

# 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.*

November - December 2014

A Publication of Seminole Audubon Society



## BIG SIT! Report

The SAS team, *Seminole Sitters*, competed in the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Big SIT! on Sunday October 12 at Lake Jesup Park. The Big SIT! is a species count described by its sponsor, *BirdWatcher's Digest*, as "Birding's Most Sedentary Event." Unlike most bird counts that involve traveling to various spots along a route or within an area, the Big SIT! is done from a 17' circle. The 2014 Big SIT! consisted of 184 competing circles in 50 states and countries.

Our team included sixteen birders this year. Many arrived before the sun, but not before the boaters. The location where we have erected the canopy in previous years was under water forcing us to adjust our location slightly.

New species for our Big SIT! count included least bittern and purple gallinules. We were happy to see American bitterns, king rails, our friendly limpkins, and painted buntings. Although many of our regularly-seen species were absent this year, our final count was 53 species. We extend our special thanks once again to Paul Hueber, without whose expertise we would not have tallied



nearly as many species.

We had stiff competition this year with nine count circles competing for the highest count in Florida. The *Celery Fields Forever* team of Sarasota won the

**See BIG SIT! on page 13**



The printing and mailing of this newsletter is made possible in part by the generous donations of Bob and Inez Parsell and ACE Hardware stores in Sanford, Longwood, Casselberry, and Oviedo.

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# WELCOME

## NEW MEMBERS

### and Members NEW to our Chapter

Diane Calkins	Deltona
Pamela Cherry	Sanford
Elizabeth Dease	Osteen
Jack Ferrell	Deltona
Rebecca Herber	DeBary
A & L Jones	Osteen
Edward LaPierre	Deltona
Roberta Matuska-	
Mederer	DeBary
Louise Speak	Sanford
Carl Shilke	Sanford
Dorothy Staring	Lake Mary
Suzette Winstanley	Lake Mary

## New Meeting Location:

Seminole Audubon Meetings & Programs – Have a **New Home!** No longer at the library.

Seminole Audubon meetings and programs will be held at a **new location** starting with our November 9<sup>th</sup> program on the Life of Birds.

We want to thank First Presbyterian Church, Sanford, for allowing us to meet in their **Fellowship Hall** the second Sunday of each month through April 2015. The address is **320 S. Park Ave, Sanford**. The time is still 2 PM. The Seminole County North Branch library in Sanford is no longer open on Sundays.



# Birding



# Instruction

Our birding classes are held at the Ed Yarborough Nature Center in the Geneva Wilderness Area, 3485 N. CR 426, Geneva, FL 32732. Classes are offered in partnership with Seminole County Natural Lands, and instructed by Faith Jones and Shirley Folse. Information 407-797-4636 or [seminoleaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:seminoleaudubon@gmail.com)

## Backyard Birds

**Wednesday November 5th 2 – 4 pm**

This class will teach you a simple, but time-proven method, of bird identification. We will focus on the identity of birds that frequent our feeders and yards. \$5.00

## 2015 Birding Basics Course

Tues. & Thurs. Jan. 13, 15, 20, and 22 1 -4 pm  
Weekends Jan. 10, 17, 18, and 24 9 am - noon

Our 4-session beginning birding course for birders of all ages will be offered afternoons and weekends in January. Classes will be held at the Ed Yarborough Nature Center in the Geneva Wilderness Area and offered in partnership with Seminole Co. Natural Lands Program. The third class (Jan 18 or 20) will be a field trip to Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. Cost \$30.00 Pre-registration required as space is limited.

# Top Shelf

## **Death in the Everglades: The Murder of Guy Bradley, America's First Martyr to Environmentalism by Stuart B. McIver**

Guy M. Bradley's obituary was published in the August 1905 issue of *Bird Lore*.

"The deceased acted as warden in Monroe County, a wild and thinly settled district, for over three years... During all this time he faithfully guarded his wards, the plume birds, traveling thousands of miles in the launch *Audubon*, in order

to watch over them...A number of well-known ornithologists and members of the Association visited Bradley at different times, and always found him alert and faithful in the performance of his duty, and willing to undergo any hardship to protect the birds. He took a personal interest in his work and was genuinely proud when he could report an increase in numbers. ...Personally he was gentle and somewhat retiring, was pure in thought and deed, deeply interested in and a supporter of the small Union Church near his home. A young wife is left to mourn his sudden and terrible death, and his two children, too young to realize their loss, will never know a father's care."

Stuart McIver introduces the reader to the ordinary young man Guy Bradley but by the time you turn the last page and close the cover you will have met an extraordinary hero.

The story takes place in the latter years of the nineteenth century at the intersection of American Gilded Age consumerism and Progressive Era idealism. McIver covers everything from weapons, high fashion, ornithology and the origins of the Audubon Society to frontier living in Flamingo as well as a look at Florida politics.

The nascent conservation movement is interwoven with Bradley's story as the American Ornithological Society is successful in getting the Florida legislature to pass a bill making the killing of birds other than game birds illegal. For the new conservation regulations to be effective an enforcer was required and in May 1902 Guy Bradley was offered the position, which he happily accepted. He was deputized June 1902 in Key West with Florida Audubon underwriting his salary of thirty-five dollars a month.

McIver takes the reader on a journey of the Florida wilderness as well as pioneer living and spirit. Looking through the lens of today we can only shudder at the description of plume hunters raiding rookery after rookery, slaughtering the adults and leaving the chicks to starve. He also presents the many facets of the primary environmental issue: how to stop the slaughter of birds for the millinery trade. Plume hunting provided a fairly lucrative means of supporting a family in Flamingo as well as economic gain at every exchange of the appalling commodity along the way, so it is easy to understand why the new law was difficult to enforce.

He includes an amusing anecdote involving Mary Munroe, wife of Kirk Munroe a founding vice

president of Florida Audubon Society. Mary was an aggressive booster of the cause and when she saw women wearing hats with plumes and stuffed birds she simply walked up and yanked their hats off. This provoked much screaming as hats in those days were pinned to the wearers' heads and many angry exchanges took place, but not many conversions to the plight of the birds.

The Plume Wars, family feuds and frontier Florida all provide a rich context to the Guy Bradley story of frontiersman and feather hunter turned game warden dying in the line of duty. His dying serves as a reminder of the multifaceted issues surrounding any environmental cause. Guy M. Bradley was definitely a martyr for environmentalism and truly deserves to be remembered and honored.

**DonnaLea Needham**

## Bird Bits

Do you have any questions about birds that you would like to have answered? Want to try to 'stump' the Board? Jot those questions down and email them to [seminoleaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:seminoleaudubon@gmail.com). During the monthly meetings, SAS will answer as many questions as we are able to, so send your inquiries our way!

SAS had its debut *Bird Bits* presentation at the September meeting. Sam Kendall asked: "Is Central Florida considered a year-round range for the northern parula?" Although there may be some record of northern parula sightings during the winter months they are classified as a Neotropical migrant, a bird that spends the summer in its breeding range in North America but migrates to Central or South America for its nonbreeding range in winter. The northern parula has the nickname of the Valentine Bird in our area as it tends to return to central Florida on approximately February 14<sup>th</sup>. So, for the majority of northern parula, the answer is no. Shirley Reilly asked: "Are northern mockingbirds a menace to Florida's scrub-jays? At Lyonia Preserve a scrub-jay and mockingbird were seen working together to attack something on the ground". I handed this question off to Shirley Folse with little or no notice to help me with an answer. Her initial reaction was no; they eat different things. The Florida scrub-jay eats seeds and the northern mockingbird eats insects. But in her research she learned that Florida scrub-jays require protein from insects during pre-breeding to ensure healthy eggs and young birds. So we've decided to ask the Florida scrub-jay experts on Nov. 6<sup>th</sup> when we meet at Lyonia Preserve in Deltona for a mid-week

ranger-guided field trip. Join us and get all your questions answered about this remarkable bird! So, for now Shirley Reilly, the answer is ... we'll get back to you on that one!

**Leslie Martin**

## Some Good News

### Trails Closed to ORVs in Big Cypress Preserve

Florida panthers and other wildlife in Big Cypress Preserve will get a breather from the noise and habitat damage from off-road vehicles as part of a settlement with the Center for Biological Diversity and other environmental groups. Secondary trails will be closed to ORVs until Preserve biologists can make a full assessment of impacts to wildlife, sensitive waterways, and the "wild character" of the place.

<http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/news/center/articles/2014/sun-sentinel-times-09-26-2014.html>

**Samuel Kendall**

### Millions of longleaf pines planted

Funded by M.C. Davis and Sam Shine, 8 million longleaf pine seedlings have been planted on the Nokuse Plantation in Northwest Florida. Since the Civil War, about 90 million acres of pines across the Southeast have been reduced to 3 million. The Nokuse plantings will connect some of the scattered, remaining longleaf pine forests in Florida.

<http://www.landscape.org/florida/partners/nokuse/>

**Samuel Kendall**

### Little Bug Helps Battle Against Air Potato

Air potato, *Dioscorea bulbifera*, may have finally met its match. Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council (FLEPPC) classifies air potato as Category I, an "invasive exotic that is altering native plant communities by displacing native species, changing community structures or ecological functions, or hybridizing with natives". Native to Asia and Africa, this perennial vine climbs over and smothers native vegetation. It is well established in our area despite years of efforts to control it.

Researchers discovered air potato is kept under control in its native China by a natural "enemy", *Lilioceris cheni* or the air potato leaf beetle. Extensive testing at the USDA/ARS Invasive Plant Research Laboratory in Fort Lauderdale indicates the air potato leaf beetle is a specialist feeder and will feed or deposit eggs only on air potato vines. First released in Florida in 2012, Seminole County

released air potato leaf beetles at two locations in 2013. The beetles, or evidence of their voracious appetites, have now been reported all over the county.



**Photo by Leslie Martin**

The beetles do not actually kill the air potato plant, but the possibility seems promising that this biological control will be able to keep the vines to a controllable level where they will not endanger so much native vegetation.

**Faith Jones**

## **A Changing Climate: Nature's Crisis, Humankind's Challenge**

"Nature bears long with those who wrong her. She is patient under abuse, But when abuse has gone too far, when the time of reckoning finally comes, she is equally slow to be appeased and to turn away her wrath." Nathaniel Eggleston, 1882. Nathaniel, who was writing 132 years ago about deforestation, speaks equally well about the danger of climate change today.

In her four and a half billion years Earth has gone through many climatic changes and weather shifts, so what's the big deal now? Weather and climate are extremely important to life on Earth and for most of human existence we thought that both were beyond our control or influence. A BIG JOLT of reality is beginning to awaken us to the facts concerning a changing climate and what it means to Earth's environment.

When the last ice age ended around twelve thousand years ago the glaciers began retreating and Earth entered a warming trend, the Holocene Epoch. The topographical landscapes and natural environments that we recognize today resulted from that "Goldilocks, or just right" climate. These

climatic conditions and weather patterns allowed for the migration and development of *Homo sapiens sapiens*, the first species capable of significantly and consciously altering the landscape and exploiting natural resources. The Holocene epoch has become known as the period of human influence on biosphere and climate.

Scientific research and weather records have demonstrated abrupt changes in temperature variants in the late 19th century continuing to the present. Earth may be, and probably is, entering a natural climate cycle, but now for the first time the human impact will be a factor in this change. Scientists know a lot about climate change and know that Earth will continue to warm as people add more greenhouse gases to the atmosphere from the burning of fossil fuels. Earth's climate is complicated and even with advanced computer models science cannot know exactly how Earth's eco-systems will interact with one another as greenhouse gases increase. It is already evident that some bird migrations are changing as birds attempt to adapt. Audubon's Citizen Science project has been and will continue to be important in documenting shifting bird populations.

One of the reasons that it is difficult for modern scientists to quantify the possible extent in global warming is that accurate climatic data extends back, at best, only about a hundred years. Accordingly, it is difficult to determine whether any data indicating global warming is simply a normal variation in a generalized warming pattern. There are many unanswered questions and unknown problems that face humankind today, but fortunately we have many very good resources to help us make informed decisions about our lives and communities.

It is imperative for societies to work together in our effort toward conservation of Earth's natural wonders as well as human well-being. This is humankind's challenge. Be informed!

As Members of the Audubon Society we can be proud of the recently released Climate Change Report which can be accessed at: [climate.audubon.org](http://climate.audubon.org)

The National Wildlife Federation's Climate-Smart-Conservation Guide describes the issues, sets goals and offers solutions:  
[www.nwf.org/climatesmartguide](http://www.nwf.org/climatesmartguide)

One site that I found quite by accident several months ago has proven to be a treasure trove of



easily-understood information. It is in the UK, but has relevant info. Remember, we are all connected:  
[www.metoffice.gov/climatechange](http://www.metoffice.gov/climatechange)

One that has much to offer especially about climate change and water:  
[www.epa.gov/climatechange](http://www.epa.gov/climatechange)

**DonnaLea Needham**

## Crystal Lake Preserve



## Update

Jim Denslow and Bill Clapham remain hard at work at Crystal Lake Preserve (CLP) where they continue to work on the Interpretive Trail. A number of markers have been installed at the site. They are clearing the property of invasive exotic species, such as *Ardisia crenata*, while they work their way along the trail installing the markers. A pamphlet is still in progress to be used by visitors along the Interpretive Trail. In addition to working on the trail Jim and Bill are transplanting trees where the canopy has been compromised. Volunteers are always welcome and the work is usually done on each Thursday following our programs, which are held the second Sunday of each month. To confirm time and location contact 407-323-4506 or [bdenslow@cfl.rr.com](mailto:bdenslow@cfl.rr.com)

**Faith Jones**

## Net Metering

When a household or business decides to put out the money for a rooftop **solar system** it's not just the owner who benefits. The owner gets the satisfaction of making electricity without producing any greenhouse gases or other pollutants. The neighbors on the grid share a bit of that satisfaction. Non-carbon electrical generating sources are needed right now to reduce heat-trapping gases, which are threatening birds, food security and the nature of human existence.

Every time a grid-connected solar installation produces more electricity than the owner needs the neighborhood receives electrons from that solar system. Producing and sharing those excess electrons locally means reduced transmission line losses for the utility company. Plus the sun is shining

during peak-demand hours when air conditioners and commercial buildings often stress the local utility. Solar installations reduce that stress. They strengthen the grid.

The more solar systems the more fuel costs are reduced for the utility and so is the need for new power plants. This should help keep rates from going up for non-solar customers. Solar systems also save water. Big fossil and nuclear plants are water hogs. Large and small investments in solar help keep energy dollars invested in the Florida economy, not in Wyoming coal mines or Texas gas wells.

In view of these wide spread benefits the Florida State Legislature wanted to promote customer-owned solar electric generation. In 2008 a plan known as net-metering was included in Energy Bill H.B 7135 and signed by Governor Christ. Net-metering means whenever a solar system produces more kilowatt hours than a customer uses during the month, the extra kilowatt hours are credited on the next bill at the full retail rate. After 12 months, if any credits remain, the customer receives a check from the utility although at a lower wholesale rate. Variations of this net-metering system rewarding solar installations are effective now in 43 states. When there's a solar energy spill..... it's just called a nice day!

**Samuel Kendall**

## Trip Notes

**Mead Botanical Garden** was the setting on Sept. 11 for our first field trip of the new season. Fifteen people met at the Garden entrance and enlisted docent Larry Martin of the Orange Audubon Society in an enthusiastic tour of the grounds. Larry knew all the best places to see clusters of birds and led us through the butterfly gardens and along nature trails on a guided hike where he pointed out the native inhabitants of the formal gardens there.

We were fortunate to see red-eyed vireos and abundant cardinals as well as several woodpecker species. Serenaded by the song of a mockingbird, we traveled the slightly flooded paths through some of the local undergrowth in bloom. The highlight of our trip, however, had to be the **Barred Owl** taking a nap in a palm tree, unbothered by our group of



fifteen gathering below him to get a closer view. He sat quietly, close to where his usual nest was, for as long as we were there. Occasionally, he would raise one eyelid to peer down, giving us all hope that he would be as excited to see us as we were to see him. This is a park to come back to when warblers are passing through. We had a wonderful day!

**Sarah Donlan**

On September 18, thirteen brave souls drove through rain to participate in our guided tour of **Washington Oaks Gardens State Park** in Palm Coast.



**Photo: Sarah Donlan**

Our guide, Park Specialist Joe Woodbury, is a good birder familiar with the Park. He was able to lead us to a sugarberry tree filled with red-eyed vireos, and few other "hot spots" in the Park. Although the ground was wet, amazingly, the rain held off long enough for us to see much of the garden side and enjoy a short visit to the ocean side. In the gardens we saw northern flickers, blue-gray gnatcatchers and a few other resident birds. On the ocean side, in addition to a few shorebirds, we saw a migrating Peregrine falcon. Twenty-nine species from ten taxonomic orders were recorded during the outing.

Our thanks go to Sarah Donlan for planning and organizing this trip.

The **Yankee Lake Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility** property was our destination on Friday September 26. The county's state-of-the-art system has enabled the preservation of a 3000 acre pristine wildlife area along the St. Johns River. The system includes natural wetland effluent disposal, reclaimed irrigation, and Rapid Infiltration Basins (RIBs). Along with this system, the Division is working hand-in-hand with other divisions to utilize the land for other uses, including over 1000 acres to the Natural Lands program (Black Bear Wilderness Area) for hiking and trails.



**Photo: Sarah Donlan**

There are Florida scrub-jays on this property and Seminole County is tasked with preserving their habitat in perpetuity. The County has contracted Atkins Engineering Environmental Division to manage and preserve the habitat of the Florida Scrub Jay on this site.



**Photo: Sarah Donlan**

Our tour was hosted by Ruth Hazard, Deputy Water & Wastewater Manager at Seminole County Environmental Services. We were guided by Susan Shaw, Atkins Project Manager and Lead Biologist for their Yankee Lake Florida scrub-jay project. Highlights of the trip included spotting seven Florida scrub-jays. We saw both "Florida" and "Georgia", the matriarchs of the two known Florida scrub-jay families. Two American kestrels were seen and the possibility of their being of the Southeastern subspecies was raised. The final sighting was a family of Eastern bluebirds in a snag. **Faith Jones**

Several SAS members and two guests attended a hike through **Hal Scott Regional Preserve and Park** this summer. We met at 5:00 am in the dark and walked about a mile to find Red-cockaded Woodpecker trees. These Pine trees had been bored out to make nests. To our dismay the woodpeckers had moved on and in one particular area Eastern Bluebirds were using the nests. These trees are spread throughout the area. The park is crisscrossed with dirt roads and has several camp areas (walk-in only) and borders the upper Econlockhatchee River. It is a beautiful area! It was quite wet on some of the trails and all eventually got wet of foot.

All in all we heard or saw 24 species of birds, especially noting the Common Nighthawks and Nightjars. We walked until about 10:30 am. Everyone had a great time! Pam Meharg led the group. This was a spontaneous trip, not previously scheduled with Seminole Audubon.

**Bill Clapham**

# Program Notes

## Nature Photography without a Tripod – Dr. Moulis' Sept Program



**Photo by Shirley Reilly**

Photographers and nature lovers alike were treated to a wonderful program for our first meeting of the season on September 14. Harry Moulis, M.D., from

Daytona Beach, presented an inspiring lecture based on his bird photography tips and display. Dr. Moulis has many awards for his amazing photos and has evolved photography to an art form in realistic bird pictures. His work has been on display in various settings, Daytona Arts and Science Museum, local public buildings and at Merritt Island Wildlife Sanctuary. One of his photographs was recently chosen for the yearly Audubon National Calendar.

Eighty people from around Central Florida attended the meeting at the Sanford Library for a standing-room-only crowd. Dr. Moulis gave wonderful tips to aspiring photographers on taking photos from a kayak and without a tripod. It takes time and patience, and sometimes more than 1500 shots, to get just a few really good pictures. He explained that basing the shot around the subject bird's eye would provide dramatic presence to any photo. Much was learned from this session, by those that aspire to take the best photos and by those who would rather just admire them. There were equal numbers of each in the audience. Thank you, Dr. Moulis!!

**Sarah Donlan**

## Upcoming Programs

**NEW MEETING LOCATION:** As the Library is no longer open on Sunday, we had to find a new meeting location. Our meetings for the remainder of the season will be held the second Sunday of the month at 2:00 pm in the **Fellowship Hall of First Presbyterian Church, 320 S. Park Ave.,** near downtown **Sanford.**

### **Life of Birds Sunday November 9**

Reinier Munguia of Wildstock Photography will be our guest speaker. He is a commercial and nature photographer with a strong education and conservation vision. His work has appeared in several publications including textbooks and magazines. His presentation covers all aspects of a bird's life from the adaptations that allow it to survive in its environment to its amazing flights and displays. Some topics he will cover include physical and behavioral adaptations, communication, foraging, courtship, nesting, and many bird facts and stories. You will learn about many species around the world with a special emphasis on Florida's birds.



Reinier's passion for nature has led him to become an advocate for causes related to the protection of species. Educating people about nature is his most important goal. He is involved with the Lake Region Audubon and has presented at several birding festivals.

### ***Feathered Ghosts: Passenger Pigeons December 8***

September marked the centennial of the end of a species when Martha, the last known passenger pigeon, died at the Cincinnati Zoo. Once darkening North American skies by the billions in a few decades, this sleek and colorful bird was driven to extinction- by us.



We will air the award-winning video *From Billions to None: The Passenger Pigeon's Flight to Extinction.* There will also be an informational presentation on passenger pigeons and

### ***Illustration by K.Schaeppi***

other species of pigeon and dove. Attendees will have the opportunity to make an origami replica of a passenger pigeon.

### ***Helping Birds in a Changing Climate January 11***

Jacqui Sulek, Chapter Conservation Manager for Audubon Florida will be our guest speaker. Jacqui will summarize the recently released Audubon report *Birds & Climate Change.* Her program will also include actions each of us can take to help protect birds.

# **Upcoming Trips**

Last minute changes do occur, so it is essential that you notify us in advance if you plan to participate in any our trips. A liability release must be signed. Trips are open to the public.

Ways to Contact Us:

1. [www.meetup.com/SeminoleAudubon-com](http://www.meetup.com/SeminoleAudubon-com)
2. E-mail: [sarahdonlan42@gmail.com](mailto:sarahdonlan42@gmail.com)
3. Call: Sarah Donlan 407-687-6087
4. Sign up at Program Meetings

### ***November 6, Thursday--Lyonia Preserve, 2150 Eustice Ave. Deltona.***

Florida Scrub Jay habitat, trails, Education Center. Ranger-guided tour.  
Meet: Sanford Library--8:45 am or meet at the Preserve at 9:30 am.  
Can be warm; dress accordingly.

### ***November 15, Saturday--Marine Discovery Center, New Smyrna Beach.***

Pontoon Boat Trip, 2 hours on Indian River. Boat leaves at 2 pm --their regularly scheduled tour. \$25.00 per person, cash or check. Reservations to Sarah Donlan 407-687-6087.  
Meet: Sanford Library, 150 Palmetto Ave., Sanford--12:30 pm for carpool/caravan or at boat by 1:45 pm.

### ***December 20, Saturday--Avian Reconditioning Center, 321 Lester Rd.,***

Apopka. Bird of Prey rehab center, Eagles, Hawks, Falcons, Kites, Owls.  
Donation suggested.  
Meet: JoAnn's Fabric Store parking lot, Seminole Towne Center, for carpool/caravan at 9:15 am or meet us there at 9:45 am. Opens at 10 am.

### ***January 17, Saturday--Wiregrass Prairie Preserve, 1751 Lopez Rd., Osteen, FL 32765.***

1400 acres in St. John's River Valley. upland and wetlands, 3 hiking trails. Group Tour.  
Meet: Sanford Library, 8:30 am for carpool. Limited parking; must consolidate to min. number of cars. Admission Free. Bring binoculars, camera, comfy shoes, water, hat, and jacket.

## **January 22, Thursday--Blue Heron River Tour, Hontoon Landing, DeLand.**

Two-hour pontoon boat tour on St. John's River and Hontoon Dead River. Reservations required. Many wading birds, turtles, gators, etc. Pontoon boat \$25.00 per person, cash or check. For info call Sarah at 407-687-6087. Bring jacket, binoculars, camera, water, snack.

Meet: JoAnn's Fabric Store parking lot, Seminole Towne Center. Time to be announced.

Or meet us at Hontoon Landing in DeLand.

## **Alaska June 2016: Birding Trip**

SAS members are in the process of planning a birding trip to Alaska in June 2016. We are in the early stages of putting a trip together. We will use Holbrook Travel, and Barry Rossheim, who led our Costa Rica and Cuba trips, will be our leader. If you have interest in such a trip and would like to be kept informed of our plans, please send an email to Joy Rector at [joy7audubon@aol.com](mailto:joy7audubon@aol.com).

## **When did I become a birder?**

...when the first large white bird pushed me off the sidewalk of a noisy street in front of the city library.

As a longtime resident of Colorado where the birds are mostly in the mountains, I expected the same to be true here—surely they'd find greater comfort and solitude in their natural environments. Surprise!

"Concrete doesn't scare us," they chirped. "We are not afraid of human noises either--machinery such as helicopters, sirens from service vehicles, July fire crackers, discordant vocal exchanges during drug busts in the neighborhood. We sometimes nest in high metal structures, too. We just carry on."

To my amazement, flocks of ibis arrive daily to dig about in the yellowing, weedy front yard. Young male cardinals play-battle in the

hospital parking lot across the street. Pelicans boldly swoop over my windshield as I speed along busy streets. Ospreys, my favorite of all time, occasionally decorate neighborhood utility poles and tall bridge supports over water. They are tasteless, not necessarily choosing the pretty ones disguised as church crosses. They choose anything high enough to provide a great view.



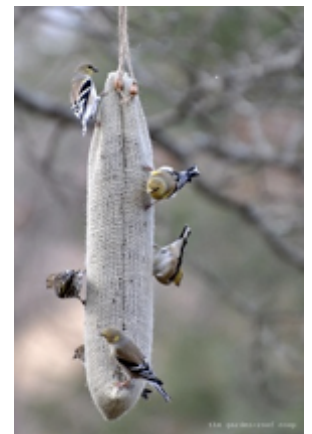
Ospreys remind me of New Yorkers, who prefer a view of the Hudson River despite a warehouse district or run-down apartment. While I was living in New York, I became adapted to this city cultural custom: the value of the view. Probably, this is why I love the adaptable osprey happily perched anywhere, providing it has a view.

Concrete and high places don't scare me, either. Truly, if I had feathers and wings, I most definitely would be choosing the highest structure with a view--and of course shelter from the windy storms. If you've ever seen an osprey hunkered down, feathers fluffed, holding tight, you'd know what I mean.

**Bella, Beginner Birder**

## **SAS New Fund-raiser: Thistle Socks**

Lowe's in Sanford has donated nyjer seed to SAS to assist us in raising donations. A few of our Board members have created thistle socks to dispense the seed. This is



the favorite seed of our wintering American goldfinches. If you attract American goldfinches, pay close attention to the birds at your thistle sock as each winter there are reports of a few pine siskins seen feeding with American goldfinches.



SAS is bundling a seed-filled, hand-crafted thistle sock with a bag of seed (approximately 2 lbs. of seed) for a suggested donation of \$4.00. They will be available at our program meetings or e-mail [seminoleaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:seminoleaudubon@gmail.com) to arrange delivery.

## Here Comes the Band

We met Ralph Risch and Mike Martin at Bear Pond in Seminole State Forest early on the morning of Friday, October 3, 2014. Ralph is a Florida Scrub Jay Biologist at the park. It started out as a cool morning, but things (like weather) do change quickly in Florida.

There were about 12 curious spectators. Several were attending the Wings and Wildflower Festival being celebrated in Lake County who signed up for this program. There was a writer sent by the magazine, *Birds & Blooms*. We were also being filmed by a videographer from Sumter Community College.

Six cars and two Ranger trucks caravanned about six miles north to the Scrub Jay Restoration area after an informational briefing by Ralph about what we were to witness. He had been "training" a few jays to enter into a small wire trap.

As soon as we arrived at our destination, the jays were swarming and diving all around us. The "Food Truck" has arrived. Ralph has a special tune he whistles to call them and the *Jeopardy* song while he bands them. But, as he was showing us his

banding equipment, the Jays disappeared! It seems we were at the intersection where three different families were squawking over territorial rights and each family was chasing the intruders away.

As we waited for the Jays to settle their Hatfield & McCoy squabble, the weather changed to hot and sunny with no shade available. Ralph Risch took advantage of this down time and gave an interesting lesson about the Jays' population. It has dropped from 100,000 in circa 1920 to 10,000 in 1992 to 6,000 today. This has happened because of habitat degradation and destruction due to citrus farming and subdivisions. The Jays are cooperative breeders, which means the young birds stick around to help to raise the next young, assist in territorial defense and sentinel duty. The helper males stick around till "Dad" dies or they die. After a few years, the female helpers disperse to other territories as breeders. A Scrub Jay's average life span is about 16 years.

By this time the temperature had risen and we waited under a scorching sun for the Jays to return; and here they came to investigate the peanuts in and on the cage. Ralph would throw a peanut down the road to keep the male and a helper, who were already banded, out of the cage. The female was cautious. I asked if this meant the females were smarter. The male spectators groaned, but I got no answer!

Finally, she stepped in the cage and Ralph very carefully brought her to the truck as he soothed her and calmed her down. He put two bands on each leg, then measured every part of her body from the length of her beak, nares, wings, head, length of tail, and placed her in a gauze bag to weigh her. Ralph's whistled rendition of *Jeopardy's* theme song calmed her while the solvent dried on the bands. He did label her as a fighter on the behavioral report and told us that the bold Jays and the "chickens" seem to die sooner.





After calming her once more, and giving her a peanut, Ralph released her. She flew off into the brush to admire her newly-acquired bling. We thanked Ralph for his infinite knowledge of our endemic species. He really knows each bird as an individual and I'm sure he'll be banding our Florida Scrub Jays for a long time.

**Shirley Reilly**

## Audubon Assembly – 2014

From facts about sea levels rising to the “Dancing Hippies” skit; from Paige, the Bald Eagle, encouraging *Vote Yes on 1*; to adults debating land management vs. land acquisition; to “shall we eat key lime pie or cheesecake?”... this was a busy 24 hours at Audubon Assembly, October 17-18, 2014!



We appreciated being given the opportunity to participate in this informative and interesting weekend! We split up in order to attend all sessions including: *Getting Out the Vote on Amendment One*, *Engaging the Next Generation of Conservationists*, *Balancing Land Conservation - Habitat Restoration or Management*, and *Communicating about Climate Change*. A wealth of information was presented and various ideas were shared among the different chapters. Our heads are spinning from the valuable ideas put forth...now the challenge is to put some of them into action!



The priority of the assembly was to vote on and put in place Audubon's 2015 Conservation Action Agenda; this was completed before heading outside for the final event - a *Vote Yes on 1* Pep Rally!

**Leslie Martin and Marguerite Terwilleger,  
SAS Co-presidents**

## Follow Us on Twitter and Like Us on Facebook

We are now on Twitter! Follow Seminole Audubon @AudubonSeminole. It is a new twitter account and it would be great to add “followers”. A species count and photo from Big Sit! as well as information on the November program were the first events ‘tweeted.’



Please ‘like’ Seminole Audubon on Facebook. There are some photos posted from recent field trips. If you have some Backyard Bird photos that you would like for us to post, please e-mail them to [seminoleaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:seminoleaudubon@gmail.com)

**Marguerite Terwilleger**

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





## BIG SIT, from page 1

bragging rights for highest count in the state with 61 species. The *Seminole Sitters* are #2 with 53 species.



For a number of years we were the only count circle in the world reporting a limpkin. This year *Celery Fields Forever* also reported limpkins. So, we lost our bragging rights for limpkins, but the *Seminole Sitters* will not go without bragging rights. We are the only circle reporting king rails, and the only circle that sighted painted buntings! That is certainly something to brag about! **Faith Jones**

## Calendar, from page 14

**Basic Birding Course** - \$30. Must pre-register 407-797-4636 or [seminoleaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:seminoleaudubon@gmail.com). Details page 3

Thurs. & Tues. Jan. 13, 15, 20, and 22 1:00 – 4:00 pm.

Weekends Jan. 10, 17, 18, and 24 9:00 - noon  
**Crystal Lake Preserve**, Lake Mary. Work mornings.

Thurs. Nov. 13 & Dec. 18. Time and meeting location 407-323-4506 or [bdenslow@cfl.rr.com](mailto:bdenslow@cfl.rr.com)

### Other Events

Sat. Nov. 8 **Night Hike & S'mores** 7-9:00 pm  
Geneva WA \$5.00. Must pre-register 407-349-0959

Mon. Nov. 10 **Florida Panther: Following Road to Recovery** 7 pm 200 Fairmont, Sanford. Cuplet Fern FNPS 407-302-7616

Sat. Nov. 15 **Who's Watching Whoo? Owl Class**. 7-9:30 pm Geneva WA. \$5.00 Must pre-register 407-349-0959

Jan. 21-26 **Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival**, Titusville.  
[www.spacecoastbirdingandwildlifefestival.org](http://www.spacecoastbirdingandwildlifefestival.org)

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone and e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

If you join elsewhere, please use our Chapter Code:  
**C4ZE310Z**

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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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PO Box 2977  
Sanford FL 32772-2977

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



## Calendar of Events

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

**Program Meetings** are held at 2:00 pm on Sunday afternoons in the **Fellowship Hall of the First Presbyterian Church** located at **320 S. Park Ave.**, near downtown **Sanford**. Call 407-797-4636 for details.

Sun. Nov. 9 **Life of Birds. Reinier Munguia**, well-known photographer, educator, and birder will be our guest speaker for this fascinating look into the secrets of a bird's life.

Sun. Dec 14 **Feathered Ghosts: Passenger Pigeons**. The demise of a species will be the focus of this program.

Sun Jan. 11 **Helping Birds in a Changing Climate**. Jacqui Sulek, Audubon Florida, will be our guest speaker.

**Field Trips** Details and registration information for all of these trips are in this issue of The JAY and on [www.meetup.com/seminoleaudubon-com](http://www.meetup.com/seminoleaudubon-com), [sarahdonlan42@gmail.com](mailto:sarahdonlan42@gmail.com), or 407-687-6087

Thu. Nov. 6 **Lyonia Preserve**, Deltona

Sat. Nov. 15 **Marine Discovery Center & Pontoon Boat Trip**, New Smyrna Beach

Sat. Dec. 20 **Avian Reconditioning Center**, Apopka

Sat. Jan. 17 **Wiregrass Prairie Preserve**, Osteen

Thu. Jan 22 **Blue Heron River Tour**, DeLand

### Birding Instruction

Wed. Nov. 5 **Back Yard Birds** Nature Center, Geneva WA. 2-4 pm \$5. 407-797-4636 or [seminoleaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:seminoleaudubon@gmail.com)

**See Calendar, page 13**