



Peligram

September
2026



Red-bellied Woodpecker at Treasure Hammock Ranch by Bob Montanaro.

Wish List

Pelican Island Audubon is in need of the following articles and we are asking for your help:

- Birdseed, especially black oil sunflower seeds
- 8.5 x 11 printer paper
- New Adult life jackets
- New Youth life jackets

Items can be dropped off at Audubon House, 195 9th St. SE (Oslo Rd), Vero Beach, Monday through Friday from 9AM to 1PM. For more information, email piaudubon@yahoo.com or call 772-567-3520.

Thank you!

MEETINGS

View the full Meeting schedule at PelicanIslandAudubon.org

General Meeting - Sept. 28 - 6PM - Garden Club of IRC - Vero Beach
2526 17th Avenue, Vero Beach starting at 7:00 p.m.



Rooted in Change: Food, Planet, and the Power of Plants with Kevin Mitchell

Kevin Mitchell is a:

- Plant Based Treaty Ambassador
- Sustainability Consultant
- MSc in Circular Economy and Sustainable Innovation
- Florida Master Naturalist (freshwater)
- Environmental activist with deep local ties to the Treasure Coast

Pelican Island Audubon Nights At Raw Space



Join Pelican Island Audubon at Raw Space, 1795 Old Dixie Highway, Vero Beach, to see STEWARDS, a multi-media installation on environmental stewardship in Indian River County along with a program by photographer Bob Montanaro. Doors open at 6:30PM. This event is free & open to the public.

- September 3 – Woodpeckers of Indian River County
- September 24 – Creepy Crawly Land Crabs of Florida – and beyond!

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 **Missy Weiss**
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. '29

Vin Gemmiti, '29

Nick Polge, Ph.D. '28

Bonnie Swanson '27

Appointed Board Members:

Leah Blythe

Justine Carter

Janet Courtney

Will Johnson

Donna Halleran

John Nelson

Hadi Shalhoub, D.O.



Stop by and browse the native plant nursery - over 34,000 native plants & trees distributed so far! Free Bald Cypress currently available in 1 gallon pots plus a selection of native plants are available at low prices.

Audubon House Native Plant Nursery 195 9th Street SE (Oslo Rd), Vero Beach, on Monday & Wednesday - 9AM to 11AM & Saturday - 9AM to Noon

More at PelicanIslandAudubon.org

Volunteer to help in the gardens!

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

FIELD TRIPS

Space is limited. Registration is required.

For the schedule & to register visit

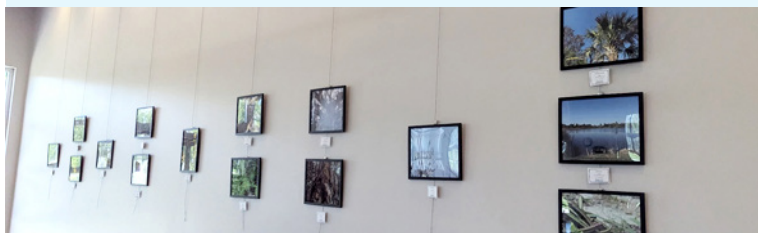
PelicanIslandAudubon.org

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.



Audubon Advocate Photography Exhibit at the Intergenerational Center **See Nature Through the Eyes of Local Fifth Graders**



The Cultural Council of Indian River County and Pelican Island Audubon Society invite the community to enjoy a special photography exhibition featuring graduates of the Audubon Advocate program showcasing their unique perspectives of local wildlife and natural habitats.

The exhibit will be on display at the Intergenerational Recreation Center, 1590 9th St. SW (Oslo Rd), Vero Beach, from August 17–November 1, 2026. Admission is free.

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

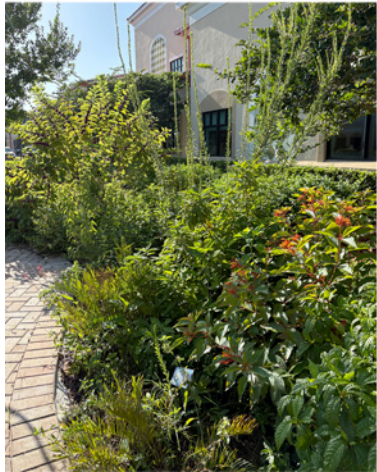
Phone: 772-567-3520

E-Mail: piaudubon@yahoo.com

Website:

www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org

Growing Beauty, Habitat, and Community Across Indian River County



by Missy Weiss, Executive Director

What began as a single native plant demonstration garden at the Indian River County Administration Building has grown into a beautiful network of educational landscapes throughout our community.

That first native plant garden included approximately 150 plants. Since then, volunteers have helped create gardens at the UP Center, the beachside post office, Vero Beach Elementary, the 13th Avenue post office, and the post office at 20th Street and 88th Avenue, with hundreds of native plants adding beauty and purpose to each location.

These gardens are much more than collections of beautiful plants. They provide food, shelter, and habitat for an incredible variety of wildlife- from bees and butterflies to birds, racers, rabbits, and countless other creatures. At the same time, they serve as living classrooms where residents and students can discover the remarkable diversity and value of Florida's native plants.

But perhaps the most remarkable part of these gardens is the people behind them. Year after year, enthusiastic volunteers have given their time, energy, and passion to dig, plant, mulch, nurture, and educate. Our partnership with the local Eugenia chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society has been especially important, providing invaluable knowledge, encouragement, and support for nearly every project.

These gardens are a lasting testament to what a community can accomplish together. Together we can create spaces that inspire, educate, support wildlife, and offer moments of beauty and peace for everyone who visits. I encourage you to check out one of these demonstration sites if you have not already.

From Ghana to Vero Beach: Inspired by a Stormwater Intern

By Alexis Peralta



Lordia Blay

This summer of 2026, the IRC Stormwater Division was extremely honored to host Lordia Blay, a Master's degree student from UF who is studying internationally

from her home country of Ghana. Lordia is an exceptional human being, who has persevered to get her studies accomplished in the States, learning about sustainability and water quality practices, to eventually return to West Africa in hopes of creating great change for the future.

Lordia has shared stories of how the people in Ghana manage their trash and stormwater. My jaw fell open when she said people in the villages wait for it to rain so that they can put their trash out for the stormwater to carry it away for them, unaware or uncaring of the damage this does to their waterways and downstream systems. She shared videos of people actively dumping full trash cans into their stormdrain systems, which are huge

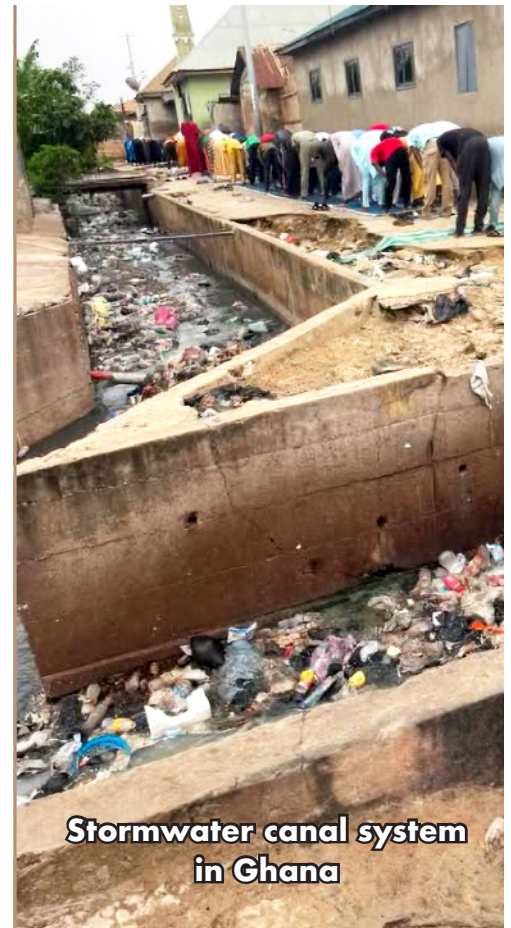
concrete canals full of debris.

Lordia is passionate about learning educational methods that will create behavior change and inspire people to better care for their local environment. In a country where many resources are limited, getting people to care about the environment is a tough thing. The health of the environment is low on their list of priorities, but little do they realize what an impact it will have on their future, and the future of their children.

I was incredibly excited to have the chance to not only share with Lordia my knowledge of stormwater, but to learn from her how West Africa operates, their culture, and the similarities and differences we have from across the Atlantic. One of my favorite parts of spending time with her this summer, has been the pure joy and excitement on her face as she experiences new things, especially the tiny things we take for granted! She especially loved being a counselor at the Summer Camps held at the Audubon House!

To learn more about Lordia's experiences, read the full article with her post intern interview at

www.indianriver.gov/naturalresources



Stormwater canal system in Ghana

My Hoot Working Together, We Can Save Our Earth in ONE Generation



All species, including humans, are interconnected. We depend on nature to provide us with oxygen, food, water, clothing, housing materials, and even the paper or computer screen we are reading. Of the estimated 8.7 million species on Earth, we are the smartest. Thus, our job is to see that all species survive because we depend on one another for our survival. Of the estimated number of species, only about 1.2 million (7.77 million animals; 298,999 plant species) have been scientifically described and cataloged. The undescribed species live mainly in the oceans and tropical forests that have not been well-explored by scientists. Why? – scientific expeditions require funding, usually a low priority for governments. Unfortunately, many species may be going extinct before we even know of their existence! Some of James Prosek's paintings of some species are on view at the excellent Vero Beach Museum of Art exhibit until Oct. 25, 2026 <https://www.vbmuseum.org/james-prosek-at-work/>

The first single-celled ancestor is thought to have formed 3.5 to 4 billion years ago. This single-celled ancestor evolved into all these millions of various plants and animals. Thus, we humans (no matter what race) all share many of the same genes and nucleotides, A, T, C, and G, that form DNA with all life living on our Earth. We all maintain our DNA, make proteins, and convert sugars into energy. About 20-60% of our genes can be found in plants, 80% in mice, and over 95% in chimpanzees.

We are the only species on our Earth that has gone to the moon and are now aiming at colonizing other planets. Unfortunately, we have taken poor care of our own home planet. Do we know or care that we are contaminating our waters and are not replacing the trees that provide some of the oxygen we breathe, the food we and other species eat, cool our Earth, and protect our water? When I was born, ~2.3 billion people lived on Earth. Today, ~8.3 billion people live on our Earth, adding over 140,000,000 more each year! We must improve our relationship with nature if our descendants and we are to survive the problems we have created.

Critically, we must educate adults and our children about our environment, pollution, chemicals, and especially fossil fuels (coal, oil, and natural gas) that contribute roughly 50% more planet-warming CO₂ in our atmosphere than the pre-industrial era. Let us encourage all to plant native plants and trees essential to live in harmony with nature. Native Plants are a must for healthy ecosystems for our and their survival https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climate_change/. Native birds, insects, and wildlife depend upon native plants. Clear-cutting lots and removing native plants to replace them with lawns, exotic plants, and concrete buildings, roads, and sidewalks heats our local areas (Heat Islands), and interrupts critical ecological interconnections and relationships. Millions of acres of farmland, green spaces, and native wildlife habitats continue to be destroyed by construction and maintenance of highly manicured lawns using chemicals and grass clippings that pollute our waters.

Burning fossil fuels is leading to sea-level rise, with an increase in intense storms, flooding, and fire. This impacts human homes and buildings and eliminates valuable foraging and nesting habitats for our birds.

Our waters are contaminated by grass clippings, fertilizers, irrigation runoff, pesticides, and pet waste and environmental enforcement is lacking. Did you know you can save money by reducing your lawn and save on mowing, blowing, and applying chemicals? At a minimum, keep grass 10 feet away from waterways. Plant a buffer of native wetland plants along the water. <https://www.cfpbpublic.org/environment/2026-07-31/majority-florida-waterways-polluted-but-environmental-enforcement-lacking>. Cardboard works well to kill sod grass and cover with native grasses and plants and pine straw. Other concerns are the widespread spraying of insecticides and chemicals on agricultural and public lands. We export wildlife for the pet trade and import 90 million live animals to sell as pets, from frogs and fish to spiders, birds, and lizards, which are prone to escape into our environment, thriving in Florida. Even in our oceans, our whales are in trouble. These are things we can control and improve to save our world so that all succeed.

To help save our Earth from all these problems, a great read is *Regeneration: Ending the Climate Crisis in One Generation* by Paul Hawken (2021). “*Regeneration* means putting life at the center of every action and decision. It applies to all of creation—grasslands, farms, people, forests, fish, wetlands, coastlands, and oceans. It applies equally to families, communities, cities, schools, religions, cultures, commerce, and governments. Nature and humanity are composed of exquisitely complex networks of relationships, without which forests, lands, oceans, peoples, communities, and culture perish.”

We are living on a stressed Earth because of increased fossil-fuel burning, building construction, wars, deforestation, poverty, oil, corruption, industrial agriculture, overconsumption, among other natural insults. At the same time, the government has fired scientists and experts at NIH and USAID working to stop human-disease transmissions, and firefighters fighting wildland fires that produce even more CO₂. All these factors are interconnected. By working together, Paul Hawken describes how in one generation we can reduce our CO₂ emissions, thereby protecting and restoring our forests, grasslands, farms, and oceans to draw down CO₂.

from our atmosphere through photosynthesis. So far, no G7 country (the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, or the United Kingdom) has come close to setting targets in alignment with the Paris Agreement to reduce emissions to keep global warming under 1.5 degrees. A map of how countries are doing relative to the Paris Climate Agreement can be found at <https://brilliantmaps.com/meet-paris-2016/>

Let's work together! Individually, we can remove or reduce our grass lawns and plant natives! How about our County and Cities making this commitment? Let's all realize that we do have a serious global climate-change issue. Our government leaders must set up a plan to encourage citizens to reduce our carbon footprint. Tell your Elected Officials we deserve a beautiful future that includes a healthy environment for plants, trees, and animals.

JAMES PROSEK: AT WORK



VBM
VERO BEACH MUSEUM OF ART

3001 Riverside Park Drive
Vero Beach
vbmuseum.org
772-231-0707

ON VIEW
July 11 -
October 25, 2026

James Prosek, *Maine Composition No. 1*, 2024. Acrylic on panel, 25 1/2 x 25 1/2 inches. Image courtesy of the artist. © James Prosek

James Prosek: At Work is organized by the Morris Museum, Morristown, New Jersey, and features new interpretive texts authored by the Vero Beach Museum of Art. Support for this exhibit is provided by Barry and Jennifer Jaruzelski and the Martin Guild Charitable Foundation.

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VALID THROUGH 10/25/2026

Summer Camp Adventures

by Jennifer Satterly, Environmental Educator

Another summer camp season has come to an end, bringing those familiar bittersweet feelings. While it's always nice to return to the air conditioning, it's never easy to say goodbye to camp and the laughter, adventures, and memories that come with it.

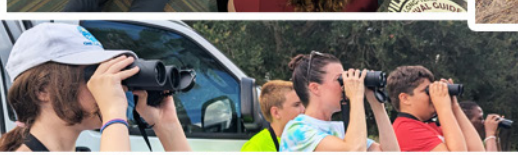
This summer was filled with exploration, learning, and plenty of time outdoors. We offered two weeks of Adventure Camp, a week of Survival Camp, a special week for children from the Homeless Children's Foundation and partnered with Indian River County Natural Resources for two weeks of Stormwater Camp. We also hoped to offer Special Needs Camp but unfortunately did not have enough enrollment. We will continue working to reach more families and bring this important opportunity back next year.

Our campers kayaked, fished, swam, explored the woods, went dip netting and seining, learned survival skills, discovered the Indian River Lagoon, met Noodle the corn snake and Linguini the ball python, and explored some of our community's incredible natural places. Perhaps most rewarding was watching their curiosity grow. By the end of Adventure Camp, our campers could identify multiple bird species, so I think we may have created some lifelong birders!

These experiences would not be possible without our amazing community partners. We are deeply grateful to Alexis Peralta and Indian River County Natural Resources, Heather Stapleton with One Lagoon (IRLNEP), Rebecca Creek with Resinating Artwork, Olivia Roddenberry with Indian River County Conservation Lands, and Laura Hersh Harris for sharing their time, knowledge, and passion with our campers.

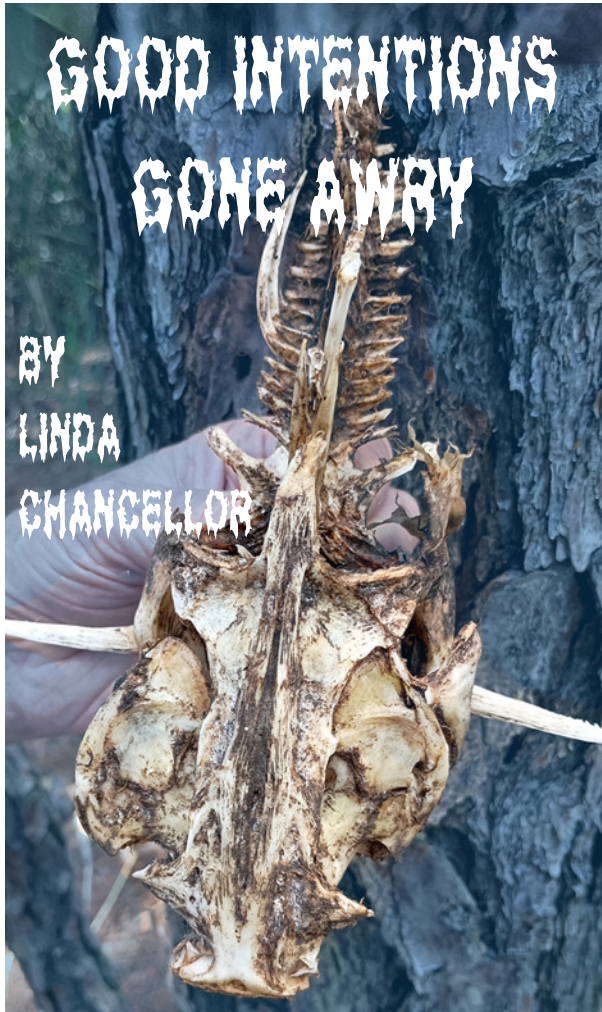
As we close out the summer, we are left with tired smiles, countless memories, and grateful hearts. Florida is an incredible place to explore, and we feel lucky to help children discover it.

We hope to see familiar faces, as well as plenty of new ones next summer!



GOOD INTENTIONS GONE AWRY

BY
LINDA
CHANCELLOR



My husband and I were walking along the Presley Creek Nature Trail when we came across a number of skulls and backbones, of large fish, scattered on the ground. These skulls were about 6 inches long and three dimensional. They had two short bony spines on each side above their mouth and further back there were two longer bony spines located on each side at the base of the skull. The backbones were about 12 inches long with some longer, but most of them were not attached to the skulls. I took photos so I could try and identify them later.

When I returned home my son-in law alerted me to a recent article in The Rivah Visitor's Guide issued for the Northern Neck of Virginia. The article was about Blue Catfish and how they have become invasive in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and its tributaries. Blue Catfish are native to Mississippi, Ohio, Missouri and Rio Grande river basins.

In 1974, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries wanted to introduce a new species for recreational game fishing. They released 300,000 blue catfish into the James River. Currently the record catch for a blue catfish is 143 pounds. What they hadn't expected was that blue catfish found the fauna of the James River to be very tasty. Catfish are usually bottom feeders and their flesh can have a muddy taste but Blue Catfish feed on striped bass, shad, menhaden, and blue crabs, clams and rockfish eggs and lack the muddy taste. They can swallow 400,000 rockfish eggs at one time! The current population is estimated to be over one hundred million fish that have spread throughout the Chesapeake Bay's watershed and its tributaries. They have also been found in some North Carolina waters. Because of their numbers they are searching for ways to control the population. So far The State Legislative of Virginia has awarded two \$250,000 reimbursable grants to two of the bay's catfish processing plants. The grant is for the companies to increase their infrastructure and flash freezing process. They are also encouraging anglers to fish more for this species as they are great sport to catch and are good eating. I tried to confirm that the skulls we found were of Blue Catfish but I could not be sure. Let's hope they don't come to Florida!



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SAT 9 AM - 5 PM
SUN 9 AM - 1 PM

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195 Oslo Road,
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UF IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA



Adult Intro to Birding Classes

Course instructor: Alexis Peralta

Course of 4 Saturday Classes

November 14, 21, and December 5, 12

Or

January 2, 9, 23, & 30

This is a hybrid course including classroom & field activity.

No supplies or equipment required.

Birding 2.0 Advanced Birding Course

Course instructor: Alexis Peralta

Saturday Classes, February 13, 20, & 27

Enhance & improve your birding knowledge & skills. Topics include bird language, changing plumage, & more!

Hybrid course including classroom & field activity.

No supplies or equipment required.

Register for all courses at [PelicanIslandAudubon.org](https://pelicanislandaudubon.org)
\$95 for PIAS members / \$125 for non-members (includes membership) Questions: alexisperalta@yahoo.com

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 under-represented 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: \$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.

Join Our Team!

October 13 - 10AM

Volunteer Orientation at Audubon House

195 9th St. SE (Oslo Rd)

Learn more about all the volunteer opportunities at Pelican Island Audubon!

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

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