

The JAY

www.seminoleaudubon.org



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

June, July, August 2021

SAS Has Lost a Board Member

Faith Jones



Shirley collecting money at SAS Holiday Silent Auction

It is with great sadness we share the news that Shirley Reilly lost her battle with cancer in mid-May. Originally from Pittsburgh PA, Shirley came to Central FL fifty years ago via the Philippines, Syracuse NY, Charleston WVA, and Erie PA. She was a professional dog trainer. She served as Vice-President and Training Director of the Orlando Dog Training Club. She was also a Training Director for Seminole Dog Fanciers. She served many years as President of the Orlando area board of directors for Florida Dog Guides for the Deaf. She had her own obedience training school as well, training many service dogs for people with handicaps, especially those with hearing loss.

Shirley was an active SAS member for many years. She was elected to the SAS Board of Directors in 2012 and held a position until her death. During her 9-year tenure on the Board, Shirley served as Secretary, Meeting Greeter, assisted with bird classes, and was our Audubon JayWatch Coordinator. Shirley was always willing to try something new, and help where needed. She was awarded our Volunteer of the Season in 2013.



Shirley Reilly 1934—2021
Taken on a Birding Basics Class trip. Shirley with camera and binoculars was a most common sight.



Shirley looking for something at Lake Monroe Conservation Area

In recent years she was a vital member of the *Seminole Scrubbers*, a group of SAS members who volunteered to assist St Johns River Water Management District maintain their Florida Scrub-Jay population on Lake Monroe Conservation Area. Shirley's dog training background made her the ideal volunteer to lead the conditioning team that enabled the young jays to be banded. During those times of year Shirley went almost daily to check on the jays. She could not go on Friday as that was her day to volunteer at Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive.

In addition to her kindness, I think I will miss most her sense of humor.



The original *Seminole Scrubbers* at Lyonia Preserve

Season Summary

Phyllis Hall, President

It has been a very challenging year with the pandemic for all of us. The board has appreciated your flexibility as we quickly moved from in-person meetings to Zoom meetings for our programs. The meetings were recorded with the link sent after the meeting. We averaged 27 participants at each meeting with an average of 22 viewing the recording. We were pleased with that participation of this new technology. We had a total of about 354 participants on Zoom and viewing the recordings for all meetings.

Because of the pandemic restrictions many Audubon Chapters opted not to do field trips this season, but the SAS board determined that we could do that safely following CDC guidelines and local COVID-19 orders regarding social distancing and wearing masks, limiting the number of participants on each trip and not organizing carpools. This worked well with about 150 total participants for all field trips. A special thanks to Sarah Donlan for organizing the field trips. And thanks to Leslie Martin for coordinating the Christmas Bird Count in December and the Great Backyard Bird Count in February.

While many chapters lost members during the year, SAS has consistently gained members nearly every month. We currently have over 260 paid members assigned to our chapter. Thank you to Marty Shepherd for all her work on membership maintenance. And thank you to Margaret Loring for sending the welcome letter to new members. Because of a problem with Spectrum email service, SAS converted monthly communications from Gmail to MailChimp. We send monthly meeting and field trip reminders to nearly 400 people on the MailChimp distribution list. We have over 620 followers on Facebook and 648 followers on Meet Up. For comparison, on 2/27/2020, we had 292 on Gmail, 489 on Facebook and 590 on Meet Up. Cecilia Carey has truly mastered MailChimp as well as Meet Up and Facebook. Thank you to Cecilia for a great job on this. And special thanks to Peggy Stickney who provides the notices of meetings and field trips to the *Orlando Sentinel* and the *Sanford Herald*. At nearly every field trip and Zoom meeting, there were participants who heard about the event through social media and the newspapers.

Many thanks to all the board members and committee chairs for their continued work this year. See the list at the end of this newsletter for names and their roles. And a special thanks to these people who have agreed to serve on the upcoming board term of 2021/2023: Sarah Donlan, Jan Peters, Lewis Gray, Leslie Martin, and Nat Harrison (CLI student). Terms will begin July 1. These board members are continuing their 2019/2022 terms: Phyllis Hall, Jim Denslow, and Peggy Stickney.

Your board and committee chairs will continue to be busy during the summer, planning programs and field trips for our next season, planning other projects and taking care of chapter business.



Marty Shepherd, Cecelia & John Carey

Altamonte Springs Family Fest

It was perfect weather for the Family Fest at Crane's Roost Park in Altamonte Springs on Saturday May 15th. Approximately 250 adults and children visited Seminole Audubon Society's booth. Volunteers handed out bird craft kits, bird identification guides for children, Northern Cardinal coloring pages, and pamphlets on planting native plants for birds.

Volunteers also answered a slew of questions about neighborhood birds, discussed the Purple Martin habitat on Lake Monroe, and showed visitors how to use bird apps to identify birds. Thank you to our volunteers!

Conservation Updates

Status on River Cross Development

Chris Dorworth, the developer of the controversial River Cross project, offered to settle a pair of lawsuits he filed against the county in 2018 after his development application was denied if Seminole County agreed to carve the 669 acres proposed for his River Cross development out of the county's rural boundary. He proposed to submit new development plans for old pasture land just north of the Orange County line and east of the Econlockhatchee River. At a private meeting on April 1, the county commissioners voted to reject the settlement. After the meeting Commissioner Jay Zembower pointed out that the costs to the county to defend the Dorworth lawsuits has already exceeded half a million dollars. Phyllis Hall sent a letter to the County Commissioners on behalf of SAS to thank them for voting to reject the settlement and for continuing to protect the county's rural boundary.

Pirate Sand and Fill Mines Slammed by Legislature and Lake County Commission

In Lake County, within the Wekiva watershed, landowners had been digging sand and fill mines under the guise of agricultural operations, and selling the material to the Department of Transportation (DOT) contractors to use in roadbuilding. Pleas to the DOT by Audubon and local governments to stop the practice initially produced little result. Commissioner Lee Constantine in his role as Chair of the Wekiva River Basin Commission also sent a strongly-worded letter to the governor. In April, Lake County Commissioners unanimously denied an after-the-fact permit for the Whitewater Farms borrow pit west of the river. At the same time, Audubon successfully worked with legislative committee staff to add language to SB1194 that requires all future DOT contractors to provide assurances that any sand or fill material purchased originates from a borrow pit that has obtained all of the required environmental permits. All DOT contracts, subcontracts, and purchase orders executed by contractors or subcontractors after July 1, 2021 must include specific requirements for compliance. The Legislature passed SB 1194 by Sen. Hooper (R-Palm Harbor).

M-CORES Repeal Ends Turnpike Proposals

The original 2019 M-CORES legislation mandated the construction of 330 miles of new turnpikes through some of Florida's most sensitive environmental areas and important rural farmland areas, effectively prying them open for future development and sprawl.

An amended Senate Bill 100 by Senator Harrell (R-Stuart), Chair of the Transportation Committee, has repealed the M-CORES mandate. The bill focuses primarily on extension of the Suncoast Parkway to U.S. 19 in Citrus County, then allowing a gradual improvement of U.S. 19 and related roads up to Interstate 10 by 2034. The bill also directs a new study of a northern extension of the Florida Turnpike. The new language requires that "The department (of transportation) shall take into consideration the guidance and recommendations of any previous studies or reports relevant to..." future projects, which would include the protective recommendations from the Task Forces. This new language in the bill will require DOT to at least consider the recommendations of the M-CORES Task Forces, which include some of the most environmentally-protective guidelines for highway planning and design ever prescribed in Florida, in the event the turnpikes are proposed again in the future.

Florida Forever

The Senate and House chambers agreed on \$100 million of state funding for *Florida Forever*, the state's premiere land conservation program. Additionally, another \$300 million in pending federal economic relief funding will be dedicated to *Florida Forever* acquisitions within the Florida Wildlife Corridor. This exciting investment will see important acquisitions in an ecological network identified for its habitat value and connectivity, with the transparency and public accountability of the *Florida Forever* program. In addition, both committees agreed to spend \$500 million of the federal relief funds for septic-to-sewer conversions and \$100 million towards the clean-up of the Piney Point disaster.

Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible Amazon Smile purchases to **Seminole Audubon Society** whenever you shop on Amazon Smile.

When you Start With A Smile you help Seminole Audubon promote awareness and protection of plants and animals in the St. Johns River Basin.



Best Florida Native Plants for Birds

Neta Villalobos-Bell

Food: Insects

Part 4 of a 5-part Series

In this series of articles to create an inviting habitat using suggested Florida native plants to attract birds, we cover their habitat needs, food, shelter and nesting. For resident birds, it's more than just providing a buffet for them to stop by and fly away. Hopefully, they will want to stay to reproduce. For migrants, providing a safe stopover to refresh and feed is increasingly important considering we are still losing ground to development in Florida. The plant choices you make are important for the survival of our bird populations.

INSECTS. A CRITICAL BIRD RESOURCE.

Ninety-five percent (95%) of North American songbirds feed on insects. (Bird Conservation magazine, Winter 2018-2019, p.30)

Insects are a most critical resource for birds during migration and during breeding because they provide more nutrients than seeds and fruit at these times, and native plants attract more insects than non-native plants. Native plants evolved over thousands of years with our native wildlife, including insects, for the benefit of both.

The value of using native plants as an insect source has been studied by many organizations.

National Audubon website, 2017, stated...

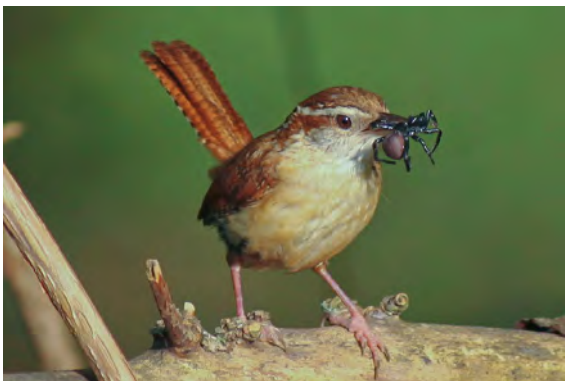
"Native plants are better for native birds than introduced flora. More specifically, because these trees and shrubs have evolved with the local wildlife, they harbor more insects or yield more berries and fruit than non-native plants, providing greater amounts of food." (Audubon, July 27, 2017, Michelle Donahue, <https://www.audubon.org/news/new-research-further-proves-native-plants-offer-more-bugs-birds>)

According to a study published October 2018 by the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, **"Insect-eating birds that depend on the availability of high-calorie, high-protein cuisine-namely caterpillars and spiders-during breeding season to feed their young are finding the menu severely lacking in backyards landscaped with even a small proportion of non-native plants."**

Biological Conservations. Volume 213, Part A, September 2017, Page 42-50

Understanding how introduced plants reduce food web complexity is critical to effective conservation management within human-dominated systems. **"In urban breeding birds, the paucity of dietary specialists suggests that a lack of food resources, such as arthropod (insects, spiders, earthworms, millipeds, lawn shrimp) prey essential for reproduction and survival, may contribute to bird declines."**

WHERE DO BIRDS FORAGE FOR THESE INSECTS?



Carolina Wren

Although foraging overlaps, some techniques are unique to certain birds.

Birds forage on the **ground** and under leaf litter. Use deciduous trees and semi-deciduous plants. Red Maple, Oaks, Walter's viburnum, Simpson stopper. Don't rake the leaves, but use as free mulch.

Brown thrashers find them by scratching at leaf litter. Sparrows, towhees, crows, and wrens eat big caterpillars, beetles, grubs, and other medium and large insects and spiders. Robins visually notice where the worms are in the ground.

(Disclaimer. Spiders and worms are not insects, but important bird food).

Birds find insects **crawling on and under leaves** of low-growing grasses and perennials. Examples are love grass, muhly grass, and wildflowers, such as tickseed.



Northern Bobwhite

Best Florida Native Plants for Birds cont'd from page 3

Chickadees find aphids, whitefly, scale, caterpillars, ants, leafhoppers, and beetles on and under leaves.

Higher up, birds pick insects off **twigs and branches**. Oaks. Pines. Sweetgum leaves are eaten by many insects, thus become bird food.

Tufted Titmouse pick up tiny aphids and other chewing insects.

Birds search for insects hidden **under rough tree bark**. Oaks. Pines.

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers can hear chewing insects inside the outer layers of tree trunks. Woodpeckers feed on larvae, beetles, weevils, borers. Chickadees, nuthatches, creepers, black and white warblers eat many tiny insects that they find in tree bark as do the titmouses.

Birds eat flying insects.

Hummingbirds snap up very tiny flying insects like gnats out of midair in addition to tiny aphids and chewing insects. Swallows and swifts feed on the wing. Yellow-rumped warblers can eat little caterpillars on treetop leaves and then can flutter out to snap up insects in midair.



Pileated woodpecker



Yellow-rumped Warbler

About 12,500 species of insects are found in FL, not all native, some are invasive and some are pests. They fly, crawl, jump, bite and sting, suck juices from plants, eat other insects and invertebrates. They're everywhere even if you don't see them, under tree bark, on plants under leaves and on stems, and inside flowers.

We complain and wish they weren't around us, but we're lucky they are. Insects are an integral part of the food web. And, birds are natural predators in your yard keeping pests at a reasonable level so there's no need to use pesticides. In fact it could be harmful if a bird picks up an insect that is sprayed with chemicals. Please minimize your use of pesticides and spot treat only.

WILDFLOWERS

Insects that feed on nectar are attracted to wildflowers which in turn attract predatory insects. It's a frenzy of insect activity and an inviting buffet for birds.



Florida paintbrush. *Carphephorus corymbosus*

Height: 3' Spread: 2-3' Soil: sandy, well-drained Light: sun

Bloom: large cluster pink flower heads in late summer or autumn

Best Florida Native Plants for Birds cont'd from page 4

Florida greeneyes. *Berlandiera subacaulis*

Height: 1 – 1 ½', Spread: 1' Soil: sandy, well-drained

Light: sun to light shade

Bloom: yellow flower disk with prominent green disk in spring to fall



Florida greeneyes



Spotted beebalm/Dotted horsemint. *Monarda punctata*

Height: 1 ½' to 3' Spread: forms clumps from self-sown seeds Soil: well-drained Light: sun

Bloom: shades of white, pink and rose in late spring to early fall

Rose-mallow. *Hibiscus moscheutos*

Height: 5-6' Spread: 3' Soil: wet Light: sun to partial shade

Bloom: white to pale yellow with a dark maroon center spot in summer Prune annually to the ground in autumn



Rose mallow

OAKS

Caterpillars are especially nutritious for baby birds. Research by Doug Tallamy, entomologist and author, "found that oaks support an astounding 543 species of Lepidoptera, including Polyphemus and Imperial moths, Banded Hairstreak, Striped Hairstreak, White M Hairstreak, Juvenal's Duskywing, and Horace's Duskywing."

Previously described in Series 3.

Southern red oak/Spanish oak. *Quercus falcata*

Height: up to 90' Spread: 10-20', Soil: sandy, acid Light: Sun to part shade

Shumard oak. *Quercus shumardii*

Height: 60-110' Spread: 40-60' Soil: Moist, well-drained Light: Full sun

Post oak. *Quercus stellata*

Height: 45 to 55' Spread: 35-50' Soil: all soils Light: Full sun

Bluejack oak. *Quercus incana*

Height: 15-40' Spread: 20' to 30' Soil: sandy Light: Full sun

PINES

Pine bark is flaky and deeply fissured – a perfect hiding place for beetles and other insects.

Longleaf pine. *Pinus palustris*

Height: 60-120' Spread: 30-50' Soil: sandy Light: Sun

Slash pine. *Pinus elliotti*

Height: 60-100' Spread: 20'- 60' Soil: moist, well-drained Light: Sun

Loblolly pine. *Pinus taeda*

Height: 60-100' Spread: 30-60' Soil: adaptable, well-drained Light: sun



Loblolly Pine



So, as you peruse through the resources suggested below, remember

"Right Plant in the Right Place". As you know by now, choose plants that match their needs with what exists in your yard, such as, soil type, light, mature size, space, and more.

Resources for additional research on these plants.

www.fnps.org

www.plantrealflorida.org

www.flawildflowers.org

Native Plant Landscaping for Florida Wildlife, Craig N. Huegel

Forest Plants of the Southeast and Their Wildlife Uses, James H. Miller & Karl V. Miller

A Gardener's Guide to Florida's Native Plants, Rufino Osario

Florida's Best Native Landscape Plants, Gil Nelson

Neta Villalobos-Bell. Certified Advanced Florida Master Naturalist and Land Steward, Certified Horticulture Professional, Certified National Association Interpreter. Member of Seminole Audubon Society and the Florida Native Plant Society.

BIRDS CAN'T READ: Facts and Fallacies of Bird Boxes

by Richard Poole and Christine Brown



Richard Poole constructing nest boxes

We have examined bird boxes for over 30 years and as the years progressed, we learned that birds can't read. Many birds disregard completely some instructions written in "How to build bird boxes." Take the term "bird boxes." Residents in our boxes include: squirrels, flying and gray, various species of snakes, mice, bats, anoles, bees, wasps, raccoons and opossums. We call our boxes "nest boxes."

One of the first questions Richard is asked when discussing boxes is, "How high should I place my box?" His reply, "Just high enough so that when I climb my ladder I can easily open the top and take a picture if I desire." Usually the height is 9-10 feet to box entrance. The impetus for this article occurred when he read, "screech owl boxes should be 30-40 feet high." A friend had a screech owl nest in a box 7 feet high. We have had many screech owls nest in our boxes.

Other fallacies include:

- *Everyone knows, a purple martin box should be 10 feet plus high.*
We have seen two martin nests in one wood duck box with the entrance 6 feet above ground.
- *A great crested flycatcher box should be over 8 feet high.*
We've seen a great crested flycatcher nesting in a 'bluebird box' with a hole 4 feet above the ground. We have raccoons and opossums in the neighborhood. Richard decided they should have a box. The floor was 10" x 10", the height 18 inches. A great crested flycatcher nested in it.
- *If you want a certain bird, you have to build a box for that bird's specifications.* See purple martins above. Some commercial boxes for red-bellied woodpeckers are 9 1/2 x 7 3/4 inches. Question: what is the diameter of a hole made by a red-bellied woodpecker? Maybe four inches at the most and we have had red-bellied woodpeckers nest in boxes as small as 3.5" x 5.5" x 10".
- *If ventilation holes aren't drilled at the top, the birds will roast.*
Knowing heat rises, Richard had trouble thinking anyone would write this. But we decided to have a test. Yes, our test showed the ventilated boxes were cooler, by 0.9 degrees C. We published the experimental procedure in *Florida Field Naturalist* 36:3, p.64. While checking eastern bluebird boxes in central Florida we found four (4) young. They were in a 'bluebird' box but one was larger than the others. A cowbird? We waited and as they grew feathers we learned that all were bluebirds. We inquired about the cause of the large one. The best answer we received was, "it was the first egg laid and the temperature was hot enough to start incubation." Usually the female waits until the last egg is laid to start incubating them, so this one got an early start!

The size of the hole will exclude larger birds, if squirrels don't enlarge it. But the size of the hole will not exclude smaller birds or other animals. We put metal flashing around our holes. Someone in the past decided screech owls need a 3-inch hole. Our screech owls have nested in boxes with 2 1/4" holes.

The recommended standard size hole for wood ducks is 4 x 3 inches. Richard made that size at first, but using a drill is a lot easier than a jig saw. His holes are now 3.5 inches which is OK by the wood ducks. As he was measuring the width of the box to put the hole in the middle, he asked himself, "Why the middle?" So, he drilled the hole to one side. The result was that birds laid their eggs on the side furthest away from the hole.

We have enjoyed our experiences with nest boxes. We hope you will place some in your area. Someone once asked Richard, "If I buy your box, will you guarantee I'll get a screech owl?" "No," he replied, "but if you don't get the box, I guarantee you won't get a screech owl! And don't be surprised if some other critter takes up residence." **Birds can't read.**



Differing size Eastern Bluebird nestlings from same brood.

These are the hands of a licensed bird bander.

The Role of the Chapter Historian

By Chuck Honaker, SAS Historian

The historical archives of Seminole County, FL are housed at the Museum of Seminole County History located at 300 Eslinger Way in Sanford. If you have not visited the museum, I recommend it. There are exhibits and memorabilia that reflect the rich history of our part of Florida. In fact, Seminole Audubon Society is a vital piece of our county's history. Chartered in 1949, Seminole Audubon has been involved in local and area-wide conservation, birding and educational initiatives for over seventy years.

The role of the chapter historian is to ensure that our documents and our publications are organized by year and stored properly for future use and reference by our members. In the past six months our old paper records which include newspaper clippings, handwritten minutes of chapter meetings the 1950s and 1960s, scrap books, and copies of *The Jay* have been transferred to the Museum of Seminole County History. These are stored at no cost in a climate-controlled area for posterity. They can be accessed for research or other uses as needed. There is also a more public working file which contains examples of our chapter's past and more contemporary materials such as our original charter document and a 2021 copy of *The Jay*.

In recent years, most SAS materials are stored on computers and jump drives which are compact and convenient for data storage, but we still retain some paper issues of *The Jay*. If those who hold office change or people move out of the area, our chapter records are located centrally. A few days ago Phyllis emailed me for help with finding old chapter minutes related to waivers. The electronic history files are referenced frequently by Board members for background on previous chapter activities. Good record management is important in all organizations.

Little Wekiva and the Florida Wildlife Corridor

Senate Bill 976, filed by Sen. Brodeur (R- Lake Mary), calls for a study to investigate siltation damage of the Little Wekiva River. Sediment has filled the stretch of the river north of State Road 434, choking the riverbed with invasive plant growth and exacerbating flooding in the area. SB 976 requires the Department of Environmental Protection, in consultation with the St. Johns River Water Management District, Seminole County, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and the Department of Transportation (DOT), to conduct a study to identify the sources of the sedimentation. Fingers point to DOT's \$2.3 billion, multi-year project to repair Interstate 4 through Orlando. The Little Wekiva River is a stream in the Greater Orlando area, flowing northward as a tributary of the Wekiva River, which later joins the St. Johns River, the longest river in the state of Florida. The Wekiva River and the Little Wekiva River have been designated National Wild and Scenic Rivers. The bill also recognizes the Florida Wildlife Corridor as an existing physical and geographically-defined area consisting of more than 18 million acres of land and creates incentives for conservation and sustainable development within this corridor. SB 976 acknowledges the importance of ecological connectivity, wildlife corridors, and the protection of functionally-connected networks of conservation lands.

Keep Up With SAS

Visit our website **SeminoleAudubon.org** or follow us on



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Audubon - Our Racist Eponym

By Sam Kendall

When I read last year that John James Audubon was a racist slave owner I wasn't surprised. But I was hurt. It challenged my long-held opinion of him; what his philosophy of life must have been. The racial turbulence of the last 18 months has forced me to confront Audubon the man, my own ignorance of black history and my own unconscious biases. He was an artist dedicated to advancing himself through his craft.

Whenever I walked by a big confederate statue it didn't occur to me that a black person walking beside me might be offended. I did feel like something wasn't proper. I mean these characters were actually losers in the war. I thought they were just objects of history. Then I read Mitch Landreu's book, *In The Shadow of Statues*. I was humbled to understand that black people are intimidated or insulted walking under these figures which represent to them chains, slavery and lynchings. I learned that during the Jim Crow era, intimidation was exactly why these "monuments" were erected. Since I finished that book many of these relics of human domination thankfully have been shuttered out of sight.

I had already read Zora Neal Hurston so I began with James Baldwin followed by a 2020 Baldwin analysis by Eddie Glaude titled *Begin Again*; then Richard Rothstein's *The Color Of Law*, which chronicles how federal agencies required lenders to deny loans to blacks; and the Lindsay Faye imaginative novel, *The Paragon Hotel*, that explores the 20th-century racist constitution of the state of Oregon. I never had any black history in high school or college and I feel like my education is just beginning.

Audubon's world view apparently was that of domination which included white domination. It was a popular and driving view that humans were the dominant world species and some religions even extended that view to one human species dominating another. All that saddened me about Audubon. But history shows that many humans still believe the earth is theirs; that other species can find someplace else to live: white rhinos, mountain gorillas, right whales, woodland caribou, red wolves, golden-cheeked warblers, Florida panthers and grasshopper sparrows – the list of critically-endangered species is long – and now must I include Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders?

Did black people know the whole story about master Audubon long before I did? I wonder? He was not a conservationist. In his time, species' extinctions were not imagined to be caused by humans. In our time, white supremacy continues to threaten the extinction of species and once again, even our national security. I've taken him down from his revered image.

Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Goal from the Central Florida Regional Conservation Committee (RCC)

Just as biodiversity strengthens natural systems, the diversity of human experience strengthens our conservation efforts for the benefit of nature and all human beings. Therefore, the Central Florida RCC resolves that each chapter will develop and implement action plans to increase diversity and inclusion of their board and their membership that reflects the diversity of their local community.

To meet this goal, Seminole Audubon Society has:

- Changed the field trip photo on our website from a bird photo to an inclusive group trip photo
- Our CLI student, Nat Harrison, has joined the SAS board
- We have a new connection with Bentley Elementary thanks to Joy Rector. The teachers plan to start a Junior Audubon Club in the fall using the *Audubon Adventures* curriculum. According to their website, this school includes 60% students of color and 60% economically disadvantaged.
- We are continuing our connection with the Eco Camp at Yarborough Nature Center. They will be using *Audubon Adventures* in their camps this summer. Cecilia Carey will be providing birding education at two (2) camps in June.

Program Notes

March 14

Grow a Better Bird Feeder by Neta Villalobos-Bell, past president of SAS, National Association Certified Interpretive Guide, Certified Florida Master Naturalist, Life Member Florida Native Plant Society, and 2018 Central Florida COX Conserves Heroes recipient. Research has shown there is a critical connection between native plants and insects which are critical to the lifecycle of songbirds. Over 3 billion birds have disappeared since 1970. It's important that each of us do what we can to provide suitable habitat that offers a good variety of native plants, leaf litter, a water source and avoids pesticides. A primary source of food for birds are insects which they find in Spanish moss, on and under leaves, hidden under bark, in lichen, and in the air. Soft caterpillars, grubs, and larvae of beetles are full of protein and are especially good food for baby birds. Oak trees are the most prolific for breeding moths and their caterpillars. Their cocoons may stay in leaf litter to pupate so it's important to leave leaf litter which also serves as good mulch. There are 26 species of native oak trees in Florida, 19 in Central Florida. Other good trees include holly, red maple, and magnolias. Native grasses like muhly produce seed for food. Firebush is popular with hummingbirds, long-tongued butterflies and long-tongued bees.

Resources Neta mentioned: *Plant Real Florida* <https://www.plantrealflorida.org/>

Where to purchase native plants: Green Isle Gardens in Groveland <https://www.greenislegardens.com/#/>

Books: *Native Plant Landscaping for Florida Wildlife* by Craig Huegel and *Birds of Florida* by Pranty-Radamaker-Kennedy

May 2, 2021

Picnic & Paddle on Wekiva

After postponement because of rain, the weather was perfect for the Annual Picnic and Paddle held Sunday at Cindy and Tom Russell's home on the



Wekiva River. Members and friends took turns kayaking on the river and relaxing on the riverbank under a beautiful tree canopy. During the day, over 15 species were heard or observed including Wood Ducks, Limpkins, Green Herons, Great Blue Herons, Red-eyed Vireos, and Downy Woodpeckers.



Trip Notes

February 27 and March 20

Lake Harney Wilderness Area

Sarah Donlan, Field Trip &
Eagle Watch Volunteer



Eagles were the big attraction for our trip to Lake Harney Wilderness Area (WA) in February and doubled up again in March. Nature throws you a curve once in a while when you are working on your field trip schedule in May and expect a regular scheduled showing of the life of an eagle, egg to fledgling. What we did to make sure everyone got a chance to view this cycle is create a pop-up event almost a month earlier than planned because everything happened sooner than we thought. There are several large nests at Lake Harney WA. The eaglet, Forest, was practicing to fly the end of February and bouncing around the nest as if he would fly off to the great north any day. Of course, 35 days as an egg and 11 to 12 weeks as an infant/juvenile/teenager, a quick cycle for sure and he was eager to go. After fledging, he hangs around with his parents for a month or two before migrating to perhaps, North Georgia. So luckily it all worked out better than we could have hoped. Forest was in his nest on February 27th, our pop-up trip, with his mom, Daphne, perching close by. Approximately 15 members and new attendees hiked the 300 acres of Lake Harney to see the birds, view the river, and enjoy the observation deck. Many species of birds other than eagles were present, including Yellow-rumped Warblers, Gray Catbirds, Northern Parulas, and numerous woodpeckers



On March 20, we scheduled our regular field trip and had a bumper group of 25 to re-create our hike. It was a cool and windy day. Perhaps we walked a little more briskly or the birds were hunkering down, but not many birds were seen. At the point in the St. John's River for viewing, we were excited to see in the furthest reach of our binoculars a Great Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, and a much-debated bird with a white chest that rather resembled a limpkin. Not that though, it was a juvenile White Ibis in partial dress that stumped us for a while. Computer enhancement verified our guess.

Five deer crossed our path, much to our delight. And, of course, Forest was flying and

returned to the nest with mom just in time for his nap.

From the observation tower we added a Northern Harrier hunting near the ground, many Tree Swallows, two more Bald Eagles in a small Cypress tree, Great Egrets, and Sandhill Cranes flying over. The trip was everything we could have hoped for. The perfect hike and wonderful, mutually interested people including children were part of the group.

We'll be doing this trip again next year. Eagle Watch in Seminole County is an important part of Seminole Natural Lands and the education of as many people as possible. It's always an enjoyable trip.

April 17

Crystal Lake Preserve, Lake Mary

Crystal Lake Preserve (CLP), a 40-acre parcel in Lake Mary, exists thanks to the foresight and perseverance of Darrell and Bette Leidigh. They purchased the property and gave it to the City of Lake Mary with restrictions that it be maintained for passive recreation. When that did not work out, the Leidighs began the lengthy process to form a non-profit corporation, Crystal Lake Preserve, Inc., that



could take ownership of the property. Darrell and Bettye, with the help of their son Mark, jumped through all the hoops required by the City and neighboring land owners.

Our April 17th field trip was led by CLP Board members Jim Denslow, Mark Leidigh, and Josh Whitman. The weather was iffy, but we managed to avoid any rain. As one of the restrictions on CLP is the number of vehicles allowed, we carpooled from a large parking area nearby. Upon arrival, a UTV ride was available. Mark and Josh made several trips around the property, successfully showing CLP



to all participants while Jim spoke with those walking.

Jim pointed out the distinct differences between Slash Pine trees and Sand Pine trees. Both species were seen emerging far above all the leafy forest below. As we walked on, Jim explained the plant community process known as old-field succession or secondary succession where an area has been cleared by a disturbance that leaves the soil in place. The area then fills in with grasses and pines that provide the shade needed for young hardwood trees to establish.

As we continued on Jim identified plants and some of the natural features of CLP. We saw a number of gopher tortoise holes.

It was a most enjoyable morning on this beautiful property. Thanks to Jim, Mark and Josh for making this trip possible.



Nine Birds to Look for this Summer

In Central Florida we have four groups of birds. There are birds that live here year round, birds that spend their winters with us, birds that come here to breed during the summer, and finally birds that migrate through in Spring and Fall on their way to and from their breeding grounds.

In the box to the right is a list of some of the birds that you should be able to see or hear this summer. Why not challenge yourself to see how many of these birds you can find before they head south? All of these birds are here to breed, so take care not to disturb their nesting activities.

- Swallow-tailed Kite
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- Common Nighthawk
- Chuck-wills-widow
- Chimney Swift
- Red-eyed vireo
- Purple Martin
- Barn Swallow
- Summer Tanager



Welcome New Board Member

We are pleased to introduce Nat Harrison as a new board member. Nat is graduating from Seminole College this summer with a major in environmental studies. Her career goal is to work in reconciliation ecology in a city setting. Nat has already been quite involved with environmental

activities. She served as president of the Environment Club at Seminole State College. She had an intern position with Cuplet Fern Native Plant Society. She also volunteered at Blue Spring SP with the manatee festival and she has volunteered with the SERV program on a lake shoreline restoration.

Nat has been a member of SAS for several years. She was selected for the Audubon Florida Conservation Leadership Program (CLI) this past year with Phyllis Hall as her mentor. In that role she has been a member of the Central Florida Regional Conservation Committee. Nat has taken over maintenance of the SAS Twitter account and she has an interest in attracting young people to Audubon. Nat was just recently selected for a paid summer internship position for the CLI Program which is based at the Audubon Birds of Prey Center in Maitland.

WELCOME

NEW MEMBERS or **NEW** to **OUR Chapter**

Carol Brennan	Deltona
Celia Dellamorte	Lake Mary
Elizabeth Escarraz	Sanford
Dee Finnerty	Lake Mary
Karen Heriot	Oviedo
Marlene Hyde	Casselberry
Melanie Jenkins	Deltona
Cathy & Robert Matthews	Oviedo
Marcie McIlrath	DeBary
Stephanie Nieves	Sanford
Karen Padro	DeBary
Jose Ruiz	Deltona
Mary Snipes	Sanford
Nancy Watkinson	Winter Springs
Thomas Witt	Geneva
Jeff Zwick	Heathrow

AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Introductory offer For New Members Only \$20.00/ 1 year

Join on our website SeminoleAudubon.org using Chapter Code E31

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

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2021-2022

Board of Directors & Committee Chairs (eff. 7/1/21)

SeminoleAudubon@gmail.com

Term	Name	Office/Committee	Email
2020/2022	Phyllis Hall	President, Web Site	phylliscath814@gmail.com
2021/2023	Sarah Donlan	Chair Field Trips	sarahdonlan42@gmail.com
2021/2023	Jan Peters	Treasurer	jan@janetkpeters.com
2020/2022	Peggy Stickney	Secretary Press/Publicity, Trip Release keeper	stickneymargaret@gmail.com
2021/2023	Nat Harrison	CLI Student, Twitter	natsscem@gmail.com
2020/2022	Jim Denslow	CLP Liaison, Member-at-Large	bdenslow@cfl.rr.com
2021/2023	Lewis Gray	Jane Isle Survey	lewisgray@bellsouth.net
2021/2023	Leslie Martin	Vice President Audubon CBC, GBBC	leslielou63@gmail.com
2021/2022	Vacant	Programs	Contact Phyllis Hall for more info

Name	Committee Chairs	Email
Marty Shepherd	Membership	gindad@cfl.rr.com
Margaret Loring	New Member Welcome Letter	MLoring@CFL.rr.com
Marguerite Terwilliger	Past President, Big Sit data, Scholarships, Hospitality, Refreshments	mterwilliger51@gmail.com
Cecilia Carey	Meetings PowerPoint, Monthly Reminders on Meet Up, Facebook	cacarey@cfl.rr.com
Chuck Honaker	Jay Watch point person, SAS Premiums, History Archives	chonakerjr@gmail.com
Jim Peters	Purple Martin Nests	jim@jameshpeters.com
Sam Kendall	Energy	samuelk32@embarqmail.com
Faith Jones	Newsletter Compiler	faithaudubon@gmail.com
Corrinne Wertz	Publications	cwertz127@aol.com

Committees

Programs

Field Trips: Sarah Donlan (Chair), Michelle Vaughn

Eagle Watch: Michelle Vaughn, Sarah Donlan

Jane Isle Survey: Lewis Gray (Chair), Marguerite Terwilliger

Conservation: Phyllis Hall (Chair), Sam Kendall, Jim Denslow, Faith Jones, Cecilia Carey, Mindy Hellman, Marguerite Terwilliger, Sarah Donlan, Chuck Honaker

SAS is represented on these community committees: Wekiva Wild and Scenic River Advisory Committee, Wekiva River Basin Commission, Central FL Audubon Regional Conservation Committee. In addition, Seminole Planning and Development agendas are reviewed each week.

Outreach: Phyllis Hall (Chair), Marty Shepherd, Leslie Martin, Cecilia Carey

MailChimp, Facebook & Meet Up: Cecilia Carey (Backup: Phyllis Hall)

PO Box Mail Pickup: Michelle Vaughn (Backup: Marguerite Terwilliger)

Lake Monroe Purple Martin Nests: Jim Peters, Helpers: Jim & Cecilia Carey, Phyllis Hall, Richard Hagen

Lake Jesup Park Clean Up: Leslie Martin, Marguerite Terwilliger

Scholarships: Marguerite Terwilliger (Chair), Corrinne Wertz, Jim Denslow, Joy Rector, Michelle Vaughn

School/Eco-Camp Connections:

Eco Camp at Ed Yarbrough Nature Center: Marguerite Terwilliger for scholarships. Using Audubon Adventures & SAS speakers for summer camps 2021.

Central FL Zoo Camp: Michelle Vaughn

Goldsboro Elementary - Sanford: Joy Rector

Bentley Elementary - Sanford: Joy Rector. Starting Audubon Junior Club using Audubon Adventures.

TW Lawton Elementary - Oviedo: Phyllis Hall

Walden Community School - Winter Park: Phyllis Hall

Seminole State College—Phyllis Hall

