



# *Peligrum*

October  
2025



*Dead Pine Tree Still A Beauty. Photo by Richard H. Baker. See my Hoot in the centerfold.*



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](mailto:piaudubonedu@gmail.com)**

10/11 - **9AM-12PM** - Day of Caring - Air Potato Roundup - ALL AGES

11/8 - **10AM-12PM** - Reptiles for all ages  
**1-3PM** - Reptiles for teens

12/13 - **10AM-12PM** - Scrub-Jay walk & Hallstrom House Tour for all ages  
**1-3PM** - Scrub-Jay walk & Hallstrom House Tour for teens

**Stop by and browse the native plant nursery - over 33,323 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](http://PelicanIslandAudubon.org)

### Tuesday Morning Hikes with Leader Ricky Ray

Various locations – Meeting at 7:00 a.m. at IHOP (westside) 88th Avenue & Route 60 – All level welcome – For more information – call/text: 928-853-9654 – snacks, water, binoculars, and bug spray is recommended. No registration required. Most walks are 3-4 miles.



PIAS nature walk led by Ricky Ray to Three Lakes WMA - Prairie Lakes Unit



*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

Board Chair **Richard H. Baker, Ph.D.**  
1st Vice-Chair **Open**

2nd Vice-Chair **Steve Palmquist**  
Recording Secretary **Open**  
Corresponding Secretary **Open**  
Treasurer **Steve Goff**  
Elected Directors:  
**Albert Alley, M.D. '26**  
**Bill Loftus, Ph.D. '27**  
**Nick Polge, Ph.D. '28**  
**Ricky Ray '28**  
**Bonnie Swanson '27**  
Appointed Board Members:  
**Justine Carter**  
**Nancy Irvin**  
**William Johnson**  
**Hadi Shalhoub, D.O.**  
**Lorna Thiebault**

### FIELD TRIPS

Space is limited. Registration is required. For the schedule & to register visit [PelicanIslandAudubon.org](http://PelicanIslandAudubon.org)

### MEETINGS

View the full Meeting schedule at [PelicanIslandAudubon.org](http://PelicanIslandAudubon.org)

**October 13 – 6PM - North County Library**  
*Indian River County Lagoon Management Plan*  
with Melissa McIntyre-Meisenburg  
Senior Lagoon Environmental Specialist  
Natural Resources – Lagoon Division

**October 27 – 7PM - Vero Beach Community Center**  
*Indian River Lagoon Horseshoe Crabs & Shoreline Nesting*  
with Kirk Fusco, Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection,  
Indian River Lagoon Aquatic Preserves

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)

## The Lost Words Article

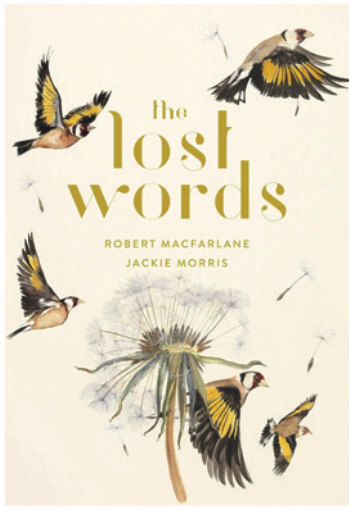
by Donna Halleran  
Executive Director

In 2007, something quietly unsettling happened. The Oxford Junior Dictionary released a new edition, and sharp-eyed readers noticed that about forty familiar

nature words had been dropped. Words like *acorn*, *adder*, *bluebell*, *dandelion*, *fern*, *heron*, *kingfisher*, *newt*, *otter*, and *willow*—the everyday treasures of woods, fields, and streams—were gone. In their place appeared words of technology and screens: *blog*, *broadband*, *bullet-point*, *cut-and-paste*, and *voicemail*.

It was as if the language of indoors was replacing the language of outdoors. For our “Tuesdays Lunch with Tina Group,” this shift served as a warning sign and a source of concern. If children no longer used words for plants and creatures around them, they might also be losing touch with the natural world itself. The concern echoed what Richard Louv called *nature-deficit disorder*—the growing distance between children and nature, with real consequences for their health, creativity, and sense of belonging in the world. This aligns with our Audubon Advocate program, which gives fifth-grade Title I students the chance to explore, learn about, and care for the environment, while incorporating their required science vocabulary words.

That loss of language—and the worry it symbolized—stirred something in many people. Two of them were writer Robert Macfarlane and artist Jackie Morris. Instead of simply mourning the missing words, they set out to bring them back, not by lobbying the dictionary, but by placing them into children’s imaginations again.



Together they created *The Lost Words*, a spell-book of sorts—each “lost” word reborn through Macfarlane’s lyrical word-spells and Morris’s luminous watercolors. An acorn once again became a seed of wonder, a kingfisher flashed across a page in a blaze of blue, and an otter slid joyfully back into the stream of children’s stories.

The book did more than restore vocabulary—it offered children (and adults, too) a way back to noticing, naming, and cherishing the living world around them. It reminds us that language is not just about communication; it is also about connection. And in a time of nature-deficit disorder, *The Lost Words* became an invitation: step outside, speak these names, and let the wild return to your life.

If you want to learn more, or get engaged, please contact: Donna Halleran, Executive Director, by email at [ExDirectorPIAS@gmail.com](mailto:ExDirectorPIAS@gmail.com)

## Dr. Richard Baker’s Legacy of Native Trees

by Donna Halleran, Executive Director

Dr. Richard Baker has always had a deep appreciation for nature, especially trees.

Among them, the majestic Southern Live Oak holds a special place in his heart. When

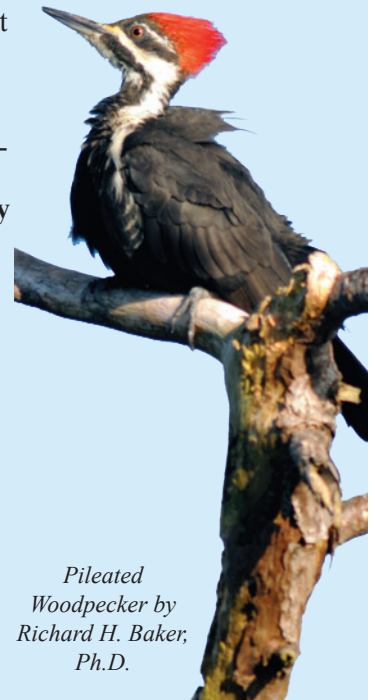
he began serving as Board Chair of the Pelican Island Audubon Society, Richard was inspired to plant native trees and encourage others to do the same — a legacy he began years ago, and one that the Society proudly continues today.

Under his leadership, the gardening committee started by planting live oak acorns, until hundreds lined the back of the property. That modest effort blossomed into a thriving committee and an ever-growing collection of native plantings. Today, they maintain and support an inventory of Southern Live Oak, Bald Cypress, and Mahogany trees, while also operating **the only Native Plant Nursery in Indian River County**. What started as a hobby has grown into a vibrant community enterprise, offering 46 species through Audubon’s Native Only Garden Shop.

The Society has also expanded its green spaces between five demonstration community buildings, creating living classrooms that highlight the beauty and benefits of native plants — cooling shade, improved air quality, water savings, and crucial habitat for wildlife.

Dr. Baker’s enthusiasm is contagious. He can quote the oxygen output of a tree, its carbon storage, and the water savings of native landscaping. But he’s just as quick to hand you a pair of gardening gloves, invite you to pull a few weeds, and share the joy of learning about native flowers, shrubs, and trees. Florida may be perfect for growing plants — but also for weeds, with the persistent Torpedo Grass as the greatest nemesis.

Thanks to Richard’s vision, Pelican Island Audubon Society continues to champion native plantings that benefit both people and the planet.



*Pileated Woodpecker* by Richard H. Baker, Ph.D.



**Add these books to your library!**

**Reflections of Blue Cypress: Photographs, History, and Poems of the Headwater Lake of the St. Johns River** by Richard H. Baker & Juanita N. Baker with a Forward by George Schaller. [124 pages] \$25 - Price includes tax

**Florida Birds Exposed: Pelican Island Audubon Society Photos of the Month Introducing Florida’s Birds** by Juanita N. Baker \$32 - Price includes tax.

Purchase online at [PelicanIslandAudubon.org](http://PelicanIslandAudubon.org) or at Audubon House, 195 9th St. SE (Oslo Rd), Vero Beach

My Hoot



# The Most Beautiful Art in the World Is in Nature

My wife and I have been fortunate to experience incredible art across the globe—paintings, sculptures, pottery, and exhibitions in world-class museums. Yet, our favorite art is the art of nature. It is endlessly original, alive, and always inspiring us to seek more.

One of nature's best subjects is WATER. Our streams, rivers, lakes, and oceans reflect trees, plants, and the ever-changing sky. Clouds—water in the sky—billow into stunning shapes, while sunrises and sunsets blaze even gloriously when magnified over water. In Florida, we've wonderful opportunities to see dramatic cloudscapes that one author called "our mountains." Underwater, coral reefs, marine plants, and sea life form dazzling works of art, though sadly, much of this beauty is bleaching and disappearing.

**Trees** are fantastic masterpieces. They shade us from the hot sun, thus reducing rainwater runoff, nurturing the plants and shrubs beneath them. They feed us, shelter wildlife, and even when dead [see cover], their twisting forms become sculptures along our roadsides.

Nature's **animals and insects**—birds, butterflies, moths, bees, and countless others—bring art to life with movement. Their colors, feathers, wings, horns, and antlers create unique and intricate patterns that rival any human design. Observing them is fascinating and calming.

But these beauties are in danger. Industrial, municipal, and agricultural waste, lawn fertilizers, septic runoff, and excessive carbon emissions pollute our waters. We burn oil and gas when solar and wind could power us cleanly. We're cutting down forests for housing developments or exporting them as so-called "clean" fuel. Meanwhile, our planet is heating up—the last three years have been the hottest on record—endangering coral reefs, forests, wildlife, and human lives.

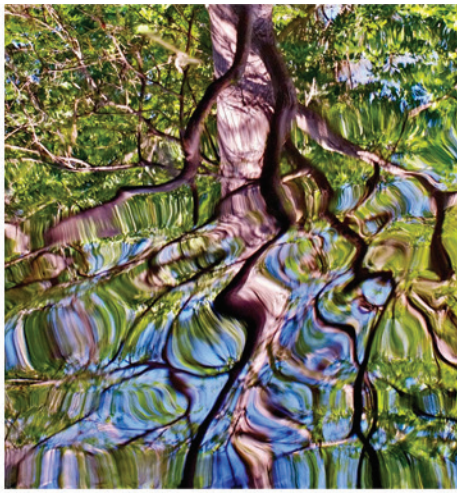
In Florida, our world-famous springs are dwindling, and most of our drinking water is wasted on turfgrass lawns—65% annually, and 88% in summer. Turfgrass's 2" shallow roots require constant irrigation, which drains our aquifers. Native plants, with 7-12" deep root systems, thrive without wasting water. Green carpet lawns may look neat, but they are not art. Nature is art—and if we want to keep nature thriving, we must rethink our choices.

Instead of clear-cutting, we can design homes around trees. Instead of lawns, we can grow native gardens. We have the knowledge and technology to protect and restore nature's masterpieces—but we must demand action from our leaders and ourselves. Let's save Nature's Most Beautiful Art!

Come visit our **Audubon House** to see the beautiful artwork created by fifth graders inspired by nature. You can also enjoy and support conservation through our two books, *Reflections of Blue Cypress*, <https://pelicanislandaudubon.org/reflections-of-blue-cypress-2nd-edition/> and *Florida Birds Exposed*, <https://pelicanislandaudubon.org/florida-birds-exposed/> filled with stunning photographs of Florida's natural art. All proceeds go to PIAS.

Let's preserve and celebrate the most beautiful art in the world—the **art of nature**.







Eastern Pondhawk  
Dragonfly



Reddish Egret



Pied-billed Grebe

Black Point Wildlife Drive  
Images by Bob Montanaro.

## A Worthwhile Trip *by Linda Chancellor*

The rain was coming down heavily and my GPS showed that I had missed the turnoff for Black Point Wildlife Drive. Frustrated, I considered turning around and driving back to Vero. I turned the car around and finally spotted the sign for the turnoff. I pulled into the small parking area. The rain slowed to a drizzle. I rolled down my window and got my first look at the wetlands. Immediately I spotted two great white egrets and an ibis. To my left I observed a big blue heron standing on top of an empty osprey platform. Dragonflies flew near the water's edges. My husband picked up a brochure, from the kiosk, which listed points of interest along the drive. Stop #1 explained that this brackish marsh resulted from the area being impounded for mosquito control.

I wanted to be the driver because that was the side closest to the water to observe the birds. But driving, stopping, taking photos, using my binoculars and dictating notes into my phone proved frustrating. Sam said "Pull over I will drive." After switching sides I exclaimed "Stop, Stop!" for I had spotted a tricolor heron through the driver's window. He did but then I said, "Can you move up a little bit so I can take a picture out your window." And so for the next hour we proceeded along the drive with me requesting frequent stops as I spotted anhingas, little blue herons, little green herons and a reddish egret. We were the only car on the drive so we weren't causing backups. Then I exclaimed, "Back up a little!" I opened my birding book to confirm - yes it was a limpkin. He was so close I could see his spotted breast! Around the next curve a 4 ft alligator lay in the middle of the road but then slid into the water as the car moved closer. Wildflowers edged the sides of the road. I spotted yellow top, gaillardia, oxeye daisy, pink mallow and purple horsemint. The sky continued to be overcast and the clouds created beautiful reflections in the water. As we drove the last stretch of road an osprey flew alongside and led us out of the refuge.

FYI – There is a \$10 fee per vehicle, for using the drive unless you have a Merritt Island Annual Pass, National Parks Golden, Senior, Access Pass, Federal Duck Stamp or a Canaveral National Seashore Pass.

## The classroom is bustling

*by Jennifer Satterly, Environmental Educator*

Our Audubon Advocates have jumped right into the fun of the semester. During our first class, we learned all about what it means to be an advocate. We had Heather Stapleton from One Lagoon (IRLNEP) join us, and she read "The Lorax" and "Horton Hears a Who." These kids were given the opportunity to compare some literature and decide which advocacy style they enjoyed the most. We explored the Oncler who advocated for his business, his family, his product and money. The Lorax, who advocated for the trees and all the animals that need those trees. And Horton, who advocated for the Who's. Each character used a different advocating style. Some were more successful than others, but overall, it opened up a good conversation in our classroom and really helped these students understand what it means to advocate for something.

Our second class was all about nature journaling and observations with Susan Lovelace, where each of our students received their own nature journal to take home and use throughout the weeks of the Audubon Advocates class. They've been asked to use their nature journal once a week in between classes for 15 to 20 minutes and then bring their journal in to share what they experienced in nature. These nature journals are designed to help their bodies slow down and become more mindful, encouraging them to be present in nature, which is beneficial for both their mental and physical health.

Our third week of class focused on the art of sketching, where Mary Lou Mullan, a local artist, taught the students how to sketch a bird and the art of watercoloring, so that the kids could create a final piece of a bird in its environment. Sketching is a valuable skill to learn, as it enables us to observe nature closely and pay attention to the finer details. It's an excellent addition to our nature journals.

Our fourth week of class focused on photography, where students learned how to use semi-professional cameras and immediately started taking pictures of everything in nature. The butterflies, caterpillars, birds, and flowers at the Audubon House have all been photographed by the kids in our classes. We are once again working with the Cultural Council to get the Advocates' photos into a local art show, which should be happening in January. We will release details as we get closer. Make sure to check out their artwork once it's on display.

It has been a busy beginning of the school year with lots of hustle and bustle in our classroom. We are in full swing in our after-school Audubon Advocates program. We have started a new series of homeschool classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The puzzle club has begun meeting on Mondays. And River Kidz has already had their first meetup.

# You Have What It Takes to Lead Bird Outings

Not a bird expert? Not a problem. To guide a group you need enthusiasm and a welcoming attitude, not perfect ID skills.

On a warm afternoon in Chicago's McKinley Park, Em De Blas was guiding a group of birders when they spotted a Downy Woodpecker "going ham" on a tree. In both English and Spanish, De Blas invited everyone to spend some time just watching the beautiful bird do its thing. The year before, De Blas had recognized that bilingual outings could welcome more people into the local birding community but worried that they didn't know enough about birds to lead them. "I still remember very vividly going through the questions, the insecurities, the anxiety, the whole works," De Blas says. Now peaceful moments like these remind them: Being a leader is less about ornithological prowess and more about helping people connect with nature.

For birders used to joining outings as a participant, taking on the responsibilities of a trip leader can feel intimidating. "Many people who would be wonderful bird outing leaders don't think they're 'good enough birders,'" says Freya McGregor, owner of Access Birding, a consulting and training company that specializes in improving access and inclusion for disabled birders. "Creating a friendly, welcoming space among the participants is your most important job as an outing leader, not having perfect bird ID skills."

The learning curve for planning your first outing is largely about logistics. You have a "duty of care" as a leader to know the access features and social environment of an outing location, McGregor says "because you are inviting people into that space with you." Practically speaking, that means preparing event descriptions that include start and end times, how far you expect to travel and on what types of surfaces, whether there will be chances to sit or take breaks, and if you'll have extra binoculars to share. Providing as much specific, concrete information as possible invites potential participants to opt in or to ask further questions.

How you open an event can also help get everyone on the same

page. McGregor introduces herself and offers each participant an opportunity to share their name, pronouns, and any access needs that it could be helpful for others to know. When leading outings with the Chicago Ornithological Society or Chicago BIPOC Birders, De Blas likes to remind attendees that no one person—leaders included—can know everything, so everyone in the group feels empowered to ask questions, offer answers, and learn together.

Once your group sets out, keep your participants engaged by taking cues from what gets them excited, says Christopher Joe, owner of Connecting with Birds and Nature Tours. Joe welcomes visitors to the 200-acre cattle ranch that his family has farmed in Newbern, Alabama, for more than three generations. They've managed the land with habitat conservation as a top priority, which has transformed the Joe Farm into a wildlife haven for iconic species of the southeastern United States, including Swallow-tailed Kites. Birders flock to the farm to see these raptors, but Joe is just as happy talking about snakes, bugs, or cows if that's what piques attendees' interest. "It's so fun, because I can take the conversation anywhere," he says. He finds that observing all parts of nature helps visitors understand the many factors that support wild birds.

You can hone your guiding skills by co-organizing outings with more experienced leaders and through training courses with established birding groups. Just remember that joy is your greatest asset. "Be yourself, tap into that enthusiasm, and lead with love and kindness," McGregor says.

*Originally published in Audubon Magazine, Spring, 2025.*



Our homeschool classes started in mid-September, and they are focused on the ocean ecosystem. The first class was held in our outdoor classroom, where they experimented with density, zones of the ocean, waves, thermal currents, and salinity. They learned about the different animals that exist in the ocean, what type of animals they are, and where they might exist in the ocean. At the end of class, they got a chance to make their own ocean animal out of recycled materials. In the upcoming weeks, we will be taking multiple field trips to explore places like the Barrier Island Center where the students will learn all about sea turtles, a beach where the kids will get a chance to have a hands-on, immersive experience with the ocean they are learning about, and a trip to the inlet to check out how it leads into the Indian River Lagoon.

River Kidz in September was a fun meetup. We had Laura Hersh Harris join us to teach us all how to make a coil basket out of raffia. The kids and parents worked diligently and had a great time learning this new skill. When the kids needed a break, they headed out to play in the woods while their parents finished working on the baskets. We will be meeting on the 2nd Saturday of every month. Check out our upcoming classes here in the Peligram or follow us on Facebook at IRC River Kidz. In October, we are participating in the Day of Caring and will actively be pulling out air potatoes in the back of the Audubon House. We need all the hands we can get.

Our puzzle club has had two meetups so far, with a couple of attendees, but we would love to get more. Join us for some relaxation and socialization. We meet on Mondays from 10 am to 12 pm.

We are looking forward to another month of fun in our classroom. We hope to see you at one of our events.



**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](http://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](mailto:piasvolunteer@gmail.com) or (203) 687-7156.**

**In honor of National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Week, The Pelican Island NWR volunteers** will be offering tram transportation from the Centennial Parking area at the refuge to the Boardwalk, Joe Michael Overlook and Jungle Bird Pond on Oct. 18, 2025 from 8AM to 10AM. You will have the opportunity to see the best birding spots on the refuge and the beginning of the fall migration of many different species. Come join the volunteers, learn the history of Pelican Island, and do some birding while enjoying the beauty that nature provides.

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

# Pelican Island Audubon Society

**November 1 - 30, 2025 - Audubon House**  
195 9th Street SE (Oslo Road), Vero Beach

## **Light As A Feather: The Birds Of Florida**

### **Interactive Photography exhibit by John Nelson & Sonia Sousa**

**November 1st to the 30th -  
Monday through Thursday,  
9AM to Noon,  
at Audubon House  
195 9th Street SE,  
Vero Beach**

**November 1st - 6:30PM  
- Audubon House - Wine,  
Beer, & Cheese reception  
- \$30 - register at  
[PelicanIslandAudubon.org](http://PelicanIslandAudubon.org)**

**Sonia Sousa is an accomplished birding photographer and board member of Audubon of Martin County. John Nelson is the President of Audubon of Martin County, and the creator and voice of The Audubon Moment as heard on WQCS, Public Radio for the Treasure Coast.**

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

For information, call 772-567-3520 M-F 9AM-1PM  
or e-mail [piaudubon@yahoo.com](mailto:piaudubon@yahoo.com)  
or visit us on the web at [www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org](http://www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org)

