Peligram

November
2026



Peregrine Falcon at Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge by Richard Thibeault.

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 & millet
- 8.5 x 11 printer paper
- Cushioned kayak seat - universal fit
- Epson ET-4958 ink

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 presentation schedule at PelicanIslandAudubon.org

IMPORTANT CHANGE OF MEETING LOCATION NOTICE

Pelican Island Audubon will no longer be meeting at the Vero Beach Community Center. Instead, we will be meeting at the Garden Club of Indian River County, 2526 17th Avenue, in downtown Vero Beach.

Monday, November 9, 2026
North Indian River County Library starting at 6PM
1001 Sebastian Blvd. (CR 512), Sebastian
Goodrich Island: The Audubon Bird Sanctuary in the St. Sebastian River
with Tim Glover, President, Friends of St. Sebastian River

Monday, November 23, 2026
Garden Club of Indian River County
2526 17th Avenue, Vero Beach
Plant-based Cooking with Nancy Heinrich

Monday, December 14, 2026 - 6:00 - 8:00PM
Holiday Party At Audubon House
195 9th Street SE (Oslo Rd), Vero Beach
Bring a generous serving of your favorite dish to share for an evening of good food & camaraderie. Drinks will be provided. Please bring your own plates & utensils.

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

Thursday Morning Hikes with Ricky Ray

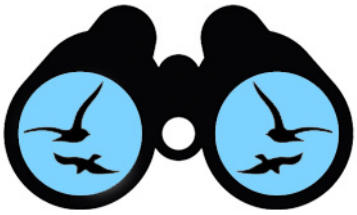


Various locations – Meeting at 7:00 a.m. at IHOP (westside) 88th Avenue & Route 60 – All level welcome – For more information – call/text: 928-853-9654 – snacks, water, binoculars, and bug spray is recommended. No registration required. Most walks are 3-4 miles.

Become A Citizen Scientist!

In partnership with Indian River County Conservation Lands Program, PIAS is seeking to help conduct monthly bird surveys at county-owned properties:

- North County Conservation Area
- Captain Forster Hammock Preserve
- Lost Tree Island (accessible by boat)
- Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area



If you are interested in joining a team or acting as a Site Captain, please contact Missy at Missy@PelicanIslandAudubon.com

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.**
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Bonnie Swanson '27
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Janet Courtney
Will Johnson
Donna Halleran
John Nelson
Hadi Shalhoub, D.O.

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 & Native Plant Nursery
195 9th Street SE (Oslo Rd.), Vero Beach
Office Hours: M - F | 9AM - 1PM
Native Plant Nursery:
Monday & Wednesday - 9-11AM
Saturday - 9AM-Noon
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 1833, Vero Beach, FL 32961
Phone: 772-567-3520
E-Mail: piaudubon@yahoo.com
Website:
www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org

My Hoot

Richard H. Baker, Ph.D.

How Effective and Humane Is Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) for Feral Cats?

This is the title of the University of Florida/IFAS Extension paper **https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/UW468/pdf** written by five faculty (Mark Hostetler, Samantha M. Wisely, Steve Johnson, Elizabeth F. Pienaar, and Martin Main in 2020 and reviewed in 11/2024. I grew up liking cats as pets, but based on science, they are an invasive, non-native predator. Florida is spending taxpayer funds to try to control Burmese Pythons in the Everglades, an animal that was once kept as a pet but, when released into the environment, assumes the role as an exotic, invasive predator. Is that any different from the situation with feral cats?

Domestic cats trace their ancestry to the Near East and North Africa, where they were first domesticated by humans, likely both for pest control and human companionship in ancient Egypt. Unfortunately, cats kill 2.4 billion birds per year in the U.S. alone, a tremendous toll considering that birds are already under stress from habitat loss and food shortages. Both TNR lovers and those against TNR agree that there are too many free-roaming cats.

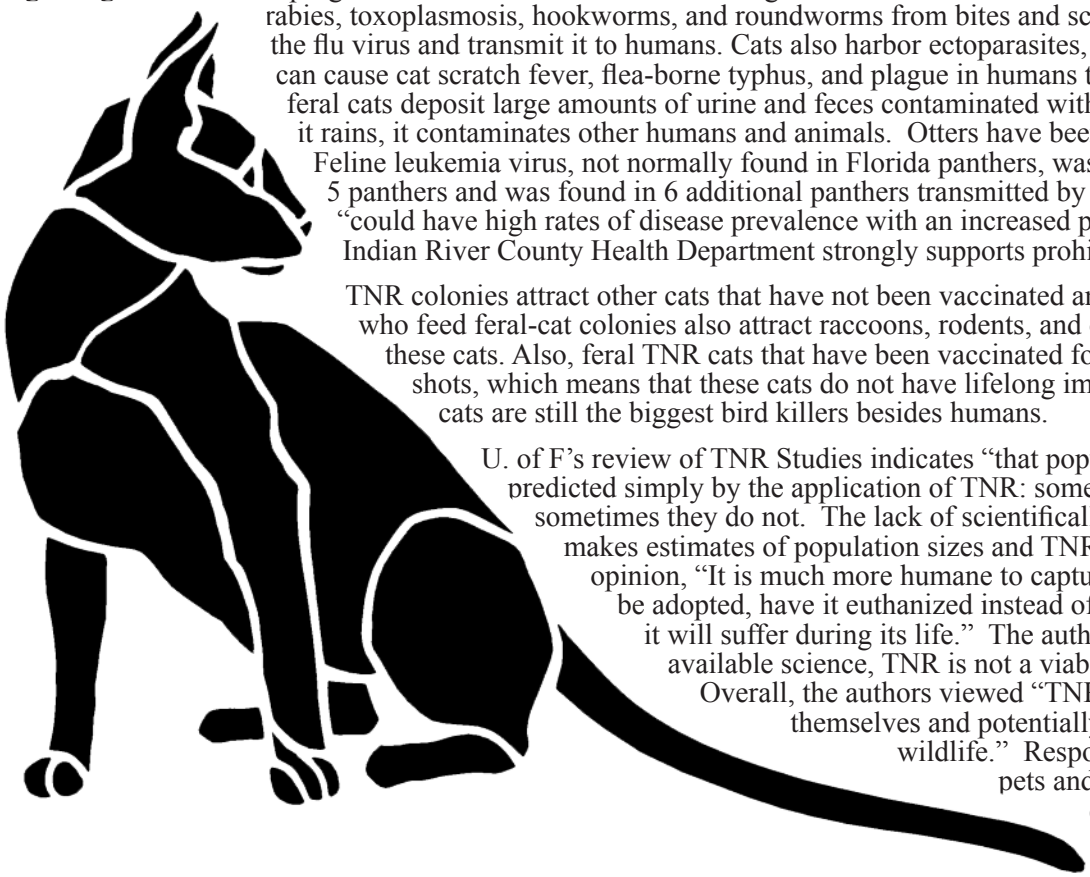
The above authors analyzed one of the goals of TNR programs: does TNR reduce cat populations over time? Looking at studies in California and Florida that they felt were scientifically accepted in estimating abundance, they concluded that TNR did not significantly reduce cat population sizes, but that population sizes increased due to immigration of other cats and the difficulty of trapping all cats and neutering them. Also, it is a fact that when populations of some mammals are reduced, the remaining females produce more offspring, a strategy called Compensatory Reproduction.

The authors also reviewed studies claiming that TNR reduces cat populations. Some studies used the recollections of individual caretakers to estimate cat populations, which fluctuated as the cats that belonged to the colonies changed. "Consequently, the reliability of the estimated cat numbers is questionable (i.e., human error in estimating the number of cats); it was not based on a scientifically accepted way to estimate abundance. In addition, most of the cat colonies included in the study were very small (an average of 7 cats per colony)....We do not consider the methods used in this study to be reliable." Other studies "Did not use standardized field observations; thus, results are likely not accurate....Overall, it appears that TNR cat colonies were reduced only if there were high rates of adoption/removal of cats (around 50% or more), if there were high rates of neutered cats, and if there were low rates of immigration by cats. Without these, the colonies would not decline in size over time."

In addition, it is inhumane to release domesticated cats who have been bred for centuries to be cuddled and coddled, to be thrust out into Florida's nature with hurricanes, summer's hot temperatures and winter's cold, thunder/lightening and rain, and predators they have not evolved with, such as bobcats, coyotes, alligators, raccoons, hawks and owls, snakes, all waiting for a meal.

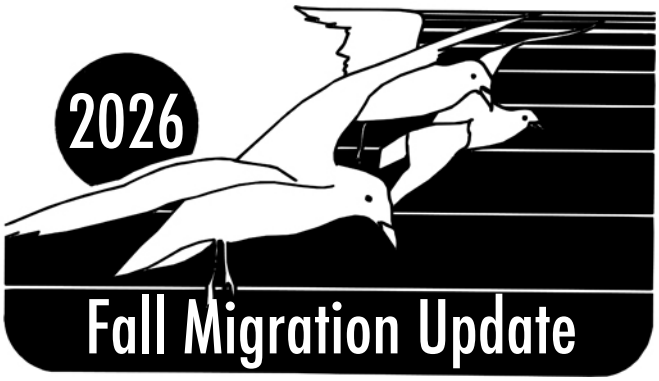
Thus, are TNR programs humane? U. of F. quotes PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals): "Having witnessed the painful deaths of countless feral cats, we cannot in good conscience advocate trapping, altering and releasing (e.g. TNR) as a humane way to deal with overpopulation and homelessness" (https://www.peta.org/about-peta/why-feral-cats/;accessed 1/7/20). After their review of other studies, they state, "free-roaming cats would be better off dead."

Regarding whether TNR programs increase the risk of transmitting diseases to humans or wildlife, they provide data that, besides rabies, toxoplasmosis, hookworms, and roundworms from bites and scratches, cats can be a reservoir for the flu virus and transmit it to humans. Cats also harbor ectoparasites, including fleas, ticks, and mites that can cause cat scratch fever, flea-borne typhus, and plague in humans that have contact with cats. Since feral cats deposit large amounts of urine and feces contaminated with some of the above diseases, when it rains, it contaminates other humans and animals. Otters have been found with Toxoplasma from cats. Feline leukemia virus, not normally found in Florida panthers, was found to cause the deaths of at least 5 panthers and was found in 6 additional panthers transmitted by domestic cats. TNR colonies thus "could have high rates of disease prevalence with an increased potential for human exposure." The Indian River County Health Department strongly supports prohibiting TNR.



TNR colonies attract other cats that have not been vaccinated and are susceptible to disease. People who feed feral-cat colonies also attract raccoons, rodents, and opossums that can bring diseases to these cats. Also, feral TNR cats that have been vaccinated for rabies are unlikely to get booster shots, which means that these cats do not have lifelong immunity to rabies. Furthermore, these cats are still the biggest bird killers besides humans.

U. of F's review of TNR Studies indicates "that population outcomes cannot be predicted simply by the application of TNR: sometimes populations decline, and sometimes they do not. The lack of scientifically applied monitoring in studies makes estimates of population sizes and TNR outcomes unreliable." In their opinion, "It is much more humane to capture a healthy cat, and, if it cannot be adopted, have it euthanized instead of returning it to the outdoors, where it will suffer during its life." The authors maintain, "...based on the best available science, TNR is not a viable solution in most situations." Overall, the authors viewed "TNR strategies are inhumane to the cats themselves and potentially dangerous to humans, pets, and wildlife." Responsible cat owners should neuter their pets and keep them indoors to enjoy their companionship. To do otherwise is to be inhumane to the cat and damaging to the environment.



Indian River County by Will Johnson, Board Member

Each fall, millions of birds pouring out of North America funnel through the Florida peninsula on their way to wintering grounds in the Caribbean and Central and South America. Indian River County's location on Florida's Atlantic Coast makes it a prime place to witness this spectacle as birds follow the coastline south or arrive to our shores from over the ocean.

According to BirdCast (https://birdcast.org), the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's radar-based bird migration tracker, a staggering 29 million migrants have winged their way through Indian River County this fall—substantially more birds than are typically detected here in the season. While it's tempting to attribute this surge to increasing bird populations, the real cause is subtler but no less interesting: frequent northeast crosswinds this season have shifted many species' typical trans-Atlantic flight paths west towards Florida, resulting in unusually high numbers of birds that typically migrate through the peninsula in smaller numbers.

Since the beginning of August, a total of 33 warbler species have been reported to eBird (https://ebird.org/) across Indian River County, including such notable species as Canada Warbler (one report), Cerulean Warbler (one report), Golden-winged Warbler (one report), Nashville Warbler (one report), Connecticut Warbler (four reports), and Swainson's Warbler (three reports). Other noteworthy fall migrants have included a Bell's Vireo at Sebastian Inlet on 29 September, an Eastern Warbling Vireo at Captain Forster Hammock Preserve on 26 Sept, and multiple Alder Flycatchers.

Although October is wrapping up, fall migration is far from over in our area. Many of our common wintering species, such as Savannah Sparrows and Yellow-rumped Warblers, have yet to reach their typical wintertime abundance. Some birds, including many waterfowl, are still moving through the county well into December. There's plenty of time to get out and experience this amazing natural wonder unfolding right in our backyard.

The Magic of Monarchs: A Season of Migration by Missy Weiss, Executive Director



As autumn arrives in Indian River County, the natural world is on the move! In a previous Peligram, we explored the remarkable migration of dragonflies. Now, as we record peak bird migration, another traveler deserves our attention- the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*).

With their striking orange and black wings, monarchs are among the most recognizable butterflies in North America, but their beauty is only part of their story. Eastern monarchs undertake an extraordinary journey, traveling thousands of miles from breeding grounds in Canada and the United States to overwintering forests in central Mexico. Unlike summer generations that live just a few weeks, the fall migrating generation can survive for eight to nine months, allowing it to complete this remarkable journey.

Monarchs depend on milkweed to survive. Females lay their eggs (~300-500 eggs in her lifetime) on milkweed leaves, and the caterpillars feed exclusively on these plants as they grow. As they feed, caterpillars sequester cardiac glycosides from the milkweed sap that ultimately discourages predation. After transforming inside a chrysalis, the adult butterfly emerges ready to sip nectar and continue the cycle.

Unfortunately, habitat loss, pesticide use, spread of protozoan parasites (OE), and climate change threaten monarchs and their migration. We can help by planting native milkweed (not tropical) and nectar-rich flowers, avoiding pesticides and herbicides, and protecting natural habitats.

Here in Florida, we also have monarchs that remain year-round, making our gardens and natural areas important places for them to find food and shelter.

Whether we are watching birds overhead, dragonflies crossing the landscape, or monarchs drifting through our garden, fall reminds us that migration connects ecosystems across remarkable distances. Every native plant we grow and every habitat we protect can make a difference.

This season, look up, look around, and celebrate the incredible travelers sharing our skies and landscapes!

Join us for the new season of Audubon Field Trips by Bill Loftus, Ph.D., Board Member

Every year Pelican Island Audubon Society offers a slate of local and regional field trips, a popular benefit for chapter members. We also welcome non-members to sign up for one of these walks, in hope that they will decide to join us in our mission. The field trips serve to introduce people to natural areas in our area and provide physical and mental health benefits. By experiencing nature together, our members get to know one another which makes our chapter stronger and more cohesive. The trips also advertise our chapter, its mission and our work in the community.

For the 2026-2027 season, we are offering trips to some favorite places and introducing several new areas to visit. Great birding areas in our region that we'll visit include Orlando Wetlands Park, Wakodahatchee and Green Cay Wetlands, and Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. We plan a cooperative trip with Audubon of Martin County to Nubbins Slough near Lake Okeechobee. Locally there are trips planned to the Lagoon Greenway, Captain Forsters, Osprey Acres, and Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge. We are planning a visit to a working cattle ranch west of Vero Beach. Other trips are in the planning stages and may include an overnight van trip to Florida's west coast. All trips are posted on the PIAS website where people may sign up a few weeks before the trip. All trips are free except for van trips which include a fee to cover costs. We hope you will join us on one or more of our trips.



Greetings, bird & nature lovers, and welcome to a new feature in the Peligram. Have you ever looked at a photograph of a bird or some other nature scene and wondered how the photographer did that? There are a lot of ways to take the same photo, and we are going to try and unravel some of the more common methods to simplify the process and, hopefully, make a meaningful improvement in your own photography. But taking the photograph is only part of a larger holistic process requiring several interlocking parts beyond the technical ability to take the photograph that includes specific habitats, what birds and other wildlife you might expect to find there, your creative vision, and a lot of patience.

All these things and more will be discussed in future articles:

- Camera basics for bird & nature photography
- What camera gear will get you the photographs you want to take
- Exploring Indian River County's birding locations and several within a short driving distance outside of the county plus rating them for bird photography
- Understanding the importance of the County's various habitats for wildlife and what you can reasonably expect to find there
- Reviews of assorted camera gear and photography books
- And other odds and ends that relate to bird & nature photography

If you don't have them yet, you might consider buying two books published by Pelican Island Audubon Society for inspiration for your own photography. The books are *Reflections of Blue Cypress (Second Edition)* by Richard & Juanita Baker and *Florida Birds Exposed* by Juanita Baker. *Reflections of Blue Cypress* features engaging photographs by the Bakers of Indian River County's Blue Cypress Lake and its largely unspoiled flora & fauna along with history and poems of this headwater lake of the St. Johns River. *Florida Birds Exposed* features the bird photography of a great many photographers gleaned from years of submissions to the now discontinued bird-of-the-month photo contest in the Peligram. The photographs represent an array of expertise, from beginners to professionals, and with most of the images having been taken in Indian River County this book will motivate you to grab your camera and head out on a photo adventure of your own!

And a little about me: I got into photography when film reigned and I had a darkroom to experience the full circle of taking the photographs, then developing the rolls of film negatives, to printing them with an enlarger. When computers and digital cameras came along with sophisticated image processing software, then I was happy to give up the darkroom and its smelly chemicals for the sterile clack of computer keys and the ruminative glow of a monitor assisted by a deep dive in art school into the computer's creative potential in helping the digital photographer achieve their artistic vision. My passion is photographing rocket launches [see my web site LunarCabin.com for those], followed by birds & nature, landscapes, urban, night, and infrared photography, and most everything else except for people photography, which I don't really care for. For a look into my work, visit my blog at RangeTracking.com. I try to post something new every day to push myself to keep active with my photography. I hope you will be inspired, too.

NEXT MONTH: The Bare Necessities

Birding Classes with Alexis Peralta

Adult Intro to Birding Classes

Course of 4 Saturday Classes

November - December Class Dates	January Class Dates
Nov. 14 - 8:30AM - 2:30PM	Jan. 2 - 8:30AM - 2:30PM
Nov. 21 - 8:30AM - 11:30AM	Jan. 9 - 8:30AM - 11:30AM
Dec. 5 - 8:30AM - 11:30AM	Jan. 23- 8:30AM - 11:30AM
Dec. 12 - 8:30AM - 11:30AM	Jan. 30 - 8:30AM - 11:30AM

This is a hybrid course including classroom & field activity.

No supplies or equipment required.

Birding 2.0 Birding Course

Saturday Classes (8:30AM to Noon), 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.

For more info & register for all courses, go to PelicanIslandAudubon.org

$95 for PIAS members / $125 for non-members (includes membership) Questions: alexismperalta@yahoo.com

FIRE... DANGEROUS OR IMPORTANT?

by Jennifer Satterly
Environmental Educator

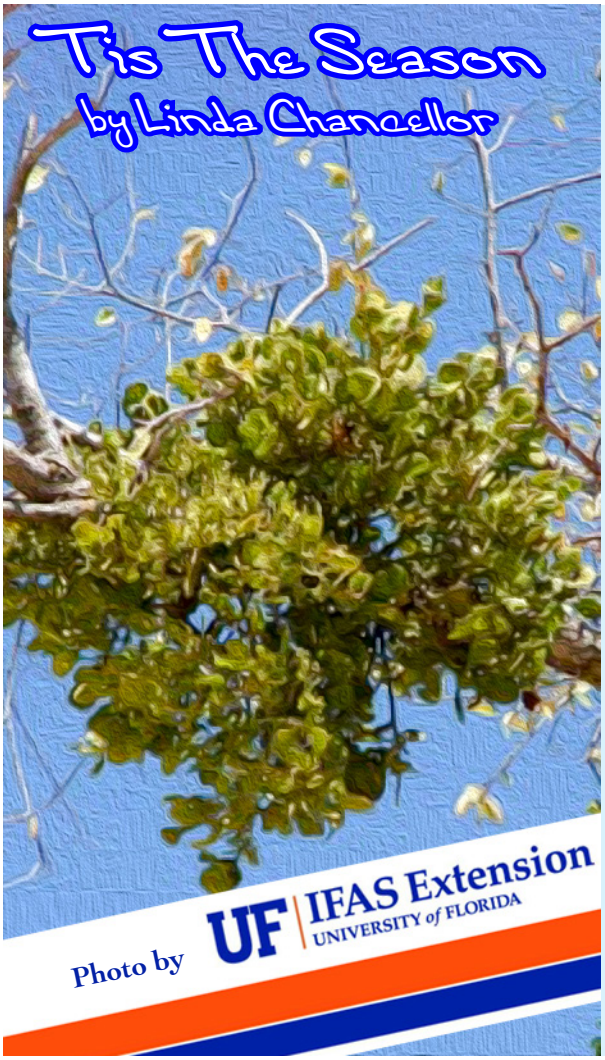
This month we have been learning a lot during our Audubon Advocates after school program. The Audubon Advocate program is a tuition free, 14 week, after school lagoon science education program for 5th graders from four different title one schools. One of our classes was focused on fire and how important it is to Florida. We had numerous visiting educators teaching us about fire and its role here in Florida. A big thank you to Ashley Lingwood (IRC Conservation Lands Division), Susie Arcaro (Seminole Tribe), James Arcaro (Florida Forest Service), Justin Teal (St Sebastian Preserve State Park), and Patrick Sullivan (St. Sebastian Preserve State Park) for educating our 5th graders on such an important topic.

Our classes were informed that Florida has been burning naturally for thousands of years and humans have been using fire for a very long time to manage land even though their techniques and procedures have changed. Florida is the lightning capital of the U.S. due to the number of strikes per square mile. Since Florida gets struck so often by lightning, the native plants that exist in Florida have adapted to the fire and some need the fire to help with seed dispersal and successful seed germination. We learned that wire grass only has a 3% chance of successful germination without fire, but they have an 80-90% success rate after fire has gone through the area. Wow, that is a huge difference! A fire helps clear the land so there is exposed soil for the seeds to land, no competition from other plants, and the soil is full of nutrients from the ash.

Since so many humans have moved to Florida, buildings have been built and roads have been put into place and fire has been suppressed for safety reasons. Since then, we have learned that when Florida does not have fire, the ecosystem changes and our native plants and animals lose the habitat they require. Lack of fire also causes bigger wildfires when they do happen due to a larger fuel load on the ground. Because of this, we have reintroduced fire into our Florida ecosystems with prescribed burns as a form of land management. We learned that a lot of time and preparation goes into these prescribed burns, and it often requires multiple entities working together to accomplish the job.

In learning about prescribed burns, the students were able to see, try on, and use some of the tools and gear that these burn bosses and wildland firefighters use. The excitement amongst the students and teachers was very evident with very big smiles. These are the moments that will be remembered by the students and teachers. These are the moments that might spark an interest in future careers for these students. We are so lucky to have had this opportunity to learn from our local experts.





It is easier to spot the evergreen bushy clumps of Mistletoe when deciduous trees lose their leaves. Two years ago, I spotted several clumps growing in my Laurel Oak. I had been advised to remove Mistletoe because it is parasitic and would weaken the tree. I knew it was harvested and sold during the Christmas season for the "kissing tradition." But I was curious to know more about Mistletoe. Where and how does Mistletoe grow? How does it spread from tree to tree? How is it harvested and prepared for sale? What was the history of Kissing under the Mistletoe?

FYI - Mistletoe grows along the western, southern and eastern parts of the United States. The plant is hemiparasitic meaning it produces its own food through photosynthesis but absorbs water and minerals from the host tree. Female plants produce white berries that are sticky and hold a single seed. Seeds are spread through bird droppings and sticking to the feet and beaks of birds and then smeared onto a branch. When the seed germinates it creates a haustorium which is a tubelike structure that pierces the bark and allows the plant to absorb minerals and water from the host tree.

Mistletoe is usually collected after Thanksgiving to prepare and sell for the holidays.

People used to harvest mistletoe using a shotgun to shoot the clumps out of the trees. But mistletoe is brittle and can break from high falls. Today harvesting the female plants with berries is done by using tall ladders and pole pruners. The plants are then lowered to the ground with rope. Mistletoe contains toxic compounds, so the use of gloves is recommended when handling it. The plants are then hydrated by soaking the stems in water to prevent dehydration and then put into bags with holes to stop deterioration.

The history of the tradition of hanging mistletoe has been attributed to many cultural groups over the years. When Washington Irving returned from England, he wrote *The Sketch Book* published in 1820. He recorded England yuletide traditions and so a footnote from the chapter "Christmas Eve" reads, "The mistletoe is still hung up in farmhouses and kitchens at Christmas, and the young men have the privilege of kissing the girls under it, plucking each time a berry from the bush. When the berries are all plucked the privilege ceases". It soon became an American Tradition.

Using software to appreciate Florida's trees

By Sue and Claire Cook, Ph.D.s

Claire and I are biologists, and applaud everyone's efforts in the PIAS' Trees for Life project. We are protecting biodiversity and making a difference!

As members of the Unitarian-Universalist-Fellowship of Vero Beach (UUFVB) Green Team, we wondered about the ecological impacts of oaks on the UUFVB / Emerson Center campus. What do these trees contribute both as individuals and as part of the urban forest canopy across the Treasure Coast?

Two Internet sites have helped us address these questions. MyTree (https://mytree.itreetools.org /#/) is a tool that collects information about a tree (species, circumference, distance from a building) and estimates its ecological value. Developed by the US Forest Service, it estimates savings on electricity (shading), storm water uptake, and most importantly, how much atmospheric CO_2 is captured and stored as wood – combatting global warming. Using MyTree, we have found that 18 of the live oaks on our campus have sequestered 115 tons of CO_2 in their leaves, trunks and roots, removing 3.7 tons from the air this year.

To evaluate the environmental value of trees across Indian River County, we use TreeEquityScore (TES; https://www.treeequityscore.org/) that evaluates the "tree-friendliness" of neighborhoods. On a scale of 50 to 100, Audubon House has a maximum score of 100 with a low heat value of -4.7 °F compared to the area average, while the Gifford Gardens neighborhood has a TES score of 80 and an elevated heat value of +8.1 °F.

We look forward to sharing and discussing these tools and data with other PIAS members!



Evaluating trees at UUFVB.



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.

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.

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

November-December Events with Volunteer Needs

Nov. 14 9-11AM	Weed Wrangle at Sebastian Stormwater Park
Nov. 21 10AM-2PM	Manatee Festival at Manatee Museum in Fort Pierce
Dec. 7-10 4:45-6:30PM	Audubon Advocate Graduation at Audubon House
Dec. 14 8-9PM	Holiday Pot Luck Cleanup

January - February Events with Volunteer Needs

January 2	Ask Me About The Birds at Jaycee Park
January 16	Landscape Conference at the IG Center
January 23	Quail Valley Charity 5K at Riverside Park
January 30	Adopt-A-Road - Oslo Road at Audubon House
February 5 - 7	GardenFest at Riverside Park
February 27	NatureFest at the Manatee Museum

Contact Lorna for information on other volunteer opportunities with Pelican Island Audubon Society!

For more information & to volunteer, 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

_____ ADDRESS

_____ CITY, STATE ZIP

_____ E-MAIL

Enclosed is my:

$_____ $30 for annual membership

$_____ $35 for family membership

$_____ $100 Scrub-Jay sustaining membership

$_____ $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

Printed by the Indian River County Sheriff's Office Inmate Design Publication Program.



7th Transforming Landscapes for a Sustainable Future

January 16, 2027
at The IG Center

1590 9th Street SW (Oslo Road)
Vero Beach, FL 32962

Conference Schedule



8:00AM	**Registration** plus native plants on sale from Native Plant Nurseries
9:00-9:50	**Dr. Craig N. Huegel,** Curator, University of South Florida Botanical Garden, owner and operator of Hawthorn Hill Native Wildflowers, and teaches biology at St. Petersburg College. *Our Need for Nature and the Concept of Creating It*
10:00-10:50	**Kirsten Hines**, award winning writer, wildlife photographer, and speaker whose work champions the connection between people & nature, *Keeping Florida Wild*
10:50-11:10	Break I **Native plants on sale from Native Plant Nurseries**
11:10-12:00PM	**Dr. Gage Lapierre,** Post Doctoral Associate Manager, UF Native Plant Nursery, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, *The Florida Meadow - A Future of Ecological Enhancement*
12:00-1:00	**Lunch with Box Lunches included in the $25 admission ticket**
1:00-1:50	**Shelby Radcliff,** Co-founder & partner at Emergent Gardens, a landscape design practice based in North Central Florida, *Lawn: What Is It Good For?*
2:00-2:50	**Dr. Grant Gilmore,** Senior Scientist, Estuarine, Coastal & Ocean Science, Inc. Vero Beach, FL, *Rewilding an Old Orange Grove: An Ecology Professor's Experiment*
3:00-3:30	**Dr. Richard Baker** - Discussion and Summary

Tickets are $25 per person & includes a box lunch. Purchase tickets online at

www.PelicanIslandAudubon.org

Phone: 772-567-3520 | Email: piaudubon@yahoo.com

Sponsors

Become a conference sponsor and get your name or business listed here! For details, see back for more information.

$10,000
- Albert & Virginia Alley

$2,500

$2,000

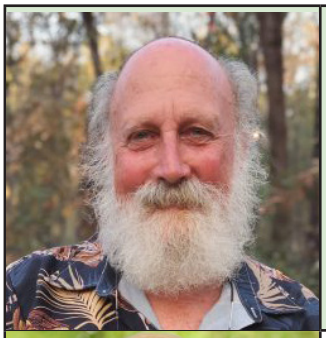
$1,500

$1,000
- Eugenia Chapter - Florida Native Plant Society
- Kay Gibson
- Grand Harbor Audubon
- Indian River Exchange Packers, Inc.
- Native Butterfly Flowers Nursery

$500
- Clean Water Coalition
- Garden Club of Indian River County
- Save The Manatee Club

$250
- Anonymous
- Environmental Learning Center
- Indian River Land Trust
- Ocean Research & Conservation Association

Speaker Biographies



Dr. Craig N. Huegel, Curator, University of South Florida Botanical Garden, owner and operator of Hawthorn Hill Native Wildflowers, and teaches biology at St. Petersburg College. Former faculty member , Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, University of Florida where he cofounded the Cooperative Urban Wildlife Extension Program. Author of *Native Florida Plants for Shady Landscapes, Native Wildflower and Other Ground Covers for Florida Landscapes*, and *Naïve Plant landscaping for Florida Wildlife.* Uses central Florida landscapes as laboratories to evaluate native plants and grows a wide variety of species (mostly wildflowers) that are not commonly propagated elsewhere.



Kirsten Hines is an award winning writer, wildlife photographer, and speaker whose work champions the connection between people and nature. Relying on her biology background, she blends scientific insight with artistic vision to tell personalized stories that spark curiosity and conservation action. Kirsten's ten books include *Birds of Florida, Wild Florida: An Animal Odyssey, Attracting Birds to South Florida Gardens and Recovering Caribbean Nature*. Her photography also appears in exhibitions, public art programs, and major nature photography showcases. A lively speaker and top rated instructor, she travels widely to teach, guide, and inspire. Learn more at KirstenHines.com.



Dr. Gage LaPierre is a Research Associate at the University of Florida. He recently completed his Doctorate of Philosophy, studying groundcover restoration at the School of Forest Resources & Conservation. With a Master of Science in Ecological Restoration and a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science, Gage's academic and professional journey has been dedicated to understanding and restoring natural ecosystems. In his current role, Gage is actively involved in developing the Florida Native Seed Partnership, a key initiative for ecological restoration and enhancement. While in school, Gage founded the UF Native Plant Nursery Project and continues to work to expand it into a comprehensive program or center within IFAS. During this time, Gage also acted as land manager for the Natural Area Teaching Laboratory (NATL), where he remains connected as a member of its advisory board. Gage's is also a dedicated educator, having served as a lead instructor and teaching assistant for various UF courses, and regularly conducts tours and workshops to share his expertise with students and the wider community.



Shelby Radcliffe is a co-founder and partner at Emergent Gardens, a landscape design practice based in North Central Florida. With her team, she designs and creates gardens that bring together beauty, human experience, and ecological richness. A desire to challenge conventional landscapes is central to her vision for creating life-affirming gardens in the everyday places we inhabit. Her approach is informed by a broad creative and horticultural background spanning native plant propagation, public gardens, horticultural education, garden installations, and visual art.



Dr. Grant Gilmore, is a marine research scientist and ecology professor, president of Tropical Ecoscience, Inc. a not for profit research and education organization. He taught undergraduate and graduate courses in terrestrial and marine ecology at Indian River State College, Florida Institute of Technology and the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution for 32 years. In 1988 he purchased a two acre field of grass for a home site and experimented with rewilding this treeless terrain. With little horticultural intervention he let the plants tell him a story. A forest evolved. Over this 38 year period he recorded and mapped the development of plant communities on his property. He also recorded the succession of animal assemblages associated with these plants (mostly reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals).

Sponsorship Opportunities Available

Sponsors donating $2,500 or more will 20 complimentary tickets; $2,000 = 16 tickets; $1,500 = 12 tickets; $1,000 = 8 tickets; $500 = 4 tickets; $250 = 2 tickets. At sponsor levels of $500 or above, the sponsor will be given a table for their organization to provide information to conference participants. Sponsors will also be listed on the program, flyers, and in our advertising. Thank you in advance for your generous contribution to help put on the 7th Transforming Landscapes Conference!