternatives, Heather guides the kids to consider The Lorax and his role in the story. She explains that The Lorax is an advocate for the trees and animals, trying to stand up for them, especially since they lack a voice. She discusses how they are all now advocates and highlights the importance of thinking about how to advocate for causes. She asks whether *The Lorax* effectively advocated.

The kids realize that while The Lorax aimed to do good, he could have approached the situation without shaming, yelling, or getting angry, ultimately removing himself from the conflict. They suggest that The Lorax could have connected the Onceler to nature, encouraging him to care about it. He could have educated the Onceler on how he harmed nature and offered suggestions on how to replace the trees he cut down. Overall, the students believe The Lorax could have handled the situation more kindly. They agree that they dislike being yelled at, bossed around, or having fingers pointed at them. Following this discussion, Heather transitions into a presentation about their Lagoon, explaining that although *The Lorax* is fictional, it relates to real environmental issues, particularly regarding The Indian River Lagoon. She spends the remainder of the class teaching the students about The Indian River Lagoon’s wonders and the challenges it faces. She explains how actions on land can impact the Lagoon and emphasizes that it’s their responsibility to advocate for it and create change. The kids learn that something as simple as picking up dog waste can significantly affect The Lagoon.

After the presentation, participants are encouraged to pledge what they can do to help the Indian River Lagoon. Some commit to picking up their dog’s waste, others promise to use less plastic, a few vow to utilize reusable water bottles or bags, and many other ideas are shared as well. The open discussions among the kids in this class were inspiring to hear. Children have incredible imaginations and can generate amazing ideas for helping. This class is a wonderful addition to our program, and we are very thankful for our partners in this initiative.

Adopt an Advocate! Please help support our 14-week outdoor science, after-school Audubon Advocates program, which focuses each year on 5th graders from four underserved elementary schools.

Goal: Improve science vocabulary, mental health, and opportunities for under-represented minorities and girls to be comfortable outdoors and become Environmental Advocates for Indian River County.

Focus: Introduce students to outdoor, hands-on Lagoon science, help them understand the interconnectedness of life and the value of all native species, and help them be good stewards of the environment.

The environmental educator takes students outdoors into nature to kayak, photograph, sketch, meet a variety of scientists in the field, familiarize themselves with scientific methods, collect specimens, document their

experiences, and educate others at school and their parents, family, and friends. While learning “leave no trace & earth manners.”

Results: Educated, healthier, empowered students; new aspirations and possibilities for underrepresented students; and, over time, a healthier Lagoon.

It will be transformative for the students, their parents, our community, and our environment—and for you as a sponsor!

Please Adopt an Advocate: Do Something Extraordinary! \$500 Supports One 5th Grader per term, or consider giving what you can.

Help fund one or more students to attend our 14-week after-school program at Audubon House. Thank you!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

My check is enclosed. Make check payable to Pelican Island Audubon Society, or donate online at PelicanIslandAudubon.org

1 Student \$500 any amount

(Please check) if you would like an update on your sponsored student.

Pelican Island Audubon Society is looking for Volunteers to help in the following areas:

- **Native Gardens – Help watering plants and/or selling plants**
- **Bird Walks – Lead walks - Kayak Tours – Lead tours**
- **Outreach – Help with events such as Festivals, Landscape Conference, help with movie nights, greeting people at monthly meetings**
- **Teaching a course of interest**
- **Grant writing**

If you have any questions or the time to help with any of the above, please contact Lorna Thibeault at piasvolunteer@gmail.com or (203) 687-7156.



Summer Adventure Camp 2025

Schedule coming soon. Details at PelicanIslandAudubon.org

Pelican Island Audubon Society Membership Form

Enclosed is my:

NAME _____ \$ _____ \$30 for annual membership

ADDRESS _____ \$ _____ \$35 for family membership

CITY, STATE ZIP _____ \$ _____ \$100 Scrub-Jay sustaining membership

E-MAIL _____ \$ _____ \$200 Osprey sustaining membership

_____ \$ _____ contribution

_____ \$ _____ TOTAL

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 www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org



YOU ARE INVITED TO THE
STARRY NIGHT
Pelican Island Audubon Society's
GALA
60th Anniversary Event

APRIL 12, 2025 - 6 P.M. - 9 P.M.

SCHACHT GROVES - 6100 12TH STREET - VERO BEACH - FL - 32966

Guest Speaker: Eve Samples - Music by: Low Ground Trio

Tickets available at PelicanIslandAudubon.org

In celebration of Pelican Island Audubon Society's 60th Anniversary, this event will be a night of *Glitz, Stars, and Gaiety* as we step back and celebrate! We invite you to immerse yourself in the starry evening as we raise a champagne toast to Our many accomplishments. This event allows our local businesses to increase their exposure in the community through contributions of products and services, which excites all those in attendance.

- Highlighting your support through unique auction items.
- Networking with other businesses, organizations, and supporters.
- Have business information displayed throughout the event.

We are looking forward to your participation in this special event.

Attached is a donor form with further information and event details for your review and use. If you have questions, please contact Donna Halleran at ExDirectorPIAS@gmail.com or call 772-567-3520.

60th Anniversary Gala Sponsorship Opportunities

Help celebrate Pelican Island Audubon Society's 60th Anniversary Gala on April 12, 2025 at Schacht Groves by becoming a sponsor. Call the office at 772-567-3520 for more information or email to piaudubon@yahoo.com.

Presenting Patron (Presenting Sponsor) - \$10,000

(1 available) - Ensure the success of the Gala

- (10) Admission tickets to attend the event
- (1) Website banner on the Pelican Island Audubon Society website to run before, during, and up to one month following the event
- Opportunity to write a welcome message to be included in the event program
- Recognition from the podium and in the event program
- Name or logo in the event program
- Swag bag

Painted Bunting Delicacies Food Sponsor- \$5,000

(3 available) - Fund the local caterers and staff

- (4) Admission tickets to attend event
- (1) Website banner on the Pelican Island Audubon Society website to run before, during, and up to one month following the event
- Recognition from the podium and in the event program
- Name/logo recognition in the event program, website, and social media acknowledgment
- Swag bag

Mocking Bird Evening Speaker Sponsor - \$3,000

(1 available)

- (4) Admission tickets to attend program
- Website banner on the Pelican Island Audubon Society website and social media acknowledgment
- Name/logo recognition in the event program
- Swag bag

White-eyed Vireo Venue Sponsor - \$2,500

(2 available) - Preserving History

- (2) Admission tickets to attend event
- (1) Website banner on the Pelican Island Audubon Society website and social media acknowledgment
- Name/logo recognition in the event program
- Swag bag

Song Bird Music Sponsor - \$2,000

(2 available) - Fund the local musicians playing at the Gala

- (2) Admission tickets to attend the event
- Website and social media acknowledgment
- Name/logo recognition in the event program, website, and social media acknowledgment
- Swag bag

Champagne Sponsor \$1,000

(2 available) - Beverage Station signage

- (2) Admission tickets to attend event
- Name/logo recognition in the event program, website, and social media acknowledgment

Great Egret Email Sponsor \$1000

(2 available) - Help spread the news!

- (2) Admission tickets to attend event
- Logo/name recognition in the event program, website, and social media acknowledgment

Swainson's Hawk Swanky Sweets-Dessert Sponsor - \$500

(2 available) - Spread the Sweets

- (1) Ticket to attend event
- Event table signage
- Logo/name recognition in the event program

White Pelican 50/50 Sponsor - \$500

(1 available) - Snow Birds travel opportunity

- (1) Ticket to attend event
- Event table signage
- Logo/name recognition in the event program
- Opportunity to pull the winning ticket

Southern Live Oak Auction Sponsor - \$500 (1 available)

- (1) Ticket to attend event
- Name/logo on paddles
- Logo/name recognition in the event program

Yes, I'd like to be a 60th Anniversary Gala sponsor!

NAME _____

COMPANY NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

EMAIL _____ PHONE _____

SPONSORSHIP LEVEL _____

PAYING BY ENCLOSED CHECK CREDIT CARD (Or pay by phone at 772-567-3520)

CARD HOLDER NAME _____

CREDIT CARD # _____

EXPIRATION _____ CVV _____ BILLING ZIP CODE _____

SIGNATURE _____