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.

November—December 2022

Audubon Assembly was to be held in Fort Myers in mid-October. Because of Hurricane Ian, Assembly has moved to Zoom format. You still have time to register for these free sessions.

October 27, 2022 Audubon Wins and Work for Birds and Florida - A Year in Review

Julie Wraithmell, Executive Director of Audubon Florida, takes us on an exciting journey around the state as we celebrate this year's conservation accomplishments, where we need to continue to push to protect birds and the places they need, as well as staff awards.

November 2, 2022 at 6 pm Chapter Celebration and Florida Audubon Annual MeetingJoin us for the annual celebration of Audubon's 45 chapters, their successes, and the announcement of this year's chapter awards winners, as well as the brief annual meeting of the Florida Audubon Society. **Register here.**

SAS President Audubon Florida Volunteer of the Year

Katie Warner, Audubon Florida

Every year Audubon Florida hosts our annual conference, the Audubon Assembly, where members of our 45 chapters, our staff, and partners come together to learn more about conservation in Florida and celebrate the year's achievements. During this



conference, we also recognize Floridians for their contributions to conservation in the Sunshine State.

This year I am thrilled to share that Audubon Florida will recognize Phyllis Hall as our **Volunteer of the Year Award for 2023.** This award is given to an individual who shows dedication to birds and the places they need and consistently goes above and beyond in their service to conservation. Phyllis' involvement with Audubon has been appreciated over the years by her leadership with Seminole Audubon Society, her mentorship and involvement with CLI and her time, energy and enthusiasm shared with Audubon Center for Birds of Prey.

Audubon Florida looks forward to celebrating all Phyllis has done, and sharing the example she set with our attendees. This award will be presented November 2nd at 6:00 pm, during the Chapter Celebration of the Zoom meeting mentioned above.

Conservation Leadership Initiative

Phyllis Hall, SAS President

The annual Florida Audubon Assembly is usually the kickoff event for the Conservation Leadership Initiative (CLI). This year students and mentors will meet regionally for a half-day event. This is my fifth year mentoring a CLI student. It's been a very enjoyable and rewarding experience. I feel I learn as much from the students as they do from me. My CLI student this year is Nashalee Rios, a biology major at Seminole State College. Her environmental interests include: Botany/Plant Science, Conservation, Ecology, Environmental Engineering, Environmental Policy/Advocacy, Forestry, Limnology/Hydrology, Sustainability, Wildlife Biology, and Zoology. Twenty-five students were selected for CLI across Florida this year. There were over 135 applicants.



Winter Break Eco Camp at Ed Yarborough Nature Center: Tuesday-Friday, December 27-30, 2022

Eco Camp is an outdoor adventure and environmental education program that is committed to promoting individual growth and environmental awareness. Call 407-665-2211 for more information. Register online at <u>recreation.seminolecountyfl.gov</u>. Scholarships are available from SAS. Camps fill quickly so please apply as early as possible. To start, call or email the Ed Yarborough Nature Center to check availability and **inquire about scholarships**. <u>nswanson@seminolecountyfl.gov</u>

Complete the scholarship application on the SAS website: https://seminoleaudubon.org/education/

Time: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm (extended care available from 7:30 am - 5:30 pm) Cost: \$132 (extended care an additional \$15/ week) Ages: 7 - 12

Free the Ocklawaha Coalition Update

The coalition composed of over 32 people from various organizations along the St. Johns River and river basin meets regularly via Zoom. Phyllis Hall attends to represent SAS. At the latest meeting on October 7th, the update included changes in leadership positions and a change in strategy from "breaching the Rodman Dam" to partial restoration. This would re-establish the original Ocklawaha River and recover 20 springs, improve the St. Johns River and Silver Springs while providing significant economic benefits to Marion and Putnam counties. There had been resistance in those counties to breaching the dam, but support is building according to a scientific poll taken in December 2021/

January 2022. Over 77% of respondents were in favor of restoring the flow of the Ocklawaha River. Recently, a new Community Engagement Coordinator, a resident of Welaka, is working with that community to continue to gather support. There has also been a turnaround in support by some key politicians in that area.



Margaret Spontak, Chair of the Free the Ocklawaha River Coalition, Deborah Green, Orange Audubon President and Phyllis Hall met with Senator Jason Brodeur in September, 2021 to ask for his support to facilitate the legislation needed on this issue. Senator Brodeur is the chair of the Environment and Natural Resources committee. We met with him again on 10/13 to follow up and ask his opinion of why the legislation did not pass last session. His response was lack of local support in Marion and Putnam counties. We reviewed the recent poll results with him and the action plan to continue to gain support in those communities. We also reviewed the legislative platform Margaret developed. While he made no commitments, we left the meeting feeling hopeful that this will be the year this issue will be addressed in the upcoming legislative session.

Bird About Town - Sandhill Cranes

By Lynne Smith, SAS Member

It's migration time! But for the Florida Sandhill Cranes (Grus canadensis pratensis) it's just a beautiful time of the year to live in Florida. Most Sandhill Cranes are making the journey south from Canada, Alaska, Idaho, Utah, Colorado, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan to Texas, Florida, Cuba and Mexico, but not the four to five thousand Florida Sandhill Cranes that live here year-round. I'm sure you've probably met some. They're almost what you'd call "friendly" as far as wild birds go. They have adapted to humans quite well.

I've been fortunate to witness two big Sandhill Crane migrations. The first time I ever saw a Sandhill Crane was in



Sandhill Cranes outside Oviedo Library
Photo – Lynne Smith

March, 1985. My husband, two young children and I were enroute, moving from Ohio to Utah. We were traveling down Interstate 80 through Nebraska when we came upon a spectacle of Sandhill Cranes everywhere! There were literally thousands gathered along the Platte River in Nebraska. This is their annual stopover in the springtime as they head back north to Alaska and Canada. They rest and get food from the cornfields, river and marshes.

The second time I saw them in great numbers was in mid-October, 2012. I was visiting my sister in southern Michigan. She took me to *Haehnle Memorial Audubon Sanctuary*. There we were treated to the sight of hundreds of Sandhill Cranes circling, landing and gathering to eat and roost for the night. These Sandhill Cranes were on their way to Florida for the winter.

Here are some interesting facts about Sandhill Cranes:

- They stand about four feet tall, weigh between 7 and 14 pounds and have six-and-a-half-foot wingspan to lift them off the ground.
- Their long neck with a windpipe shaped like a French horn, allows them to make that loud, rattly, bugle-like call. That sound can carry for over two miles which is good for calling your mate, your youngster or telling humans like me to back off!
- Their dagger-like beak is four to six inches long and is very effective for stabbing fish, snakes, lizards, frogs, snails, worms, insects, plants, and baby animals. They also eat seeds, berries and acorns.
 They are opportunistic and adaptable birds which has surely helped them to thrive among us humans.
- They mate for life. They lay one to three eggs in shallow, three-foot-wide nests of reeds, grasses and cattails built in marshes or on land. Their young stay with them for about ten months. They will re-pair if their mate dies.
- They are noted "dancers". I have witnessed a dance behind the Baptist Church in Oviedo. The dance involves jumping, flapping wings and prancing toward each other.
- It is estimated that there are 560,000 Sandhill Cranes.

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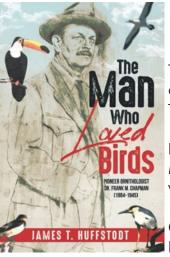
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AMERICA'S BIRD MAN: DR. FRANK M. CHAPMAN

The first full-length biography of Dr. Frank. M. Chapman (1864-1945) founder of the **Christmas Bird Count**, was recently released. It is authored by James T. Huffstodt.

From the author: "Chapman was the iconic bird man of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City who spent all or part of each winter studying Florida birds for more than a half-century.

Chapman is remembered primarily today as the founder of the Christmas Bird Census (CBC) in 1900 which began with 27 participants counting a few thousand birds of 90 species; today upwards of 70,000 participants from the

United States, Canada, Mexico, and other locations last year counted more than 4.5 million birds of 650 species.

<u>THE MAN WHO LOVED BIRDS: Pioneer Ornithologist Frank M. Chapman, 1864-1945</u> is the culmination of more than 20 years of research and writing. The narrative highlights his many contributions to ornithology and bird protection, which went far beyond the CBC.

Some may be surprised to learn that Chapman was the most popular bird writer of his era, one of the earliest pioneer bird photographers, an explorer-ornithologist who laid the foundations of modern South American bird study, a museum innovator who perfected the bird habitat diorama, an early bio-geographer, a strong voice protesting the reign of the plume hunters, and the owner-publisher-editor of the first popular bird magazine, *Bird-Lore* (1899-1934)—the ancestor of today's *Audubon* magazine.

Chapman spent all or part of each winter in Florida from 1885 until 1942, first based in Gainesville, then in Ormond Beach, followed by Biscayne Bay, and finally in Coconut Grove, Miami. He led milestone bird expeditions down the Suwannee River, into the Everglades, Payne's Prairie, Lake Okeechobee, and Indian River Lagoon. He also played a lead role in 1903 in persuading President Theodore Roosevelt to designate Pelican Island as the first Federal bird refuge."

Join SAS on December 17 for Christmas Bird Count

This is the longest-running, citizen-science project in the world. SAS will form groups to survey in the Sanford area. The results will be used to help determine the long-term health and status of bird populations. Using a circle with a 15-mile diameter, SAS will concentrate on Zones 10 and 11 in Sanford and Lake Mary. No birding experience necessary. Beginning birders will be paired with more experienced birders. For more information or to volunteer contact Leslie Martin at woodstork.martin@gmail.com.



Field Guide Library

Thanks to donations from several generous members, we now have a selection of birding field guides for many locations. We have guides to Texas, Montana, Alaska, Kauai, The Salton Sea, Peru and Cuba to name a few.

If you are planning a trip, send us an email with your destination and we'll check the Field Guide Library.

Do you know what bird this is?

John and Cecilia Carey were unsure when they spotted it at Table Rock State Park in South Carolina on September 26th. It is a Warbling Vireo.

Fortunately, they observed it closely for identifying marks and took several photos with a 600 mm lens. The vireo was outside of its normal range and the last confirmed sighting in South Carolina through eBird was in 2015. They were very excited when they received confirmation from Paul Serridge at eBird that it was a Warbling Vireo and not a Philadelphia Vireo.

Warbling Vireos are a migratory songbird. They breed in most of the northern, central, and western United States as well as Canada. Each fall, the vireos migrate to Central America for the winter. They are identified by a dark eyeline that fades out before the bill and white areas above and below the eyes that creates an "open" look. Their feathers are grey-olive above and



Warbling Vireo by John Carey

mostly whitish below. Their sides are a soft yellow. Warbling Vireos eat mainly caterpillars, pupae, moths, and butterflies. During the fall and winter, they add small fruit to their diet. In breeding season, they can be found in deciduous forests often near bodies of water.

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Images by John Carey from the Lyonia Field Trip (Page 7) Prairie Warbler, Eastern Towhee, and a Florida Scrub-Jay collecting nuts.

Program & Trip Notes

September 11: Birds of Seminole Forest

Ralph Risch, Florida Scrub-Jay Biologist for Seminole State Forest in Lake County, presented detailed information about the Jays and how their habitat has been maintained at Seminole Forest. Ralph has banded 436 Jays since 2006. The numbers of FL Scrub-Jay families in Seminole Forest are variable depending on the state of their habitat. Their numbers are declining across the state and the bird is in danger of becoming extinct. Causes are mainly from habitat destruction and predators such as snakes, blue jays and hawks. Feral cats also play a big role especially in



Ralph Risch

Photo by Marguerite Terwilleger

areas surrounded by development like Lyonia Preserve. The highest populations of Florida Scrub-Jays are currenting in Ocala Forest and Seminole State Forest. Ralph also provided interesting facts and photos of sandhill cranes, kestrels, loggerhead shrike, and blue grosbeak as well as various flowers found in Seminole Forest.

At the end of his presentation, Ralph announced that he would be leaving Seminole State Forest to accept a supervisory position at another Florida forest. The next week Phyllis Hall connected with Joe Bishop, Senior Supervisor with Florida Forest Service. Joe said the Scrub-Jay habitat at Seminole Forest would be maintained and he was working on a plan to continue monitoring the Scrub-Jays there.

Chuck Honaker is currently active with Audubon FL Jay Watch at Blue Spring State Park. If you are interested in becoming a Jay Watch volunteer, sign up at https://fl.audubon.org/get-involved/jaywatch

Sept.17: Rock Springs Run State Reserve

The biggest adventure for the 15 people on the field trip was finding the new entry to the reserve! It changed with the construction on 46 but it is now a nice entry. The morning was hot and muggy and birds seemed scarce so we really had to search in the trees for them. The group logged 30 species

> including Eastern Wood-Pewee, White-eyed Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, and a variety of woodpeckers with the highlight being the Red-headed Woodpecker. Northern Bobwhites were

seen in the parking area by two participants, life birds for them.



Partial Group Photo

by Phyllis Hall



Eastern Wood-Pewee & Red-headed Woodpecker by John Carey



Barred Owl



Program & Trip Notes (continued from page 6)

Seminole Natural Lands Birding Walks

Chuck Honaker, a master naturalist and member of SAS, is a volunteer with Seminole County Natural Lands. In addition, he does Jay Watch at Blue Spring State Park. Representing SAS, Chuck led a morning birding walk on Saturday September 24th at Lake Harney Wilderness Area . Seminole County Natural Lands volunteers Kathy Corbett and Patty Smith were also there. Over 30 species of birds were seen or heard including Red-eyed and White-eyed Vireos, a Bald Eagle, a mixed flock of Barn and Tree Swallows, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and a Prairie Warbler. Wild Turkeys were observed perched in a pine tree. Of special interest during the morning were three pigmy rattlesnakes spotted along the trail to the St. John's River and an owl pellet found in the stairwell of the observation tower overlooking Lake Harney.

The Seminole National Lands website lists SAS as a partner. Check out their newsletter for upcoming programs in December.

https://www.seminolecountyfl.gov/departments-services/leisure-services/greenways-natural-lands/natural-ls/environmental-education-programs.stml



ake Harney by John Carey



Patty Smith, John Carey, Kathy Corbett, Chuck Honaker

We were fortunate to get this walk in before Hurricane Ian. At the end of October, Lake Harney Wilderness Area remains closed due to high flood water from the storm.

October 9: Big Sit at Lake Jesup Park Cancelled due to high waters from Hurricane Ian

October 15: Lyonia Nature Preserve

It was a beautiful morning for the birding hike at Lyonia Preserve in Deltona on October 15th. Steven Kintner, Vice-President and Conservation Chair of West Volusia Audubon and a volunteer at Lyonia Preserve took us on 2.5-mile hike through the scrub. Along the way, he gave an excellent talk about the behavior of the Florida Scrub-Jay, native scrub

Participants in the Lyonia Trip

plants, topography, and the history of the park. Numerous FL



Steve Kintner explaining characteristics and the importance of scrub habitat to our trip participants.

Scrub-Jays were observed as we walked through their territories. Some were carrying multiple acorns in their beaks. We even saw one dig a hole with its beak, cache an acorn, and then mark the spot with a small stick. Calls of Eastern Towhees joined those of the Florida Scrub-Jays throughout the hike. A Northern Bobwhite was also heard but not seen. Overall, 18 species were identified including an American Redstart, a Prairie Warbler, Brown Thrashers, and 10 Sandhill Cranes in flight.

Upcoming Programs and Field Trips

Meetings are held on the second Sunday at 2 pm except the April meeting will be on the third Sunday in 2023. Meeting **Location**:

IFAS Extension Education Building University of Florida/IFAS Extension Seminole County 250 W. County Home Rd. (off 17/92) Sanford, FL 32773

Program November 13: Disney's Avian Conservation Program and Purple Martin Research

Dr. Jason Fischer, Conservation Program Manager for avian projects with Disney Conservation. has been fascinated by birds and our relationship to them ever since he first started taking pictures of birds as a child. His graduate research focused on avian urban ecology, and he now brings this passion to managing Disney's avian conservation efforts. His work involves supporting international avian conservation efforts with the Disney Conservation Fund. He also develops research and engagement programs focused on the bird species, including Purple Martins, that call Walt Disney Parks and Resorts home.



Purple Martins by Ken Schmidt

Field Trip November 19: Geneva Wilderness Area

The Geneva Wilderness Area is a 180-acre site, part of the Seminole County Natural Lands Program. The site contains an array of native Florida communities: mixed hardwood swamp, mesic flatwoods, scrubby flatwoods, and a lake system, all supporting a diverse collection of wildlife, including a variety of upland and wetland birds, gopher tortoise, white-tailed deer, etc. Meet at 8:00 am at the parking lot on 3485 N County Road 426, Geneva, FL 32732. Moderate walking over uneven terrain. All levels and ages of birders are welcome. Restrooms are not available. Limited to 15 people. Reservations required. Contact Cecilia Carey at cacarey@cfl.rr.com.



Photo courtesy of Seminole County

Program December 11: Preserving Seminole County

Jim Duby is the Seminole County Natural Lands Program Manager. He will provide an overview of the Seminole County Natural Lands Program and what Seminole County has accomplished through its Natural Lands Program, including many photos of landscapes and wildlife. You may discover some new places to hike and go birding!



Field Trip December 17: Christmas Bird Count

See page 4 for details and how to participate.



Program January 8, 2023: St. Johns River by Lisa Rinaman, Riverkeeper

The St. Johns River is the longest river in Florida and its most significant one for commercial and recreational use. At 310 miles long, it flows north and winds through or

borders twelve counties. Numerous lakes are formed by the river including Lake Monroe in Sanford. Lisa will explain some of the ecological challenges relating to the river and her role as the chief advocate and the public's voice for the river.

Lisa Rinaman was a former staff member for Jacksonville Mayor John Peyton. She has helped implement numerous environmental initiatives and policies. Lisa was instrumental in leading the effort to develop and implement irrigation, fertilizer, and *Florida Friendly* landscaping ordinances to better protect the St. Johns and local waterways. Also, she has played a key role in securing state funding for water quality improvements. She has also been a key advocate for the *Free the Ocklawaha* initiative.

Upcoming Events

North Shore Birding Festival on Lake Apopka December 1-5, 2022

This festival highlights the St. Johns River Water Management District's 20,000-acre Lake Apopka North Shore, Florida's top birding hotspot, and other Central Florida birding hotspots. For Orange Audubon Society's seventh annual festival, field trips will extend over 5 days, Thursday through Monday. Although the festival does not have an exhibit hall for vendors, it does bring together a critical mass of leaders and participants to catch up on their common interest: birding. Before the pandemic, the NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL emphasized participants from around the country, demonstrating the economic importance of birding and nature photography ecotourism. For example, the 2019 festival had participants from 18 states and Canada, plus



over 60 Florida cities. Out-of-town participants contribute to the local economy and may visit again after the festival. After two years of more local participation, travel has started again. The festival is run entirely by volunteers and proceeds benefit Orange Audubon Society's nature and environmental center fund and related educational programs. For more information, visit the festival website at https://northshorebirdingfestival.com/.

Facebook event: https://www.facebook.com/events/1261607844577075









Jeff Benka Lake Mary

Lorri Lilja Casselberry

Chelsea Martin Lake Mary

Jessica Meehan Sanford

Rebekah Richey Altamonte Springs

Ada Rottler Lake Mary



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2022-2023 Board of Directors & Committee Chairs (eff. 7/1/22)

SeminoleAudubon@amail.com

Term	Name	Office/Committee	Email
2022/2024	Phyllis Hall	President, Website, History	phylliscath814@gmail.com
2021/2023	Leslie Martin	V.P., Ornithology, SAS Premiums	woodstork.martin@gmail.com
2021/2023	Jan Peters	Treasurer	jan@janetkpeters.com
2022/2024	Peggy Stickney	Sec., Publicity, Release Keeper	stickneymargaret@gmail.com
	C.Carey P. Hall, L. Martin	Programs & Field Trips	cacarey@cfl.rr.com, phylliscath814@gmail.com woodstork.martin@gmail.com
2021/2023	Lewis Gray	At Large, Jane Isle Survey	<u>lewisngray@bellsouth.net</u>
2021/2023	Nat Harrison	At Large, CLI Liaison	natsscem@gmail.com

Committee Chairs	Committee	Email
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Margaret Loring	New Member Welcome Letter	Mloring@CFL.rr.com
Marguerite Terwilleger	Past President, Big Sit data, Scholarships,	mterwilleger51@gmail.com
Cecilia Carey	Meetings PowerPoint, Monthly Reminders on	cacarey@cfl.rr.com
	Meet Up, Facebook	<u>Gacare, Comments</u>
Jim Peters	Purple Martin Project	jim@jameshpeters.com
Connie Dolan	Crystal Lake Preserve Liaison	spidconn318@juno.com
Sam Kendall	Energy	samuelk32@embaramail.com
Faith Jones	Newsletter Compiler	faithaudubon@gmail.com
Corrinne Wertz	Publications	<u>cwertz127@aol.com</u>

Eagle Watch: Michelle Vaughn, Sarah Donlan **Jay Watch:** Chuck Honaker, Marty Shepherd

Jane Isle Survey: Lewis Gray (Chair), Marguerite Terwilleger, Leslie Martin

Conservation: Phyllis Hall (Chair), Sam Kendall, Faith Jones, Cecilia & John Carey, Mindy Hellman, Marguerite

Terwilleger, Sarah Donlan

<u>SAS is represented on these community committees:</u> 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 weekly.

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

Events: Seminole Garden Expo – February, Altamonte Springs/Lake Lotus Festival – around Earth Week, Casselberry EarthFest - Earth Week, Seminole State College Earth Week, Altamonte Springs Family Festival Cranes Roost

MailChimp, Facebook & Meet Up: Cecilia Carey (Backup: Phyllis Hall)
PO Box Mail Pickup: Michelle Vaughn (Backup: Marguerite Terwilleger)

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

Lake Jesup Park Clean Up: Leslie Martin, (Chair), Marguerite Terwilleger

Scholarships: Marguerite Terwilleger (Chair), Corrinne Wertz, Joy Rector, Michelle Vaughn

School/Eco-Camp Connections: Eco Camp-Ed Yarborough Nature Center: Marguerite Terwilleger for scholarships.

Using Audubon Adventures & SAS speakers for camps

Bentley Elementary– Sanford: Joy Rector Central FL Zoo Camp: Michelle Vaughn Goldsboro Elementary - Sanford: Joy Rector TW Lawton Elementary - Oviedo: Phyllis Hall

Walden Community School – Winter Park: Phyllis Hall

Seminole State College - Phyllis Hall