

# The JAY



March - April - May 2025

[www.seminoleaudubon.org](http://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.*

## A New and Improved Purple Martin Habitat at Sanford Marina

Installed as a joint effort by Seminole Audubon Society and the City of Sanford

By Jim Peters, Chairman, Purple Martin Committee

A "gourd-raising" ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at the Sanford Marina on a cold, windy January 14, 2025 morning. Through a joint effort of the Seminole Audubon Society (SAS) and the City of Sanford, the installation of two new state-of-the-art Purple Martin habitat units was completed in time for the 2025 birding season. A total of 36 gourds were stuffed with pine straw and cedar wood chips by a team of volunteers from Seminole and Volusia counties and raised to a height of 16 feet. They will attract returning and new Purple Martins to Sanford. The ceremony was attended by five City of Sanford staff and eighteen SAS volunteers, while two photographers captured the scene.

Purple Martins make annual migratory trips from South America to Florida to nest and raise their young. Due to extensive habitat loss in their breeding range, they rely heavily on habitat provided by humans, such as gourds, for shelter and nesting. The birds like to live near the water and near people. The Sanford Marina is an ideal location because it is on the shore of Lake Monroe and near three picnic shelters. Visitors enjoy



The "gourd-raising" ribbon cutting.  
L to R: Edric Diaz, City of Sanford and Phyllis Hall, Seminole Audubon Society.

Photo by Tish Hart



Left: Two beautiful and extraordinary adult Purple Martins.

Photo by: Ken Schmidt



Right: The information kiosk on Purple Martins.  
Photo by: Christine Otu

seeing the birds up close and learning about them from the nearby kiosk.

Early each year, several "scout birds" fly to the area to locate shelter, followed weeks later by a larger group of Purple Martins. They nest in the

*Continued on next page*

# New Purple Martin Habitat at Sanford Marina *Continued from page 1*

gourds and the young hatch in early summer. These birds remain in the local area, foraging on insects such as dragonflies and mosquitos, until the fall when they return in large numbers to South America for the winter. Seven Purple Martins have already been seen at the gourds—go check them out!

The Seminole Audubon Society and the City of Sanford have worked together on this habitat since 2016 when Purple Martins were seen nesting in nearby streetlights. In 2017, the first habitat units were erected, and immediately attracted the birds and they have been nesting there ever since. Predator crows became a problem so improved gourds were used successfully in the 2024 season and that led to the state-of-the-art habitat erected on January 14, 2025. It is noted that Disney World has over 300 Purple Martin gourds and UCF conducts research on Purple Martins on the UCF campus.



Top left: Robert Beal, Operations Manager, Parks and Recreation, City of Sanford taking two new gourds to be filled with nesting material. Top center: Henry Dye, City of Sanford, filling a gourd with cedar chips and pine straw. Top right: Jim Peters (right) assisted the volunteers with attaching their gourds to the poles.

Bottom left: Dantav Tillman, City of Sanford, turns the winch-handle to raise the nesting habitat up the pole. Bottom center: A volunteer taking her turn to turn the winch-handle. Bottom right: Now fully raised, one of the new Purple Martin habitats is completely installed and the City of Sanford staff and SAS volunteers gather beneath for a group photo.

Photos by Tish Hart



If you would like more details on the improved gourds, the habitat installation process, and the remarkable people who made this happen, please visit the September-October 2024 and the January-February 2025 editions of The Jay newsletter at the following links:

<https://seminoleaudubon.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/2024-JAY-Sep-Oct-Final.pdf>

<https://seminoleaudubon.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/2025-JAY-Jan-Feb-Final.pdf>

*Continued on next page*

## New Purple Martin Habitat at Sanford Marina Continued from page 2



Deviant Wolfe Brewing, located in Historic Downtown Sanford, invited SAS to talk about Purple Martins on January 24, 2025. Jim Peters gave a short PowerPoint presentation. Patrons were able to see an original gourd and a new crow-guard gourd.

The original Purple Martin gourds and poles systems are no longer needed at the Sanford Marina location and SAS has donated one system, which includes eight gourds, to Lawton Elementary School in Oviedo for their Lawton Environmental Study Area. SAS has had an activity booth at the school's Earth Day event for the past several years.

The remaining system is available for a donation. Please contact [SeminoleAudubon@gmail.com](mailto:SeminoleAudubon@gmail.com) if you are interested in it.

One of the original Purple Martin habitat systems  
Photo provided by Phyllis Hall

## Audubon Florida's Role in State Park Planning

By Chuck Honaker, SAS Conservation Committee Member

On February 5, 2025, Julie Wraithmell, Executive Director of *Audubon Florida*, hosted a Zoom call for state chapter leaders. A number of SAS conservation committee members were on the call as well. The goal was to address Audubon's future impact on Florida State Parks' planning processes. Florida, with some 175 state parks and preserves, has one of the largest state park systems in the USA. Audubon, as one of the oldest conservation organizations in Florida, was a proponent of the development of our state park system. It is a bureaucratic system with many layers. Summarized below are some of the key points from the call, and how Audubon members can be advocates in support of our state parks.



Julie Wraithmell  
Source: [www.fl.audubon.org](http://www.fl.audubon.org)

Readers might recall that back in August 2024, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) announced plans to add golf courses\*, pickle ball courts, hotels/lodges and other amenities to 9 state parks. There apparently was little, if any, public notice about this. When word got out to *Audubon Florida* and other groups, there was a huge outpouring of opposition to these projects from the public and state politicians. In fact, Audubon action alerts numbering some 38,000 were received in Tallahassee. In response to the public's outcry, Governor DeSantis withdrew his support for the proposal at least temporarily. This was reported in the *Audubon | Florida Naturalist* magazine's Winter 2024 edition. This is an opportunity for *Audubon Florida* to continue being a conservation leader in the state. (\*Ironically the golf course at Florida Caverns State Park was closed in 2018.)

Ms. Wraithmell outlined some components of the Florida state government structure that impact decisions about state park land management plans:

- At the top is the **Governor and his Cabinet** (Gov. DeSantis, Chief Financial Officer, Commissioner of Agriculture and the Attorney General (**Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund aka TIITF**))
- **Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)** State parks & preserve state parks (SP), Aquatic Preserves (AP) & National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERR)
- **Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)** - Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) and Environmental Areas (WEA)
- **Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services**- State forests (SF)
- **Division of State Lands (DSL)**
- **Acquisition & Restoration Council (ARC)**

# Audubon Florida's Role in State Park Planning Continued from page 3

With the focus on state parks and preserves land management process, the initial step is that the state gets new land and leases are assigned. A land management plan is drafted based on the resource components of the property and its specific habitats and natural resources, use of prescribed fire, etc., and the land use components such as demographics of the area and possible recreational uses. Land management planning is a complex and cumbersome process. In the past, it was based on proposals with public input, advisory groups and finally the submission of the park's plan for approval to ARC noted above. Revisions are intended to be at least every 10 years, but that is difficult to manage. Quoting from the FDEP and the Florida Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP) website, "DRP is an innovative leader in balancing natural domain with demand for resource-based recreation it is the core mission of DRP to provide resource-based recreation while preserving, restoring [and] interpreting natural and cultural resources".

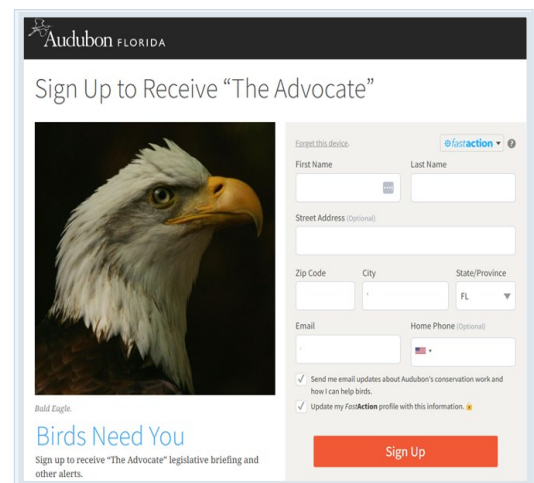
The entire 175-unit state park system is divided by geographic location into five administrative districts: Northwest #1, Northeast #2, Central #3, Southwest #4 and Southeast #5. The FDEP's park planning office has devised a new method to review management plans: it is now being done district by district. Public and agency input is arranged county by county, city by city, etc., in each district. All the district's preserves and parks, with their commonalities and differences, are covered in a consolidated land management plan. The plan then goes to the Acquisition and Restoration Council for review and approval. Of note, the Northeast District #2's plan was approved by the ARC in June of 2024 and the Southwest District #4 is next in line.

Ms. Wraithmell mentioned that the district plans will have a regional focus rather than on units. The plans will be large and this might slight small parks. The Southwest district draft plan is due in the March/April timeframe. Also open houses in each area, such as Port Charlotte, will occur for the public. Information about unit management plans or public participation schedules can be found at <https://floridadep.gov> or by calling (850)245-3051.

Ms. Wraithmell concluded by emphasizing *Audubon Florida's* important advocacy role in the conservation of state parks. Our chapters spoke up last August, but we should also be familiar with our local state representatives and continue to build rapport and relationships with them and local state park staff. Get involved and become allies by being a positive force within our area state parks—know their interests and needs in order to be able to offer solutions.

If you would like more information on State Park Planning and meeting announcements or on *Audubon Florida* advocacy, please visit the following websites:

- FDEP's State Park Planning website: <https://floridadep.gov/parks/parks-office-park-planning/content/state-park-planning>
- To subscribe to FDEP's State Park meeting announcements: <https://floridadep.gov/subscribe>  
(Click on the "Subscriber Page" link, then select "Florida State Parks Upcoming Hearings" from the long list in their subscription form.)
- Sign up for the weekly "The Advocate" newsletter for more information about advocacy and for weekly updates on the upcoming Florida Legislative Session, including updates on SB80, the State Park bill, and other time-sensitive policy concerns. Go to <https://fl.audubon.org/get-involved>.  
(Click on "Sign up for the Advocate!" at the far top right of any *Audubon Florida* webpage. You will land on the page shown in the image to the right.)

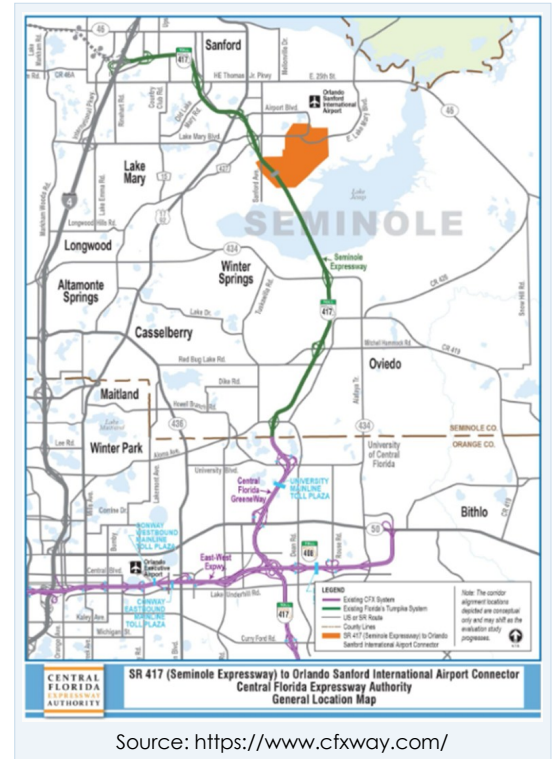


# Central Florida Expressway Authority Concept, Feasibility, & Mobility Studies (CF&M): SR 417 to Orlando Sanford International Airport

By Phyllis Hall

This study began in 2022 to study the feasibility to develop an approximately two-mile long extension from 417 to the Sanford Airport with the goal of allowing better connectivity and easing future traffic in the area especially on Lake Mary Boulevard. Phyllis Hall has represented SAS on the Environmental Advisory Group along with Charles Lee, Audubon Florida Director of Advocacy. This group is composed of representatives from environmental, government agencies, and advocacy groups. Public meetings have also been held during this time. Four routes have been proposed in the study area. All are already heavily developed with many conservation concerns for floodplain and wetlands. In August, 2024, the CF&M Study added a raised viaduct over Lake Mary Boulevard like the one that is being planned for SR 414 in Apopka. This alternative would be quite expensive and would not address the traffic projects the study has identified coming from the south. The study is expected to be completed by second quarter 2025. It will be submitted to the Expressway Board and to the Seminole County Commissioners.

The website for this project is: <https://www.cfxway.com/agency-information/plans-studies/project-studies/concept-studies-sr-417-to-orlando-sanford-international-airport-connector/>



## Research Participation Opportunity

University of Toronto/Rotman Research Institute lab focuses on neuroplasticity and lifespan learning. They are currently doing a study across Canada and the U.S. examining how birding and citizen science activities contribute to cognitive and brain health. They have worked with various groups to develop this line of research (e.g., naturalists, gardeners, musicians), most of which focuses on nature and learning in the domains of natural science.

The study is open to anyone aged 18+, takes about 15 minutes, and requires no prior birding experience. Participants can choose to enter a raffle to win a gift card, or one of several pairs of binoculars from our sponsors. At the population level, they are exploring how trends in species' prevalence correlate with geographic trends in how people perceive and categorize birds. At the smaller scale, they have a line of neuroimaging research looking at beneficial changes to brain structure and function that result from decades spent learning about birds. More details about the study as well as links to past publications and articles can be found at the study website, [www.birdingstudies.com](http://www.birdingstudies.com).



Here is a link to an Audubon Magazine article that provides a brief overview of this research area, including some of their past work:

<https://www.audubon.org/magazine/spring-2023/yes-birding-does-change-your-brain>

# Bettye Leidigh 1935-2025

By Corrinne Wertz

It is with great sadness that we share with you that Bettye Leidigh, a longtime member of Seminole Audubon Society, has passed away.

Bettye was the SAS treasurer from 2009 to 2016 and hosted many SAS Board meetings at her beautiful home overlooking Crystal Lake in Lake Mary. Bettye and her husband Darrell enjoyed watching the wildlife there, especially the sandhill cranes. In 2013 Bettye helped a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student with her year-long project on the cranes.

In 2000 Darrell and Bettye bought and donated a 40-acre pristine piece of land to protect the sandhill cranes from residential development. We now know this as Crystal Lake Preserve (CLP). In 2010 the SAS Board agreed that CLP would be our long-term conservation project. Bettye and Darrell (posthumously) were given a Defender of the Environment award in 2011 by *Nature Wise* for preserving this property in perpetuity. Bettye served as the CLP Board Secretary/Treasurer until her passing and hosted all CLP Board meetings at her home.



## Black Hammock Wilderness Area 2025 Bird Surveys

By Chuck Honaker, Florida Master Naturalist and Tracey Comazzi

Black Hammock Wilderness Area (BHWA) in Oviedo has been selected to be the site of our 2025 surveys. It is one of nine Natural Lands properties in Seminole County and is administered by the County's Leisure Services Department, Greenways and Natural Lands. The other eight properties are Black Bear, Geneva, Lake Harney, Lake Jesup, Lake Proctor, Spring Hammock, Econ River WA and Chuluota. Seminole Audubon Society (SAS) Bird Surveys were conducted at the latter two wilderness areas in 2023 and 2024 respectively.

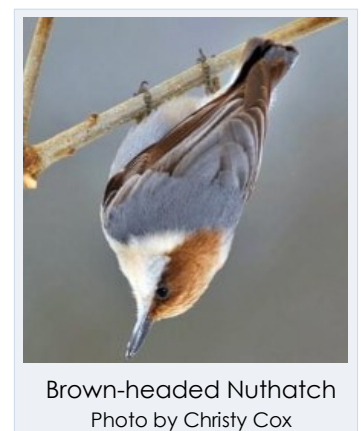
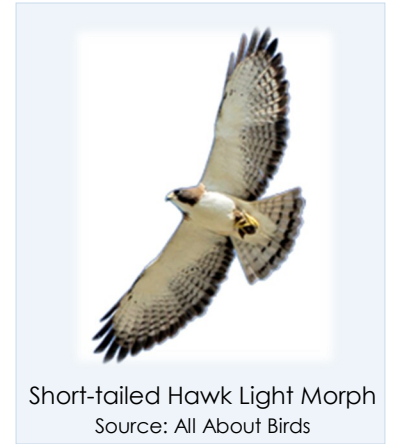
BHWA is a 700-acre property that was acquired jointly by Seminole County and St. John's River Water Management District is an effort to protect and preserve shore-line habitat of Lake Jesup. It includes a variety of habitats including hydric hammock, hardwood swamp, pine flatwoods and sand pine scrub. SAS surveyors have conducted hikes in January and February this year and they are pleased by the number and array of species of birds in the area: 48 species to date, including a Short-tailed Hawk, Brown-headed Nuthatches, Sandhill Cranes, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and Northern Flickers. The table on the next page includes all of these species. It will be updated for each edition of *The Jay* newsletter and reveal resident species as well as the arrivals and departures of migratory visitors.

With spring migration just around the corner, the species observed in the coming months are set to increase. Surveys are held on the 2nd Monday of each month from 7:30-10:30 a.m. Details on how to participate in these surveys can be found on page 10 under Upcoming Programs and Field Trips.

*Continued on next page*

# Black Hammock Wilderness Area 2025 Bird Survey Data Continued from page 6

Total Species to Date: 48		Jan	Feb
Avg. Monthly Species: 35		Monthly Total Species: 35 36	
Common Name	Scientific Name	Jan	Feb
Anhinga	( <i>Anhinga anhinga</i> )	x	
Blackbird , Red-winged	( <i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i> )		x
Bluebird, Eastern	( <i>Sialia sialis</i> )		x
Cardinal, Northern	( <i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i> )	x	x
Catbird, Gray	( <i>Dumetella carolinensis</i> )	x	x
Chickadee, Carolina	( <i>Poecile carolinensis</i> )	x	
Crane, Sandhill	( <i>Antigone canadensis</i> )	x	x
Crow, American	( <i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i> )	x	x
Crow, Fish	( <i>Corvus ossifragus</i> )	x	x
Dove, Mourning	( <i>Zenaida macroura</i> )	x	x
Eagle, Bald	( <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> )	x	x
Grackle, Common	( <i>Quiscalus quiscula</i> )	x	x
Gull, Ring-billed	( <i>Larus delawarensis</i> )	x	
Harrier, Northern	( <i>Circus hudsonius</i> )	x	
Hawk, Red-shouldered	( <i>Buteo lineatus</i> )	x	x
Hawk, Short-tailed	( <i>Buteo brachyurus</i> )		x
Heron, Little Blue	( <i>Egretta caerulea</i> )	x	
Ibis, White	( <i>Eudocimus albus</i> )	x	x
Jay, Blue	( <i>Cyanocitta cristata</i> )	x	x
Kestrel, American	( <i>Falco sparverius</i> )	x	
Killdeer	( <i>Charadrius vociferus</i> )	x	x
Kinglet, Ruby-crowned	( <i>Corthylio calendula</i> )	x	x
Mockingbird, Northern	( <i>Mimus polyglottos</i> )	x	
Flicker, Northern	( <i>Colaptes auratus</i> )	x	
Nuthatch, Brown-headed	( <i>Sitta pusilla</i> )	x	
Owl, Barred	( <i>Strix varia</i> )		x
Parula, Northern	( <i>Setophaga americana</i> )		x
Phoebe, Eastern	( <i>Sayornis phoebe</i> )	x	x
Robin, American	( <i>Turdus migratorius</i> )	x	x
Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied	( <i>Sphyrapicus varius</i> )		x
Stork, Wood	( <i>Mycteria americana</i> )	x	
Swallow, Tree	( <i>Tachycineta bicolor</i> )		x
Titmouse, Tufted	( <i>Baeolophus bicolor</i> )	x	x
Towhee, Eastern (Red-eyed)	( <i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i> )	x	x
Vireo, White-eyed	( <i>Vireo griseu</i> )		x
Vulture, Black	( <i>Coragyps atratus</i> )	x	x
Vulture, Turkey	( <i>Cathartes aura</i> )	x	x
Warbler, Palm	( <i>Setophaga palmarum</i> )	x	x
Warbler, Palm (Western)	( <i>Setophaga palmarum sp.</i> )	x	
Warbler, Palm (Yellow)	( <i>Setophaga palmarum sp.</i> )		x
Warbler, Pine	( <i>Setophaga pinus</i> )		x
Warbler, Yellow-rumped	( <i>Setophaga coronata</i> )	x	x
Waxwing, Cedar	( <i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i> )		x
Woodpecker, Downy	( <i>Dryobates pubescens</i> )	x	x
Woodpecker, Pileated	( <i>Dryocopus pileatus</i> )	x	x
Woodpecker, Red-bellied	( <i>Melanerpes carolinus</i> )	x	x
Woodpecker, Red-headed	( <i>Melanerpes erythrocephalus</i> )	x	
Wren, Carolina	( <i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i> )	x	x



# Program and Field Trip Notes

## Wekiva - Wild and Scenic River and the Dragonfly Mercury Project

Sunday, January 12, 2025

Wekiva River Ambassador Ashley Konon provided interesting background on the designation of the river and the Dragonfly Mercury Project. In 2000, the Wekiva River System became a nationally-designated "Wild and Scenic River", federally recognized for its Outstanding Remarkable Values (ORV) and free-flowing condition. An ORV must be river-related and be exemplary at a regional or national scale. The National Wild and Scenic River System was created by Congress in 1968 to preserve certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations. Nationwide there are 255 National Wild and Scenic Rivers. Each has a management committee composed of land managers of the surrounding public lands, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), federal, state, county, and city representatives. They work together to make decisions to benefit the river system within the scope of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

The Dragonfly Mercury Project (DMP), which was started in 2009, is a collaborative effort to measure mercury pollution in our protected landscapes. Partners of the project include National Park Service (NPS), US Geological Survey (USGS), Wekiva Island, Wekiva Basin State Parks, Orange County, Lake County and Wekiva River Aquatic Preserve. Oversight is provided by the NPS and USGS. Over 140 parks and other protected areas have participated to date. Participant parks engage community scientists to collect juvenile dragonflies (called nymphs or larvae). The dragonflies are collected from seven sites along the river on a rotating basis. They are sent to a USGS lab for processing. More information on the data collected can be found at <https://geonarrative.usgs.gov/dmpdatadashboard/>



Ashley Konon  
Photo by Phyllis Hall

Ashley also explained that Mercury (Hg) is a toxic pollutant that is found around the globe. Microbes can convert mercury into methylmercury (MeHg) which is especially dangerous because it can pass the blood-brain barrier. It can bioaccumulate and bioamplify through the food web. Methylmercury can cause serious health impacts, such as altered behavior and reduced reproductive success in fish, birds, and even humans.

## Yankee Lake Treatment Facility: Florida Scrub-Jays

Friday, January 17, 2025

By Phyllis Hall

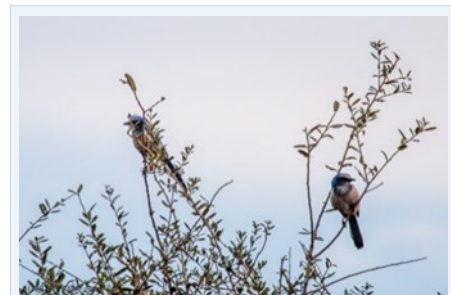


Tour group receiving information and instructions about the tour.  
Photo by: Phyllis Hall

A guided tour of the only habitat in Seminole County for Florida Scrub-Jays was enjoyed by eighteen people, including two Seminole County staff. In 1993, SAS, along with *Audubon Florida*, was instrumental in the preservation of this habitat when the water treatment facility was being planned and we have visited this property every year since. The biologists from Environmental Science Associates provided information on how they maintain the habitat. The group was lucky to see all of the Jays at the first stop.

There are currently six birds in two families including two that fledged last year. From my own records, the number of birds since 2015 has ranged from 4 to 9

in 2 or 3 family groups. There is a larger population nearby at Seminole State Forest and another at Rock Springs Run State Reserve. These birds travel only within an 8-mile radius so the populations do not mingle.



Two of the Scrub Jays seen that day  
Photo by: Jim Peters



# Program and Field Trip Notes Continued from page 8

## Yankee Lake Treatment Facility: Florida Scrub-Jays Continued

A young male, however, came from Rock Springs in 2023 and established a family at Yankee Lake Treatment Facility. On average, 2-3 babies fledge each year but they are at risk from various predators like hawks and snakes. This species is in danger of going extinct so every habitat is important. Even a small population like the one at Yankee Lake is vital to keeping the species' gene pool viable.



The tour group was taken to the Scrub Jay habitat in a convoy of trucks. White-tailed Deer and Wild Turkeys were among the wildlife spotted along the way.  
Photo by: Jim Peters

## Gemini Springs Bio-Bingo

Saturday, January 18, 2025

We apologize if you came to play bio-bingo and found a long line of cars. The gate to the park is supposed to be unlocked at sunrise, but someone must have forgotten to set their alarm. We were not the only ones affected; there was a group of about 50 5k runners waiting, too.

## The Road to Recovery: 25 Years of Red-cockaded Woodpecker Management at Hal Scott Regional Preserve and Park

Sunday, February 9, 2025

Graham Williams is the South-Central Region Land Manager for St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD). One of SJRWMD's properties, Hal Scott Regional Preserve and Park (Hal Scott), is home to a population of the federally-endangered Red-cockaded Woodpeckers (*Leuconotopicus borealis*), (aka RCWs), and covers approximately 8,715 acres in Orange County, a rapidly urbanizing area. It was jointly purchased by St. Johns River Water Management District and Orange County in 1992, and named for Hal Scott, the former President and Executive Director of Florida Audubon Society. This land also protects the Econlockhatchee River watershed.

RCWs are the only woodpecker in North America that live exclusively in cavities drilled into living, old-growth pines, in particular longleaf pines. Their main threat is loss of habitat. The longleaf pine was extensively logged in the late 1800's and then the land clear-cut for development and agriculture. Only a small fraction of old-growth longleaf remains across its historic range.

Hal Scott Preserve was designated as an essential property to support their population. A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) species recovery plan was established for them in 2003 when the number of RCWs on the property dropped to only 11 adult birds. RCWs are slightly larger than a Downy Woodpecker (*Dryobates pubescens*). They have a black head and neck, large white cheek patches, bold black-and-

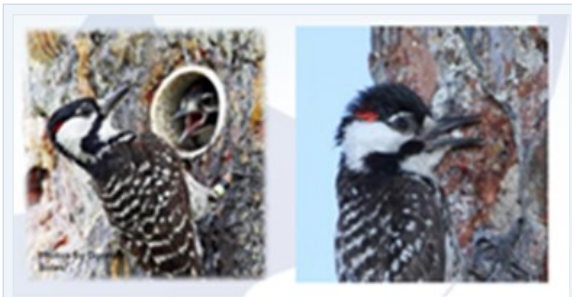


Graham Williams  
Photo by: Phyllis Hall

*Continued on next page*

# Program and Field Trip Notes Continued from page 9

## The Road to Recovery: 25 Years of Red-cockaded Woodpecker Management at Hal Scott Regional Preserve and Park Continued



Red-cockaded Woodpecker  
Left: Feeding young raised in an artificial nest cavity. Right: drilling a new hole.  
Source: Graham Williams

spotted black-and-white flanks. The “cockade,” a tiny red line on the side of the male’s head, is rarely seen. They are non-migratory and live in cooperative family groups. They eat larvae, and eggs of insects and other arthropods found on and under the bark, including ants, termites, beetles, and wood roaches. They only produce one clutch per year, usually laying 3-4 eggs with 2-3 of them hatching. An average of 1.5 young fledge from each nest. One of their primary predators is rat snakes which are good tree climbers. Staff wrap the bottom of each nesting tree with tin foil and duct tape to deter them.

Recovery activities at Hal Scott have included identifying each nest and banding all chicks, installing and maintaining over 150

artificial nest cavities, prescribed burns, planting over 800,000 longleaf pines, translocating RCWs from other sites, etc. All of these activities are working. As of 2024, there were 55 RCWs on the property, a five-fold increase in their numbers in 21 years!

## Upcoming Programs and Field Trips

Meetings are held on the second Sunday of the month at 2:00 p.m. There will be no program meetings, April through August, 2025.

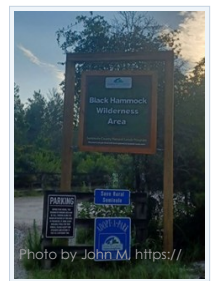
### Meeting **Location:**

IFAS Extension Education Building  
University of Florida/IFAS  
Extension Seminole County

## Seminole County Natural Lands Monthly Bird Surveys

Black Hammock Wilderness Area in Oviedo has been selected 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](mailto:cwh.jr@hotmail.com). All levels of birding experience are welcome.



## Upcoming Bird Talks



Male Painted Bunting  
Source: [https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Painted\\_Bunting/](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Painted_Bunting/)

Saturday, April 12, 2025 - Birds of Sanford  
11:00 a.m. with Cecilia Carey  
Seminole County North Branch Library in Sanford

Saturday, May 31, 2025 - Colorful Birds of Central Florida  
3:00 p.m. with Cecilia Carey  
Seminole County West Branch Library in Longwood

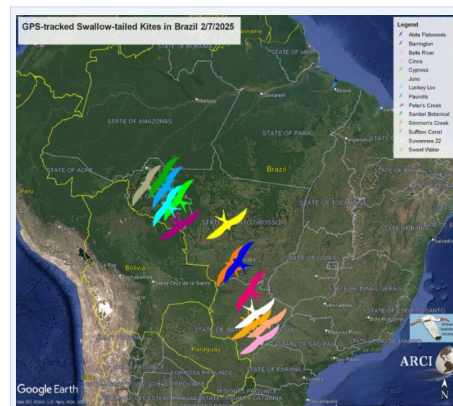
# Upcoming Programs and Field Trips Continued from page 10

## Program: March 9, 2025, Sunday. Swallow-tailed Kites

Ken Meyer, Executive Director of Avian Research and Conservation Institute (ARCI), will discuss the life cycle and habitat needs of Swallow-tailed Kites. He will share the latest research on tracking them during their long migration and how you can help with this research. Ken received his Ph.D. in Zoology from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, in 1987. Since 1996, he has served as an adjunct Associate Professor in the University of Florida's Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation. Ken co-founded ARCI in Gainesville, Florida, in 1997. During his 38 years of conducting field research and producing management and conservation plans, Ken and his team have studied the behavior and ecology of 16 species of birds of conservation concern from eastern Canada to Brazil.

Learn more about ARCI at <https://www.arcinst.org/>

After the speaker we will hold our annual member meeting to vote on upcoming board terms.



Swallow-tailed Kite migration as of February 7, 2025  
By: Gina Kent, ARCI

## Field Trip: March 15, 2025, Saturday. Deer Run Park



The Deer Run Golf Course property was purchased by Seminole County in December, 2021. Over the next several years, it will be developed into a passive park and the clubhouse will be renovated and turned into a community center. Moderate walking over uneven terrain on the old golf cart

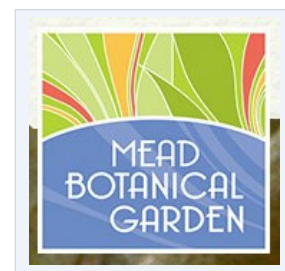
trails. All levels and ages of birders are welcome. No restrooms available. Coordinator: Leslie Martin.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at 300 Daneswood Way, Casselberry, FL 32707. Carpooling encouraged.

## Field Trip: April 12, Saturday. Mead Botanical Garden

Mead Botanical Garden is on 47 acres that include a boardwalk and trails through pine trees and a butterfly garden. We expect to see wading birds and migrating birds.

Meet at Mead Garden at 8:00 am, 1300 S. Denning Drive, Winter Park 32789. Parking with restroom available. Moderate walking over uneven ground. All levels and ages of birders are welcome. Coordinator: John Carey.



## 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 *National Audubon*.

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





# WELCOME

New Members or New to Our Chapter !

Patrick Adamson	Lake Mary	Eric Moore	Geneva
Scott Avidon	Lake Mary	Sophia Onassis	DeBary
Scott Garrow	Sanford	Debra Renfro	Sanford
Thomas Greene	Sanford	Laura Roberts	Sanford
Nicholas Hope	DeBary	Jose Santana	Sanford
Laura Hurley	Deltona	Holly S. Small	Sanford
Leigh Ann Lyon	Lake Mary	Nancy Tooley	Lake Mary
Martha Mills	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)**

<b>Board</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Term</b>
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