

The JAY

January - February 2025



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.

Rounding Out 2024 on a High Note: The City of Sanford's Contribution to Purple Martins

By Jim Peters, Chairman, Purple Martin Committee, and Phyllis Hall

In the September-October edition of *The Jay* newsletter, we described the events of the 2024 Purple Martin season at the Sanford Marina, including the fact that Jim Peters met with Mr. Robert Beall, Operations Manager for the City of Sanford's Parks and Recreation Department. It was noted that Mr. Beall kindly agreed to purchase two (2) new poles and twenty-four (24) nesting gourds, which would be installed in early 2025. The installation of the poles is already underway, a month ahead of schedule!

Seminole Audubon Society (SAS) would like to extend heartfelt thanks for the super job performed by City of Sanford's Parks and Recreation staff: Edric Diaz, Henry Dye, and Dantav Tillman, in installing the two (2) foundations for the new and greatly improved Purple Martin habitat. These were installed at the Marina on December 16, 2024. SAS also thanks Mr. Beall who has arranged for the purchase and installation of the new habitat items. His continued commitment to and cooperation with the Purple Martin nesting habitat project is greatly appreciated. He has been a joy to work with since the project's start in 2017.

Laying the pole foundations entailed a considerable amount of effort. Two (2) holes were dug precisely thirty (30) inches deep and corrugated pipe inserted to contain the concrete. A rectangular ground sleeve



Ground sleeve for later insertion of the habitat pole.



Ground sleeve



Square stone at bottom of hole to support the ground sleeve.

Photos by Jim Peters

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The City of Sanford's Contribution to Purple Martins *Continued from page 1*

was then inserted in the concrete, carefully checked and adjusted for level. This critical step was needed to ensure the habitat poles will stand straight when inserted into the ground sleeves. The poles and gourds will be installed in January before the Purple Martins arrive to begin nesting.



L to R: Dantav Tillman and Edric Diaz mixing the concrete.



Ground sleeve held in place while concrete is poured.

Photos by Jim Peters



L to R: Dantav Tillman, Edric Diaz and Henry Dye carefully checking for level.

The job went smoothly and very professionally, and was completed within three hours. The gourds, which are the new design with crow guard and an easy-open top for cleaning, will be installed in January 2025 in time for the nesting season. There will be a total of thirty-six (36) gourds, including the twenty-four (24) gourds purchased by Mr. Beall, on the two poles. The City will store all of the habitat components at the end of the nesting season.



Ground sleeve in concrete with cap to prevent dirt entry. The concrete was very professionally placed around the sleeve. In January the habitat poles will be inserted and the gourds hung to welcome Purple Martins.

Photos by Jim Peters



With many thanks to Dantav, Edric and Henry!
L to R: Dantav Tillman, Edric Diaz, Henry Dye and Jim Peters.

The following is a link to the September-October, 2024 edition of The Jay Newsletter article:
<https://seminoleaudubon.org/.../2024-JAY-Nov-Dec-Final.pdf>

Solar Farms: a Win-Win for People and Nature

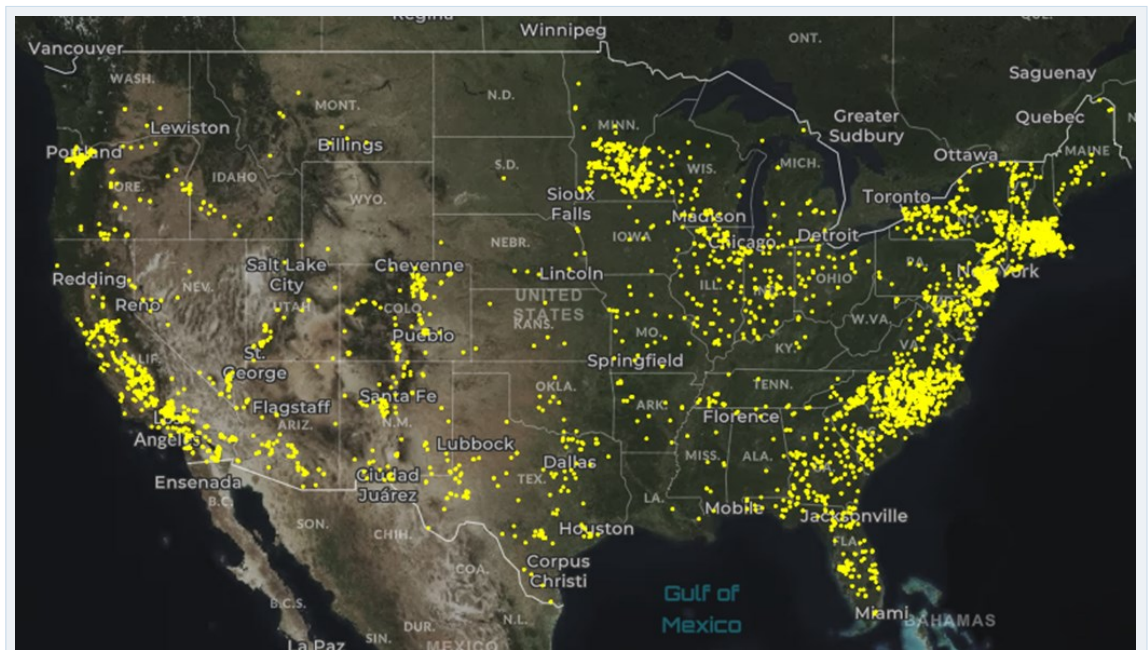
By Sam Kendall



Our sluggish economic system is finally showing results for birds, people, air and water. It is a cranky and slow-to-respond system but it appears that the best price for electricity is now aligned with the best environmental outcome. Moving electrons with solar energy is now less costly for utility companies than moving them with heat. Mining, transporting, processing and burning coal and natural gas (methane) are now more expensive than building and installing large arrays of solar panels. Someday, we will no longer be breathing toxic particulates or cleaning spilled coal ash from rivers and we will stop forcing chemicals underground to crack rocks open to release natural gas (fracking) and allowing these chemicals to leach into aquifers. By increasingly using the sun's energy directly, climate chaos will slow down and Earth's systems will once again flourish.

The sun provides thousands of times more energy every day than we currently use. We need to continue advancing the technologies that capture, store and transmit it. Unfortunately, our electric transmission system is not robust enough to accommodate all the solar farms that developers are planning to build. Expanded transmission is needed to move the electricity from farms to the areas that need it. Ideas abound for increasing transmission¹ and new rules from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission will make it easier to connect this complex interstate system². The Audubon Society is at the table with transmission line officials advising on the least environmentally impactful new transmission routes³. Audubon also talks with developers about minimizing any negative impacts to natural lands and wildlife from solar farms.

Solar installations are life-affirming, valuable in so many ways. An interactive map I discovered by the U.S. Photovoltaic Database (USPVDB), shows solar farms across the country and provides details on each. All of these solar power plants, along with solar panels on rooftops, covering parking lots and floating on water bodies will supplant new gas plants, as indicated on the USPVDB map. Although we lag behind China in producing electric cars and buses, demand for EVs in the US continues to strengthen and we have the momentum to bring down emissions from transportation. To reign in overheating of the atmosphere and oceans, we need to accelerate solar installations and speed up the reduction in carbon and methane emissions. The climate scientists were right. *Continued on next page*



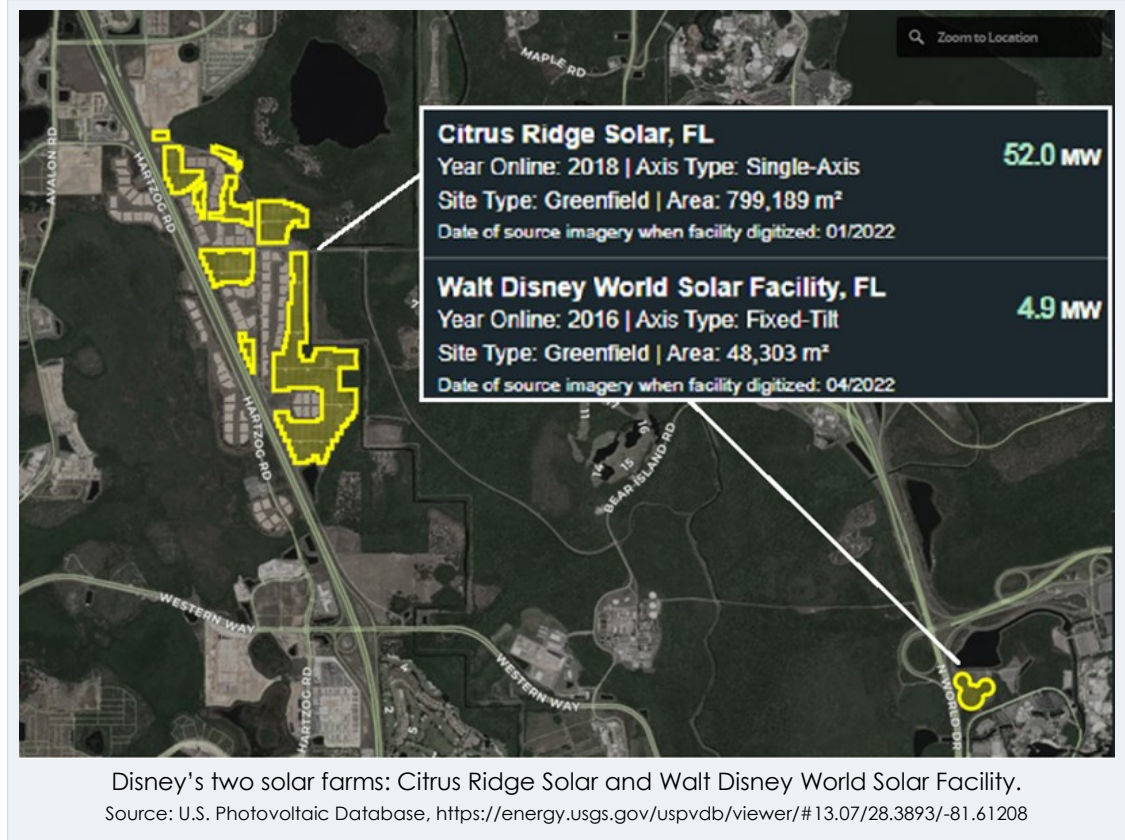
Current solar farms across the United States

Source: U.S. Photovoltaic Database, <https://energy.usgs.gov/uspvdb/viewer/#3.26/37.52/-90.01>

Solar Farms: A Win-Win for People and Nature Continued from page 3

We should have transitioned away from polluting combustion energy sources decades ago but the energy industry was ensnared in the vice-like grip of our capitalistic price system and powerful fossil-fuel lobbying. Thanks to public demand and common sense, this is changing.

In a win for nature, solar farms present opportunities to create and increase habitat for butterflies, bees, birds and other insects. The first farms were all about the cost savings of solar and the ground beneath the solar panels received little to no attention. On the solar farm map I discovered that Disney now has two solar arrays. The soil under their enormous and most recent Citrus Ridge Solar farm, which began producing energy in 2018, has been turned into a pollinators' paradise which you can see [here VIDEO: Walt Disney World's 270-Acre Solar Farm Powers Two Theme Parks While Providing Nature Habitats - WDW News Today](#). The information gained from this pollinator project is available to other solar farm developers. Currently, the two solar farms are powering two of the four Disney parks. By 2030, the entire Disney complex will be powered entirely by solar energy, a model for corporate sustainability.



The interactive USPVDB map can be found at <https://eerscmap.usgs.gov/uspvdb/viewer/#3/37.25/-96.25>.

References:

- <https://cleantechnica.com/2024/04/10/replacing-wires-could-double-how-much-electricity-the-us-grid-can-handle/>
- <https://www.ferc.gov/news-events/news/ferc-transmission-reform-paves-way-adding-new-energy-resources-grid>
- <https://www.audubon.org/advocacy/transmission-lines>

Reflecting on the 2024 Florida Audubon Assembly

By Alex Barath, 2023-2024 Florida Audubon CLI Alum

Attending the 2024 Florida Audubon Assembly was a wonderful, and extremely informative experience this year! The conference was held at the Hilton Daytona Beach Oceanfront Resort the first week of November—celebrating the 125th year of Florida's Audubon's dedication to conservation in the state. It was a great opportunity to connect with the involved organizations and Audubon Chapters from all regions of Florida. I got to learn about the exciting insights and new challenges that face us in protecting Florida's natural lands for years to come. The Assembly began with engaging keynote sessions that highlighted Audubon's historical impact and future direction. Dr. Paul Gray's presentation during the Welcome Luncheon brought to life the early days of conservation, reminding us of the battles fought to

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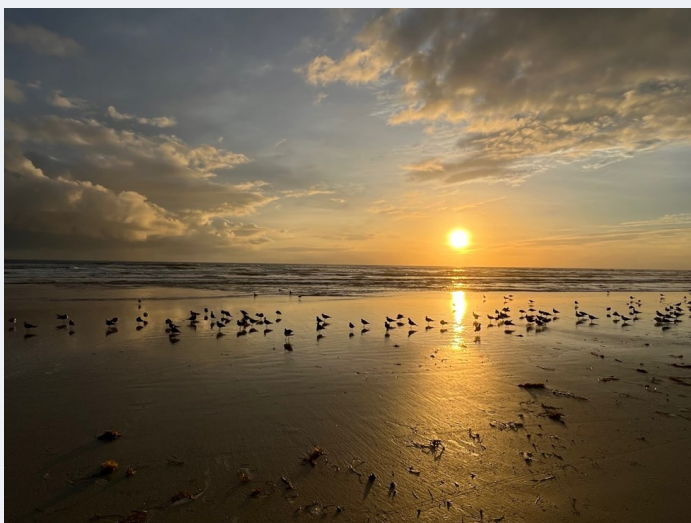
Reflecting on the 2024 Florida Audubon Assembly *Continued from page 4*

preserve the Everglades and its avian inhabitants. It took a collective unification of Chapters and communities alike to eventually pass the Migratory Bird Treaty Act that we know and treasure to this day. But it is important we do not forget our history and the struggles it took for such a treaty to be passed by our government. Dr. Gray did a fantastic job reminding all of us that it takes effort and inspiration to advocate for the creatures we represent in the Audubon Society.

Furthermore, as a Conservation Leadership Initiative (CLI) alumna this year, I was particularly excited to see the new cohort of CLI students engaging with Chapter leaders during the dedicated CLI session! This intergenerational exchange continues to serve as a powerful bridge between young conservationists and seasoned Audubon leaders and activists. But what never fails to surprise me is their level of diversity and passion. Several of them expressed an interest in different fields that all equate to bettering the environment for both people and animals. I had the pleasure to talk to multiple CLI students seeking interests in entomology, marine biology, environmental sciences, and political advocacy in our government. As much as I was able to share with them regarding the CLI program, I felt

equally rewarded by their willingness to share with me their goals and futures! I have high hopes and confidence that the CLI cohort of 2024-2025 will become strong leaders in the future.

The assembly also featured several networking sessions, field trips, and panel discussions. I was honored to attend a Coastal Recovery panel held by panelists Commissioner Henry Dean and Mike McGarry, to discuss the efforts, science, and variables that go into restoring beaches. Furthermore, I was able to attend a panel discussing the process of advocacy in local communities, which was held by Audubon Advocates Chris Farrell, Andrew Dance, Ginger Adair, and Melissa Lammers. Florida Audubon's network relies on the knowledge of its members and associates, so it is vital that we keep ourselves informed and on top of the current topics and measures, both political and scientific, involved in maintaining Florida's environment.



A tranquil sunrise graced by a mixed flock of shorebirds on Daytona Beach
Photos courtesy of Alex Barath



L to R: Francis the Bald Eagle and CBOP Ambassador, Alex Barath and Alex DeBear, 2024-2025 CLI Student
Photos courtesy of Alex Barath

Some of the fun standout moments for me as a typical attendee of the meeting were the birds, of course! I saw Francis the Bald Eagle again, making his appearance as an avian ambassador from the Center for Birds of Prey (CBOP). It was also amusing to visit Lighthouse Point Park, and see a beautiful male Cape May Warbler who apparently decided he was going to wait last minute to migrate south. But, overlooking the ocean of Daytona Beach, one could hardly be bored by the number of gulls and terns that covered every inch of sand, backlit by some of the prettiest sunsets and sunrises I have ever seen. It made walking along the beach an unforgettable experience.

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Reflecting on the 2024 Florida Audubon Assembly Continued from page 5

Overall, the Assembly was amazing! It is vital for us to always celebrate our achievements and reconnect with one another and our roots. But the conference serves the great purpose of exposing us as well—exposing us to new environments, new topics, new issues, and new solutions. My experience this year was entirely gratifying, and I have my peers, Seminole Audubon, and the attendees to thank for making my attendance a possibility. As we look toward 2025 and beyond, I am eager to apply the lessons and opportunities I gained from this event in both my own UCF Audubon Campus Chapter, Knighthawk Audubon, and my community here in Orlando, Florida.



Former UCF Knighthawk Audubon President, Ava-Marie Gomez,
and Alex Barath
Photo by Alex Barath



Male Cape May Warbler
Photo by Alex Barath

Chuluota Wilderness Area 2024 Bird Surveys - Final Tally

By Chuck Honaker, Florida Master Naturalist, and Tracey Comazzi

On December 2, 2024, we completed our tenth and final survey of 2024 at Chuluota Wilderness Area in far eastern Seminole County. It is one of nine Natural Lands properties in the county, validating our county's logo as *Florida's Natural Choice*. We are fortunate to have these areas, with a wide variety of flora and fauna, for hiking, birding and just plain enjoying nature in general.

An average of 30 species was seen on our monthly surveys, which documented many familiar birds and some that are seen less frequently. Below are some of the less common birds I selected from our 2024 reports:

- Belted Kingfisher (*Megabyte alcyon*)
- Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*)
- Cooper's Hawk (*Accipter cooperii*)
- Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*)
- Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)
- Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*)
- Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus Podiceps*)
- Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*)
- Swamp Sparrow (*Melospiza georgiana*)
- Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*)

Econ River Wilderness Area was the 2023 survey site. Black Hammock Wilderness Area in Oviedo will likely

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Chuluota Wilderness Area 2024 Bird Surveys Continued from page 6

be the site of our 2025 surveys. It has a variety of habitats including hydric hammock, hardwood swamp, pine flatwoods and sand pine scrub. We conducted an exploratory hike in the area on December 12, 2024 and saw a good variety of species.

The final tally of the species seen this year and the total number of birds counted can be found in the table below. Thanks go out to our regular surveyors, John & Cecilia Carey, Lewis Gray, Brenda Feliciano, Kate Dolamore, Connie Dolan, Susan Angermeier, Lorri Lilja and Joy Rector, and to all of the other volunteers who participated as their time permitted.

The surveys are open to all SAS members. Good birding!

Chuluota Wilderness Area 2024 Bird Survey Data

Total Species to Date: 80		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Nov	Dec
Avg. Monthly Species: 30	Monthly Total Species:	26	32	36	33	29	26	30	30	20	45	30

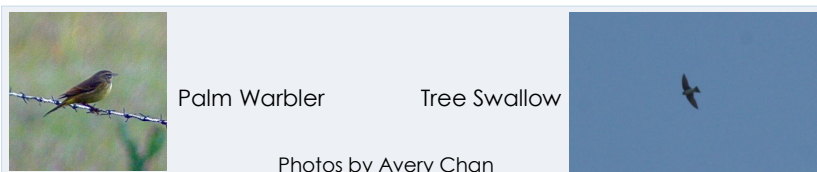
Common Name	Scientific Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Nov	Dec
Blackbird , Red-winged	<i>(Agelaius phoeniceus)</i>										x	x
Bluebird, Eastern	<i>(Sialia sialis)</i>		x	x	x	x				x	x	
Bobolink	<i>(Dolichonyx oryzivorus)</i>									x		
Bobwhite, Northern	<i>(Colinus virginianus)</i>								x			
Cardinal, Northern	<i>(Cardinalis cardinalis)</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Catbird, Gray	<i>(Dumetella carolinensis)</i>	x		x	x						x	x
Chickadee, Carolina	<i>(Poecile carolinensis)</i>						x	x				
Cormorant, Double-crested	<i>(Nannopterum auritum)</i>										x	
Crane, Sandhill	<i>(Antigone canadensis)</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x
Crow, American	<i>(Corvus brachyrhynchos)</i>		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
Crow, Fish	<i>(Corvus ossifragus)</i>		x	x		x					x	
Dove, Common Ground	<i>(Columbina passerina)</i>	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		x	
Dove, Mourning	<i>(Zenaida macroura)</i>		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Duck, Wood	<i>(Aix sponsa)</i>							x				
Eagle, Bald	<i>(Haliaeetus leucocephalus)</i>			x	x						x	x
Egret, Great	<i>(Ardea alba)</i>								x	x		
Egret, Snowy	<i>(Egretta thula)</i>										x	
Egret, Western Cattle	<i>(Bubulcus ibis)</i>				x	x	x	x	x			x
Flycatcher, Great Crested	<i>(Myiarchus crinitus)</i>				x	x	x	x				
Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray	<i>(Polioptila caerulea)</i>	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x
Grackle, Boat-tailed	<i>(Quiscalus major)</i>		x			x	x	x			x	
Grackle, Common	<i>(Quiscalus quiscula)</i>						x	x				
Grebe, Pied-billed	<i>(Podilymbus podiceps)</i>										x	
Harrier, Northern	<i>(Circus hudsonius)</i>				x						x	
Hawk, Cooper's	<i>(Accipiter cooperii)</i>								x		x	
Hawk, Red-shouldered	<i>(Buteo lineatus)</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Hawk, Red-tailed	<i>(Buteo jamaicensis)</i>					x						
Hummingbird, Ruby-throated	<i>(Archilochus colubris)</i>							x				
Ibis, Glossy	<i>(Plegadis falcinellu)</i>										x	
Ibis, White	<i>(Eudocimus albus)</i>		x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x
Jay, Blue	<i>(Cyanocitta cristata)</i>				x	x	x	x				
Kestrel, American	<i>(Falco sparverius)</i>		x	x							x	
Killdeer	<i>(Charadrius vociferous)</i>										x	x
Kingbird, Eastern	<i>(Tyrannus tyrannus)</i>									x		
Kingfisher, Belted	<i>(Megaceryle alcyon)</i>										x	

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Chuluota Wilderness Area 2024 Bird Survey Data Continued from page 7

Total Species to Date: 80		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Nov	Dec
Avg. Monthly Species: 30	Monthly Total Species:	26	32	36	33	29	26	30	30	20	45	30

Common Name	Scientific Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Nov	Dec
Kinglet, Ruby-crowned	(<i>Corthylio calendula</i>)	x		x							x	x
Kite, Swallow-tailed	(<i>Elanoides forficatus</i>)					x						
Meadowlark, Eastern	(<i>Sturnella magna</i>)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Merlin	(<i>Falco columbarius</i>)			x								
Mockingbird, Northern	(<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>)		x		x	x			x		x	
Osprey	(<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>)			x					x			
Owl, Barred	(<i>Strix varia</i>)			x	x		x	x				
Owl, Great Horned	(<i>Bubo virginianus</i>)								x			
Parula, Northern	(<i>Setophaga americana</i>)			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Phoebe, Eastern	(<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>)	x	x	x							x	x
Robin, American	(<i>Turdus migratorius</i>)	x	x									x
Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied	(<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>)	x	x								x	
Shrike, Loggerhead	(<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>)								x			
Sparrow, Savannah	(<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>)											x
Sparrow, Swamp	(<i>Melospiza georgiana</i>)										x	
Stork, Wood	(<i>Mycteria americana</i>)		x			x						
Swallow, Barn	(<i>Hirundo rustica</i>)								x			
Swallow, sp.									x			
Swallow, Tree	(<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>)		x								x	
Swift, Chimney	(<i>Chaetura pelagica</i>)								x			
Titmouse, Tufted	(<i>Baeolophus bicolor</i>)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Towhee, Eastern (Red-eyed)	(<i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i>)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Towhee, Eastern (White-eyed)	(<i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus allenii</i>)											x
Turkey, Wild	(<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Vireo, Blue-headed	(<i>Vireo solitarius</i>)				x							
Vireo, Red-eyed	(<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>)						x	x				
Vireo, White-eyed	(<i>Vireo griseu</i>)	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Vireo, Yellow-throated	(<i>Vireo flavifrons</i>)			x			x	x				
Vulture, Black	(<i>Coragyps atratus</i>)		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
Vulture, Turkey	(<i>Cathartes aura</i>)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Warbler, Black-and-White	(<i>Mniotilta varia</i>)	x		x							x	x
Warbler, Palm	(<i>Setophaga palmarum</i>)	x	x	x							x	x
Warbler, Palm (Yellow)	(<i>Setophaga hypochrysea</i>)	x									x	x
Warbler, Pine	(<i>Setophaga pinus</i>)	x	x	x	x		x	x				x
Warbler, Prairie	(<i>Setophaga discolor</i>)				x							
Warbler, Yellow-rumped	(<i>Setophaga coronata</i>)	x	x	x							x	x
Warbler, Yellow-throated	(<i>Setophaga dominica</i>)	x										
Waxwing, Cedar	(<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>)			x								
Woodpecker, Downy	(<i>Dryobates pubescens</i>)		x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Woodpecker, Downy (Eastern)	(<i>Dryobates pubescens ssp.</i>)											x
Woodpecker, Pileated	(<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>)		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Woodpecker, Red-bellied	(<i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Wren, Carolina	(<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Wren, Northern House	(<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>)	x									x	x
Yellowthroat, Common	(<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>)	x	x	x	x							



Palm Warbler

Tree Swallow

Photos by Avery Chan

Program and Field Trip Notes

Birding the Ruins of the Yucatán

November 8, 2024—November 18, 2024

On this year's overseas field trip, led by Leslie Martin, members and guests of Seminole Audubon Society visited the Yucatán Peninsula to birdwatch and tour Mayan archeological sites.

Our guide, Alex Dzib, is an expert bird guide who specializes in bird behavior and is involved mostly with studying Flamingos. He is of Mayan descent and is very knowledgeable about Mayan history and the historical sites we toured. We visited political, economic and religious ruins as well as a site that housed cisterns for water during the dry season. Most impressive was Uxmal, a UNESCO World Heritage Site where a local guide led our group.

Thanks to Alex's birding skill, we were fortunate to observe most of the endemic species of the area such as the Yucatán Wren (*Campylorhynchus yucatanicus*), Cozumel Vireo (*Vireo bairdi*), Cozumel Emerald (*Cyananthus forficatus*), and Orange Oriole (*Icterus auratus*). By the end of the trip, our bird count included 184 species on 35 separate eBird checklists.

Keep your eyes and ears open, our next trip will be announced soon!



Yucatán Peninsula Field Trip Group
Photo courtesy of Leslie Martin



Cozumel Emerald (*Cyananthus forficatus*)
Photo by Joy Rector

Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium brasilianum*)
Photo by John Carey

Program and Field Trip Notes Continued from page 9

Bald Eagles and the EagleWatch Program

Sunday, November 10, 2024



Shawnlei Breeding presenting on Bald Eagles and the EagleWatch Program
Photo by: Phyllis Hall

Shawnlei Breeding, Audubon EagleWatch Program Manager, presented many interesting facts about Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). Females are bigger than males, weighing 8-12 pounds. They live 15-20 years in the wild (40 years in captivity). They can lift about 4 pounds. They are scavengers eating mostly fish and meat. They stay with the same mate for life and on the same nest site (philopatry). Their nest is the largest of any North American avian species weighing up to 2 tons with a size of 10 feet wide and 12-14 feet deep. They nest in pine trees, dead tall trees, or cell towers. Eagles are a conservation success story. In the 1960s their numbers were down to about 500 in the U.S. because of DDT (*Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane*) in the food chain that affected the viability of their eggs. By banning DDT and passing laws to protect them, their number have grown to well over 330,000 eagles. The species was removed from the Endangers Species list in 2007. They continue to receive pressure from loss of habitat, car strikes, toxins and disease, climate change, and changes in permitting for construction near their nests. The EagleWatch program is composed of volunteers who monitor nests each season, which runs from October to May. The volunteers collect and report nest data. In

Florida, this includes 53 counties with 763 volunteers watching 1,278 nests; 60 nests are monitored in Seminole County and during the 2023-2024 EagleWatch season, 52 chicks and 48 fledglings were observed.

If you would like to become an Eagle Watcher, learn more at <https://cbop.audubon.org/conservation/about-eaglewatch-program>. Audubon Center for Birds of Prey has a volunteer rescue team that will come to pick up injured birds of prey. If you find an injured eagle or other bird of prey, call the center at 407-644-0190. They can also direct you to other rescue centers for other birds and wildlife in plight.

Spring Hammock Preserve

Saturday, November 16, 2024

Twenty participants enjoyed a great birding morning with coordinators Chuck Honaker and Connie Dolan.

The group saw Ruby-crowned Kinglets (*Corthylio calendula*), Black-and-white Warblers (*Mniotilta varia*), Orange-crowned Warblers (*Leiothlypis celata*) and Yellow-throated Warblers (*Setophaga dominica*), Eastern Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*), Gray Catbirds (*Dumetella carolinensis*), a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*) and many other species. Except for its eastern boundary with Lake Jesup, this approximately 1,500-acre preserve is surrounded by urban development. It is composed of floodplain forest, hydric hammock, upland mixed hardwoods and pine flatwoods.



Spring Hammock Preserve Group
Photo by: Jim Peters

Program and Field Trip Notes Continued from page 10

Raptor Feathers by Dianna Flynt

Sunday, December 8, 2024

Dianna is recently-retired from the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey where she was the expert on injury assessment, treatment, and rehabilitation of over 700 raptors annually. Dianna provided many interesting facts about bird feathers. She also brought samples for everyone to see up close. Feathers are keratin, mostly protein, structures grown by papillae in the skin where they emerge with a thin-layered covering called a sheath. The sheath is preened off as the feather grows. Blood is supplied to the feather while the feather is growing. Hereditary genes determine the color and shape of the feathers.

Feathers protect and insulate a bird, aid in camouflage, communicate behavior, make flight possible, and assist in recognition of age, sex, and species. Birds bathe in water in ponds, rain, and leaves. They also take dust baths. Anting is a behavior where birds put ants on their feathers and the ants provide them with insecticide, fungicide or bactericide protection. Preening removes oil, dirt and parasites, as well as feather sheaths. Oil from the uropygial gland helps with waterproofing along with the layering of the feathers. Molting is an exchange of worn feathers for new ones and tends to be bilaterally symmetrical. Molting typically occurs annually and gradually over a period of four to eight weeks.



Dianna Flynt demonstrating raptor feathers
Photo by: Phyllis Hall

Lighthouse Point Park at Ponce Inlet

Saturday, December 14, 2024

It was a cold and blustery day for the Seminole Audubon Society field trip to Lighthouse Point Park in Volusia County. Eight birders walked three miles along the beach and the Intracoastal Waterway, and spotted twenty-six species of birds. The highlight of the trip was seeing a mixed flock of 400-500 birds resting on the beach, all facing into the wind. Larger birds such as American Herring (*Larus smithsonianus*), Laughing (*Leucophaeus atricilla*), and Ring-billed (*Larus delawarensis*) Gulls stood upwind, decreasing the windspeed for Royal (*Thalasseus maximus*) and Sandwich (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) Terns, Black Skimmers (*Rynchops niger*), Lesser Black-backed Gulls (*Larus fuscus*) and Red Knots (*Calidris canutus*). The birders were also delighted to see a few Piping Plovers foraging with Sanderlings (*Calidris alba*), Northern Gannets (*Morus bassanus*) fishing offshore, and a Surf Scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*) on the Intracoastal Waterway.



Thank you to Jim Peters for the Black Skimmers in flight photo (top left), Jan Peters for the birders on the beach photo (bottom left), and John Carey for the photos of the mixed flock of birds (top right) and the Piping Plover (bottom right).



Upcoming Programs and Field Trips

Meetings are held on the second Sunday of the month at 2:00 p.m.

Meeting **Location:**

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

Seminole County Natural Lands Monthly Bird Surveys

Black Hammock Wilderness Area in Oviedo will likely be the site for the 2025 Seminole County Natural Lands bird surveys. Surveys are held on the 2nd Monday of each month from 7:30-10:30 a.m.

If you would like to help with these surveys and for site confirmation of the first survey, contact Chuck Honaker at cwh.jr@hotmail.com. All levels of birding experience are welcome.



Program: January 12, Sunday. Wekiva Wild and Scenic River



In October 2000, the Wekiva River, Wekiwa Springs Run, Rock Springs Run and Black Water Creek were designated by U.S. Congress as a National Wild and Scenic River. River Ambassador, Ashley Konon, will explain what this means to Floridians for river conservation and recreational opportunities like birding on kayaks. She will talk about her role as River Ambassador and explain what agencies are involved in the management of the river. Ashley will also describe another project she leads, the Dragonfly Mercury Project. Each year volunteers collect juvenile dragonfly nymphs or larvae at four sites around the Wekiva River System.

Field Trip: January 17, Friday. Yankee Lake Treatment Facility: Florida Scrub-Jays

This is a guided tour of the only habitat in Seminole County for Florida Scrub-Jays. Along with Audubon Florida, SAS was instrumental in getting this habitat preserved in 1993 when the treatment facility was being planned, so we visit this property each year. We will meet at 8:00 am at the Seminole County Northwest Water Reclamation Facility on 501 Yankee Lake Road, Sanford, off SR46, just before the entrance to the Seminole Forest. Restrooms are available in the administration building. We will be riding in the management company's pickup trucks. We may be joined on the tour by County administration staff. All levels and ages of birders are welcome. Limited to 10 people. Reservations are required. Contact Phyllis Hall at: phylliscath814@gmail.com



Field Trip: January 18, Saturday. Gemini Springs Bio-Bingo

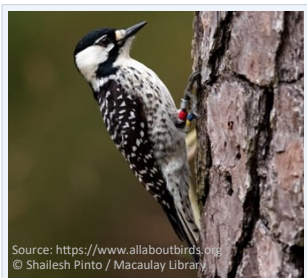


Play Bio-Bingo at Gemini Springs Park, DeBary, one of Florida's Special Places. Bio-Bingo is a biology treasure hunt using a Bingo card. Explore the park to find the birds, flora, and fauna on your Bio-Bingo card. Play on your own or form a team of the best bird, butterfly, bug and plant people you know! Moderate walking over uneven terrain on the trails. Concrete sidewalk pathways. Restrooms available. All levels and ages of birders are welcome. Meet at the park at 8:00 a.m. When you enter the park, turn left when you see the red building. Meet in the first parking lot. Address: 37 Dirksen Dr, DeBary, FL 32713. Coordinator: Leslie Martin.

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Upcoming Programs and Field Trips Continued from page 12

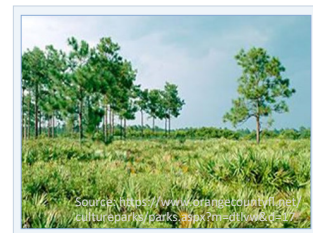
Program: February 9, 2025, Sunday. The Road to Recovery: 25 Years of Red-cockaded Woodpecker Management at Hal Scott Regional Preserve and Park



Graham Williams is St. Johns River Water Management District's south-central region land manager. One of those properties is Hal Scott Regional Preserve and Park, home to a population of the federally endangered red-cockaded woodpeckers (RCWs). Graham will explain how the population at Hal Scott Preserve is monitored and summarize the work that has been done to recover this population from the brink of extinction. He will include facts about RCW biology such as lifespan and habitat requirements. These birds are the only woodpeckers in North America that live exclusively in cavities drilled into living, old-growth pines, especially longleaf pines. Their main threat is loss of habitat. The longleaf pine was extensively logged in the late 1800s and then the land was clear-cut for development and agriculture. Only a small fraction of old-growth longleaf remains across its historic range.

Field Trip: February 15, Saturday. Hal Scott Regional Preserve and Park

The property offers nearly 9,000 acres of unspoiled Florida wilderness. It is managed by the St. Johns River Water Management District. There are miles of unspoiled sanctuary trails for hiking along the scenic shoreline of the Econlockhatchee River with plenty of wildlife to view. Wildlife sightings may include Bald Eagles, Sandhill Cranes, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers (RWC), gopher tortoises, bobcats, river otters and indigo snakes. Preserve staff will lead the 2–3-hour tour on an eco-buggy trailer around the property with stops to view RCW cavity trees and to look for RCWs as they forage. There are no restrooms or other facilities available onsite. The eco buggy trailer used for the tour will have 3-4 stairs to climb to get on and off. The trailer has padded bench seating once on board, but is not equipped to accommodate a wheelchair. Meet at the parking lot at 4500 Dallas Boulevard, Orlando, FL 32833 at 8:00 am. **Limited to 20 people. Reservations are required.** Contact Leslie Martin at woodstork.martin@gmail.com.



Program: March 9, 2025, Sunday. Membership Meeting

Membership vote for the 2025/2027 terms for SAS Board members will be held at the March monthly meeting. If you would like to nominate someone (or volunteer yourself) to serve on the board, contact Phyllis Hall at seminoleaudubon@gmail.com.

Other Programs and Events

February 22, 2025. Seminole Garden Expo

9:00 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Seminole County Extension Service

250 W. County Home Road

Sanford, FL 32773

SAS will have a booth. **Volunteers needed for morning and afternoon shifts.**

If you can help, contact Phyllis Hall at seminoleaudubon@gmail.com.

A flyer for the Seminole Garden Expo & Plant Sale. The flyer features a photograph of a family (a man, a woman, and a child) looking at a plant. The text on the flyer includes: "Seminole County Parks and Recreation Department | UF/IFAS EXTENSION SERVICES", "GARDEN EXPO & PLANT SALE", "SAT, FEBRUARY 22, 2025", "9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.", "250 WEST COUNTY HOME RD. SANFORD, FL 32773", "FREE ADMISSION AND PARKING", "FREE Admission to the Museum of Seminole County History", "How To Clinics, Speakers, Vendors, Exhibitors, Demonstration Gardens, Ask an Expert and talk to Master Gardeners.", "Kid's activities, crafts and programs, 4-H, butterfly encounter, scavenger hunt and food trucks.", "Food Pet Friendly", "Handicap Accessible", "For more information and a schedule of activities, visit facebook.com/UFIFASeminoleCo", "The University of Florida and UF/IFAS Extension Services (IFAS) are Equal Opportunity Institutions and provide programs, educational materials, and other services to all individuals without regard to race, sex, age, or disability. UF/IFAS Extension Services (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution. For more information, please contact the UF/IFAS Extension Services (IFAS) office at 352-390-1234 or visit our website at www.ufl.edu/extension. © 2025 UF/IFAS Extension Services. All rights reserved." and "MASTER GARDENER UF/IFAS FLORIDA 250 West County Home Rd | Sanford, FL 32773 | 407-665-5566 www.SeminoleCountyFL.gov SEMINOLE COUNTY FLORIDA".



WELCOME

New Members or New to Our Chapter !

Patricia A. Donohue Sanford
Bridget Friedman Lake Mary
Tyler Lovell Deltona

Paul Melgoza Sanford
Michelle Nieto DeBary
Jo Wormington Osteen

Keep Up With SAS



Visit our website at <https://seminoleaudubon.org/>



Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/seminoleaudubonsociety/>



Find us on Meetup at <https://www.meetup.com/seminoleaudubon-com/>

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

2024-2025
Board of Directors & Committee Chairs (eff. 7/1/24)

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, Chuck Honaker, Phyllis Hall
- **Seminole County Natural Lands.** Chuck Honaker (Chair)
- **Jane Isle Survey.** Lewis Gray (Chair), Marguerite Terwilleger, Leslie Martin
- **Jay Watch.** Chuck Honaker

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

Conservation Leadership Initiative (CLI). Phyllis Hall

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

CLP Butterfly Survey. Connie Dolan & Tracey Comazzi (Co-chairs)

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

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. Joy Rector

Media:

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

Membership. Marty Shepherd

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

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, Connie Dolan, John Carey
 Release keeper: Peggy Stickney

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