

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.

September - October 2023

What Kind of Birder Are You?

By Phyllis Hall

Several years ago, as I was getting more involved in birding, I was feeling quite intimidated by people I met who seemed to be super expert birders with their ability to spot and instantly identify all kinds of birds. I came across an article that helped me feel better about where I was on my own birding journey. As I recall, that article divided birders into categories something like hard-core birders (about 25%), enthusiastic birders (about 50%), and casual birders (about 25%). Hard-core birders were described as those who are bird experts and might have a number goal for their life list of birds. They may travel extensively to find another bird to add to that list. Enthusiastic birders usually are interested in nature and enjoy seeing a new bird wherever they are. Casual birders are those who enjoy seeing birds and can recognize common birds or bird categories.

Recently another kind of birding is appealing to me called "birding in place" where you just sit and see what you can from one location. Backyard birding and watching your feeders fits into this category. Whenever you travel, locally or somewhere exotic, you can find birds. Often, they are in parking lots or local retention ponds. And let's not forget those great bird and nature photographers. I always enjoy seeing photos on Facebook from Orlando Wetlands and the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive. I think just seeing them has helped me with better identification, especially with water birds. My experience at the Lake Lotus bird banding station has also helped me understand that identification can be challenging, especially for those little warblers. They are also called little brown birds when you don't know what bird it is! And I have learned a lot by birding with others on field trips where we help each other find and identify birds.



Florida Scrub Jay by Louise Hunt/GBBC

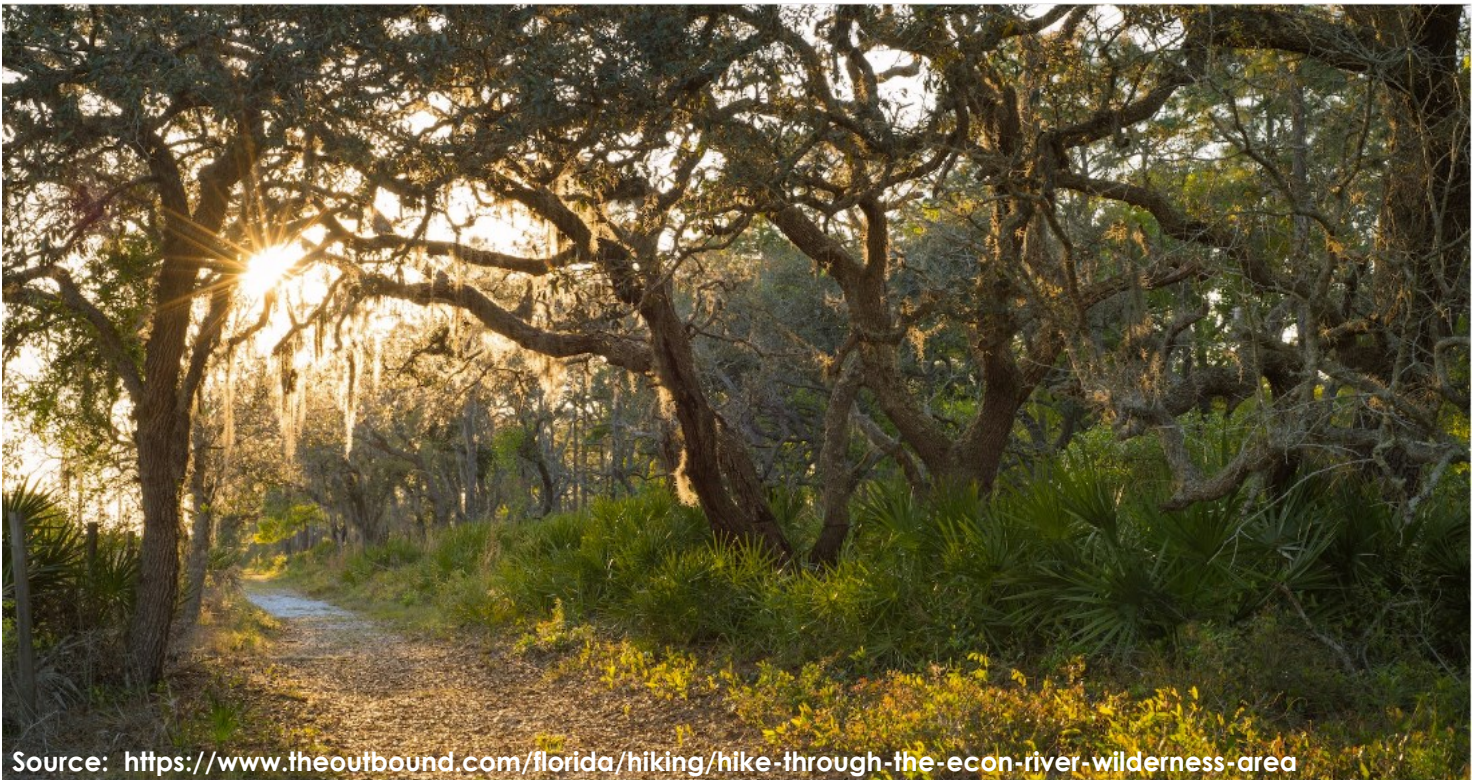
Our program and field trip planning committee has worked hard to provide learning opportunities for everyone this upcoming season, no matter where you are on your own birding continuum. Come on one (or all) of the SAS field trips this season and enjoy birding with others who share our love of birds and nature.

For a full list of upcoming programs and field trips in September and October, please see page 8.

Seminole Forever

By Phyllis Hall

The goal of *Seminole Forever* is to preserve land, to preserve and protect environmental systems, and provide future generations increased access to public lands. This program is based on the *Florida Forever* program and will identify, acquire, and preserve environmentally-sensitive lands, water resources, forests and farmlands, and outdoor recreation lands. Priority areas will be on lands connecting the wildlife corridor and the Wekiva River Basin. Criteria for the selection of land include the site's vulnerability to development, the diversity of species, wetlands, condition of the habitat, and the long-range manageability of the site, etc. Special considerations can include connection to existing parks, trails and neighborhoods. Land acquisition recommendations will be made by an advisory board composed of seven voting members selected by the Commissioners. It will include ex-officio members from advocacy groups such as *1,000 Friends of Florida*, *Audubon Florida*, and *Seminole Soil and Water Conservation District*. County Commissioners had continued to refine this ordinance, and, at the August 8, 2023 Commissioners meeting, *Seminole Forever* was unanimously approved!



Source: <https://www.theoutbound.com/florida/hiking/hike-through-the-econ-river-wilderness-area>

Econ River Wilderness Area, Oviedo

Building the Grid Birds Need

By Sam Kendall

Four decades ago, I first began to understand how greenhouse gases trap heat in the atmosphere. Gaseous molecules with three or more atoms trap infrared radiation. That's the science. These gases exploded into the atmosphere following the industrial revolution. The predictions from NOAA and other research institutions about the looming climate disruptions and potential disasters were certainly alarming. What my mind didn't accept at the time was that this was actually going to happen.

Forest fires arrived as predicted. California fires have been dwarfed this year by huge areas of Canadian, bird-friendly forest lost and still burning: lung-damaging smoke drifting down into the U.S., hazing cities. Extreme rainfall events are happening in the most odd places: just outside Philadelphia where several people lost their lives, one of them finally found down in the Schuylkill River near where I used to live. Fort Lauderdale took an unprecedented heavy flood-bath that disrupted commerce and lives there. July set a heat record that broke 1.5 degree C which the Paris Climate Agreement calls a tipping point. Internationally, climate refugees try to escape the dried-out Sahel region across Africa, the middle east and Guatemala in Central America.

Continued on next page

Building the Grid Birds Need *Continued from page 2*

When I read years ago that most of the excess heat was absorbed by the oceans it gave me a sort of comfort. Maybe this would lessen the effects on the earth's surface, I thought. It didn't occur to me that the oceans would also rebel against this intrusion of their homeostasis: water temperature at 100 degrees in south Florida now literally squeezing the life out of corals. This is bad news but what seems even worse is the latest research on the AMOC, the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Current. This giant flow under water affects climate all around the planet.* It appears to be collapsing.

Are we in a climate emergency? If you want to call it that and I do, then we need to put on the brakes. We need to stop the greenhouse gases. Fortunately, we have the resources and know-how necessary. National Audubon is engaged with the government agencies and other stakeholders that regulate and can expedite change in one of the most significant offenders: the Power Industry.

The National Audubon Society's "Flight Plan" for the years 2023 to 2027 includes a large climate element. Check it out on their website. I sat in on the Zoom call where they announced the publication of "Birds and Transmission, building the Grid Birds Need." ** Sara Rose, Audubon VP for Climate, said they support distributed solar installations on rooftops, parking lots, etc., but these single-use installations will provide only about a third of the power we use in the U.S. So Audubon is focusing on large, utility-scale solar and wind farms. Getting these hooked up is the fastest way to reduce CO2.

Surprisingly, there are hundreds of clean solar, wind and battery farms in various stages of development, waiting in line to be connected to the national grid. Enough, in fact, that would surpass our existing national grid power. There is also a five-year wait for these applications. What's the holdup? Too much for me to cover here. (See the article below by Steve Hanley)***

However, a major problem is the lack of high voltage transmission lines to carry this clean energy to the population centers where it's needed. Building new lines will have environmental impacts including threats to birds. Sara Rose says 3% of bird mortalities are caused by collisions with transmission lines. Doesn't sound that bad but consider the billions of bird deaths due to human activities each year and you still have millions tangled in wires. Audubon has stepped into the process now to try to limit these impacts.

A major success of this Audubon collaboration with developers is the recent DOE approval of the Sunzia transmission line from NM to AZ. Construction begins this summer. Energy from a large wind farm in NM will travel 500 miles to Phoenix. The developer has committed to using an *ultraviolet light-based system* developed at Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary. The system makes the wires birds collide with most frequently more visible. Another Audubon strategy will co-locate wires in an existing right-of-way to minimize impacts to a national wildlife refuge. Audubon has overlay maps of migrating bird stop-over areas to avoid when meeting with developers.

This summer the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) finally approved new interconnection rules that will speed up the application process for these clean generating facilities.*** Projects that are already near completion will be advanced to the front of the line and developments will be reviewed in clusters rather than separately. Having Audubon at the table gives us hope that construction impacts before and after completion will be reduced and mitigated. However, the "Flight Plan" reminds us that the impacts from global warming will far exceed any impacts from building a safer, greenhouse-gas-free electrical power system.



Solar-powered device fitted with ultraviolet lights mounted on transmission lines.
Source: media.audubon.org/BirdsAndTransmissionReport.pdf. Photo by James Dwyer

*<https://www.cnn.com/2023/07/25/world/gulf-stream-atlantic-current-collapse-climate-science-intl/index.html>

**[Transmission Lines and Birds | Audubon](#)

***<https://cleantechnica.com/2023/08/01/ferc-unanimously-approves-new-grid-interconnection-rules/>

Legislators Try To Save Their Beach Home

By Sam Kendall

Back in February we learned on the Audubon Climate Leadership video call about the problems sea walls create for shorelines. Sea Grant Researcher, Dr. Savanna Barry, described what happens when waves crash into sea walls, undermining the integrity of the structures and forcing erosion of adjacent dunes and beaches. She said if the current rate of new sea wall construction continues we could lose 30% of our natural shorelines by the end of the century. All this while we are trying to save beaches for nesting shorebirds, not to mention the nesting human population. You can imagine my surprise and disillusion when I learned that Governor DeSantis signed what our legislators call the **Hurricane Restoration Reimbursement Grant Program**.

In this program, \$50 million of Florida taxpayer money will be used to reimburse property owners for the construction of seawalls. Beachfront homeowners can apply for up to \$150,000 with a 50/50 % homeowner match. It's not just nesting shorebirds who are worried about the long-term consequences of this ill-advised legislation.

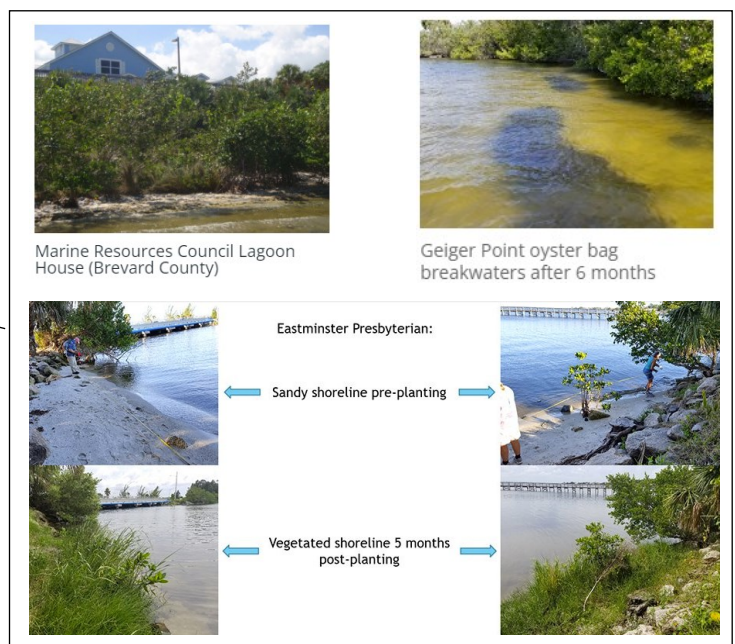
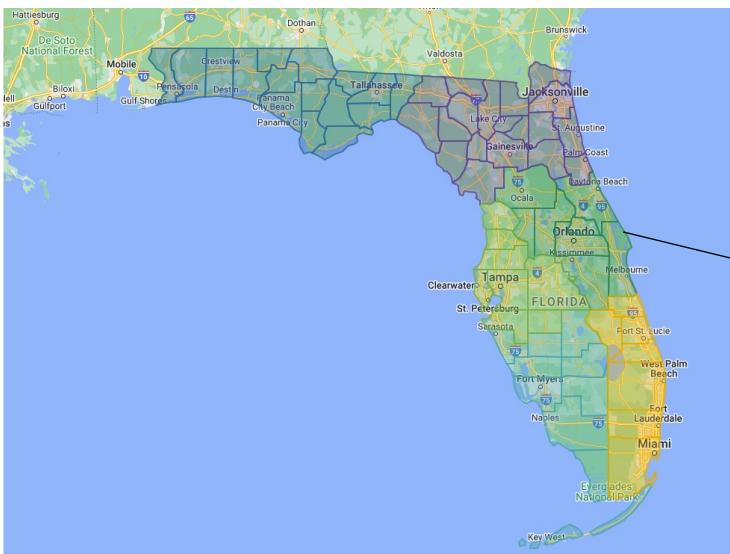
Researchers at the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines at Western Carolina University published an op-ed in the *Tampa Bay Times* in May.* (North Carolina is one of several states that prohibits seawalls outright.) They say the scientific consensus has been available in textbooks for years. "Any shore-parallel hard structure placed on an eroding beach will cause that beach to disappear" and "... increase erosion and storm impacts on adjacent properties." As far back as 1981, the Army Corps of Engineers published a report describing the adverse consequences of sea walls. The authors warn this grant program will not only accelerate beach erosion, it will pit neighbor against neighbor in lawsuits over who caused the loss of "my" beachfront sand.

On the Audubon call, Dr. Barry showed us an example of a "living shoreline" her team had constructed to protect against erosion at Cedar Key. Mangroves and sea grass they planted stabilize the near shore and sea oats help keep dunes intact. "This shore vegetation will help keep carbon out of the atmosphere, too," she said, "but neither living shorelines nor sea walls will stop the ocean from rising."

*<https://www.tampabay.com/opinion/2023/05/30/florida-seawalls-are-not-answer-heres-why-column/?emci=f1c18b11-c7ff-ed11-907c-00224832eb73&emdi=af75828a-a200-ee11-907c-00224832eb73&ceid=536010>

Follow this link to explore examples of living shoreline projects in Florida:

<https://floridalivingshorelines.com/florida-sampler/>



Examples of East Central Florida Projects

SAS Conservation Work

Attracting Birds with FL Native Plants Seminar at Lukas Nursery

Cecilia Carey gave an outdoor presentation on attracting birds to your yard with native plants at Lukas Nursery and Butterfly Encounter in Oviedo on May 31 and June 2. She discussed how to provide birds with water, food, and places to rest, nest and rear their young by creating habitats for birds in your yard. She described how native plants available at the nursery produce seeds, nectar, nuts, fruit, and berries that birds eat as well as plants that support pollinators and other insects that are eaten by birds. Phyllis Hall, who converted a large portion of her yard to a native plant meadow, helped answer questions after the talk. Attendees then walked to the expanded native plant area which now has over 150 species of Florida native plants.

Cecilia Carey presenting at Lukas Nursery

Photo by John Carey



Crystal Lake Preserve Butterfly Survey July 1, 2023

By Connie Donlan

The Crystal Lake Preserve survey is part of a survey circle like Christmas Bird Count and is held on the first Saturday in July. The summary data is submitted to the North American Butterfly Association. At this year's count, we saw 36 butterflies with 13 species including Polydamas, Spicebush, Black, Giant, and Eastern Swallowtails, Ceranus Blue, Gulf Fritillary, Zebra Heliconian, White Peacock, Monarch, Queen, Fiery and Horace's Duskywing skippers. Thanks to SAS volunteers: Connie Dolan, Tracey Comazzi, Kate Dolamore, and Lynn Folts. A few birds were sighted too—Black-capped Chickadees, Brown Thrasher, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Tufted Titmouse, Northern Cardinal, Carolina Wren, Blue Jay, Sandhill Crane, and Anhinga!



From Back to Front:
Kate, Connie, Tracey, Lynn



Spicebush Swallowtail on redroot
Photos by Lynn Folts



Giant Swallowtail larvae
Photo by Tracey Comazzi

Be an EagleWatch Volunteer



Bald Eagles. Photo: John Johnson

Audubon EagleWatch is one of Audubon's premier community-science programs. EagleWatch volunteers monitor more than 800 nests across the state. EagleWatchers collect important data on nesting eagles in Florida including productivity, active nest locations and possible disturbances or threats to nesting activities. Volunteers monitor nests from mid-October until about mid-May or until the eaglets have fledged. The time commitment is observing the nest at least twice a month for about 20 minutes from mid-October until the eaglets fledge. Current SAS volunteers are Sarah Donlan, Michelle Vaughn and Phyllis Hall with Richard Hagen. Training is live on Zoom and will also be recorded. If you are interested in volunteering, email the Program Manager at eaglewatch@audubon.org. More information is also provided at this link <https://cbop.audubon.org/get-involved/be-eaglewatcher>.

Bird About Town:

Black Vulture — Florida's Halloween Bird

By Lynne Smith, SAS Member



Order – Accipitiformes (same as hawks and eagles) **Genus** – *Coragyps* **Species** – *atratus*

Black vulture habits and appearance are rather ghoulish. That's why I thought our fall newsletter would be a good time for an article about them.

I've followed Black Vultures down a trail at Orlando Wetlands Park. I've skirted around them on Central Avenue in Oviedo as they fed on a dead armadillo. My Master Naturalist class was held next to a colony of 25 to 30 Black Vultures at Blue Spring State Park. There was lots of hopping, grunting, perching and preening going on during class, so I don't think they were paying much attention.

Let me introduce you to the Black Vulture. They're one of 23 species of vultures and one of the two species of vultures that reside in Florida. The other is the Turkey Vulture. Their feathers are black with gray wingtips. They have a bald, gray head, gray legs and feet. Their body is 25 inches long with a five-foot wingspan and they weigh about four to five pounds. Their tail is short and squarish compared to the tail of a Turkey Vulture. They're warm-weather birds found in the southeast United States, Mexico, Central America and most of South America. They can live to be 25 years old.

Vultures are high-altitude hunters. They have excellent eyesight. Gliding on air currents, they search for carrion or other vultures that have already found carrion. Highways and city streets are great locations for them to look for food. Amazingly Black Vultures have adapted to automobiles as not only something that provides them food, but they've also learned to be very adept at dodging vehicles as they drag their meal off the road. Black Vultures, on occasion, will kill a baby calf, lamb or injured cow. They have very strong immune systems that protect them from the bacteria and diseases. Their bald, gray head prevents blood, bacteria and meat from sticking to their face. Their stomachs contain strong chemicals that can digest almost anything. Vultures don't have many predators, but if threatened, one line of defense that they use is vomit. They forcefully projectile vomit on whoever gets too close and the strong chemicals in that vomit can actually burn the intruder. In other words, don't disturb a Black Vulture.

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Bird About Town: Black Vulture *Continued from page 6*

Black Vultures live in colonies. At night they roost together in trees. They can't sing or call, but they do hiss and grunt. Males try to impress potential mates with their aerial skills and, on the ground, with wing-spreading, hopping and grunting. Black Vultures mate for life. They don't build nests, but lay their eggs in hidden locations, such as hollow logs and trees, caves, abandoned buildings, and dense vegetation. The female lays one to three eggs. Both the male and female incubate the eggs. They hatch in 30 to 45 days. The parents regurgitate food to feed their babies and after about three months, they are ready to fledge. They live in their parents' colony for years, learning the skills of scavenging for food.

Next time you see a Black Vulture gliding in the sky or hopping on the ground, be thankful for nature's clean-up crew!



References:

Gregory, Josh. *Vultures*. New York, N.Y., Scholastic, 2016.

Johnson, Jinny. *Vultures*. New York, Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 2003

Help Birds Avoid Window Collisions



Feather Friendly® window markers are an easy-to-use, scientifically-proven solution for preventing bird collisions with glass surfaces. Feather Friendly® window markers are highly effective in making the area visible to birds and preventing deadly collisions while remaining unobtrusive to humans. Endorsed by American Bird Conservancy and Audubon.

<https://www.featherfriendly.com/residential>



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 2024. 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: September 10, Sunday. Migration Patterns of Six Florida Birds

Gabriel Rey, Stetson University, will present his senior thesis research project on how ranges have shifted, and migration patterns have altered, for six Florida birds. Climate change exacerbates existing threats to birds with habitat loss and degradation while adding new challenges, including shifting ranges and altered migration patterns. Many birds are struggling to adapt. Six Florida birds will be discussed: Piping Plovers, Red Knot, Everglades Snail Kite, Wood Stork, Florida Scrub-jay, and Red-cockaded Woodpecker.



<https://www.freepik.com/free-vector/set-different-bird-cartoon->

Field Trip: September 16, Saturday. Night Walk, Geneva Wilderness Area

The Geneva Wilderness Area is a 180-acre site and 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. Moderate walking over uneven terrain. Meet at 7:30 pm at the parking lot on 3485 N County Road 426, Geneva, FL 32732. We will allow our eyes to transition to the darkness and get to listen for the crepuscular animals as they are waking up. The walk will be led by Natalie Swanson, Program Coordinator of Seminole Natural Lands/Leisure Services.

Trip Coordinator: Leslie Martin woodstork.martin@gmail.com.



Photo by Kelp Grizzly Photography/Shutterstock

Program: October 8, Sunday. Big Sit! at Lake Jesup Park

This event replaces our regular monthly meeting. This is an annual, international event hosted by New Haven (Connecticut) Bird Club. They compile the count data. We sit inside a circle and count all the bird species we see or hear. Tent available for shade. All levels and ages of birders are welcome. Come for an hour or two or for the entire time. Bring your own binoculars, chair, water, and snacks. *Lake Jesup Park, 5951 Sanford Avenue, Sanford. 7:00 -11:00 am. Accessible parking space. No restrooms.*

We welcome all those who would like to enjoy time in nature. This gathering is accessible for all, including those who have a disability, persons with a mobility challenge, blind or low vision, deaf or hard of hearing, persons who are neurodivergent or persons with any other intellectual, developmental, or physical disability or concern. <https://gis.audubon.org/birdability/>.

Coordinator: Leslie Martin woodstork.martin@gmail.com.



Upcoming Programs and Field Trips *Continued from page 8*

Field Trip: October 21, Saturday: Econ River Wilderness Area

The Econ River Wilderness Area is a 240-acre property located on the Seminole/Orange County line south of the city of Oviedo, on the west side of the Econlockhatchee River. Habitats include pine flatwoods, sandhill, and river swamp. Bird species seen include Tufted Titmouse, Northern Cardinal, Woodpeckers (Downy, Red-headed, Pileated, Red-bellied), Northern Parula, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, Carolina Wren, and other common birds. All levels and ages of birders are welcome. We will walk about 2.75 to 3 miles over a flat sandy trail including a shell/gravel section. Meet at the map kiosk, on left side of the parking area at 7:45 am.

3795 Old Lockwood Rd, Oviedo, FL. Coordinator: Chuck Honaker chonakerjr@gmail.com

Monthly Bird Surveys at Econ River Wilderness Area.

If you would like to help with these surveys, contact Chuck Honaker chonakerjr@gmail.com



Brown-headed Nuthatch
Photo by Jay McGowan
Macaulay Library



Northern Parula female
Photo by Oscar Johnson/
Macaulay Library



Red-headed Woodpecker
Photo by Ryan Saunderson
Macaulay Library



Roseate Spoonbill. Photo: Niccole Neely/Audubon Photography Awards

Audubon Assembly: Conservation in a Changing Landscape

October 26-28, 2023

Audubon Assembly will be held in-person in Brandon, FL (near Tampa). Register before September 1, 2023 for the early-bird discount:

<https://fl.audubon.org/news/audubon-florida-assembly-conservation-changing-landscape>

North Shore Birding Festival.

November 30-December 4, 2023

Reservations for birding trips will be available soon on their website. They fill quickly, so sign up as soon as you can!

<https://northshorebirdingfestival.com/>



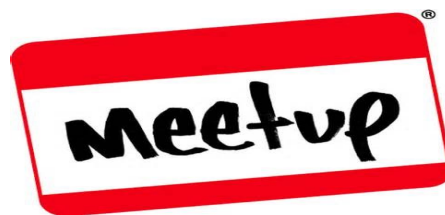
WELCOME

NEW MEMBERS or NEW to OUR Chapter

Norma E. Adamczyk	Enterprise	Christie Graham	Sanford	Julie Natho	Sanford
Marlys Bartick	Sanford	Mary Johnson	Sanford	Marion Peck	DeBary
Dennis Blackwood	Lake Monroe	Jeff Ketts	Sanford	Elizabeth Peterson	DeBary
Suzanne Bouck	Lake Mary	Lyssa Koo	Deltona	William Ridner	Osteen
Michael Chetta	Deltona	Eric Martin	Sanford	Jen Rudolph	Geneva
Sarah Colandreo	Sanford	Sharon McNicol	Geneva	Mary Smith	Lake Mary
Cathy Cook	Sanford	Claudiette Medina	Deltona	Michael D Smith	Lake Mary
Elizabeth Dalton	Sanford	Misael Molina	Lake Mary	Martin B Tracy	Lake Mary
Roc Dixon	Sanford	Laura Monteagudo	Deltona	Jerome Wyant	Sanford
Leroy Eckert	Lake Mary			Patty Younker	Winter Springs

Keep Up With SAS

Visit our website **SeminoleAudubon.org**



Audubon Membership

Your membership contribution supports our chapter and makes you a partner in our mission to promote the awareness and protection of wildlife and the environment that supports it. In addition, you receive membership in the National Audubon Society and Audubon Florida including the Audubon and Florida Naturalist magazines.

Join on our website: <https://seminoleaudubon.org/membership/>

Donations are always appreciated to support chapter activities. Consider honoring someone with a donation to Seminole Audubon Society. Just click on the Donation icon on our website. Payment is with credit card or PayPal at <https://seminoleaudubon.org/>.



Image by nadzeyashanchuk/freeoik.com

2023-2024

Board of Directors & Committee Chairs (eff. 7/1/23)

SeminoleAudubon@gmail.com

Board	Name	Term
President	Phyllis Hall	2022/2024
Vice President	Leslie Martin	2023/2026
Treasurer	Jan Peters	2023/2025
Secretary	Peggy Stickney	2022/2024
At-Large	Lewis Gray	2023/2025
At-Large	Tracey Comazzi	2023/2026
At-Large	Connie Dolan	2023/2025

Per 9/11/2022 board meeting, keep the board at 7 members. Add a year to a term as needed to keep the terms balanced.

Committees

Bird Surveys

- The Big Sit! Leslie Martin
- Christmas Bird Count. Leslie Martin
- EagleWatch: Sarah Donlan, Michelle Vaughn, Chuck Honaker, Phyllis Hall
- Econ River Wilderness Area. Chuck Honaker (Chair)
- Jane Isle Survey: Lewis Gray (Chair), Marguerite Terwilleger, Leslie Martin
- Jay Watch: Chuck Honaker

Conservation: Phyllis Hall (Chair), Sam Kendall (Energy), Chuck Honaker, Sarah Donlan, Cecilia Carey, John Carey, Marguerite Terwilleger, Tracey Comazzi

Conservation Leadership Initiative (CLI). Phyllis Hall

Crystal Lake Preserve (CLP). Connie Dolan (Chair), Corrinne Wertz

Butterfly Survey co-chairs: Connie Dolan & Tracey Comazzi

Education. Cecilia Carey (Chair), John Carey, Joy Rector. Garden clubs, libraries, schools and scouts, eco-camp, etc.

History Archives. Stored in Seminole County History Museum. Electronic files: Phyllis Hall

The JAY Newsletter. Tracey Comazzi (Chair), Corrinne Wertz

Lake Monroe Purple Martin Nests. Jim Peters (Chair), Jan Peters, John & Cecilia Carey

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

New Member Welcome Letter. Margaret Loring

Media:

- **Meetings PowerPoint, MailChimp, Meet Up, Facebook.** Cecilia Carey
- **Website.** Phyllis Hall

Membership. Marty Shepherd

Outreach/Festivals. Phyllis Hall (Chair), Marty Shepherd, Cecilia Carey, Leslie Martin, Joy Rector

PO Box Mail Pickup. Marty Shepherd (Backup: Marguerite Terwilleger)

SAS Gmail Inbox. Phyllis Hall (Backup: Cecilia Carey)

Programs & Field Trips. Phyllis Hall (Chair), Leslie Martin, Cecilia Carey. Release keeper: Peggy Stickney

Scholarships Eco-Camp. Marguerite Terwilleger (Chair), Corrinne Wertz, Joy Rector, Michelle Vaughn