



Peligram

February
2026



Great Blue Heron, Cormorants, and an Anhinga at Broadmoor Marsh by Ricky Ray



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**

2/14/26 - Air Potato Roundup - Sebastian Stormwater Park
9AM-1PM

3/14/26 - All About Manatees W/Elyse Geraghty from the Manatee Center at Audubon House
- 10AM-12PM Whole family - 1PM-3PM Teens

4/11/26 - Kayaking at Round Island
10AM-12PM Whole family - 1PM-3PM Teens

5/9/26 - Eyes On Seagrass at the Wabasso Causeway

Audubon Advocates Art Show at the IG Center

Art in Public Places

February 2 through May 11, 2026
1590 9th Street (Oslo Rd), Vero Beach

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.



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 **Steve Palmquist**

2nd Vice-Chair **Open**

Recording Secretary **Lorna Thibeault**

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

William Johnson

John Nelson

Hadi Shalhoub, D.O.

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

All schedules subject to change. Check PelicanIslandAudubon.org for latest.

FIELD TRIPS

Space is limited. Registration is required.

For the schedule & to register visit

PelicanIslandAudubon.org

MEETINGS

View the full Meeting schedule at PelicanIslandAudubon.org

February 9 – North County Library

1001 Sebastian Blvd. (CR 512), Sebastian

Update In Motion: Indian River County Conservation Lands Division with Ashley Lingwood

Indian River County Conservation Lands Program Manager

February 23 – Vero Beach Community Center

2266 14th Avenue, Vero Beach

Around The World With Disney Conservation

with Jason Fischer, Ph.D., Disney Conservation Manager

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

One Less Boar

by Linda Chancellor



It was a beautiful day in January, and my son-in-law had gone hiking. When he returned, he was eager to show me some photos he had taken. The photos were of a bleached white skull that I identified as a cow skull. He responded that it was not a cow skull but the skull of a wild boar. I began to look at the photos more closely since a few had been taken from different angles. He told me that he had discovered the top part of the skull lying near some tree roots. He spotted the lower jaw about 3 feet away, but he did not see any evidence of the rest of the skeleton. After taking pictures, he decided to reassemble the skull and took a few more photos. I wondered how it got to that location. Did a predator drag it away from the main kill, eat and then leave? Did vultures finish it off? Looking at the photos the first thing I noticed was that the four tusks were still located in the skull. Two short, dark brown stained tusks about 2 inches long extended out the side upwards and curved forward. The lower jaw held two tusks, about 4 inches long, that were bone white. These curled up toward the upper skull. The boar still had most of its molars and only had two large incisors at the front of the lower jaw. I would not have wanted to encounter this boar when it was alive!

FYI- Wild Boars are an invasive species that has caused millions of dollars in damage to natural areas and to agricultural areas. The animals are difficult to eradicate since they reproduce very rapidly and are difficult to locate in the wild. Female boars (sows) reach maturity around 6 – 12 months and can produce 2 to 3 litters a year after a 114-day gestation period. Each litter can include 4 to 12 piglets. A few years ago Flagler County established a Boar Management and Removal Program in connection with the Land Management Department. They also added a way for citizens to alert officials to wild hog sightings so that the areas can be documented on a map. In 2023, before the program was established, 255 hogs were captured. After 2024 they captured 604 hogs and by November 2025 they had already caught another 412 boars using this new system. *Photo by Sam Wolfe.*



**Lake Apopka
Birding Trip in
the Pelican
Island Audubon
luxury van**

**February 13,
2026**

Learn more and
sign up at
PelicanIslandAudubon.org



**Great Air Potato
Roundup**

**February 14, 2026
9AM - 1PM**

**Stormwater Park
297 Englar Drive
Sebastian
Pelican Island
Audubon & the City Of
Sebastian are looking
for volunteers to help
remove invasive air
potatoes from
Sebastian Stormwater
Park. Call
772-388-8200
to volunteer.**



**Sebastian Inlet
Wildlife
Part 1**

A short film
by
Bob Montanaro

**February 27, 2026
starting at 7PM**

**Audubon House
195 9th St. SE
(Oslo Rd)**



**MOVIE NIGHT AT
AUDUBON HOUSE**

***Wind Across The
Everglades***

A story of plume hunting
in the Everglades and
the Audubon wardens
trying to protect the
birds.

**March 20, 2026
Audubon House
195 9th St. SE (Oslo Rd)
Vero Beach**

**Doors open at 6PM
Movie starts at 6:30PM**

Popcorn available or
bring your own snacks.



**SPACE NIGHT AT
AUDUBON HOUSE**

**March 28, 2026
starting at 6:30PM
195 9th St. SE (Oslo Rd)
Vero Beach**

Two Programs!

**Gateway To Space: Cape
Canaveral Space Force
Station & Kennedy
Space Center
with Bob Montanaro**

**Astronomical Viewing
with the Treasure Coast
Astronomical Society**

The astronomical viewing
will take place outdoors,
weather permitting, so
dress appropriately.



Indian River County (IRC) remains environmentally unique and one of the very best places to live healthily in Florida. Our natural resources include 26 miles of Ocean beaches with the Indian River Lagoon and the St. Sebastian River, both of which offer great birding, fishing, boating, and numerous eco-tourism opportunities. Our County has Florida's 20th-largest lake, preserved, pristine, the beautiful Blue Cypress Lake, headwaters to the St. Johns River, which offers other unique freshwater opportunities. Unfortunately, it suffered from Miami's biosolids (human poop) deposits, which our County has now banned. Our County is renowned for having the first U.S. Wildlife Refuge, the *Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge*. We have extensive conservation lands and parks – constituting about 40% of all County lands - including the *Blue Cypress Conservation Area*, *Middleton's Fish Camp Park*, *McKee Botanical Garden*, *Round Island Park*, *Riverside Park*, *Sebastian Inlet State Park*, *Jungle Trail* with a bit of "Old Florida", and *Humiston Park*, which was voted one of the "Top 10 Beaches for Families in the U.S.

However, over the last 60 years, the septic tanks, fertilizers, and chemicals from our lawns have accumulated, causing increased algal blooms and seagrass loss. Our natural resources have deteriorated and continue to be threatened by expected future County growth with the associated construction and human impacts.



Although we have a history of trying to "Keep Vero, Vero," we've evolved. Following the 1973 construction of two 133-foot-high condominium towers in Vero Beach, the County restricted building heights to 50 feet for nonresidential and mixed-use structures and 35 feet for residential buildings, which has preserved its character, limited growth, and maintained a small-town feel. These limits are now in the county's Comprehensive Plan. Our cities, Vero Beach, Sebastian, Fellsmere, Indian River Shores, Orchid, and various communities like Winter Beach, Gifford, Wabasso, and town officials and IRC all try to keep this county a great place to live. But since IRC is a great place and the citrus industry has declined, we are seeing expansive new developments that require more roads, facilities, storage buildings, and the loss of agricultural lands.

Purposely, IRC has passed three bond issues (\$26 million in 1992, \$50 million in 2004, and \$50 million in 2022 to acquire and preserve environmentally sensitive lands through tax increases. Part of the last bond will provide funding for public access, including parking lots, trails, and restrooms. Vero Beach also offers a rich cultural scene with unique arts and excellent museums. But most importantly, besides our Audubon Chapter, Pelican Island Audubon Society and its Audubon House Nature Center, IRC has great environmental organizations like the Clean Water Coalition (CWC), Indian River Neighborhood Association (IRNA), Indian River Land Trust (IRLT), Ocean Research & Conservation Association (ORCA), Gopher Tortoise Alliance, Pelican Island Conservation Society, Friends of the St. Sebastian River, Keep Indian River Beautiful (KIRB), Coastal Conservation Association, and started by PIAS, the Environmental Learning Center (ELC). It is critical that these organizations work together to keep wildlife thriving and our county the best place to be in Florida.

Tragically, new bills are proposed in our State Legislature that threaten our local environmental protections. HB 105 by our Rep. Robbie Brackett, R-Vero Beach, claims to ensure "fair, consistent, and transparent enforcement" of local regulations <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2026/105/ByCategory>. IRNA Board Chair, Mike Johannsen, warns that HB 105 threatens the principle of home rule, which allows local governments to address their community's specific needs. Even with a recent amendment limiting liability to actions 'not authorized by ordinance,' the bill still allows individuals and businesses to sue local governments over enforcement disputes, bypassing standard administrative appeals <https://www.tcpalm.com/story/opinion/contributors/2025/11/18/vero-beach-ex-mayor-bill-threat-to-home-rule-democracy/87241433007/>. Further, if a plaintiff wins a lawsuit under the bill,



n Indian River County

courts must award them up to \$50,000, while local governments receive no reimbursement for costly court expenses if they win. This would be costly for taxpayers and weaken local regulations on development and environmental protection.

As a follow-up, another bad bill, Florida Senate Bill 718 (Sen. Stan McClain) and its House companion, HB 479 (Rep. Randy Maggard), would prohibit our local city and county governments' authority to protect water quality, wetlands, and watersheds from pollution control, like our Indian River Lagoon. For example, IRC's summer fertilizer ban (June-Sept.) and building heights could be voided. Yet Democracy means we, the people, should have a say. Let's work together to let our representatives know why to vote against Bills 718 and HB479. Contact:

Sen. Erin Grall, Phone: 850-487-5025, Email: Grall.Erin.Web@flsenate.gov,

Rep. Robbie Brackett, Phone: (850) 717-5034, Email: robert.brackett@myfloridahouse.gov,

Governor Ron DeSantis Phone: 850-717-9337 Email: <https://www.flgov.com/eog/leadership/people/ron-desantis/contact>.

Our State Representatives should not give up their authority to make environmentally responsible decisions for Florida under any Federal Laws.

In light of the continuing threats to our natural resources and the forthcoming 2026 elections – as framed by my *December Hoot*, “I Saw the Eagle Cry” - PIAS is partnering with CWC and IRNA to promote:

- increased public awareness of County-wide land and water-resource issues – including the degraded health of the Indian River Lagoon and Blue Cypress Lake; and
- voter-constituent demand for County and local government action to mandate and fund restoration of County water resources and environmental habitat - as a measure of existing elected officials' commitment and criteria for 2026 candidates.

As part of our collective efforts, we are developing a proposed Public Education Forum on April 25 at the Emerson Center to address environmental issues and solutions related to:

- Historical Fishes,
- Human Health Impacts,
- IRL Water Quality Indicators & Correlation with Population Growth,
- Relationship of Water Resources and Conservation Lands,
- Urban Landscaping Impacts,
- Low Impact Development,
- State-of-the-Art Wastewater Treatment Facilities vs Existing Facilities,
- Water Quality Monitoring & Identification of Pollutant Sources,
- Hydrogeology of IRC,
- Septic Tank Water Quality Impacts and Nutrient-Reducing Systems,
- Effectiveness of Florida's Agricultural Best Management Practices & Needed Improvements,
- Biosolids Sustainable Use & Human Impacts at Blue Cypress Lake and IRC Ban of spreading Miami or others' biosolids in our county Pollutants-Muck, etc,
- IRC Dedicated Lagoon Big Issues & Needed Funding,
- Resiliency,
- Blue-Green Algae Task Force Findings & Recommendations,
- Economic Value of the IRL and Brevard County Example of Investment & Results,
- Local Government Financing Stormwater Utilities.

What Can You Do?

By working together, we can build public demand that our State representatives, County commissioners, and city councils move proactively to restore and preserve our land and water resources for us and future generations. You All Come!



**by Jennifer Satterly
Environmental Educator**



We had another successful winter break camp here at the Audubon House. We had 10 campers ranging from 13 to 18 years old visiting from the Homeless Children's Foundation of Indian River County. The weather was warm some days and chilly the others but we all had a wonderful time no matter what the weather was.

On Monday everyone was very excited to see each other as it had been about 5 months since we were all together last. These students really enjoy our time together and look forward to every camp we offer. Our first activity was for everyone to choose an animal that represented them and then create a poster expressing that. The campers took this activity seriously and spent just a little over an hour coming up with their animals and creating their posters. One student chose a panther, noting he and the animal were both powerful, strong, fearless, and kind. After that activity, we headed outside with buckets, bags, and grabbers and got to work cleaning up Oslo Rd. We were able to fill two large trash bags with all the litter we found alongside the road. These campers were super excited to be able to help the environment by picking up all the litter that doesn't belong. As we went along, we talked about mangrove trees, alligators, spiders, and more. We took a break at the Oslo boat ramp before heading back to the Audubon House for lunch. After lunch, Alexis Peralta with Indian River Natural Resources joined us for an afternoon of learning about stormwater and birds. Alexis did her enviroscape stormwater presentation

teaching everyone what we do on land affects our Lagoon and how they can help by making simple changes on land. We followed that presentation up with a great game of bird bingo. Both activities were a wonderful way to prepare us for our field trip to Egret Marsh Stormwater Park.

Tuesday, the weather was pretty cold but we had plans to go kayaking at Round Island. One student said her mom was saying to her that she wasn't sure we would be kayaking due to the cold. She told her mom that Miss Jen is a nature person and the weather won't stop her from kayaking. She was absolutely correct. We all bundled up and headed out on the water and the time out there was perfect. As soon as we were out on the water, the sun came out and warmed us all up. We had a great time kayaking. I am so very grateful that Ladd Borne was able to volunteer his time to join us to help lift all the kayaks and be at the back of the group while we are out on the water helping anyone that might need some extra instruction. We couldn't do what we do if it weren't for our volunteers! After we got back to land we were met by Ashley Lingwood and Olivia Roddenberry from Indian River County Conservation Land Division with warm pizza ready for everyone to eat. Once everyone had their fill of pizza, they took us on a trailer tour of one of the trails where we got to see lots of spiders, mangrove trees, and we even got to see a barracuda they caught in the cast net. The kids had a great day and some may have fallen asleep in the van on the way back to Audubon.

Wednesday was our last day of camp and it was equally packed with fun and maybe even colder than Tuesday. We started our morning off with a very chilly tour of Egret Marsh with Alexis Peralta. We learned all about how the stormwater is dealt with at this park and how it has created a sanctuary for all the birds. We walked around the entire area and each camper had a pair of binoculars and were able to see over 20 species of birds. We came back to Audubon to get warmed up and to work with Rebecca from RESINating Artwork to create Altoid wallets. This activity consisted of a very minty smelling classroom, lots of embellishments, and tons of paper and sticker options. The kids decorated the Altoid containers with stickers and glued paper inside and outside and got really creative with all the embellishments. It is always a joy watching these kids get creative and really love what they make. Once we were all cleaned up from that activity, we said goodbye to Rebecca and moved into our holiday party. We enjoyed treats that were donated and every camper received a gift bag full of all kinds of goodies like movie tickets, blankets, card games, art supplies, and more. The kids were overjoyed with what they received and the wonderful week they had.

We are so grateful for all the organizations and volunteers that came together to make this another wonderful camp experience for these students. We couldn't do it without all of you! Thank you so much for giving your time and energy and generosity. We really appreciate it!

It Takes A Village

by Donna Halleran
Executive Director



For more than a decade, Pelican Island Audubon Society has opened its arms—and its trails, outdoor classroom and wild places—to campers from the Homeless Children's Foundation of Indian River County. What began as a simple partnership has grown into a deeply rooted relationship with Executive Director Hannah Hite and her extraordinary staff, built on trust, care, and a shared belief that every child deserves joy, safety, and wonder.

Together, we created Winter Holiday, Spring, and Seasonal Adventure Camps—offered exclusively to these children. While parents meet one-on-one with case managers to navigate barriers to self-sufficiency, such as employment, housing, and access to vital resources, their children are given something equally essential: time to simply be kids.

At camp, they kayak and hike, climb trees, race through the woods, play games, learn about the environment, and laugh freely. They are cared for, encouraged, and reminded—again and again—that they matter.

What makes these camps truly extraordinary is the village that surrounds them. Over the years, an ever-growing circle of collaborators, partners, and supporters has stepped forward with generosity, creativity, and heart. While we cannot list everyone who makes this program possible, we are honored to highlight a few.

The **Circle of Friends of Sebastian** (est. 2022)—nearly forty dynamic women—has embraced this mission wholeheartedly. For the third consecutive winter (2025), they provided breakfast foods, snacks, and beautifully curated holiday gift bags filled with new blankets, games, art supplies, restaurant gift cards, movie tickets, handmade Christmas stockings, and delightful surprises. And their care doesn't stop there—throughout our

seasonal camps, they continue to spoil campers with homemade cookies and treats made with love.

Heather Stapleton of One Lagoon leads unforgettable days at the Wabasso Causeway, beginning with shoreline cleanups and followed by dip netting, seining, and a refreshing swim. She closes each day by reading *The Lorax*, inspiring campers to create posters and find their voices as advocates for a healthy lagoon.

The **Indian River County Conservation and Lands Division**, including Olivia Roddenberry, Ashley Lingwood, and dedicated staff—alongside community partners from **Treasure Coast CISMA and Florida Ecological Services** staff—created a day these campers will never forget. Each child was gifted a fishing rod to take home, followed by a shared fish fry and pioneer-style meal that turned learning into celebration.

With contagious enthusiasm and a generous spirit, **Rebecca Creek**, owner of **RESINating Artwork** in Palm Bay, led hands-on art experiences where campers crafted resin necklaces and decorated keepsake wallets—personally covering all supply costs so every child could create something lasting and meaningful.

And quietly, steadily, a devoted donor couple from Pelican Island Audubon Society continues to fund a full week of summer camp each year for children from the Homeless Children's Foundation—ensuring that this magic continues. This is what a village looks like: people showing up, giving freely, and creating outdoor experiences filled with safety, joy, dignity, and belonging for children who need it most.

We are already looking ahead to another year of new adventures and meaningful partnerships.
Come be a part of the village.



Pelican Island Audubon Society presents

Birding 2.0

Saturdays, March 14, 21, & 28

8:30AM - 12:00PM

Audubon House, 195 9th St. SE (Oslo Rd), Vero Beach

\$95 for Pelican Island Audubon members
\$115 for non-members (membership included)



Why Join?

- Enhance and improve your birding knowledge and skills.
- Topics include bird language, changing plumage, intro to warblers, and more!
- This is a hybrid course, with time spent in the classroom and in the field.
- No supplies or equipment required!

Visit PelicanIslandAudubon.org to register.

Questions? Contact Alexis at alexismperalta@yahoo.com

Indian River County Stormwater presents Summer Camp for the Lagoon

July 6-17, 2026 for incoming 6th to 9th Graders

at Audubon House, 195 9th St. SE

(Oslo Rd.), Vero Beach



Activities include:

Kayaking & hiking
Water quality sampling
Environmental games



Field trips to Sebastian Inlet, stormwater parks, and the Indian River County Landfill among other places

COST: \$300 for 10 days

Register at PelicanIslandAudubon.org

Questions: Email aperalta@indianriver.gov

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.

Go Green!

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

NAME _____	Enclosed is my:
	\$_____ \$30 for annual membership
	\$_____ \$35 for family membership
ADDRESS _____	\$_____ \$100 Scrub-Jay sustaining membership
	\$_____ \$200 Osprey sustaining membership
	\$_____ contribution
CITY, STATE ZIP _____	\$_____ TOTAL
	Please mail this completed form with a check made out to:
E-MAIL _____	Pelican Island Audubon Society
	P.O. Box 1833
	Vero Beach, FL 32961

Or join online using a credit card at www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org