



# Peligrum

May  
2026



*Nature Sketch by an Audubon Advocate.*

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](http://PelicanIslandAudubon.org)

Questions: Email [aperalta@indianriver.gov](mailto:aperalta@indianriver.gov)

## Moonshot Moment at Audubon House

By offering a screen-free environment, we create space for meaningful conversation—showing families that literacy grows everywhere: in the soil, the garden, and shared moments between children and caregivers.



**Moonshot Moment at Audubon House**

*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.**  
 Vice-Chair **Steve Palmquist**  
 2nd Chair **William Loftus, Ph.D.**

Recording Secretary **Lorna Thibeault**

Corresponding Secretary **Open**

Treasurer **Steve Goff**

Elected Directors:

**Albert Alley, M.D. '26**

**Vin Gemmiti, '29**

**Nick Polge, Ph.D. '28**

**Ricky Ray '28**

**Bonnie Swanson '27**

Appointed Board Members:

**Leah Blythe**

**Justine Carter**

**Janet Courtney**

**Will Johnson**

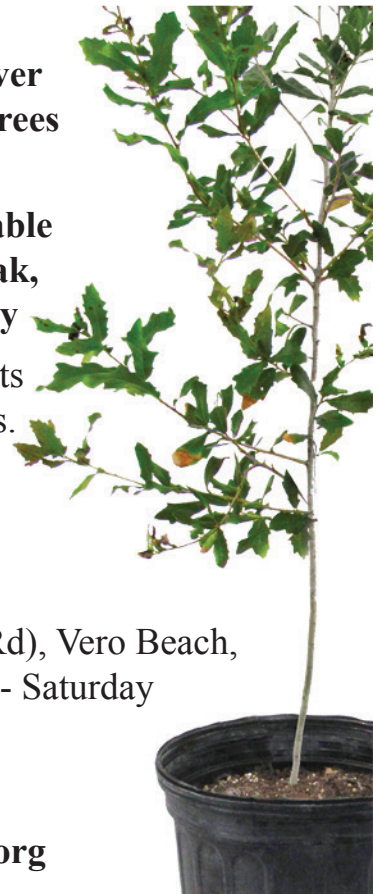
**John Nelson**

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

All schedules subject to change. Check [PelicanIslandAudubon.org](http://PelicanIslandAudubon.org) for latest.

## 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)  
 Meetings resume in October - New schedule coming soon.

### 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.



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)

# Could It Be?

by

Linda Chancellor



Painted Bunting  
(female) by  
Bob Montanaro.

What small bird has a greenish back and yellow breast? I had spotted one with those colors bouncing around in the Croton shrub in my back yard. Since it was smaller than a cardinal or blue jay I figured it had to be a warbler. The bird kept hopping around and was often hidden by the leaves making it hard to get a better view. Finally, he flew and landed on one of the nearby native red salvia flowering stalks allowing me to see it clearly. I kept looking through my binoculars and called to my husband to bring the bird book and his binoculars. I figured two sets of eyes were better than one when trying to observe any distinguishing marks that could be used to identify the bird. I checked my bird book and decided it was not a warbler. My brain began to think what has a bright green back and yellow breast. I remembered that a female Painted Bunting had those colors and so flipped to the page describing Painted Buntings and confirmed it was a female. The first I had every seen in my yard! Both of us kept our eyes glued to our binoculars as we watched her. I could even see the pale-yellow ring around her eye. She clung to the bottom of the flowering stalk and appeared to be eating the seeds. As she inched up the stem her body weight caused the stem to bend downward. When she would reach the new flowers, she flew to another stalk and repeated the action. We continued to watch her for another ten minutes before she flew off.

FYI – According to the *All About Birds* website the gender of the bird I observed may have been an immature male. They have the same coloring as females the first year of their life. The circle of color around a bird's eye is often referred to as the orbital ring.

In 1841 John James Audubon reported that “thousands” of the colorful birds were caught every spring and shipped from New Orleans to Europe, where they fetched more than 100 times the price when sold as cage birds. Unfortunately, they are still illegally trapped and sold in Mexico, Caribbean, and Central America.

## Pelican Island Audubon Society Summer Nature Adventure Camps 2026

Give your child a summer of outdoor adventure, exploration, and education!

### Summer Nature Adventure Camp

Dates: June 15th - 19th

July 20th - 24th

Times: 8:30AM to 3:00PM

Camp is for students entering  
5th through 8th grade.

Cost: \$200

Aftercare available for an  
additional \$75/week

\$50 discount for  
Audubon Advocate graduates

#### Activities include:

Kayaking, hiking, swimming, clean-ups,  
outdoor adventures, science education, and  
more!

### Survival Nature Adventure Camp

Dates: June 22nd - 26th

Times: 8:30AM to 3:00PM

Camp is for students entering  
5th through 8th grade.

Cost: \$200

Aftercare available for an  
additional \$75/week

\$50 discount for  
Audubon Advocate graduates

#### Activities include:

Survival skills such as fire starting, shelter  
building, essentials for hiking & surviving  
in the wild, plant identification, outdoor  
adventures, science education, and more!

### Special Needs Adventure Camp

Dates: June 8th - 12th

July 27th - 31st

Times: 8:30AM to 3:00PM

Camp is for students entering  
3rd through 5th grade with a disability.

Cost: \$200

Aftercare available for an  
additional \$75/week

#### Activities include:

Kayaking, hiking, swimming, clean-ups,  
outdoor adventures, science education, and  
more!

To register, visit [PelicanIslandAudubon.org](http://PelicanIslandAudubon.org) or call 772-567-3520  
For questions, email Jen Satterly at [piaudubonedu@gmail.com](mailto:piaudubonedu@gmail.com)

# My Hoot



**Our 2026 Audubon Heroes**

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of PIAS! How we appreciate their many contributions!! Thus, we wanted to highlight our volunteers and honor a special few with Awards at our Annual Meeting, March 30, 2026. Volunteers help us with our mission to preserve and protect the animals, plants, and natural communities, the land and water on which they depend in Indian River County, through education, advocacy, and public awareness. They teach us about birds and nature, bring in new members, fund our projects, save our lands and water, and have fun! **Here are our 2026 awardees:**

**The Phyllis Stockburger Award** is given to **Nancy Irvin**, who, in the 1980's, rescued an injured pelican on the bridge and asked PIAS what to do with it! Since then, she has been a longtime-serving, supportive PIAS member and Board member since 1984. We appreciate her very much for helping so many with found birds and supporting our needs for years.

**Special Service Award** to a PIAS member who has made special contributions or outstanding service. **David Eakins** started working in a nursery at 14 years old, was the owner and operator of his own landscape business for 30 years, and is one of our newest Tree Team volunteers. He has contributed incredibly to our Native Nursery and the ORCA grounds around the Audubon House. **He is a Force of Nature.** He is growing thousands of live oak trees for us to give away and other native plants for our nursery, and has enhanced the trails and lands at ORCA. Ricky Ray asks, "What does he eat for Breakfast! He does so much."

**Maggy Bowman/Conservationist of the Year Award** to an individual or an organization, not necessarily a PIAS member, who has made outstanding contributions in the area of conservation, promoting environmental concerns, or educating the general public regarding local environmental conditions. We appreciate the efforts of **Ashley Lingwood, Indian River County Conservation Lands Program Coordinator**, a native Floridian, for her work in Florida habitats for the past 15 years, first fighting off Burmese pythons and alligators, monitoring imperiled and native wildlife, and conducting prescribed burns in the Florida Everglades. Now in IRC, she manages, monitors, and saves our most threatened and endangered species, such as monitoring sea turtles, Florida Scrub-jays, and the Gopher Tortoises.

**Environmental Educator Award** is given to a teacher who best promotes an attitude of environmental awareness and understanding among their students. **Cari Berwick, science teacher** from Vero Beach Elementary School, has done a great job selecting and coming with her Fifth-grade students to our Audubon Advocate program for 8 years.

**Environmental Citizen Award** is given to **Carol Thomas, President of the Eugenia Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, Fran Robinson, their Treasurer, and Carla Flournoy, Secretary**, for a terrific job leading their chapter in partnership with PIAS in planting and maintaining our 6 Demonstration Gardens.

**Conservation Journalist Award** to **Craig Pittman, Columnist for the Florida Phoenix**, informing the public weekly of our current environmental issues and what we can do to stop them. He is the author of 5 books, including *Cat Tale: The Wild, Weird Battle to Save the Florida Panther*.



**Nancy Irvin**



**David Eakins**



**Carla Flournoy**



**Fran Robinson**



**Nick Polge**



**Will Johnson**



**Natalise Snead**



**2026  
Annual  
Awards**

**Environmental Landscaping Award to Steve Palmquist and Nick Polgi**, devoted Tree Team volunteers at the Vero Beach Elementary School, for designing and planting a beautiful Demonstration Garden that teaches students and parents the importance and value of native plants in our environment and their homes

**Board Chair Award to Will Johnson, our newest Board Member**, for being a world expert on birding. He has recorded over 400 bird species in Florida, including 329 in IRC alone. He holds multiple appointments to state ornithological initiatives, including

eBird reviewer for five east-central Florida counties and member of the Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee. Will writes for the American Birding Association's Field Naturalist and speaks regularly at birding festivals and environmental organizations statewide. At PIAS, he has contributed as a field trip leader, guest speaker, art exhibitor, and board member. He is also a great Bird artist!



**Ashley Lingwood**



**Cari Berwick**

**Eleanor & Bud Kleckner Generosity Award to Kay Gibson** for her generosity in providing cash, cameras, chairs, and more for our Audubon students. She and her husband, Dana Gibson, who passed away, have set a fine example for creating a 165-acre Gibson Preserve and Georges River Land Trust in Searsmont, Maine, supporting similar programs for local school children, and it is now considered an "outdoor classroom" by the local community's elementary school.

**Special Recognition/ Merit/ Appreciation/Thanks Awards to Deborah Ryan** for great refreshments at our monthly and special meetings. She goes all out with positive friendliness. In addition to special cookies, she also provides great-tasting cakes, drinks, including coffee, for all to enjoy.



**Carol Thomas**



**Steve Palmquist**

**Environmental Youth Award: High School Senior Natalise Sneed** for expressing herself so eloquently in remembering her 5th-grade Audubon Advocate experience in a 6-minute speech at the IRC Commissioner's Children's Services Advisory Committee (CSAC) Awards ceremony, where our Audubon Advocate program received its 3rd annual 1st Place Award. She told us how it influenced her life by teaching her the science and curiosity about parasites. She has received several college scholarships and has high aspirations of being a scientist, possibly a parasitologist! [See Natalise's story on the next page.]

**Volunteer of the Year Award to Paul Halleran** for all the magical maintenance he does for our Audubon House and the equipment and facilities in it on such a timely basis. Admirably, he also picks up trash on our county's roads.



**Kay Gibson**



**Deborah Ryan**

**Board Elections:** Also, at our Annual Meeting, the following Officers were reelected: Board Chair Richard H. Baker, Ph.D. 1st Vice-Chair Steve Palmquist, 2nd Vice-Chair Bill Loftus, Recording Secretary Lorna Thibeault, Treasurer Steve Goff, by the membership to serve for two years, Albert Alley, M.D., and Vinny Gemmiti to serve as elected Board Directors for 3 years, and Janet Courtney, Ph.D. to fill a vacant board member's position for 1 year. Justine Carter, William Johnson, John Nelson, Hadi Shalhoub, D.O., & Leah Blythe were appointed Board Members.



**Paul Halleran**

Thank you, Board members, all our volunteers, presenters, and these award winners, for all your hours of dedication and persistence. And credit to our outstanding staff: Donna Halleran, Bob Montanaro, and Jenifer Satterly! They have been so essential for PIAS's accomplishments!! Finally, we give great appreciation for our donors, and you members who support us with your membership, feedback, donations, and participation.

# Results of our Land & Water Issues & Solutions Forum by Richard H. Baker, Ph.D.

Pelican Island Audubon Society collaborated with the Clean Water Coalition - special thanks to Michael Walther and Judy Orcutt - and the Indian River Neighborhood Association - great help from Mike Johannsen, Missy Weiss, and Dan Lamson - for the successful Land & Water Issues Forum on April 25th. More than 125 people attended, demonstrating the strong community commitment to protecting our land and water. In addition, 11 environmental organizations participated with informational tables and staff, inspiring community members to get involved and to volunteer for our environment. The expert speakers with experience in different aspects of our environment emphasized:

- Preserving our natural areas and wildlife habitats
- Protecting our water quality and drinking water sources.
- Keeping overdevelopment and growth under control.

## Based on the 12 excellent speakers, we have learned:

- The Indian River Lagoon is a unique, economically important, and a diverse estuary.
- The Lagoon and related County and City water resources significantly shape the quality of life we enjoy in Indian River County.
- For every dollar we invest in Lagoon Restoration, we receive \$24 back to our economy in recreational benefits, property values, tourism, and jobs.
- Commercial and sport fisheries and seagrass restoration can be revitalized if water quality and degraded habitats are restored.

## The physical issues and challenges confronting County water resources include:

- **Stormwater** from rainfall that flushes nutrients and other pollutants through drainage canals and ditches to the Lagoon from urban lands, and agricultural lands - where excessive fertilizer is placed (per Dr. Grant Gilmore, it only takes 4 hours for rainwater at 58th Ave to reach the Lagoon).
- **Human waste** that flows from septic tanks and leaking sewer pipes as groundwater flows into the Lagoon - via thousands of septic tanks, leaky wastewater collection system pipes, old and leaky sewage pipes, and land application of biosolids (human poop) contaminates our seafood and destroys seagrass.
- **Aquifer depletion** from the excessive use of potable water to irrigate lawns and landscapes, further challenged by increasing demand from our County's increasing population.

**All these issues have slowly increased in severity over the past 70 years** in conjunction with our population growth. Collectively, we are all responsible for the deterioration and disappearance of our wildlife, forests, grasslands, and farmland. Already 3.5 million acres of land in Florida have been lost to land development, including priority natural lands. Within the next 50 years, sea level may rise 10 inches or more, which would drown many parts of coastal Florida, covering land

## Natalise's Story

We are proud to share the story of a graduating senior named Natalise. Her journey has not been easy, but it shows what support, curiosity, and opportunity can do in a young person's life.

When Natalise was in third grade, she and her family went through a period of homelessness. It was a difficult time filled with uncertainty. School was not always easy to focus on, and stability was hard to find. But even in those moments, Natalise kept going. She showed up, she learned, and she held on to hope for something more.

for existing and possible new developments, agriculture, and natural lands.

## Solutions exist, including:

- Innovative stormwater-treatment solutions.
- Projects to connect septic systems to sewer.
- New wastewater-treatment facilities.
- Land purchases and conservation easements in critical areas.
- All homes and businesses convert to landscaping with native plants to reduce sod, necessary because 60% of our drinking water goes on grass! Plant more trees!

## The promising news is that we can restore our environment.

We must do 2 things to make this happen: time and money – invested by all of us – mostly through our State and local governments.

Current investments are producing promising results, but too slowly to keep pace with development. Seagrass beds are seeing some recovery but fall far short of the historical coverage needed for a healthy Lagoon.

**Significantly more public funding is needed** over a long period of time. It will take time to plan, design, and build the needed restoration projects.

## We hope participants left this meeting with the intent to facilitate these needed changes to save our Florida!

- Please pay attention to policies espoused by elected officials and candidates for office.
- Urge elected officials and candidates to support projects that will restore County water resources and critical environmental lands.
- Talk with your neighbors about how these issues affect their lives and pocketbooks.
- And – VOTE!



Pelican Island Audubon Volunteer Coordinator Lorna Thibeault & Executive Director Donna Halleran at the conference.

It was her tenacity and hard work that led to her being chosen in fifth grade for a student program run by the Pelican Island Audubon Society. It was there that Natalise discovered a deep interest in the natural world. She became especially curious about parasites and how they live, survive, and affect ecosystems. What started as simple curiosity grew into a passion.

Through hands-on learning and time spent outdoors, Natalise found not only knowledge, but also confidence. She asked questions, took notes, and began to imagine a future she had never considered before. The program gave her a space to grow and people who believed in her.

[Continued next page]

Now, years later, Natalise is graduating high school with her Associate Degree in Biology and taking a major step forward. She has been accepted to Hawaii Pacific University with a \$21,000 a year Provost Scholarship. She will enter a three year program that combines her bachelor's and master's degree studies in Public Health. This is a pre-med tract, where she plans to study parasitology. She is excited to continue learning and hopes to one day contribute to research that helps both people and the environment.

Her story is one of resilience and possibility. From homelessness in third grade to a future in Honolulu, Natalise's path shows how early support and meaningful programs can make a lasting difference.

To our donors, thank you. Your support helps create these moments. It helps students like Natalise discover their interests, overcome challenges, and build a future they can be proud of. Her journey is just beginning, and you have been part of what made it possible.

## Completing the Living Classroom at Vero Beach Elementary School

Pelican Island Audubon Society utilized funding from the Plants for Birds Grant, awarded by Audubon Florida in partnership with Florida Power & Light (FPL), to design and implement a Pollinator Education Garden at Vero Beach Elementary School. This effort was made possible through the collaboration of board members, volunteers, teachers, and school faculty, all of whom are committed to maintaining the garden year-round to ensure its long-term sustainability.

The garden serves as a hands-on outdoor classroom for all K-5 students, integrating environmental education with grade-level curriculum standards. Students participate in structured, developmentally appropriate activities that foster both knowledge and stewardship behaviors. Kindergarten students explore nature through creative expression using natural materials, while upper-grade students engage in garden care, including hand watering and plant maintenance. Across grade

levels, students contribute to basic data collection by tracking plant growth and observing pollinator activity.

Fifth-grade students, including participants in the Audubon Advocate program, take on leadership roles by mentoring younger peers and reinforcing key concepts such as water conservation, the importance of native plants, and the role of habitat in supporting birds and pollinators. These students also document wildlife activity through photography and utilize trail cameras to monitor species presence, strengthening both observational skills and scientific literacy.

The addition of the Living Classroom Pollinator Hotel marked the project's completion. Designed and constructed by Eagle Scout candidate Paul Soares (Sebastian Troop 505) as his final Scouts BSA service project, the structure provides critical nesting habitat for native bees and beneficial insects, further enhancing the ecological function of the garden.

### Outcomes and Impact

- Established a sustainable native plant pollinator garden that supports birds, bees, and other wildlife
- Engaged all K-5 students in hands-on environmental learning aligned with curriculum standards
- Increased student understanding of native plants, water conservation, and habitat stewardship
- Provided leadership and mentorship opportunities for fifth-grade Audubon Advocates
- Introduced student-driven data collection and wildlife monitoring using trail cameras
- Expanded habitat resources through the installation of a pollinator hotel for native insect species

Students have demonstrated increased comfort and confidence in outdoor learning environments, along with a growing understanding of their role in environmental stewardship. The Living Classroom will continue to serve as a lasting educational and ecological resource for the school community.



## Please Plant a Bald Cypress Tree Around Your Stormwater Lake or Pond by Richard H. Baker, Ph.D.

Many people visit the PIAS's Audubon House's nursery with over 60 species of native plants and 10 tree species to select plants for their yards. Many select one of the 3 free trees: live oak, mahogany, or bold cypress. We have free 4-6 ft tall bald cypress trees in 1-gallon pots available for planting along the edges of stormwater ponds or in your yards, as they grow well on dry land. Students from Vero Classical School also planted one of our free Mahogany trees at Jones Pier Conservation Area on Jungle Trail to preserve the Lagoon

Susan Keiffer sent us a photo of one tree she got from us 2 years ago and planted on the edge of the pond at Garden Club Park in Sebastian, at the corner of Barber Street and Rose Arbor Drive. This tree has more than doubled in size in this short time. Here you can enjoy the scenic view of the lake, take a break in the gazebo, or take a walk around the native plantings. Bald cypress will help keep the water cleaner and provide a place for birds and other animals to visit and possibly nest. Susan plans to plant more bald cypress trees around this lake.



**Wouldn't it be great if all our stormwater ponds look like this. Great for birds and us.**

**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.

# Go Green!

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



## Pelican Island Audubon Society Membership Form

Enclosed is my:

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \$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)