

# The JAY

*The mission of the Seminole Audubon Society is to promote awareness and protection of the plants and animals in the St. Johns River basin in order to sustain the beneficial coexistence of nature and humans.*

June – July – August 2016 A Publication of Seminole Audubon Society

## Protect Gemini Springs

## Competing Solar Amendments What to do?



The City of DeBary is trying to acquire 102 acres of conservation land located in the Gemini Springs Addition conservation tract to facilitate private development and profits in their transit-oriented development area (TOD). This land was acquired in 1999 by the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) using funds provided by the Florida Department of Transportation.

**See Springs, page 14**

In the Sunshine State there is going to be a great deal of confusion as two competing solar energy amendments are on the ballot this year. Let's take a quick look at them so they make some sense.

Amendment 4 is on the ballot this August and the language is mind numbing. Installing solar panels is expensive, and they add value to the properties that use them. Residential properties already get a tax exemption for adding solar panels, and this Amendment would give the same exemption to businesses. The idea is to provide tax relief for large-

**See Solar, page 13**

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# WELCOME

## NEW MEMBERS

### and Members NEW to our Chapter

Bonnie Adres	DeBary
Cinda Benz	DeBary
Mike Brown	Osteen
Steve Brown	Deltona
Mary Cain	Sanford
Denise Connell	Sanford
Joanne Dougherty	DeBary
Mary Ferm	Lake Mary
Jim Galeza	Deltona
Celeste Garyn	Sanford
Sandra Gray	DeBary

Sonja Greenlee	Sanford
Mark Harkins	Sanford
Martha Honaker	Lake Mary
Bill & Linda Long	Sanford
Nancy Martin	Sanford
Mercedes Martishius	Sanford
Victoria Meyers	Sanford
Loretta Morgan	Sanford
Gloria Newberger	Lake Mary
Noreen Nickerson	Lake Mary
Eve Parks	Deltona
Margaret Rawowski	Sanford
Gary Secheverell	Deltona
Marcia Shapiro	Sanford
Stan Smith	Sanford
Charles Wilhelm	Sanford
Candace Zarbock	Sanford

# Toxic Chemicals in our Water

The State is planning to increase the allowable limits of several cancer-causing chemicals in Florida waters. The DEP is updating standards for what is known as the Human Health Criteria. The new list includes 43 dangerous compounds already identified and adds new standards for 39 more. This action will weaken the restrictions on roughly two dozen cancer-causing chemicals that can be discharged into our rivers, lakes, streams and coastal waters.

There are 82 toxic substances covered under the new rules and the vast majority would have lower standards than recommendations from the Environmental Protection Agency. Of the 43 chemicals now regulated, a couple of dozen would see limits increased beyond those currently allowed. The toxic chemical benzene has had its allowable limits increased nearly three-fold and dioxin will remain unregulated, even though the EPA recommends limits.

Seminole Audubon Society calls for the Florida DEP to reconsider these new regulations. Polluters should be held accountable and not allowed to add dangerous substances to our public waters. We believe that all toxic chemicals should be regulated and that the standards should be strengthened, providing Florida residents with the highest level of protection.

**Pam Meharg**

## Seminole Audubon meets up with St Johns Riverkeeper

St. Johns Riverkeeper and a team of river advocates recently completed the Save the St. Johns Tour, a 13-day journey of the entire 310 miles of the river. They embarked on the Tour to raise awareness about the urgent threats facing the St. Johns and engage and activate people and organizations throughout the watershed in a collaborative campaign for the river's protection. Some Seminole Audubon members met up with the group for the Meet and Greet in Sanford. The Riverkeeper, Lisa Rinaman, and her team shared their thoughts about how to help protect the St. Johns River. The next day Leslie Martin and Pam Meharg joined the St Johns Riverkeeper and

approximately 50 paddlers to kayak from Katie's Landing in Seminole County to the Swamp House River Front Grill in DeBary, where they ate lunch. It



was a great day on the Wekiva and St. Johns Rivers with other individuals and organizations that love and want to protect these waters.



## Program Notes

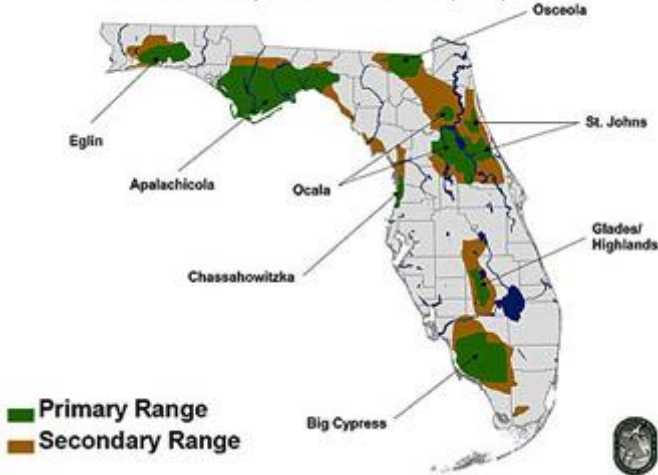
### March

Our well-attended **Bears and Such** program was held on March 13. Alexander Gulde, Wildlife Assistance Program Administrator, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), was our guest speaker. Alex covered many of the challenges currently facing the FWC. There are over 600 non-native wildlife species in Florida, competing with our native species for food and habitat. Their current priorities include: Lion fish, Burmese python and Argentine black and white tegu (a lizard). In early 2015 a Wildlife Incident Management System was instituted which allows for comprehensive collection, mapping and analysis of



reports. This has allowed them to be more proactive and to increase their public education efforts in the

**Black Bear Populations in Florida (2008)**



areas having the most problems. Half of the nuisance calls received concern bears. Coyote issues generate the next largest volume of calls. Food is the primary issue in both bear and coyote conflicts.

The Florida black bear, which once roamed the entire state, is now reduced to four core populations and two remnant groups. The Ocala-St. Johns population is the largest population. Alex discussed bear behaviors, diet, and lifecycle. He also stressed the importance of wildlife corridors.

**April**



Our potluck/Silent auction/ Bird ID program was a huge success this year on April 10th. There was plenty of chicken and corn bread to go around along with delicious dishes members brought to share. Leslie Martin displayed photos of various bird species and the audience worked to identify them. We were fortunate to have two speakers. Greg Bretz presented a program on Least Terns. The timing was perfect because the colony of Least Terns had only recently arrived for their annual visit

to the Lake Monroe marina. Tom Tobin shared his experience of documenting a bald eagle's nest at Merritt Island. He made several trips and took photos of the parents and two eaglets as they matured. Toward the end of Tom's visits one young eagle was missing, which created an unsolved mystery.



# Trip Notes

## Orlando Wetlands Park

Seventeen members enjoyed the tour of the City of Orlando's wastewater treatment acreage in Christmas on March 16th. Rachel, the OWP education specialist, drove the truck pulling the trailer on which everyone could sit comfortably.



**Photo: Tom Tobin**

Our guide was Mary Keim, a volunteer with Orange Audubon who recently retired from Seminole State. We were after the spotted vermilion flycatcher;

none were seen today, but we did see more than 30 species including white pelican, savannah sparrow, black-and-white warbler, black-bellied whistling duck, pied-billed grebe, northern harrier, and limpkin. A lone roseate spoonbill was a delightful find as was a wood stork rookery.

**Peggy Stickney**



**Photo: Woodstorks Sarah Donlan**



**Photo: White Ibis Tom Tobin**

## **Black Bear Wilderness Area**



Seminole Audubon had a good turnout for the rugged hike into Black Bear Wilderness Area on Saturday, March 19th and everybody had a great time. We saw 42 species and got some great birds. Two barred owls and a limpkin posed for us and we all were taken by the spectacular breeding plumage of the snowy egret. We saw red-bellied, downy, and pileated woodpeckers. We were surprised by the slightly early arrival of a couple of red-eyed vireos. Black Bear Wilderness Area is one of Seminole County's Natural Lands properties and certainly worth a visit if you have not been there.

**Marguerite Terwilleger**

## **Fort De Soto Trip—April 17 - 20, 2016**

Every year Seminole Audubon offers an overnight trip to a place where we can see migrating birds and there is none better than Fort De Soto in Tierra Verde, Florida, on the Gulf Coast. This year four of us (Judy Clark, Sarah Donlan, Chuck Honaker, and Leslie Martin) attended and spent a wonderful day meeting at the Mulberry Tree and walking through the scrub and trees of that beach area. Some life birds were among this year's selection. They included: warbling vireo, Cape May warbler, prothonotary warbler, black-throated blue warbler, worm-eating warbler, hooded warblers, and orchard oriole. Some of us had many more to add to our life lists and all of these fit in nicely.

Many, many shore birds in breeding plumage graced the beaches, in amorous moods and pairing off. This made it easy to discern which was male and which was female. Reddish egrets doing their elaborate dance, black skimmers, great egrets, and great blue herons in beautiful feathers were a delight to see. A sighting of a rare Glaucous gull made our day!







Tent camping at Fort De Soto is wonderful, with large campsites and adequate amenities. Usually this place ranks as one of the top 10 beaches in the U.S. We are never disappointed. One night a quick windstorm blew up, which resulted in our tent changing locations in the campsite. Our rain fly became a sail on the unsecured tent. Having been out on a bike ride, we were more interested in getting photos of least terns, which we had seen on a remote beach. Birds came first, with a quick run, which proved unproductive for getting pictures of the terns. They flew away to parts unknown. Back to the camp to drag/relocate our tent and mattresses to the correct position. We enjoyed fantastic sunsets and great camp food. Back we go next year for a rerun. Please join us!



**Photos and article: Sarah Donlan**

## Forgotten Coast Screening

Seminole Audubon Society, along with the Center for Earth Jurisprudence, Florida Wildlife Corridor, Friends of the Wekiva River, Orange Audubon Society, Sierra Club Central Florida Group, and the League of Women Voters of Orange & Seminole Counties, co-sponsored the Central Florida

screening of *Florida's Forgotten Coast: Return to Wild Florida* at the Orlando Science Center on May 10. An amazing turnout filled the auditorium for two showings! This important documentary reminds us that Florida's wildlife corridors are essential for nature and humans.



The evening included a panel discussion during which Dr. Jay Exum highlighted the Wekiva-Ocala Greenway, a vital wildlife corridor closer to home. The Wekiva-Ocala Greenway contains dozens of natural springs, the greatest expanse of sand pine scrub in the world, and the largest black bear population in Florida. It is an area filled with life that is dependent on the preservation of this corridor.

Under *Preservation 2000* and earlier state conservation land acquisition programs, along with the most recent program, *Florida Forever*, the Division of State Lands and St. Johns River Water Management District, in cooperation with local partners, have succeeded in bringing thousands of acres within the Wekiva-Ocala Greenway into public conservation. But there are vital **pieces missing**. Before *Florida Forever* lost its funding, the research and delineation of the properties necessary to protect the Wekiva-Ocala Greenway was completed and awaited funding for completion.

In 2014, 75% of Florida's voters approved Amendment 1, the Water and Land Conservation Amendment, which dedicates one-third of doc stamp taxes to the Land Acquisition Trust Fund. That money was intended to go to the *Florida Forever* program so environmentally sensitive lands, like the Wekiva-Ocala Greenway, could be protected. Please let your legislators know that you **support the use of Amendment 1 funds to purchase the remaining lands** needed to complete this corridor!

Need more Information? Visit [http://www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/FFAnnual/Wekiva\\_Ocala\\_Greenway.pdf](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/FFAnnual/Wekiva_Ocala_Greenway.pdf)

# Rare Birds Find New Home



**Photo: Ken Schmidt**

In late July, 2015, I watched and listened as two swallow-tailed kites circled my house and the nearby wetland. This was the first time I had seen any in my Altamonte Springs neighborhood. What a surprise it was to watch one land in the top of a pine tree overlooking my house and then make that a bedroom for more than a week. I thought the two might be late for the mass migration down to South America.

True to most birds' amazing sense of direction and location, two kites returned to that same tree on or around March 18, 2016, and within days after that a nest had been built. I'm presuming they are the same two from last year. But two isn't enough. Three and more kites I've now seen surfing the sky above me and I've since learned they are "social" raptors. The nest exterior appears to be mostly Spanish moss and pine needles; about 18 inches across the top and approximately 24 inches top to bottom. It's in a fork of two or three large branches, very near the top of the high, long-needle pine. In April I watched the nest whip side to side in strong winds and thought it might be lost. One day I watched one of the kites defend it against a crow.

In the first week of May I was sure I heard a higher-pitched and somewhat squeaky kite sound way up there. Only a drone could tell me for sure.

On Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup> I sat in my lounge chair on the back patio to do some serious bird watching. At 9:05 AM a head appeared above the nest top reflecting early sun. Was it mama or baby? Then at 9:08 I heard calling from distant kites which soon came into view. One kite landed on the nest. I assume it quickly exchanged some food then it left just as quickly. I was amazed to see a second kite then land at the nest and repeat the same behavior. I've read that non-breeding birds may assist with feeding. At 10:34 a kite landed and left almost instantly. Sources say the birds capture prey in talons, transfer it to their beak and then to the female on the nest.

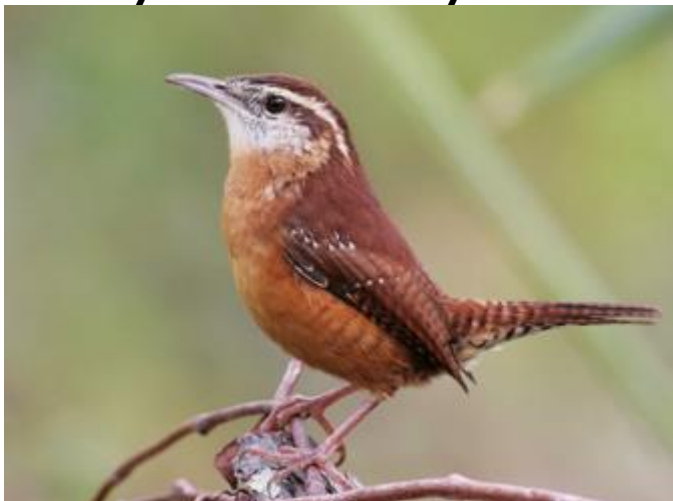
At 10:55 two kites seemed to "buzz" the nest like fighter jets. Perhaps this was a warning that they were coming in for a landing because immediately thereafter one did land on the nest. Then the second landed on the nest. So by my count there were three kites on the nest at the same time. Then two kites left the nest one by one. High-pitched kite sounds came from the nest. At 11:35 the same behavior was observed. Two kites landed simultaneously, stayed a few seconds and then left one by one 20 seconds apart. I still can't say whether there is more than one chick in the nest. I need that drone.

It's thought that only several thousand pairs of kites still breed in North America. Large population declines were recorded at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and then again about mid-century. The kites used to winter and breed up the Mississippi into 21 states but now they are only documented in the SE seven, most breeding in Florida. Wetlands are their preferred habitat and the history of wetland preservation is not something that makes America proud. Freshwater wetlands in the prairie states have long been lost to agriculture. The wetland behind me was required as a permanent drainage easement when a housing development was permitted years ago. That requirement may now be helping a species of unbelievable grace and beauty survive another generation.

**Sam Kendall**



## They Will Nest Anywhere!



**Photo: Ken Schmidt**

Although we do not use our canoe very often, we did have a trip planned in early May. The canoe is stored upside down on two sawhorses. When we went to move the canoe to the car for transport we discovered Carolina wrens had built a nest on the underside of one of the seats. There were eggs in the nest.



From all the stories we collected during the year SAS had Carolina wren as our featured bird, I know this species will nest in just about anything from a boot to a bar-b-que grill. I figured if we were able to move the nest to a nearby location the mother would probably return to the nest. I remembered Dr. Richard Poole, who builds nest boxes, mentioning he puts a flowerpot on its side and places it in a hanging basket for Carolina wrens. Fortunately these were things we had.

We placed a shepherd's hook at one end of the canoe. A pot was then placed on its side in a hanging wire basket and the basket was hung in the hook. We carefully moved the nest from the canoe seat to the pot. As the opening of the pot

seemed rather large, a wicker basket was added to partially block the opening of the pot.



You will be pleased to know that almost immediately the mother wren flew into the nesting structure. As I write this, the parents are feeding nestlings that should fledge in a few days. I would not encourage anyone to move a nest, but if it becomes necessary, providing an alternate safe structure in close proximity to original nest location did work in our case.

In the images you can see a close-up of the nesting structure we put together, the sawhorses where the canoe was and the placement of the shepherd's hook with nesting structure. **Faith Jones**

## There's No Place Like Home

Faith Jones reported a lightning strike on her owl nest box last July 5<sup>th</sup>. Here is a series of three photos showing 'there's no place like home.' In the first photo one of the Barred Owl parents returns to inspect the damaged box.



# The Heart of the Wren

Once in a while you get to see nature in action, up-close and not necessarily the way you would choose. In the Christmas cactus on my front porch just last year, nature unfolded over a series of days that let us know just how harsh conditions can be, even in your own 'home, sweet home.'

A pair of Carolina wrens decided to set up residence in our flowerpot, deep inside a sizeable Christmas cactus, under the eaves and secure from the weather. We watched from our front window as they built their nest and laid 5 eggs, all tidy and neat and delighted with their plan as only wrens can be. If you've ever heard a Carolina wren couple making plans and gathering materials, their adoration for each other is unmistakable. It's one of nature's most delightful insights.



Little Sweetie sat dutifully on her nest awaiting the hatching. We checked out our window each morning to see if all was well and UH OH, it wasn't. Stretched between one of our Grecian-style porch pillars and the pot was a yellow-and-brown-striped chicken or rat snake, stretched as far as his body could go. But NOT QUITE FAR ENOUGH!! He was struggling to leverage himself, but had miscalculated the distance and his head had dropped down to within a foot of the ground. Time and distance being what it is, QUICK GET SOMETHING!! Ken immediately, grabbed the trash-picker-upper-clamper stick that we keep in the garage and rushed to remove him from the area. All went well and we relocated him two doors down in a side yard, just waiting for another critter.

We decided that we needed to keep an eye out, just in case the snake came back, each of us taking turns walking by that window during the day. Lo



In photo two, owl parent takes a closer look at what remains of home. Jimmy Jones then repaired the box.



Photo three shows the owls obviously approved of the renovations ----TWINS!!!



and behold! Two hours later he was back and this time he had climbed to the point he was on the edge of the nest and Little Sweetie was hopping around almost in his face! Now, if you have spent time observing Carolina wrens, you know that they make a sound that could be mistaken for a rattlesnake about to strike and both wrens were doing just that. Quick! Got the Picker and this time Ken took the persistent snake up the block and around the corner. He was a quick one. Again he came back, or one of his cousins, at least a close relative! Four times we went through our drill, rescuing Little Sweetie and her babies, sometimes in more precarious positions. There were a number of additional attempts by snakes, but we prevailed!



While I consider myself a lover of all birds, only two will stop me in my tracks and make my heart jump for joy: Eastern Bluebirds and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. The Ruby-throated Hummingbird is Florida's only native hummingbird. They typically arrive in Florida late February or early March. Males arrive approximately two weeks before females to establish territories. Ruby-throated hummingbirds travel from Central America and Mexico, nonstop across the Gulf of Mexico, until they reach the United States. Then in October, they make the long trip all over again back to their wintering range. They must gain several ounces of body weight to survive the long difficult journey. Some older or weaker hummingbirds will overwinter in the southern part of Florida. Some SAS members have observed them at their feeders all winter long.



Glory Be!! We did manage to keep those eggs and subsequent babies safe until one day, we saw Little Sweetie giving them a flying lesson as they left the nest. And then this year, again rattlesnake noise on our front porch--no baby wrens there to worry about--but upon inspection, Little Sweetie was hopping around to warn us of a Black Snake that was by the screen door. She's looking out for us now, and I know she will whenever she can.

**Sarah Donlan**

## Ruby-throated Hummingbirds

**By Rhonda Ockay (from Florida Bluebird Society newsletter, used with permission)**

Their diet primarily consists of tiny bugs and nectar from flowers. Brightly-colored tubular flowers are the most attractive to hummingbirds. Popular hummingbird flowers in our region are: bottlebrush, butterfly bush, cardinal flower, cigar plant, firebush, coral honeysuckle, torenia, and trumpet creeper vine, just to name a few. The preferred method of feeding our jeweled friends would be to offer nectar-producing flowers in your garden. Hummingbirds are capable of surviving without feeders; however, placing feeders in our yard gives us an up-close view of these tiny birds. With that comes a responsibility to ensure the feeders and nectar that we offer are safe; otherwise, we could be unintentionally harming or killing unsuspecting hummingbirds.

Store-bought nectar and red food coloring should be **avoided** as red dye can be harmful to hummingbirds. Research has shown that hummingbirds do not metabolize red dye and it can damage their kidneys. The red color of your feeder is enough to attract hummingbirds, and the color of the nectar is irrelevant. Experts recommend using a 4:1 ratio (4 parts water to 1 part pure granulated cane sugar). Raw and



organic sugar **should not** be used as they contain too much iron, which can be deadly to hummingbirds. Artificial sweeteners, brown sugar, honey, molasses, and commercial drinks should be **avoided** as well.



Sugar water will ferment quickly, especially in the Florida heat; therefore, special attention must be given to changing nectar often and cleaning feeders. Cloudy nectar and feeders with moldy black spots contain bacteria that can cause a fatal infection in hummingbirds. The infection causes the hummingbird's tongue to swell, rendering it unable to eat, and it will slowly starve to death. A mother hummingbird also can pass the infection to her babies. The nectar should be changed daily in temperatures over 88 degrees. Please refer to the quick reference guide for a schedule of recommended nectar changes.

To clean your feeder, run it under hot water and scrub with a bottle brush. Miniature brushes are sold that clean feeder ports and crevices difficult to reach with a larger brush (Amazon \$4). If you see black mold, soak the feeder in a solution of ¼ cup of bleach to one gallon of water for an hour. Scrub the feeder and thoroughly rinse, and ensure the feeder is completely dry before refilling. Do not use soap as it leaves a harmful residue which will be ingested by the hummingbird. To make things easier on yourself and safer for the hummingbirds, consider an easy-to-clean feeder such as the Hummzinger (Amazon \$19).

Ants and bees can be pests at hummingbird feeders. Bees are attracted to yellow, so avoid feeders containing yellow, and especially yellow feeding ports. The easiest way to protect against ants is with an ant moat, a small water-filled cup that hangs above the feeder. Ants will not cross water; therefore, placing this barrier is a guaranteed deterrent. Ant moats are inexpensive, and some feeders such as the Hummzinger come

with a built-in ant moat. Do not use petroleum jelly, oil, grease, or double-stick tape. These chemicals are extremely dangerous when they get on a bird's feathers. They act like glue and inhibit flight, leaving birds susceptible to predators and starvation. Also be on the lookout for praying mantis and cats, as both prey on hummingbirds.

Another consideration when attracting hummingbirds, as well as other birds, is providing a fresh and clean source of water for drinking and bathing. A shallow bird bath works well, and hummingbirds love to fly through misters to cool off.

Proper care of hummingbird feeders is a significant commitment, but not impossible. Hummingbird feeders provide quick fuel for a hungry hummer and allow them a few moments to dazzle us with their magnificence. Remember: natural food sources are always better, so don't forget to add a few potted plants or a hummingbird garden to your yard.

## Citizen Science Projects

### Natural Lands Surveys

At sunrise during the first weekend of each month since December our survey team has been walking the new loop trail at **Black Bear Wilderness Area** in Sanford. We previously surveyed a different route on this Seminole County property in 2007. During the current year's surveys, we have documented 76 avian species, river otter, bobcat, and feral pigs. In May we added spotted sandpiper, ruby-throated hummingbird, yellow-billed cuckoo, northern waterthrush and blackpoll warbler to our species list.

### Project ColonyWatch

SAS has been conducting surveys of the wading bird nesting colony on Jane Isle in Lake Jesup since 2001. Under the direction of Lewis Gray, and the use of David & Marguerite Terwilleger's boat, surveys were conducted in February and April. The April survey documented probable nesting of twelve species. White ibis were the most numerous with 397 individuals counted. The next survey will be done in early June.

### Shorebird Database – Least Tern Project

The least terns have returned to Monroe's on the Lake in Sanford for another nesting season. The SAS monitoring team is visiting regularly and documenting the activity. Although the colony is slightly smaller this year, there is lots of activity with

these dainty little birds flying in and out as they feed on the small fish they find in Lake Monroe. It is anticipated that the colony will be active until early July.



**Photo: Shirley Reilly**

### **Florida Breeding Bird Atlas II**

For the last five years, we have been keeping track of breeding activity in our area for the Florida Breeding Birds Atlas II. The final breeding season for this project is 2016. The "safe dates" for most species run through the end of July, so we are still interested in any species that is breeding in the area and may not yet be reported. Full details are available at [www.fosbba.org](http://www.fosbba.org). We owe a debt of gratitude to Greg Bretz, Seminole County Coordinator for the BBAII project. Greg has spent countless hours searching for evidence of breeding, collecting data from other sources, and submitting it to the database. We look forward to the results of this important project.

## **SAS History**

Myra Platel has been reading the SAS Minutes from 1949 – 1966. From the notes she took, Myra intends to write stories of our history for future newsletters.

We have been under the impression our Chapter was formed in 1949. Myra has been able to determine the November 28, 1949 meeting was actually a re-organizational meeting for the Chapter, not an initial organization. Further research is needed to determine if any older records exist. Any volunteer interested in researching this would be welcome.

We look forward to interesting stories about our history in future issues of The JAY.

## **Earth Day 2016 Celebrations**



It was a busy April for Seminole Audubon Outreach! We had a booth at both the Lake Lotus and the Casselberry Earth Day Celebrations. Our display showcases the Florida Scrub Jay and the Least Tern projects. Children could stop by our booth and 'get banded' as they made their own bracelet with different color beads signifying the various bands put on the scrub jays. Thank you to Pam Meharg, Marty Shepherd, and Leslie Martin for staffing the booths.



## **Like Us!**

If you have a Facebook account, please take a few minutes to 'like us' and invite your friends to like us as well. If you have bird photos or information of interest to members, please email it to



[seminoleaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:seminoleaudubon@gmail.com).



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Scan the QR Code below with your mobile device to go to our web site.



### Solar from page 1

scale solar farms or commercial installations. Big box retailers and smaller strip malls could lease their rooftops for solar systems without hiking their property taxes. Seminole Audubon Society supports this Amendment.

Amendment 1 is backed by the Consumers for Smart Solar and will be on the ballot this November. This Amendment is funded by the utilities and prevents changes in state law that would open the market in Florida and allow third party solar leases.

Third party solar accounted for 72% of residential solar installed in the country in 2014. This amendment codifies policies that eliminate competition and restricts the free market. Seminole Audubon Society opposes this Amendment.

So, it is simple. Vote YES in August for Amendment 4 and vote NO in November on Amendment 1.

**Pam Meharg**

### Membership Application

#### For New Audubon Members Only

JOIN for the special rate of \$20.00 for 1 year - that's \$15 off the regular membership dues!

When you join Seminole Audubon Society you also become a member of Audubon of Florida and the National Audubon Society. Your membership benefits include our newsletter *The JAY*, *Audubon Magazine*, and the *Florida Naturalist*. Most importantly, your membership will help us work for better preservation of the environment for the benefit of all species, including mankind.

Make checks payable to:  
**National Audubon Society,**  
and mail with this form to:  
**Seminole Audubon Society**  
**P.O. Box 2977**  
**Sanford FL 32772-2977**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

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\_\_\_\_\_  
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If you join elsewhere, please use our Chapter Code:  
**C6ZE310Z**

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Seminole Associate Membership  
\$10.00 / year  
Available to Audubon Society members assigned to other chapters. Make check payable to Seminole Audubon Society.  
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**Memberships are good gifts!**

# The JAY

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Sanford FL 32772-2977

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**[www.seminoleaudubon.org](http://www.seminoleaudubon.org)**

## ***Springs from page 1***

The land was designated conservation land to be used as mitigation for damage caused to wetlands when construction was done on SR 417 and I-4.

The City of DeBary has other options to develop their TOD area that do *not* require the use of conservation lands. The option they have chosen will allow the property to be used to facilitate private development of 2,400 residential units and 258,000 square feet of non-residential space and a stormwater pond. The use of public conservation lands for private development violates the intent of the original agreement establishing the Gemini Springs Addition tract and also violates the public trust. Publicly owned conservation lands should not be taken from the public for private development.

The conservation value of this land was reaffirmed by the SJRWMD in 2012 when a Land Assessment was completed and the District recommended that the property be transferred to Volusia County with a Conservation Easement attached. This would have ensured that the property was safe from development and remained in public hands. The protection that this land provides to the watershed of Gemini Springs would have been preserved. We need the SJRWMD to reject this plan and transfer the tract to Volusia County as their staff recommended in 2012. Many people came out to a rally on Saturday, May 14th to protect Gemini Springs.

***Pam Meharg***