

The JAY

November - December 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.

Audubon Florida Assembly 2025: Highlights and Takeaways

By Phyllis Hall, President, Seminole Audubon Society



Audubon Florida Assembly group wearing their "birdie" shirts.

Photo by Erika Zambello

"Power of Birds, Power of Us: Science and Joy as Catalysts for Conservation"

This was the theme for this year's Assembly. Held from October 16-18, 2025, Audubon Florida Assembly took place at the Mission Resort & Club at Howey-in-the-Hills near Lake Apopka. Assembly began early Friday morning with field trips to local areas or a new activity of nature journaling. These were followed by the kick-off lunch with a welcome by Julie Wraithmell, Audubon Florida Vice President and Executive Director.

In the afternoon, participants could attend two of the following breakout sessions:

- *Now More Than Ever: The Importance of Local Conservation Action.* Phyllis Hall was on this panel sharing her experience on the Seminole Forever Acquisition and Restoration Committee. Erin Deady of Erin Deady Law discussed impacts of various legislation. Sara Reisinger of Sarasota Audubon Society spoke on the tactics used to stop the rezoning of a property adjacent to The Celery Fields, a more than 400-acre passive park and wetlands with a nature center staffed by their chapter. Chris Farrell, Audubon Florida's Northeast Florida Policy Associate, who was the coordinator for the panel, also emphasized that data for eBird is used for conservation advocacy. He encouraged everyone to enter their bird watching tally on eBird, no matter how small the numbers.
- *Federal Conservation in Dynamic Times: Audubon's Roles as Flame-keeper, Pacesetter, and Convener.*
- *Get the Word Out: Share Conservation Stories, Recruit Volunteers, and Grow Your Community.*

The day ended with the awards banquet followed by a keynote presentation with Rosemary Mosco,

Continued on next page

Assembly 2025, Highlights and Takeaways Continued from page 1

cartoonist and writer, working in science communication.

On Saturday morning, there was a networking breakfast, plenary, and chapter celebration. Various chapter awards were announced. Seminole Audubon Society received a grant from Florida Power & Light for native plants landscaping at the new Goldsboro Museum which is expected to be completed in late spring/early summer 2026.

I always feel inspired and encouraged by the success stories from various chapters and enjoy conversations with other chapter members. This message from an Assembly presentation slide really sums up their philosophy for me:

We follow the science.

We embrace nonpartisanship.

We pair advocacy and diplomacy to influence decision makers.

We inspire an expansive Audubon flock.

And, of course, we have birds.

Central Florida Regional Conservation Committee's Conservation Priorities for 2026

By Chuck Honaker, SAS Conservation Chair, and Tracey Comazzi

The chapters comprising *Audubon Florida* are organized geographically and ecologically into seven regions, each with its own Regional Conservation Committee (RCC) consisting of chapter leaders and policy staff from each of that region's chapters. The RCCs meet quarterly and recommend conservation priorities that prioritize the region's concerns and reflect the RCCs' commitment to work together on them. Chuck Honaker, SAS Conservation Chair, Phyllis Hall, Sam Kendall and Tracey Comazzi represent SAS on the Central Florida Regional Conservation Committee.

The RCCs met during the Audubon Florida Assembly to agree upon their regions' priorities and goals for inclusion in the "Audubon Florida 2026 Conservation Action Agenda". These priorities, which include the initiatives Habitat, Climate and Community Building, are organized to align with *National Audubon's* strategic plan, the "Flight Plan". To learn more about Flight Plan, visit <https://www.audubon.org/about/welcome-flight-plan>.

For 2026, the Central Florida RCC continues its priorities of partnering with landowners and property managers, and protecting water quality and water resources. The priorities include:

- Habitat: Wings Over Working Lands / Water for Birds and People
- Climate: Clean Energy and Natural Climate Solutions
- Community Building

For full details on the priorities and for more information on those of the remaining six RCCs, please visit <https://www.audubon.org/florida/projects>.



American Kestrel

Photo by Jason Ganz /
Audubon Photography Awards

SAS Received a Grant Funded By the FPL/ Audubon Florida “Plants for Birds Grant Program”

By Phyllis Hall

Marguerite Terwilleger and Phyllis Hall have been communicating with Posh Baker, Director of the Goldsboro Museum, since 2021 about the possibility of getting a grant to provide native plant landscaping for their new museum. Construction has now started on the museum. Phyllis submitted a grant application for \$2,500. It was announced at Audubon Florida Assembly that we received the grant funded by Florida Power & Light in conjunction with Audubon Florida. Several other chapters also received similar grants.



The Goldsboro community in Sanford was founded in 1891. It is the second black incorporated township in the U.S. after Eatonville. Over the years, residents passed along historical items that were eventually housed in a trailer. That building is being replaced by the construction of a new museum specifically designed to look like the old Goldsboro Post Office.

Planting will commence in June, 2026 after construction has been completed. This “Plants for Birds” project will help museum visitors learn about the benefits of native plants for birds and pollinators. When she gives tours, Posh is looking forward to being able to point out that the species of landscape plants were present at the time the Goldsboro community was founded. Planting volunteers will include museum volunteers, Seminole Audubon volunteers, and

community partner volunteers from Sanford Community Garden, Master Gardeners from UF/IFAS, and the Cuplet Fern chapter of Florida Native Plant Society.



Sanford Marina Purple Martin Habitat Taken Down until January, 2026

By Jim Peters, Chair, Lake Monroe Purple Martin Nests

On August 21, 2025, after a very successful Purple Martin breeding season, the 36 habitat gourds were removed, cleaned and stored until the next season. A team of SAS members including Phyllis Hall, Cecilia & John Carey, Kristin Broadway, and Jim & Jan Peters met at the Sanford Marina on this extremely hot morning to remove the gourds and to document findings. A TV Channel 13 photographer was on-site to record the activities.

Cecilia, the official documenter, found a variety of material in the gourds. There were pine straw and cedar shavings that had been placed in the gourds by SAS members and other volunteers on that very cold January 14, 2025 day but also sticks, dirt, oak leaves, pine fawns, dead insects, dragon fly and butterfly parts, and 11 unhatched eggs. Unusual findings included 9 rusty nails in one nest and Chick-Fil-A paper in another. It was apparent from this inspection and from the inspection on July 3, 2025, that most of the gourds had contained active nests during the breeding season. It is estimated that about 60 Purple Martins occupied the sites at the Sanford Marina during the 2025 season.



Jim Peters inspecting a gourd with a flashlight

Photo by Phyllis Hall

Continued on next page

Purple Martin Habitat Taken Down *Continued from page 3*

City staff, Dantav, Henry and Patrick, transported the gourds to the City of Sanford shop where the gourds were thoroughly cleaned, disinfected, rinsed, dried and stored at the shop warehouse. Jim & Jan Peters assisted in this activity.

Several unusual events occurred at the habitat area during the 2025 season. On June 25th, while Jim Peters was observing the Purple Martins, a Fish Crow flew in and knocked a baby Purple Martin off its gourd porch. It could not yet fly so it hopped across the ground and ended up in Lake Monroe. At that moment Paul and Tracey Comazzi happened by. Tracey found an old board and coaxed the baby onto it. The soaking wet bird was rescued, dried off and placed back on its gourd.

On July 3rd, Jim and Jan Peters encountered a severe thunderstorm and lightning while preparing the poles and gourds to be moved from the Marina location to a temporary location west of the Marina Isles Care Center. This was necessary because the habitat units are in the same location as the fireworks canons used for Sanford's July 4th fireworks show. They ducked under a picnic shelter with the fireworks employees who were setting up the fireworks. However, on the afternoon of July 4th, a similar thunderstorm resulted in lightning striking a palm tree in this same area setting off the fireworks prematurely. There were no fireworks in Sanford that evening. We are thankful none of the fireworks staff were on-site when the July 4th lightning struck.

City of Sanford officials, including Robert Beall and Matt Coleman, are pleased with the success of this season. Discussions are underway to erect one and perhaps two additional poles with gourds next season.

Immediately below, are photos from the habitat take-down event; however, we did not take photos of the cleaning activities at the City shop. We were up to our elbows in bleach water and did not want to bring out cameras.



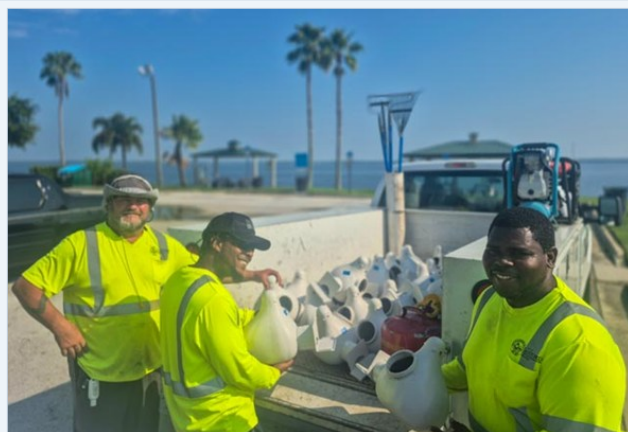
Cecilia and John Carey inspecting and documenting nest findings.

Photo by Phyllis Hall



Kristin Broadway removing nesting material. Cecilia Carey documents nest findings. John Carey and Jan Peters (background) assisting.

Photo by Phyllis Hall



City of Sanford Staff, Patrick, Henry, and Dantav transporting gourds to the City shop. They have been incredibly helpful throughout this Purple Martin program.

Photo by Jim Peters

Moving the Nest Habitats for the July 4th Fireworks Display: A Feat in Ingenuity

The task of moving the Purple Martin nest habitats took a good deal of planning, preparation and smart-thinking on the part of the City staff under the guidance of Edric Diaz.

Jim Peters' photos to the right show the City staff enjoying the challenges of the latest Purple Martin habitat adventure.



Update on National Audubon Society's Grant Recipient, St. Richard's Episcopal Church

By Tracey Comazzi

In 2023, St. Richard's Episcopal Church, located in Winter Park in the southwest corner of Seminole County, received from National Audubon Society a \$1,000 Collaborative Grant to install a native plant garden in front of the church. A year prior, in an effort to help the church become more sustainable, Tracey Comazzi, then a Rollins College and Audubon Florida Conservation Leadership Initiative student, did an independent study to develop a master plan to replace, in phases, the entire 14,000-square-foot expanse of St. Augustine lawn fronting the church with a series of native plant gardens. This would greatly reduce water, fertilizer and pesticide use and create pollinator and wildlife habitat more in line with the environmentally-conscious thinking of St. Richard's Reverend Alison Harrity and church leaders. With a plan in place, it was just a matter of finding funding to bring the plan to life.



St. Richard's Native Plant Garden full of plants ready to bloom.

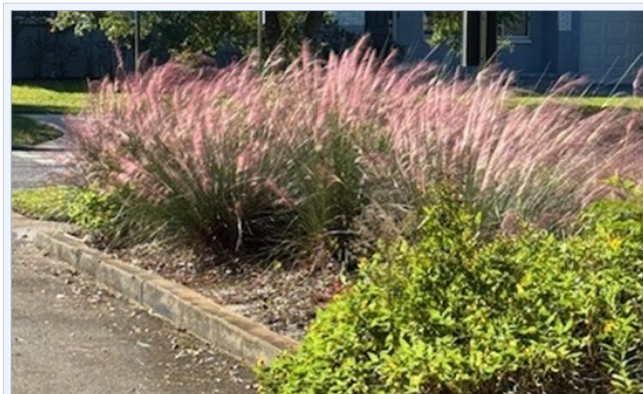
Photo by Phyllis Hall

Phyllis Hall, president of Seminole Audubon Society, did just that! She worked diligently with the church and Tracey to create the grant application and her efforts paid off, providing the church with enough funds to purchase the plants and materials needed to fill a section bordering the drive from the road down to the church's front entrance. Several parishioners removed the lawn and dug the bed and then, on May 6, 2023, with the help of the Boy Scout troop that meets at the church, they and other volunteers including Phyllis and Tracey, installed the plants.

Two and a half years on, the garden has changed faces with the seasons. The Muhly Grass has grown almost to full height, flowering abundantly as autumn steps in. Dune Sunflower spreads brightly among the perennials and American Beautyberry branches bow groundward with the weight of their hundreds of tiny, purple fruit. Annuals have come and gone, some returning from the previous season's seeds. Plant donations have included a few non-native plants, but, as long as these provide food and shelter and are not invasive, they remain and play their part. The plan to become more

respectable, and pesticide applications have ceased, giving the insect population a chance to recover.

Another phase of the plan was started this year under the enormous Laurel Oak, just behind the bench and free library. Mr. Michael Poole and Dr. Leslie Poole planted several Coonties that Mr. Poole had grown at home. While it may take some time to convert the entire front lawn to native habitat for birds, insects and wildlife, dedicated, like-minded people are making it happen, thanks in part to the head start provided by the grant from the National Audubon Society.



Muhly Grass blooms shining in the morning sun.

Photo by Tracey Comazzi

Black Hammock Wilderness Area Bird Surveys Update

By Chuck Honaker, Florida Master Naturalist and Tracey Comazzi, FL Freshwater Master Naturalist

In September and October this year, Seminole Audubon Society (SAS) volunteers continued gathering data on the bird life of Black Hammock Wilderness Area (BHWA). BHWA is one of Seminole County's nine Natural Lands properties managed by Ron Chicone, Biologist, Seminole County's Natural Lands Department. The volunteers spend approximately three hours on the second Monday of the month walking the three-mile survey route through hardwood swamp and pine flatwoods recording the species they see and/or hear. The most recent months' data has been added to the report that follows.

Continued on next page

BHWA 2025 Bird Survey Data to Date Continued from page 5

Total Species to Date: 81	(Total species plus other taxa)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct
Avg. Monthly Species: 28	Monthly Total Species:	35	36	18	24	30	32	19	24	25	40

Common Name	Scientific Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct
Anhinga	(<i>Anhinga anhinga</i>)	x									
Blackbird , Red-winged	(<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>)		x								
Bluebird, Eastern	(<i>Sialia sialis</i>)		x				x		x		x
Bluebird, Eastern (Eastern)	(<i>Sialia sialis ssp.</i>)						x				
Bunting, Indigo	(<i>Passerina cyanea</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									
Crane, Sandhill	(<i>Antigone canadensis</i>)	x	x	x	x						x
Crow, American	(<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Crow, Fish	(<i>Corvus ossifragus</i>)	x	x	x						x	
Cuckoo, Yellow-billed	(<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>)										x
Dove, Common Ground	(<i>Columbina passerina</i>)					x	x	x	x	x	
Dove, Mourning	(<i>Zenaida macroura</i>)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Duck, Black-bellied Whistling	(<i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i>)					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			x	x
Egret, Snowy	(<i>Egretta thula</i>)						x				
Egret, Western Cattle	(<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>)				x		x	x			
Flicker, Northern (Yellow-shafted)	(<i>Colaptes auratus</i>)	x									x
Flycatcher, Great Crested	(<i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>)				x	x	x		x		
Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray	(<i>Poliophtila caerulea</i>)				x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Goldfinch, American	(<i>Spinus tristis</i>)				x						
Grackle, Common	(<i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>)	x	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	x	x	x	x
Hawk, Red-tailed	(<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>)										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			x			
Ibis, White	(<i>Eudocimus albus</i>)	x	x			x	x		x	x	x
Jay, Blue	(<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>)	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x
Junglefowl, Red (Domestic type)	(<i>Gallus gallus</i>)						x				
Kestrel, American	(<i>Falco sparverius</i>)	x									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					
Nighthawk, Common	(<i>Chordeiles minor</i>)									x	
Nuthatch, Brown-headed	(<i>Sitta pusilla</i>)	x				x					x
Osprey	(<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>)								x		
Ovenbird	(<i>Seiurus aurocapilla</i>)									x	x
Owl, Barred	(<i>Strix varia</i>)		x							x	
Parula, Northern	(<i>Setophaga americana</i>)		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	
Phoebe, Eastern	(<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>)	x	x								x
Redstart, American	(<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>)					x			x		x
Robin, American	(<i>Turdus migratorius</i>)	x	x	x							

Continued on next page

BHWA 2025 Bird Survey Data to Date Continued from page 6

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Common Name	Scientific Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct
Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied	(<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>)		x								x
Stork, Wood	(<i>Mycteria americana</i>)	x				x	x				
Swallow, Barn	(<i>Hirundo rustica</i>)								x	x	
Swallow, Tree	(<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>)		x								
Swift, Chimney	(<i>Chaetura pelagica</i>)					x		x			
Thrasher, Brown	(<i>Toxostoma rufum</i>)						x		x		
Thrush, Gray-cheeked	(<i>Catharus minimus</i>)										x
Titmouse, Tufted	(<i>Baeolophus bicolor</i>)	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Towhee, Eastern (White-eyed)*	(<i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i> ssp.)	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Turkey, Wild	(<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>)					x					x
Vireo, Blue-headed	(<i>Vireo solitarius</i>)										x
Vireo, Red-eyed	(<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>)				x	x	x	x		x	x
Vireo, White-eyed	(<i>Vireo griseu</i>)		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Vireo, Yellow-throated	(<i>Vireo flavifrons</i>)							x			
Vulture, Black	(<i>Coragyps atratus</i>)	x	x		x	x	x	x			x
Vulture, Turkey	(<i>Cathartes aura</i>)	x	x		x	x	x				x
Warbler, Black-and-White	(<i>Mniotilta varia</i>)								x	x	x
Warbler, Palm	(<i>Setophaga palmarum</i>)		x								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		x		
Warbler, Yellow- rumped	(<i>Setophaga coronata</i>)	x	x								
Warbler, Yellow- rumped (Myrtle)	(<i>Setophaga coronata coronata</i>)	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, Pileated	(<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>)	x	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
Woodpecker, Red-headed	(<i>Melanerpes erythrocephalus</i>)	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
Yellowthroat, Common	(<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>)				x						x

* The full scientific name for the White-eyed Towhee is *Pipilo erythrophthalmus alleni/rileyi*.

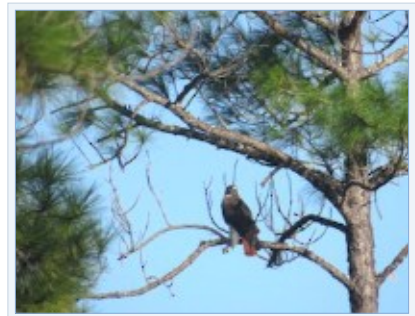
According to the Audubon phone app, Eastern Towhees we see in Florida and parts of the southeast have white eyes which can appear somewhat yellow. The northern Eastern Towhees have red eyes. While southern birds are typically permanent residents, northern populations move short distances south to winter in the southeastern United States.



American Kestrel
Photo by Chuck Honaker

All SAS members and friends are welcome to join in on the surveys. Details on how to participate can be found on page 11 under Upcoming Programs and Field Trips or you can contact Chuck at cwh.jr@hotmail.com for details.

SAS would like to thank the volunteers for their time and efforts and Mr. Chicone for his support and assistance with the logistics for these surveys.



Red-tailed Hawk
Photo by Chuck Honaker

Program and Field Trip Notes

Masters of the Night Skies by Ariel Horner, Florida Bat Conservancy

Sunday, September 14, 2025

We had record attendance with the room at capacity for the presentation on bats by Ariel Horner from the Florida Bat Conservancy. There are 13 species of bats in Florida, 10 of which live in Central Florida. Depending on the species, they live in colonies or are solitary. Ariel explained that bats are the only mammals that can truly fly and their wing anatomy is like a human hand. Their breeding season is from September to November and most of the species produce just one pup per year between mid-April and mid-August. They have familial instincts like primates in caring for their young and each other, and they will willingly adopt orphaned babies. Bats are sexually mature in 2 years and, like primates, female bats have 2 mammary glands. They can live about 30 years in the wild. They eat a variety of foods including insects, fruit, fish, frogs, etc. Bats in the U.S. can eat their body weight every night which helps with pest control for crop pests and mosquitoes. They also benefit the environment with pollination and seed dispersal. Their threats include climate change, development, and pesticides.

As with birds and insects, bats are on the decline. You can help them by limiting use of pesticides, using native landscaping as much as possible, and limiting tree- and palm-trimming during pup season mid-April to mid-August. Installing bat houses can help too. For more information and to learn how to make bat houses <https://www.floridabats.org/>.

If you find a bat on the ground, use a glove to put it on a tree trunk. If it is still there the next day, contact Fly By Night: <https://www.flybynightinc.org/rescue.html>.

Ariel brought 2 evening bats (*Nycticeius humeralis*) to show. These bats were rescued and are non-releasable. She has a permit to care for them as education ambassadors.

Ariel provided additional information on bats and bat houses, which can be found to the left and on the next page.

Bat Facts

- Over 1,400 bat species make up 25% of the mammals on Earth, and 70% of these bats eat insects.
- Scientists estimate that bats save farmers in the US over \$23 Billion every year in crop loss and damage.
- Brazilian free-tailed bats can fly up to two miles high to feed on insects and can fly at speeds of 99 mph!
- Red bats, which live in the leaves of trees throughout most of North America, can withstand body temperatures as low as 23°F during winter hibernation.
- Contrary to popular misconceptions, bats are not blind, do not get entangled in hair, and rarely transmit diseases. In fact, only 0.5% of bats will ever contract rabies.
- For their size class bats are among the slowest reproducers on Earth, with most species having only one pup per year.
- The loss of insect-eating bats increases the demand for chemical pesticides, many of which remain in the soil and water and jeopardize human health for decades.
- Bats spend an enormous amount of time grooming their fur to keep it clean and soft.
- Bats are shy and gentle animals, highly social and intelligent.
- Bats live a long time, with the average life span between 25 and 40 years.
- Bats are protected wildlife by the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, which means it's illegal to harm or kill bats in Florida.



FLORIDA BAT CONSERVANCY

Conservation ~ Education ~ Bat Houses

www.floridabats.org

info@floridabats.com

Source: Ariel Horner



Presenter Ariel Horner holding two tiny Evening Bats each just two inches long.

Photos by: Phyllis Hall

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Bat Basics

There are 13 species of bats which inhabit Florida either permanently or seasonally. Eight of these species are found in Central Florida, and five of them live in social groups known as colonies. They can inhabit man-made structures such as bridges, buildings, and bat houses. Meet these Florida bats:



Big brown bat: (*Eptesicus fuscus*) 2" to 3" long, 12" wingspan; long fur can be golden brown, reddish brown or chocolate brown, facial & wing skin is nearly black.



Brazilian free-tailed bat: (*Tadarida brasiliensis*) 2" to 3" long, 12" wingspan; fur is short, usually dark brown; easily identified by their free-hanging tails.



Tri-colored bat: (*Perimyotis subflavus*) 1.5" to 2" long, 8" wingspan; fur may be silver, yellow or light brown; wings are black with pink skin on forearms and face.



Evening Bat: (*Nycticeius humeralis*) 2" to 2.5" long, 11" wingspan; fur can be gold-brown, reddish brown or chocolate brown, facial and wing skin is nearly black.



Southeastern Myotis: (*Myotis austroriparius*) 2" long, 10" wingspan, fur may be brown, gray or red and each strand is typically bi-colored, darker at the base and lighter at the tip.

All of North America's 47 bat species are insectivores with the exception of two small species found in the desert southwest that pollinate cacti.

Florida's bats consume tons of insects every year, with some species eating nearly their own weight in bugs each night. Pregnant or nursing females consume twice as many insects as males and non reproductive females, making them critical for maintaining the natural balance of insects in the environment.

Bats eat moths, mosquitoes, flies, ants, termites, beetles, midges, and just about any insect that ventures out after sunset.

Bats primarily hunt flying insects and eat them in midair, but some species occasionally engage in 'gleaning' insects from leaves, walls or the ground.

Most bats in Florida are also found elsewhere in the United States. Habitat loss has forced bats to take up residence inside buildings, statues, stadiums, gazebos, bridges, and other manmade structures.

Installing a well made bat house in a good location will attract bats to your property without inviting them into your home. Bats provide comprehensive insect control year round in Florida without the expense and hazards of toxic chemicals.



What About Diseases?

Unfortunately many people still mistakenly believe that bats are carriers of rabies, but the fact is that only 0.5% of bats become ill with the disease; recent research indicates that the vast majority of bats are likely immune to the virus and this undoubtedly contributes to the extremely low infection rate. Contrary to common belief, bats contract rabies less often than any other mammal on Earth!

Even so, no one should handle a bat, even if it appears dead, without gloves. Injured or ill wildlife should be contained and a wildlife specialist should be consulted.

Histoplasmosis, a flu-like illness caused by the proliferation of a naturally occurring soil fungus, is erroneously linked to Florida's bats; the fungus isn't present in Florida. Reference the Centers for Disease Controls' website: www.cdc.gov. Use common sense when harvesting guano; always wear gloves and stand upwind when sweeping or shoveling.

Simple precautions that everyone should take with all wildlife include teaching children not to handle or harass wildlife, proper containment of pets, and maintaining rabies vaccines for dogs and cats.

Source: Ariel Horner

Guidelines for Locating Your Bat House

Sun Exposure: At least five hours of direct sun is recommended for bat houses in Florida. Locate bat houses in clearings with at least 20 feet of open space all around the house.

Habitat: Bat houses should be located within 1/4 mile of fresh water like a pond. Greatest bat house success is documented in areas with a diverse habitat where there is a mix of agriculture and natural vegetation.

Mounts: Bat houses can be mounted to steel poles or wooden posts; mounting to buildings is not recommended in Florida. The house should be at least 12 feet above the ground. Houses can be mounted singly or back to back and should be oriented with the fronts facing either east or west. Avoid mounting the bat house where it will be lit by bright lights at night, and don't mount a bat house to a tree because predators can easily gain access to the bat house and eat the bats.

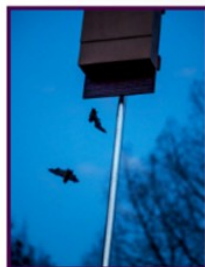
Protection from Predators: Houses on metal poles provide the best protection from predators but wood posts can be used when combined with metal predator guards. Bat houses should be placed at least 20 to 25 feet from the nearest tree branches, wires or other potential perches for aerial predators.

Avoiding Uninvited Guests: The 3/4-inch roosting spaces greatly reduce the likelihood that wasps or bees will take up residence in the bat house. Paper wasp nests should be removed in late winter or early spring before the wasps become active. Open bottomed bat houses keep birds, mice, squirrels, and other small animals from nesting inside and allows the bat guano to drop to the ground where it can be collected and used to fertilize plants.

Bats make up over 25% of all terrestrial mammals with over 1350 known species. They are among the most endangered animals on Earth, primarily because of human ignorance, superstitious fears, and habitat loss.

But bats are highly beneficial to their environments; worldwide bats are the most important dispersers of seeds and they are pollinators for many plants, including important food crops like cashews and bananas. And bats consume millions of tons of insects every night! The continuing loss of bats holds serious consequences for both the health of the planet and humanity.

You can help conserve Florida's bats by adding a bat house to your landscape. Bat houses provide a safe place for bats to live and rear young, and in return you'll receive nightly insect control without the danger and expense of chemicals.



Bat Belfrys uses field tested designs and materials which encourage bat colonization. Contact us for more information about our bat houses and installation service.

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Email: batbelfrys@gmail.com

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BAT HOUSE CURB APPEAL



BAT BELFRYS INC

Education
Conservation
Bat Houses

www.floridabats.org

321-890-6154

Our bats need all the help they can get. If you need assistance with bat house installation and bat educational services, please contact Ariel at

P: 321-890-7721

E: arielflbats@gmail.com

Program and Field Trip Notes: *Continued from page 9*

Birding by Kayak

Sunday, September 20, 2025

By Leslie Martin



Birding by Kayak Group
Photo by Leslie Martin

It was a picture-perfect day for 10 folks to go on our Birding by Kayak field trip, which launched from JB's Fish Camp in New Smyrna Beach. The water was high in Mosquito Lagoon, so the usual shorebirds that can sometimes be seen on the oyster bars were not present. This resulted in a lower bird count but, despite this, we enjoyed the day. We greeted some manatees as they left their overnight cove and we saw a dolphin or two.



Kayaking on Mosquito Lagoon
Photo by Leslie Martin

Big Sit! at Lake Jesup Park

Sunday, October 12, 2025

By Leslie Martin

The Big Sit is one of my favorite Seminole Audubon Society events! I enjoy the opportunity to sit and chat (it **is** right in the event name), drink coffee, eat donuts and listen for birds.

Our final bird count, seen or heard from within our 17-foot circle at Lake Jesup Park, was 39 species. For most of us it was the first sighting of the season for Eastern Phoebe and Palm Warblers. The highlights, added to the list later in the morning, were a female Northern Harrier and a Sora.



The Big Sit! Group
Photo by Leslie Martin

Black Hammock Wilderness Area Field Trip

Sunday, October 18, 2025

By Chuck Honaker



BHWA Field Trip Group
Photo by Chuck Honaker

On a clear and sunny Saturday morning, Connie Dolan and I guided eight guests for about 3 miles through this Natural Lands tract of wilderness which is a part of the extensive Black Hammock that runs from Spring Hammock Preserve in Longwood to Oviedo. Our group included experienced birders and photographers as well as several people just out to learn about and enjoy the area. The Black Hammock property has a variety of habitats including hydric hammock, hardwood swamp, sand pine scrub and pine flat woods.

Hydric hammock is a scientific term that refers to a unique habitat of stands of trees and a variety of plants in swampy, low-lying areas which are often wet seasonally or year-round. Of note, Spring Hammock offers trails that cover some similar habitats to Black Hammock, but it also

offers a raised, newly paved main trail and a new boardwalk that runs to Lake Jesup through a swamp of very old Bald Cypress trees.

We initially walked for about 45 minutes on an elevated boardwalk and a somewhat muddy, winding trail through the shady, lush hardwood swamp of oaks, Sabal Palms and Sweetgum trees. We saw and/or heard Red-shouldered Hawks, Pileated Woodpeckers, Carolina Wrens and numerous Gray

Continued on next page

Program and Field Trip Notes: *Continued from page 10*

Black Hammock Wilderness Area Field Trip *Continued*

Catbirds in the thick vegetation.

The swampy area eventually gave way to sand pine scrub and pine flat woods that were bordered by shrubs and small oak trees, etc. This open, sunny area provided us with close-up views of Eastern Bluebirds, Eastern Towhees (white-eyed), Palm and Pine Warblers, Yellow-throated Warblers, White-eyed Vireos and Brown-headed Nuthatches. We heard the calls of a familiar fall migrant flycatcher - the Eastern Phoebe - and watched as it flew off its perch in pursuit of flying insects. In sum, we tallied 22 species with the most numerous birds being the Gray Catbird and Eastern Bluebird.

Upcoming Programs and Field Trips

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

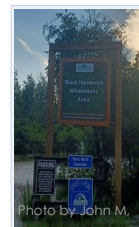
Meeting **Location:**

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



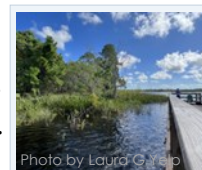
Bluebirds are among the favorite backyard visitors. With their striking colors, musical voices and gentle habits, who wouldn't want to welcome these beauties into the backyard? This Florida Bluebird Society program includes information about bluebirds, their history in America, and some of the challenges 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



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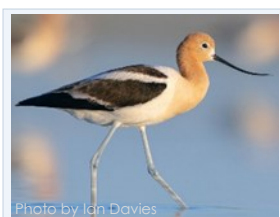
Upcoming Programs and Field Trips Continued from page 11

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 a.m. 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.

Other Programs and Events

December 11-15, 2025. North Shore Birding Festival, Lake Apopka

Trips fill up fast. Sign up for the Email List to be kept updated at this link:

<https://northshorebirdingfestival.com/>



December 20, 2025. 126th Audubon Christmas Bird Count

This year, SAS will concentrate on Zones 10 and 11 for the Wekiva Circle. Please note that this is open to experienced birders only. To volunteer, contact Leslie Martin at woodstork.martin@gmail.com.

Other hikes, classes and events are available through Seminole County Natural Lands.

To see the Seminole County Greenways & Natural Lands fall newsletter, copy and paste the following link into your browser:

https://www.seminolecountyfl.gov/docs/default-source/pdf/2025-fall-seminoletracksnewsletter-ada.pdf?sfvrsn=b719d32b_1.

SAS is listed as a partner for leading birding trips, providing programs, and providing eco camp scholarships. See page 7 of the newsletter using the link above.



WELCOME

New Members or New to Our Chapter !

Dudley Bainter	Sanford	Leslie Koontz	DeBary
Pamela Baker	Oviedo	Olivia Manzone	Sanford
Shannon Brady	Geneva	Jes Martinez-Hunt	Lake Mary
Mary Ellen Branneky	Oviedo	Carol McDonald	Daytona Beach Shores
Deborah Domroski	Lake Mary	Marta Reviriego Mendoza	Oviedo
C N Forrester	Sanford	Kent Rollins	Oviedo
Mary Garner	Lake Mary	James Rupe	Geneva
Alisha Gilbert	Deltona	Brandon Van Nuys	DeBary

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. Chuck Honaker (Chair), Phyllis Hall (Co-chair), Sam Kendall, Sarah Donlan, Cecilia Carey, John Carey, Marguerite Terwilleger, Tracey Comazzi, Fred Milch, Norman Moss

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