

The JAY

July - August 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.

A Note from the President

By Phyllis Hall

I am very thankful for our fantastic board as well as for all the volunteers who are so very generous with their time and talents. We are a small chapter (under 500 members), but we accomplish more than most chapters of all sizes. Our Programs and Field Trips Committee has provided interesting speakers and great places for field trips. The Conservation Committee keeps a pulse on what is happening in Seminole County and our surrounding community. Our Education Committee has been quite active in providing birding classes at schools and libraries. With a grant from National Audubon Society, we supplied birding backpacks to the Seminole County libraries for patrons to check out. Each backpack contains a pair of binoculars, a beginner birding book, and information on how to use binoculars and common birds of central Florida. We had a fun time with our booth at the Seminole Garden Expo in February, 2025. Each year, the Seminole County Natural Lands Committee led by Chuck Honaker conducts monthly bird surveys on one of the Natural Lands properties. This past year, in partnership with the City of Sanford Parks Department, we replaced the Purple Martin nests and poles on Lake Monroe. Those birds quickly adopted the 36 new nests and have had a successful nesting season. With your contributions to our chapter, we also provided scholarships for two students at the Ed and Imogene Yarborough Nature Center. Our outreach includes publicizing our programs and field trips in local newspapers and on MailChimp, Meet Up, and Facebook. See the updated board and committees list at the end of this newsletter and express your thanks to those volunteers when you see them.



Phyllis Hall
President, Seminole Audubon Society
Photo by Christine Otu

If you would like to volunteer, please contact me at seminoleaudubon@gmail.com.

Seminole Forever Update

By Phyllis Hall

The Seminole Forever Land Acquisition Program aims to protect and conserve lands by identifying and acquiring properties that conserve green space, provide passive recreational opportunities, and protect water resources and natural habitats. The initiative is funded by the County's General Fund and may include partnerships with local cities and nonprofits or other alternative funding sources. Seminole Forever does not require an additional tax on residents and is similar to the State's [Florida Forever](#) land acquisition program.

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Seminole Forever Update Continued from page 1

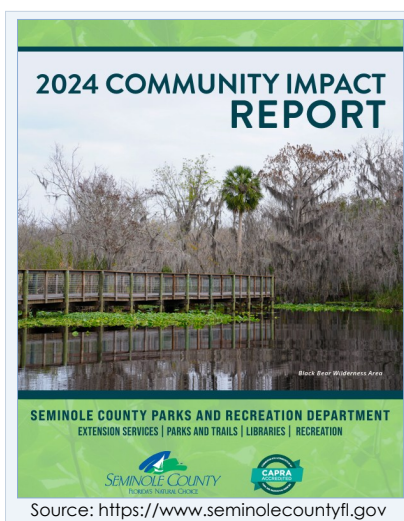
Seminole County's Acquisition and Restoration Committee (ARC) developed the application and selection criteria. These were approved by the County Commissioners. Applications for the upcoming fiscal year were opened 12/5/2024 and closed 1/31/2025. The ARC reviewed the applications and selected those to be presented to the Commissioners at their July or August 2025 meeting.

Meetings are open to the public. Learn more at:

<https://www.seminolecountyfl.gov/departments-services/parks-recreation/parks-trails-and-natural-lands/seminole-forever/>.

2024 Seminole Community Impact Report Includes Seminole Audubon Society

By Phyllis Hall



SAS was mentioned several times in the 2024 Seminole County Parks Department annual report. Our board is very pleased with our partnership with Seminole County. SAS is mentioned as a partner in Adopt-A-Park. We have adopted Lake Jesup Park for cleanup. We are listed as a partner with Library Services where Cecilia Carey provides birding classes. SAS also provided birding backpacks to the libraries through a grant from National Audubon. We are not mentioned specifically for Natural Lands but kudos to Chuck Honaker who is the coordinator of the monthly birding surveys and who also leads other birding tours with the County. There is also mention of the Seminole Forever ordinance and the Acquisition and Restoration Committee upon which Phyllis Hall serves.

See the full report here:

<https://www.seminolecountyfl.gov/file/3238/Parks-2024-Community-Impact-Report-web-ADA.pdf> and click on the "Click Here" button at the bottom of

the page. Alternatively, copy and paste the following link into a browser:

<chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://d1e7wvnb07cre.cloudfront.net/file/3238/Parks-2024-Community-Impact-Report-web-ADA.pdf>.

Purple Martins - Happy Campers at the Sanford Marina

By Jim Peters, Chairman, Purple Martin Committee

Through a cooperative effort of Seminole Audubon Society (SAS) and the City of Sanford, two beautiful state-of-the-art Purple Martin habitat units with 36 gourds were installed at the Sanford Marina in January, 2025. In early February, seven "scouts" arrived giving us hope that more would arrive for the season. Sure enough, numerous Purple Martins followed and they have produced many offspring.

Weekly checks have revealed an increasing number of birds that are obviously delighted with their new homes.



Purple Martin Breeding Pair at the Sanford Marina
Photo by Jim Peters

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Purple Martins at the Sanford Marina *Continued from page 2*



In mid-March, John and Cecilia Carey counted 23 Purple Martins. By late March, 30 were counted. Early April saw mating activities among the birds and by mid-April, it appeared most mating activities were complete. During early and mid-May, bird pairs were chirping and fluttering at the gourd entrances. On May 30th, of the 36 gourds, I counted 32 with visible babies or with adult activity indicating babies inside. This large count exceeded our expectations for the season.

The new habitats are an attraction at the marina. Each time I visit, there are people admiring the birds and asking questions. I always refer them to the very informative kiosk created by Cecilia Carey several years ago. On my most recent visit, a couple from Texas were watching the birds and asking questions, and a City of Sanford employee paused his work briefly to admire the birds and he praised the efforts to support them.

While the peak season for Purple Martin babies has just passed, there are still babies to be seen peeking out of the gourds. It is worth the time to go and see them; bring binoculars for a closer look!

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Every nesting season, Jim Peters photographs the activities of the Purple Martins at the Sanford Marina. He captures their arrival, gathering of nesting materials, the appearance of hatchlings, and the parents feeding them through fledging,

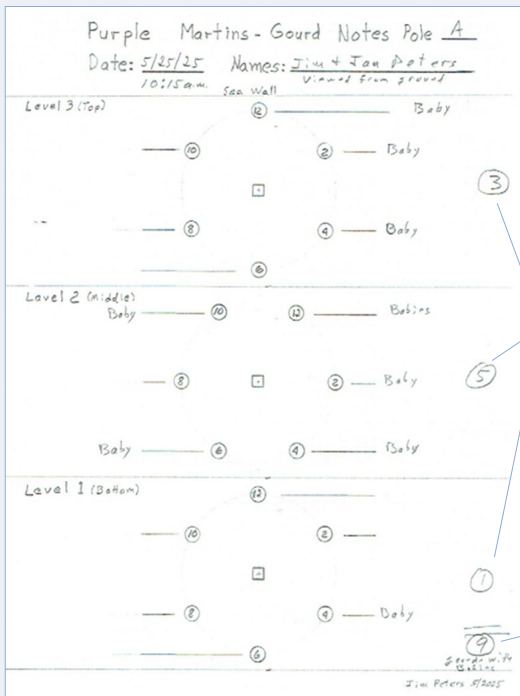
All of the photographs on this page were taken by Jim. They are just a few of the extraordinary images he has captured this year and selecting the ones to include was no easy task.



Purple Martins at the Sanford Marina

Editor's Note:

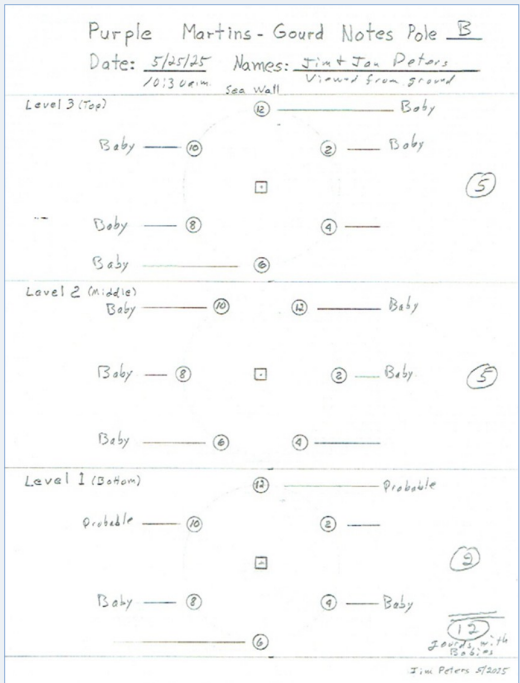
Nesting Habitat Data Recording Diagrams



- The two poles are labeled A and B
- Each has 3 levels of gourds
- Each level has 6 gourds

Number of gourds with babies per level

Total number of gourds with babies per pole



Diagrams by Jim Peters

The Purple Martins were swarming (about 60 counted) at the two habitats at 8:30 in the morning on June 11, 2025, but this photo was taken in the afternoon when The Barbara-Lee, an historical sternwheeler operated by St. Johns Rivership Co., returned from its luncheon cruise—there were not nearly as many birds possibly due to the heat of the day.

A family of ducks was also enjoying the marina and the shade provided by the gourds.

Photo by Jim Peters

Purple Martins have become almost entirely dependent on humans for nesting habitat. This is mostly due to the loss of their former natural breeding environment to development throughout eastern North America. Providing nesting habitat is essential, and, as previously mentioned, the City of Sanford's Parks and Recreation Department has provided significant upgrades to the nesting colonies at the Sanford Marina. It is also essential to know what to expect every season in terms of arrivals, nest-building, mating, hatchings, fledging and departures so that levels of success can be measured and adjustments made as needed. SAS's Purple Martin Committee and other volunteers record what is happening and when throughout the approximately six-month breeding season. To the left is an example of their data gathering, in this case, recording how many and which gourds exhibited the presence of young on May 25, 2025.

Jim Peters and Robert Beall, Operations Manager, Parks and Recreation, City of Sanford, meet regularly to discuss ongoing care and maintenance of the nesting habitat. For instance, depending on where the July 4th firework displays are held near the marina this year, they will decide whether to temporarily remove or lower one or both nesting poles to move any remaining nestlings out of potential harm's way. These poles will then be returned to their former positions and remain in place until late August or until the first major storm threat. The Purple Martin Conservation Association, of which Jim is a member, indicates that leaving the gourds up allows the youngest birds to locate them and, therefore, return the next season. The City is keen to follow these guidelines and, when the time comes, will assist Jim and the Purple Martin team with removing the habitats until the next nesting season.



Being a Guide at the Center for Birds of Prey is Rewarding and Great Fun!

By Norman Moss, Center for Birds of Prey Guide

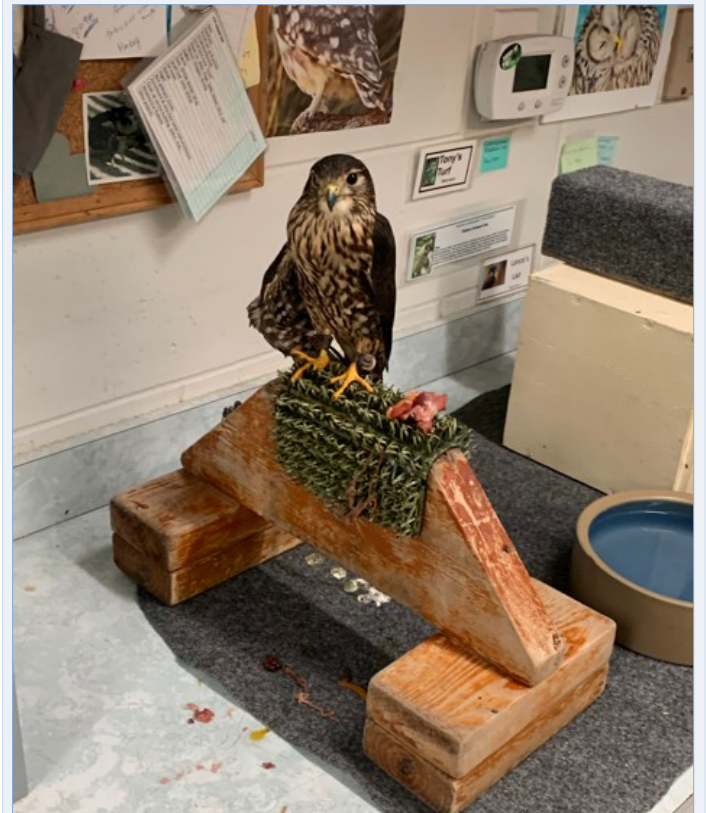
I was bored! I had just completed Physical and Occupational Therapy for the umpteenth time. I now had more than six hours per week of unscheduled time on my hands. What could I do to fill the gap? At the December 2024 Seminole Audubon Society meeting, I approached President Phyllis Hall and told her about my plight. She suggested that I call the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland; they were getting ready to start a new program to train and hire volunteer guides to conduct tours of the Center for Birds of Prey (CBOP).

What a great idea! As a past president of an Audubon chapter and a former member of the board of Florida Audubon, I felt imminently qualified. I made the call, expressed my desire to get involved and was told that they would hold a training session once they had enough interested individuals to schedule a class. It took several more weeks before I was told that a training session was scheduled for Saturday, January 25, 2025 from 9 am to 3 pm.

During the training session we learned about the mission, the history and the successes of the CBOP, received a tour of the grounds and had a question-and-answer period. We then needed to complete three three-hour assisted training sessions before we could solo as a guide. During that training time, I was assisted by Holly Kazel, who also took me into some of the 'off-limit' places where many of our feathered friends were housed, rehabilitated, fed and trained before being released back into the wild. These recuperating birds are kept away from the public to avoid imprinting or habituation, either of which might prevent them from being released.

The permanent residents at the center are all there because of their specific injuries; they could not survive in the wild. Some have been at the center since as early as 1995. Each one has its own history. Their injuries range from having fallen from a very high nest (too high to reach to be put back in the nest), to becoming tangled in barbed wire, attacked by a cat or another bird during a territorial encounter, to starvation. In one instance, one of our permanent residents was rescued after flying into a cruise ship.

The Center is open to the public on Tuesday through Sunday from 10 am to 4 pm. Admission is \$10.00 per person. Most of the activities are interactive with hands-on touching of items, question-and-answer periods and general information about each of our permanent residents. My favorite is a Merlin, named Alina. She is a tiny raptor who sits calmly on her perch. She has lost an eye and has a damaged wing, but she will gently flap her wings to let you know she is there. Here is a picture I took of Alina.



Alina the Merlin
Photo by Norman Moss

Black Hammock Wilderness Area Bird Surveys Update

By Chuck Honaker, Florida Master Naturalist and Tracey Comazzi

This is a brief report on our volunteer bird surveys on one of our county's conservation areas, Black Hammock Wilderness Area (BHWA). The survey route is about 3 miles in length and winds through hardwood swamp and pine flat woods. Trail conditions vary based on rainfall levels but

Continued on next page

BHWA Bird Surveys Update Continued from page 5

are generally easy to navigate. We use eBird.org to record bird species that are seen and heard on each survey. Our eBird reports are forwarded to the county which uses the data as basis for tracking bird species in the area. As of June, we have recorded a total of 68 species with a monthly average of 29 species. Our low count of 18 species was in March due to stormy weather and our high count of 37 species was recorded in February. The table below shows which species have been seen each month so far this year.

The winter was highlighted by sightings of Yellow-rumped Warblers plus large flocks of migratory American Robins that feed on Dahoon Holly and Sabal palm berries. The various pine and hardwood trees on the property support many species of the woodpeckers, Family Picidae: Downy, Northern Flicker (yellow-shafted), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Pileated, Red-bellied and the occasional Red-headed. This spring has been highlighted by Great-crested Flycatchers, Red-eyed and White-eyed Vireos, Northern Parulas and Pine Warblers.



American Robin
Photo by Chuck Honaker

The core group of surveyors this year includes Susan Angermeier, Chuck Honaker, Connie Dolan, Lorri Lilja, Joy Rector, Kate Dolamore and John and Cecilia Carey. Additional members who participate when schedules permit are Paul and Tracey Comazzi, Lewis Gray, Brenda Feliciano and others. All SAS members and friends are welcome to assist with the surveys.

We appreciate the partnership and support of Ron Chicone, Biologist, Seminole County's Natural Lands Department. He helps with logistics and he and his interns periodically join us on surveys which 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 11 under Upcoming Programs and Field Trips or you can contact Chuck at cwh.jr@hotmail.com for details.



Great-crested Flycatcher
Photo by Chuck Honaker

Black Hammock Wilderness Area 2025 Bird Survey Data to Date

Total Species to Date: 68	(Total species plus other taxa)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Avg. Monthly Species: 29	Monthly Total Species:	35	36	18	24	30	33
Common Name	Scientific Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Anhinga	(<i>Anhinga anhinga</i>)	x					
Blackbird , Red-winged	(<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>)		x				
Bluebird, Eastern	(<i>Sialia sialis</i>)		x				x
Bluebird, Eastern (Eastern)	(<i>Sialia sialis ssp.</i>)						x
Cardinal, Northern	(<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>)	x	x	x	x	x	x
Catbird, Gray	(<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>)	x	x	x	x		
Chickadee, Carolina	(<i>Poecile carolinensis</i>)	x					
Crane, Sandhill	(<i>Antigone canadensis</i>)	x	x	x	x		
Crow, American	(<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>)	x	x	x	x	x	x
Crow, Fish	(<i>Corvus ossifragus</i>)	x	x	x			
Dove, Common Ground	(<i>Columbina passerina</i>)					x	x
Dove, Mourning	(<i>Zenaida macroura</i>)	x	x	x	x	x	x
Duck, Black-bellied Whistling	(<i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i>)					x	x
Eagle, Bald	(<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>)	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
Flycatcher, Great-crested	(<i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>)				x	x	x
Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray	(<i>Poliophtila caerulea</i>)				x	x	x

Continued on next page

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

Total Species to Date: 68	(Total species plus other taxa)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Avg. Monthly Species: 29	Monthly Total Species:	35	36	18	24	30	33
Common Name	Scientific Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Goldfinch, American	(<i>Spinus tristis</i>)				x		
Grackle, Common	(<i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>)	x	x	x		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	x	x	x	x
Hawk, Short-tailed	(<i>Buteo brachyurus</i>)		x				
Heron, Little Blue	(<i>Egretta caerulea</i>)	x		x			
Hummingbird, Ruby-throated	(<i>Archilochus colubris</i>)				x		
Ibis, White	(<i>Eudocimus albus</i>)	x	x			x	x
Jay, Blue	(<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>)	x	x		x	x	x
Junglefowl, Red (Domestic type)	(<i>Gallus gallus</i>)						x
Kestrel, American	(<i>Falco sparverius</i>)	x					
Killdeer	(<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>)	x	x				
Kinglet, Ruby-crowned	(<i>Corthylio calendula</i>)	x	x				
Kite, Swallow-tailed	(<i>Elanoides forficatus</i>)					x	x
Mockingbird, Northern	(<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>)	x				x	
Flicker, Northern (Yellow-shafted)	(<i>Colaptes auratus</i>)	x					
Nuthatch, Brown-headed	(<i>Sitta pusilla</i>)	x				x	
Owl, Barred	(<i>Strix varia</i>)		x				
Parula, Northern	(<i>Setophaga americana</i>)		x		x	x	x
Phoebe, Eastern	(<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>)	x	x				
Redstart, American	(<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>)					x	
Robin, American	(<i>Turdus migratorius</i>)	x	x	x			
Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied	(<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>)		x				
Stork, Wood	(<i>Mycteria americana</i>)	x				x	x
Swallow, Tree	(<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>)		x				
Swift, Chimney	(<i>Chaetura pelagica</i>)					x	
Thrasher, Brown	(<i>Toxostoma rufum</i>)						x
Titmouse, Tufted	(<i>Baeolophus bicolor</i>)	x	x		x	x	x
Towhee, Eastern (Red-eyed)	(<i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i>)	x	x	x		x	x
Towhee, Eastern (White-eyed)	(<i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i> ssp.)						x
Turkey, Wild	(<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>)					x	
Vireo, Red-eyed	(<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>)				x	x	x
Vireo, White-eyed	(<i>Vireo griseu</i>)		x	x	x	x	x
Vulture, Black	(<i>Coragyps atratus</i>)	x	x		x	x	x
Vulture, Turkey	(<i>Cathartes aura</i>)	x	x		x	x	x
Warbler, Palm	(<i>Setophaga palmarum</i>)		x				
Warbler, Palm (Western)	(<i>Setophaga palmarum</i> ssp.)	x					
Warbler, Palm (Yellow)	(<i>Setophaga palmarum</i> ssp.)		x				
Warbler, Pine	(<i>Setophaga pinus</i>)		x				x
Warbler, Yellow- rumped	(<i>Setophaga coronata</i>)	x	x				
Warbler, Yellow- rumped (Myrtle)	(<i>Setophaga coronata coronata</i>)	x	x	x			
Waxwing, Cedar	(<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>)		x				
Woodpecker, Downy	(<i>Dryobates pubescens</i>)	x	x	x	x	x	x
Woodpecker, Pileated	(<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>)	x	x	x	x	x	x
Woodpecker, Red-bellied	(<i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>)	x	x	x	x	x	x
Woodpecker, Red-headed	(<i>Melanerpes erythrocephalus</i>)	x		x			
Wren, Carolina	(<i>Thryothorus ludovicianus</i>)	x	x	x	x	x	x
Yellowthroat, Common	(<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>)				x		

Become a Trail Scout and Explore the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail!

The Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail invites you to join its Trail Scouts Volunteer Program and become an essential part of a statewide effort to promote conservation through connecting people to nature. The Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail spans more than 500 unique locations across the state, each recognized for its outstanding birding and wildlife viewing opportunities. These locations range from expansive wilderness refuges to charming city parks, many of which offer unforgettable encounters with native species. As a Trail Scout, you will play an active role in evaluating the Trail locations, offering feedback on birding and wildlife viewing conditions, site infrastructure, and overall visitor experiences. Whether you're a seasoned birdwatcher or a casual nature lover, this volunteer program is a fun and easy way to make a positive impact. By simply completing an online survey during your visit to any Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail site, you will provide valuable insights that assist Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission staff in promoting conservation efforts, ensuring these special locations remain vibrant and welcoming for future generations.

How It Works:

- 1. Visit a Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail Location:** Explore the beautiful birding and wildlife hotspots around Florida.
- 2. Complete a Quick Survey:** After your visit, fill out a simple online survey to share your observations.

Make an Impact: Your feedback helps improve site conditions and supports ongoing conservation efforts across the state.

To get started, email **GFBT@MyFWC.com** with "Trail Scouts" in the subject line. The Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail is waiting for you!

To find GFBT locations visit:
www.floridabirdingtrail.com/



GREAT FLORIDA
Birding & Wildlife Trail

Program and Field Trip Notes

Hal Scott Regional Preserve and Park

Saturday, February 15, 2025

Graham Williams, South-Central Region Land Manager for St. Johns River Water Management District, led our 3-hour tour on an eco-buggy trailer around the property in search of federally endangered Red-cockaded Woodpeckers (RCWO). Along the way, we stopped to view pine trees containing the birds' nest cavities and to look for the birds as they foraged. After visiting several clusters of nest trees, we finally spotted 3 birds searching for food.



Graham Williams
demonstrating an artificial
RCWO nesting cavity
Photo by Leslie Martin

We learned about the specific size and age of tree that provides the required habitat for nesting, and Graham explained how artificial nest boxes have been installed throughout the property with successful results. This property offers nearly 9,000 acres of unspoiled Florida wilderness with gopher tortoises, bobcats, river otters and indigo snakes.

Anyone interested in helping monitor the Red-cockaded Woodpecker nesting, please contact Seminole Audubon Society.



Hal Scott Birding Group
Photo by Leslie Martin

Continued on next page

Program and Field Trip Notes Continued from page 8

Swallow-tailed Kites

Sunday, March 9, 2025

Ken Meyer, PhD, Executive Director of Avian Research and Conservation Institute (ARCI) in Gainesville, is an adjunct Associate Professor in the University of Florida's Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation. Ken co-founded Avian ARCI in Gainesville, Florida. They conduct field research and produce 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 including the Swallow-tailed Kite and American Kestrel.



Swallow-tailed Kite parent feeding its juvenile
Photo by Jim Gray. Courtesy of Ken Meyer



Swallow-tailed Kite juveniles on their ever-mounding nest
Photo by Mac Stone. Courtesy of Ken Meyer

Swallow-tailed Kites (STKI) have a wingspan of about 4 feet. They partner for life but if something happens to a partner, the other will partner with another mate. They start breeding at 4 years of age and produce 2 eggs. They prefer to nest in tall pine and Bald Cypress trees in forested and wetland areas. They build their nests with cypress sticks and line them with Spanish moss and the like. The young do not discard their excrement over the side of the nest like most other birds do. Instead, to keep the nest area clean, the parents add layers of moss on top of the nest and so it becomes a mound by the time the babies are ready to fledge. The young are fed tree frogs, wasp nest larvae, green rough

snakes, etc., and once fledged, they will learn to catch insects on the fly. In South America, there is an abundance of termite nests which provide a nutritious food source. The greatest predator of the Swallow-tailed Kite is the Great Horned Owl.

In the spring, these birds migrate all the way from south-central Brazil to nest in Florida, crossing the Yucatan peninsula and the Gulf to reach Florida. There are many hazards on the trip including hurricanes, and the force of the winds can send them off track. Swallow-tailed Kites are highly social and roost in large flocks when they are gathering for migration in the spring and for their return to South America after breeding season. They have suffered significant habitat loss and currently only breed in Florida and the lower portions of a few southern states. The diagrams below illustrate just how much range they have lost since the 1940s. Today, Florida has two-thirds of the population of Swallow-tailed Kites and, thanks to con-



Distribution prior to 1940



Distribution now

Swallow-tailed Kite Distribution

Courtesy of Ken Meyer

servation efforts, their numbers have slowly been increasing. As this species needs a mosaic of forested and unforested wetlands, ARCI has been working with commercially-owned timber lands to help provide the necessary habitat.

To learn more about ARCI or to donate to support their work: <https://www.arcinst.org/>

Continued on next page

Program and Field Trip Notes Continued from page 9

Deer Run Park

Saturday, March 15, 2025



Deer Run Park Field Trip Group
Photo by Phyllis Hall

A whopping 47 species of birds were counted by the 18 SAS field trip birders who walked some of the old Deer Run Golf Course in Casselberry. The highlight of the morning was a pair of immature Great-horned Owls who seemed to enjoy watching us as much as we enjoyed watching them, but we also saw other birds of prey, wading birds and many songbirds, both migratory and local.



Great-horned Owl Fledglings
Photo by Joy Rector

This golf course property was purchased by Seminole County in December, 2021. It is being developed into a passive park over the next several years including renovation of the clubhouse into a community center.

Find the updated plans for Deer Run Park at <https://www.seminolecountyfl.gov/departments-services/parks-recreation/projects/deer-run.stml>

Mead Botanical Garden

Saturday, April 12, 2025



Spring was in the air at Mead Botanical Garden as Seminole Audubon Society hosted a birding tour led by John Carey and Tracey Comazzi on April 12, 2025. Eleven birders walked the park for two hours with sightings that included a young Barred Owl in a tree, a Pileated Woodpecker in a cavity nest, and a Red-shouldered Hawk feeding its two chicks in a nest high up in a pine tree. The group spotted over 30 species in this beautiful 47-acre park that includes trails through pine trees, a wetland boardwalk, native plant and butterfly gardens.



Pileated Woodpeckers foraging and enlarging a nest cavity in a dead pine snag
Photos by John Carey



Mead Garden Group
Photo by John Carey



Top: Red-shouldered Hawk hatchling
Bottom: Barred Owl fledgling
Photos by John Carey

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.

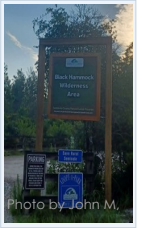
Meeting Location:

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

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. All levels of birding experience are welcome.



Program: September 14, 2025, Sunday. Bats: Masters of the Night Skies by Ariel Horner



Did you know that bats are the only mammal that can fly? Or, that one bat can eat up to 3,000 insects a night? Or, how about that they are not actually blind? Ariel Horner of the Florida Bat Conservancy will present myth-busting facts about the critical environmental services that bats provide.

Field Trip: September 20, 2025, Saturday. Birding by Kayak

Kayak the Mosquito Lagoon in New Smyrna Beach. We expect to see a variety of our favorite wildlife including birds, porpoises, manatees, raccoons, and more! Meet at JB's Fish Camp at 8:00 a.m. where you can also rent your kayak or paddleboard.

859 Pompano Avenue, New Smyrna Beach, FL 32169. Coordinator Leslie Martin.

<https://jbsfishcamp.com/> | <https://jbslagoonadventures.com/rental-information>



Annual Event: October 12, 2025, 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. Coordinator: Leslie Martin

We welcome all those who would like to enjoy time in nature. This gathering is accessible for all, including those with 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/>



Field Trip: October 18, 2025, Saturday. Black Hammock Wilderness

Black Hammock Wilderness Area is a 700- acre property acquired as part of a comprehensive effort to preserve significant habitat along the shores of Lake Jesup. It is composed of Mixed Hardwood Swamp, Sand Pine Scrub and Pine Flatwoods which provide food and shelter for an equally diverse population of birds and other wildlife. The variety of habitats and beautiful boardwalk and trail system make this property a popular destination. All levels and ages of birders are welcome. We will be walking on trails that might be difficult to navigate with uneven surfaces. No restroom facilities.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at 3276 Howard Ave., Oviedo, FL 32765. Coordinator: Chuck Honaker

Continued on next page

Upcoming Programs and Field Trips *Continued from page 11*

Program: November 9, 2025, Sunday. May All Your Blues Be Birds by Faith Jones



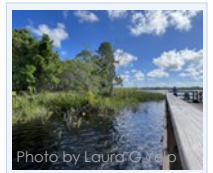
Bluebirds are among the favorite backyard visitors. With their striking colors, musical voices and gentle habits, who wouldn't want to welcome these beauties into the backyard? This Florida Bluebird Society program includes information about bluebirds, their history in America, and some of the challenges they face. It also includes information you need to know before putting up a nest box, how to install a nest box, what to anticipate if you have a nest box, and the native plants they like.

Former Secretary, President, and Birding Instructor of SAS, Faith is a founding member of the Florida Bluebird Society and she continues to serve on their Board of Directors. Faith currently lives in Penney Farms, Florida, where she is responsible for monitoring and maintaining a 40-box Bluebird Trail.

Bluebird nestboxes made by Jim Peters to Florida Bluebird Society specifications will be available at the meeting.

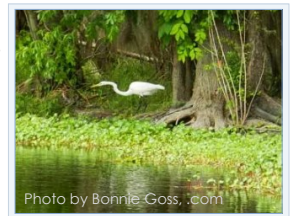
Field Trip: November 15, 2025, Saturday. Sylvan Lake Park

Join us on the new boardwalks to view wildlife and aquatic plants while crossing sensitive wetland areas on the new ADA-accessible Loop Trail. All levels and ages of birders are welcome. Restrooms available. Meet at the park at 8:00 a.m. 845 Lake Markham Road, Sanford, FL 32771. Coordinator: Chuck Honaker

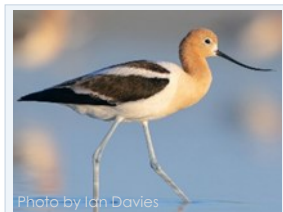


Field Trip: December 13, 2025, Saturday. Birding at Hontoon Island State Park

Hontoon Island is a 1,650-acre park located on the St. Johns River, southwest of DeLand. We will take a ferry over to the island and then go on a 3-mile walk through mesic flatwoods, floodplain forest and hydric hammock. Restrooms are available on the island. All levels and ages of birders are welcome. We will be walking on trails that might be difficult to navigate with uneven surfaces. Note: some trails may be muddy. Bring water, snacks, sunscreen, and insect repellent. Meet at the ferry boat landing at 7:45 am. Hontoon Island State Park, 2309 River Ridge Road, DeLand FL. Coordinators: John & Cecilia Carey



Program: December 14, 2025, Sunday. Birding at Ponce Inlet and a Birdy Christmas Card by Joan Tague



Joan Tague will be presenting a 2-part program with a seasonal twist. The beginning of winter birding at Ponce Inlet brings in many migrants, vagrants and more. Influenced by tides, currents, storms and human activity, the comings and goings of the birds at Ponce Inlet can be varied and surprising. Joan will draw on her experiences as a guest guide on the Marine Discovery Center's Winter Bird Tours, sharing stories and observations. To wrap up her presentation, Joan will examine a holiday classic and its connection to birds.

Joan Tague is President of Halifax River Audubon. She walked through the doors of the Pittsburgh Aviary, an all-bird zoo in 1987, and she has never looked back. Looking for an interesting volunteer opportunity, she instead found her passion. Joan is an "enthusiastic birder." Her path through birding is like so many others that love pursuit - studying, doing the field work, traveling, developing skills, giving back through volunteering for surveys and teaching both adults and children. She regularly guides field trips and walks for Halifax River Audubon, the Ormond Beach Environmental Discovery Center and many other organizations and events while sharing her love for her adopted home of Central Florida. Outside of birding Joan enjoys all things nature, music (in the form of the tuba - the mightiest of all instruments), discussing the merits of craft beer, baseball (Go Tortugas) and more. Before retiring, Joan worked for Bell Atlantic/Verizon as a Marketing Design Engineer.



WELCOME

New Members or New to Our Chapter !

Leonora Ardito	Lake Mary	Duncan C. Martin	Geneva
Ramon Bermudez	DeBary	Andree Mulder	DeBary
Margo Boyd	Holden, ME	Carley Robinson	DeBary
Karen Butler	DeBary	JoAnn Runge	Deltona
Amanda Cole	Sanford	Patricia Spurlock	Enterprise
Kirby Detraz	DeBary	Joyce Thompson	DeBary
David C. Lundberg	Lake Mary	Rose Vazquez	Deltona
James Marella	DeBary	Ashley Webber	Lake Mary

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/>.

Jay Newsletter Articles

If you would like to submit an article for the Jay newsletter, contact SeminoleAudubon@gmail.com for information on the deadline for the next issue as well as the guidelines for submission.

2025-2026
Board of Directors & Committee Chairs (eff. 7/1/25)
SeminoleAudubon@gmail.com

Board	Name	Term
President	Phyllis Hall	2024/2026
Vice President	Leslie Martin	2023/2026
Treasurer	Jan Peters	2025/2027
Secretary	Peggy Stickney	2024/2026
At-Large	Lewis Gray	2025/2027
At-Large	Tracey Comazzi	2023/2026
At-Large	Connie Dolan	2025/2027
At-Large	John Carey	2025/2027

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

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

- **CLP Butterfly Survey Co-chairs.** Connie Dolan, Tracey Comazzi

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 Carey, 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
- **Newspapers.** Peggy Stickney
- **Website.** Phyllis Hall

Membership. Marty Shepherd

Nominating Committee. Phyllis Hall (Chair), Leslie Martin, Marguerite Terwilleger

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, Chuck Honaker. Release keeper: Peggy Stickney

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