

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 2017

A Publication of Seminole Audubon Society

Fertilizer Ordinance in Seminole County

The Seminole County Commission took a big step towards protecting our rivers, lakes, springs and wetlands when they passed a comprehensive fertilizer ordinance earlier this year. Nitrogen



and phosphorus that leach into our waterways from fertilizer have been identified as one of the causes of the algal blooms that are degrading their quality and killing fish and other wildlife. The new regulations will help prevent the excess nutrients from entering our waters while allowing us to maintain healthy lawns. The new ordinance bans the use of phosphorus without a soil test, requires summertime blends of fertilizer to be used during the summer rainy season, requires the use

of 50% slow-release nitrogen, and restricts the use of fertilizer within 15 feet of our waterways. These measures will help to prevent fertilizer from entering our waterways and damaging them.

Seminole Audubon worked with our Wekiva Coalition partners to help craft this ordinance and get it passed. Citizens called and emailed the Commissioners asking for their support and over a hundred showed up to support passage. Tremendous community support is what got this ordinance passed! Please visit the Seminole County website about the new ordinance to learn more @seminolecountyfl.gov.

Pam Meharg

2016-2017
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WELCOME

NEW MEMBERS

and Members NEW to our Chapter

Linda Bose	Sanford
Joan Cave	Lake Mary
David Currie	Sanford
Phyllis Currie	Sanford
Vincent Gaitley	Sanford
Mary A. Hill	Lake Mary
Bradley Hull	Sanford
Nancy Marzolino	Oviedo
Gary Meadows	DeBary
Delores Meers	Sanford
John Pfauter, Jr.	Sanford
Patti Seanor	Geneva
Carlyle Smith	Deltona

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.

Forever Florida Gets No Funding

Florida voters passed the Water and Land Conservation Amendment (Amendment 1) in 2014 with the expectation that the Florida Legislature would restore funding to the Florida Forever Program and our other land conservation programs that have successfully protected environmentally sensitive land in Florida. The Florida Forever Program was funded with funds from the documentary tax and was designed to help offset the costs to the environment incurred from development by protecting land that was crucial as wildlife corridors and that protected our waterways. The various land programs provided \$300 million a year in funding to protect land from development from 1990 to 2007 until the recession of 2007 caused the funding to dry up. The Florida Forever Program added to state parks and forests, aided the expansion of trails and outdoor recreation and saved farmland from development while keeping it on the tax rolls. Florida voters passed the Water and Land Conservation Amendment in 2014 to restore the funding to this popular program. Unfortunately, our Florida legislators have ignored us.

The Florida Legislature has ignored the voters of Florida by providing **no funding** for the Florida Forever Program this year! Funds have been diverted to pay for salaries and operating costs of state agencies. Meanwhile, new residents continue to arrive in Florida at the rate of 1000/day and critical conservation land is being developed. After environmentally sensitive land is lost to development, the public pays for it in pollution to groundwater and increased pressure on other resources. Wildlife corridors are disrupted, forcing the wildlife into urban areas. And the landscape of Florida is changed from its exotic, lush look to the manicured lawns that are indistinguishable from those of any other state. But, we are not any other state! So, if you expect the Florida Legislature to honor the intent of the Water and Land Conservation Amendment that was passed with over 75% approval—**call your legislators today** to ask that funding be restored to our land conservation programs next year! Florida needs you!

Pam Meharg

Seminole Audubon's Website Has a New Look!

Be sure to check out our new website at

<http://seminoleaudubon.org/>

Detailed information can be found on programs, field trips, conservation, birding classes, citizen science, and more. Included is a user-friendly link for joining or renewing membership.

SAS History 1963-1966 5th in a Series

The following is the fifth in a series of articles taken from the minutes for the above years.

By the fall meeting in 1963 attendance at general meetings had dropped to twelve. Meetings were changed to daylight hours – the fourth Thursday at 2:30 pm. Meeting location alternated between the DeBary Civic Center and the Geneva Community Center.

Important news at the February 1964 meeting was that each local Chapter had been presented with a Charter at the State meeting in Lakeland. This Charter is located in our records but is not dated.

At the March 26, 1964, meeting in Geneva it was reported that Mrs. Norton, Vice President, had been doing research on the Chapter's history **before 1949** but had found no record of a prior local organization. More research is needed.

Note: the SAS Archives contain copies of *The Florida Naturalist* for July 1937, July 1938 and January 1947, which state on the front "Published Quarterly by The Florida Audubon Society, Sanford, Florida". During these years both the State Audubon President and State Secretary are listed as living in Sanford. More research needs to be done on this.

In the fall of 1964 it was announced that our Seminole chapter would have an article in the January 1965 *Naturalist*. Plans were made to have an annual joint "Conservation Week" with the Sanford Garden Clubs.

A problem with land clearing at Rock Springs Park was discussed in the spring of 1965. Letters were sent asking that land clearing there be halted. Subsequently no more land clearing was done and the park was left as it was intended.

Some meetings were held in homes in the Fall of 1965. January thru April 1966 meetings were held at the F.P.L. meeting room on State Road 46 west of Sanford. Total membership in January was sixty-one.

In February 1966 the book *The Everglades: River of Grass* by Marjorie Stoneman Douglas was brought to the attention of the group. If you have not already read this book, it is highly recommended. **Myra Platel**

Program Notes



Bats in my Florida Backyard – March Program

Shari Blissett-Clark, president of *Florida Bat Conservancy*, surprised Seminole Audubon members when a bat crawled out from under her collar, was held in her hand, and shared with members. There was standing room only during our March 12th meeting as she discussed facts and shared images of different bat species. Shari also discussed what was needed to make a 'bat friendly' bat house. The program disclosed fascinating truths about bats. Over 1330 bat species make up 25% of the mammals on earth, and 70% of these bats eat insects. According to scientists'

estimates, these insect eating 'wonders' save farmers in our country over \$23 billion every year in crop loss and damage. It was shocking to learn that Brazilian free-tailed bats can fly up to two miles high to feed on insects and can fly at speeds of 65 mph! Some of us may have been surprised that bats are not blind, do not get entangled in hair, and rarely transmit diseases.



The loss of insect-eating bats increases the demand for chemical pesticides. It is important to remember that the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission has classified bats as protected wildlife, which means it is illegal to harm or kill bats in Florida. Visit www.floridabats.org to learn more about the work Shari and the Conservancy are doing.

Marguerite Terwilleger



Wekiva River Kayaking and Potluck – April Program

What a great way to end the Seminole Audubon 2016-2017 season! Thank you to the Russells for hosting Seminole Audubon again at their paradise on the Wekiva River on April 9th. We enjoyed kayaking along the Wekiva while viewing nesting, soaring, and swimming birds. A few alligators were seen keeping watch along the way. The kayak adventure was followed by a potluck lunch. Folks brought dishes to share and no one walked away hungry. Energetic participants headed back out for a second round of kayaking after lunch while others relaxed in chairs along the shore. It was a great way to end the season with kayaking, eating, and fellowship.

Marguerite Terwilleger



Trip Notes

Evening Bat Hike

The March 18, 2017, Evening Bat Hike on Lower Wekiva River Preserve State Park was led by Shari Blissett-Clark from the Florida Bat Conservancy.

Using Shari's bat echo-locator detectors, three species of bats were identified: Evening Bat (*Nycticeius humeralis*), Brazilian Free-Tailed Bat (*Tadarida brasiliensis*), and Northern Yellow Bat (*Lasiurus intermedius*).



We also saw fleeting glimpses of the bats flying. Shari shared details about building a proper bat house while we were waiting for the sun to go down.

Ava, a nine-year-old bat-watcher, exemplified the feeling of the group. Upon returning home Ava spent about 20 minutes telling her family everything she learned about bats and all the different sounds they make.

Two extra bonuses from the night hike were seeing the constellations and the ULA Delta IV Rocket launch. One of the hikers told us about an app for his phone that helps identify constellations.

Joy Rector and Marty Shepherd



Wakulla Springs

In late March, 19 SAS members and their guests traveled to Wakulla Springs State Park (WSSP). After checking into the lodge, we all took advantage of the Ranger-led pontoon boat trip. We saw birds and alligators as we traveled down the spring run and back up the run. We also went over the main spring, which is the deepest freshwater spring in Florida.

Our first full day included a morning walk on the WSSP trail to the Sally Ward Spring Run. The dense vegetation yielded a number of vireos and warblers. The highlight of the walk was a very cooperative Hermit Thrush that hopped along the trail in front of us.



Bald Point State Park was our next stop. There we were greeted by over 100 horseshoe crabs at the edge of the Ochlockonee Bay. Our species list continued to climb as we visited Otter Lake Recreation Area and Bottoms Road in Panacea before returning to the Lodge at WSSP.

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge (SMNWR) was our destination for the second day. We were fortunate to spend the entire day with Don Morrow and Matt Johnstone, volunteers with Friends of SMNWR. They are both proficient birders who know the Refuge well and freely shared their vast knowledge. Memorable species of the day were a Blue Ribbon Garter Snake (pictured), Pectoral Sandpiper, and an American Golden Plover (pictured). During our day at SMNWR we tallied 86 species of birds.



Group activities were not planned for the final morning. Our "Trip List", the list of bird species seen or heard by at least two members of our group, contains 114 species.

Faith Jones



Brown Pelican Rookery

We had a great time on our final scheduled field trip of the year. We started the day at the Port Orange Colony in Volusia County where we observed the Brown Pelican Rookery and scanned the surrounding sand bars for shorebirds. We then grabbed a quick lunch and headed to Margaret Buschman Park to see what we could find. We enjoyed watching a pair of Great Crested Flycatchers checking out nesting sites. Thanks for the great time everyone and a special thanks to Jim Peters for the photos!



Seminole Audubon Society Outreach – A Busy Springtime!

Seminole Audubon Society was busy in April participating in the Earth Fest celebrations at Lake Lotus Park in Altamonte Springs and also in Casselberry. We had a great time telling folks about our various citizen-science programs such as Jay Watch and monitoring the Least Terns. Our activity "banding" the kids was a hit! We also talked about Seminole County's new fertilizer ordinance and promoted the use of native plants as a great way to support our natural environment. Thanks to everyone who stopped at our booth to chat!! Thank you Altamonte Springs and Casselberry. Seminole Audubon Conservation Chair, Pam Meharg, was also involved in outreach at The Winter Springs Explore Outdoors Event. She gave a presentation on native plants to use in the yard to attract birds. This is a topic we can all learn from before planting.

Wekiva Basin Field Ecology Course



Friends of the Wekiva River, Inc. are offering a six lesson course designed to encompass various aspects of the unique ecology of the Wekiva system.

Each lesson will be a three-hour field trip.

- Wetland Ecology - June 17, 2017
- Spring Ecology - August 20, 2017
- Fire Ecology - October 15, 2017
- Birds of the Wekiva Basin - December 16
- Community Ecology - February 18, 2018
- Aquatic Ecology - April 15, 2018

The course will be instructed by Dr. Jay Exum, Wildlife Ecologist.

\$100 for full course or \$25 per trip. Pre-registration required. Visit FriendsOfWekiva.org for full details.

FWC and Audubon Florida Reminder: Help Keep Nesting Waterbirds Safe!

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and Audubon Florida are reminding beachgoers and boaters to give nesting waterbirds and their young space to help keep them safe this nesting season.

Shorebirds build shallow nests out of sand and shells on beaches in spring and summer, and eggs and hatching chicks are difficult to see. They can even be stepped on. Also, wading birds are nesting now on islands around the state. Both types of birds can be easily disturbed if people approach too closely. The birds may abandon their nesting sites, exposing eggs and chicks to predators, sun exposure and other harm. The shorebirds and waterbirds have experienced decline and conservation challenges. These coastal waterbirds can benefit from increased awareness by the public.

"Florida is renowned for its diverse and spectacular bird life," said FWC Chairman Brian Yablonski. "We want to ensure these birds are here for future generations to enjoy." People can help keep nesting waterbirds safe by keeping their distance from them and Critical Wildlife Areas (CWAs). Other things to remember:

- ✚ Keep your distance from birds, on the beach or on the water. If birds become agitated or leave their nests, you are too close. A general rule is to stay at least 300 feet from a nest. Birds calling out loudly and dive-bombing are signals for you to back off.
- ✚ Respect posted areas. Avoid posted nesting sites and use designated walkways whenever possible.
- ✚ Never intentionally force birds to fly or run. This causes them to use energy needed for nesting, and eggs and chicks may be left vulnerable to the sun's heat or predators. Teach children not to chase shorebirds and kindly ask fellow beachgoers to do the same. Shorebirds outside of posted areas may be feeding or resting and need to do so without disturbance.
- ✚ It is best not to take pets to the beach, but if you do, keep them leashed and avoid shorebird nesting areas. (State parks, national parks and CWAs do not allow pets.)
- ✚ Keep the beach clean and do not feed wildlife. Food scraps attract predators, such as raccoons and crows, which can prey on shorebird eggs and chicks. Litter on beaches can entangle birds and other wildlife.
- ✚ Spread the word. If you see people disturbing nesting birds, gently let them know how their actions may hurt the birds' survival. If they continue to disturb nesting birds, report it to the FWC's Wildlife Alert Hotline at 888-404-FWCC (3922), #FWC or *FWC on a cellphone or by texting Tip@MyFWC.com. You may also report nests that are not posted to our Wildlife Alert Program.

"These charismatic birds make Florida the special place that it is," said Julie Wraithmell, Deputy Executive Director for *Audubon Florida*. "Giving these parents and their babies a little space will ensure they're here for generations to come."

For more information, go to MyFWC.com/Shorebirds and download the "[Share the Beach with Beach-Nesting Birds](#)" brochure. Or go to the Florida Shorebird Alliance website at FLShorebirdAlliance.org to learn more about how to participate in shorebird conservation efforts.

For more information about Florida's CWAs, visit MyFWC.com/CWA.

To learn how you can [volunteer your time](#) to protect nesting coastal birds, visit FL.Audubon.org and scroll over the "Conservation" tab at the top, then click on "Coastal Conservation" and "Coastal Bird Stewardship," or you can email FLConservation@Audubon.org.

Seminole Co. Natural Lands Bird Surveys

The SAS survey team continues monthly surveys at Black Bear Wilderness Area (BBWA) in Sanford. During the



most recent survey on May 7 we found a few birds that had stopped off during their migration to breeding areas to our north. There were male American Redstarts at two locations and we located a Gray Catbird. Since January, we have documented 74 species on the property.

This is our second year surveying BBWA. Last year we traveled the survey route in a counter-clockwise direction and this year we are going clockwise. During the last 17 months we have documented 101 species. In addition to birds on our May survey we also observed a number of butterflies including Tiger Swallowtail, Zebra Heliconian, a Queen, and two Hackberry Emperors (pictured). **Faith Jones**

Fifth Graders - Technology, Geography and Raptors

The Fifth Graders at Goldsboro Elementary, Magnet School of Engineering and Technology, participated in a presentation on "Technology, Geography and Raptors" organized by Mary Lynn Hess, STEM Resource Teacher.



The first part of the program was a SKYPE with Sydney Anne Calderon, a research scientist from Cornell University. The students used their laptop computers displaying maps of the world and asked Sydney questions to determine where she was located.



The second part of the program was an informative session with Carol and Mary from The Avian Reconditioning Center in Apopka. They brought an American Kestrel, a Red-shouldered Hawk, a Barred Owl, and a Bald Eagle.

The following members of Seminole Audubon attended: Faith Jones, Joy Rector, and Michelle Vaughn. Joy Rector coordinated the contact with Cornell University.

Special historical note: SAS provided letters of support for the initial grant for Goldsboro Elementary's community garden.

Joy Rector

Seminole County Solar Co-op

The League of Women Voters of Seminole County is sponsoring a solar co-op, which will give homeowners more affordable access to rooftop solar. Seminole Audubon is partnering with the League to promote this opportunity. The Florida LWV has already sponsored 99 co-ops in other Florida counties, which have proven popular and successful; Seminole County is #100! This is a group-purchasing program, which has produced discounts for members of up to 20%.

A press conference was held May 18th at the Northland Church to announce the program.



Pastor Joel Hunter encouraged everyone to consider joining the co-op. He has solar on his house and his utility bill is \$10 per month. "Solar is the sensible thing to do," Dr. Hunter said, "It makes both moral and economic sense." Deirdre McNab, LWV state program director, said she expects this member co-op in Seminole County will fill up quickly.

The first public information meeting will be held at the Eastmonte Recreation Center in Altamonte Springs on June 5th beginning at 6:30 pm. Details about the program will be presented and questions answered. Three more public meetings are anticipated and installations could begin within four months.

To learn more about the program and to join the co-op visit: <http://www.lwvseminole.org/> and click on the solar co-op tab. Joining the co-op is not a commitment to purchase.

Sam Kendall

They're Here! Welcome Purple Martins!

Just when we were starting to wonder if they were going to snub us, the Purple Martins arrived! In January 2017 Seminole Audubon, working with the City of Sanford Parks Department, erected sixteen gourds on two poles in the hope of attracting Purple Martin birds to the Sanford waterfront. With assistance from the City, Jim Peters, Jan Peters, and Faith Jones installed the foundations and poles. In mid-April we had our first sighting of the birds on the set of gourds in the marina area. As



of yet, we haven't noticed any of the birds hanging out at the set of gourds placed near the corner of Mellonville Avenue and the lakefront. Hopefully, if they don't find it this year, they will search it out in 2018. Colonies of Purple Martins will help to control insects along the lakefront and provide enjoyment for those who stop by to observe them.

Marguerite Terwilliger

Photos: David LaGrange

Least Terns



Once again we welcome the Least Terns back to Sanford and Lake Monroe for their summer breeding season. We've spotted as many as 14 flying to the *Monroe's on the Lake* hotel roof. Work has been done on this historic nesting rooftop which discouraged the birds from nesting there, but they aren't giving up!

Stop by to watch them swooping above the lake, diving for forage fish, or just hanging out at the marina.

Leslie Martin

Crystal Lake Preserve

Work has begun on the new *Darrell Leidigh Native Tree Arboretum* at Crystal Lake Preserve. Thank you to Seminole Audubon Society members who generously donated over \$200 at the April meeting. Others donated young native trees in pots. The CLP Board is matching the previous monetary donation and will be making decisions on what plants to add. If you have young trees to promote, please email bdenslow@cfl.rr.com



First Graders Learn About Birds and Go on A Hike with SAS

For Earth Day, Joy Rector and Faith Jones spent a day with the first grade students at Holy Cross Lutheran Academy in Sanford. The day began with Faith instructing the students on how to identify Bald Eagles, Ospreys, Turkey Vultures and Black Vultures. Joy then had each student and parent stand in front of a life-sized cloth Bald Eagle to compare their size with that of the Bald Eagle. She then made eagle puppets with the students.



The four items of human trash that cause the most harm to wildlife were discussed. The students were instructed on ways to minimize the harm caused by plastic bags, plastic can and bottle holders, balloons, and fishing line.

The day also included a picnic lunch at Wilson's Landing and an afternoon hike on the Lower Wekiva Preserve State Park. The students played Earth Day Bingo, a version of Bio-Bingo, during lunch and the hike. Things they learned about in the classroom and had to find on the field trip included Pocket Gopher mounds, Gopher Tortoise holes, ant lion depressions, palm trees, pine trees, galls, and various insects. They also had to find colors and shapes in nature to achieve Bingo.

The students were fortunate to see two Gopher Tortoises on the hike, and a number of birds along the Wekiva River from Wilson's Landing. Florida Green-Eyes (flower pictured), Flag Paw-Paw, and Sensitive Briar were all in bloom and added color along the trail.

All students were given an SAS backpack and an SAS bookmark containing information about eagles.

Faith Jones and Joy Rector



**Breakfast
Birding,
Boat
Ride,
and
Jane
Isle
Survey**

Dr. MJ and Cheryl Soileau invited Seminole Audubon members to their home on Lake Jesup for breakfast, birding, and a boat ride. On April 8th several members rose early, brought their binoculars, cameras, and some breakfast goodies to share. We enjoyed our food while overlooking the Soileaus' lakefront lined with cypress trees and birds. Their pontoon boat held us all and we enjoyed a tour around the edge of the lake where we viewed numerous water birds as well as eagles. It was an extra treat when MJ offered to idle us near Jane Isle, at which point we were able to complete our April Jane Isle survey. The water is very low at this time, making it difficult to approach the island but MJ lifted the motor and got us close enough for the count. Some birds included in our count were Anhingas, Cattle Egrets, Glossy Ibis, White Ibis, Snowy Egrets, and Tricolored Herons.

We toured Cheryl and MJ's yard and enjoyed snacking on sweet treats from their Jaboticaba tree, Miracle Fruit tree, Mulberry trees, and different cherry trees.

MJ, Professor of Optics, Electrical & Computer Engineering and Physics at UCF, is an astronomer and described details of the upcoming Solar Eclipse in August, which several of our members plan to travel to view from various locations. We are grateful to MJ and Cheryl for hosting us at their home.

Marguerite Terwilleger



Find Us!

If you have bird photos or information of interest to members, please email it to seminoleaudubon@gmail.com.



If you have a Facebook account, please take a few minutes to 'like us' and invite your friends to like us as well.



Follow us on Twitter at: **Seminole Audubon @AudubonSeminole.**



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

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!

Joining Seminole Audubon Society makes you also a member of Audubon of Florida and the National Audubon Society. Membership benefits include our newsletter *The JAY*, *Audubon Magazine*, and the *Florida Naturalist*. 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 _____

E-mail _____

If you join elsewhere, please use our Chapter Code: **C7ZE310Z**

Seminole Associate Membership is available to Audubon Society members assigned to other chapters. Make check payable to Seminole Audubon Society. \$10.00 / year

Memberships are good gifts!

The JAY

Seminole Audubon Society
PO Box 2977
Sanford FL 32772-2977

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Calendar of Events

www.seminoleaudubon.org

Seminole County Natural Lands Guided Hike. Pre-registration required

June 3 Herp (Reptiles) Hike 7:30 pm—9:30 pm @ Geneva Wilderness Area

Friends of Wekiva Ecology Courses

June 17	Wetland Ecology
Aug 20	Spring Ecology
Oct 15	Fire Ecology
Dec 16	Birds of the Wekiva Basin
Feb 18	Community Ecology
April 15	Aquatic Ecology

Save the Date!

October 19-21 **Audubon Assembly**, near St. Augustine