

The JAY

June - July - August 2026



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 continue to be 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, 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 communities. A special thank you to Chuck Honaker for being the chair of this committee. Our education committee provided birding presentations at schools, libraries, and an assisted living center. The Natural Lands committee led by Chuck Honaker conducted monthly bird surveys on Seminole County Natural Lands properties.

Under the leadership of Jim Peters, who works in conjunction with the City of Sanford Parks and Recreation Department, two new pole systems, each with 18 gourds, were added for Purple Martins. These were purchased by the City Parks Department. One was positioned just west of the Marina Isles Assisted Living Center while the other was

installed on the edge of the lake across the road from HCA Florida Lake Monroe Hospital (1401 W Seminole Blvd, Sanford, Florida 32771). The total number of gourds is now 72, including the original 36 at the Sanford Marina! We celebrated the installation of the new poles with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the gourd raising event in January, 2026.

We received a grant from the Florida Power & Light/Audubon Florida Plants for Birds Grant program to provide a landscape design and plants for the new Goldsboro Museum. With your contributions to our chapter, we also provided scholarships for three 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. If you would like to volunteer, please contact me at seminoleaudubon@gmail.com.

Our program and field trip planning committee will be busy over the summer planning for our next season. We look forward to seeing you again in September.



Phyllis Hall

President, Seminole Audubon Society

Photo by Christine Otu

Purple Martin 2026 Season Update

By Kristin Broadway



Purple Martins utilizing the gourds on one of the four pole habitats at the Sanford Marina
Photo by: Kristin Broadway

The 2026 Purple Martin season has proven to be exceptionally successful so far. Following the first sighting of these migratory birds at Lake Monroe on February 15, 2026, additional birds began joining the colony daily over the following weeks. While an exact count has not yet been confirmed, observations estimate the colony now includes more than fifty breeding adults.

For some of these birds, this marks their first breeding season, while others have likely returned to this very same nesting site after successfully raising chicks here in previous years. Young male Purple Martins are often mistaken for females because of their lighter coloration, but they can be identified by the spotted pattern on their abdomen and breast, as well as their darker heads. Second-year and older breeding males are easily recognized by the distinctive dark purple sheen that gives the species its name.

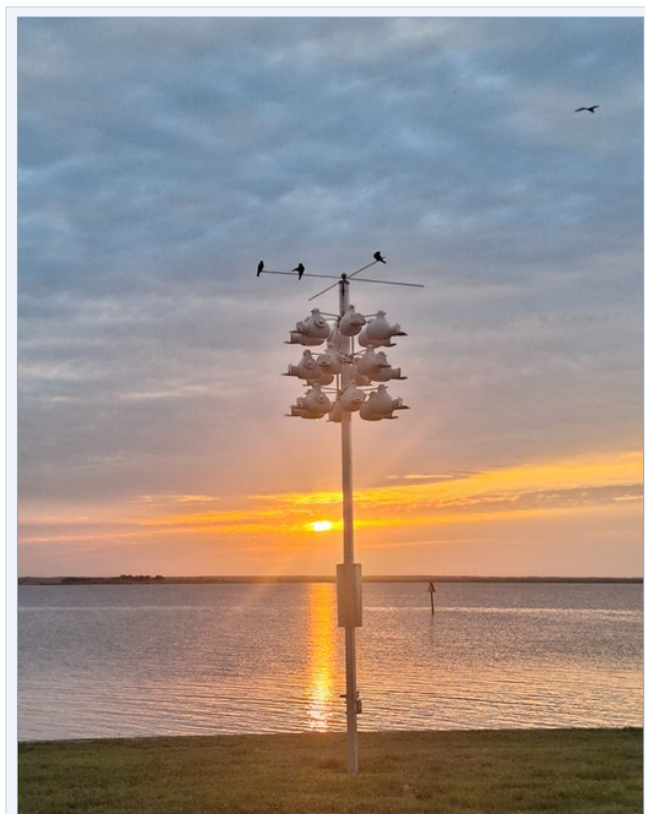
The habitat expansion completed earlier this year is already proving worthwhile. The new site near the Marina Isle Assisted Living Center has shown encouraging activity, with four to five gourds displaying active nesting behavior and at least one

confirmed nest currently housing chicks.

The strongest activity continues to center around the marina locations, where the two original poles appear to be nearly fully occupied. Most gourds, 36 in total, are currently in use, with active nesting observed throughout both poles. As of mid-May, young Purple Martins have been seen emerging from the gourds to greet parents returning with food, marking an exciting milestone in the season.

The pole located near the hospital has experienced minimal activity this year. Although decoy birds remain in place, very few Purple Martins have been observed utilizing the site so far this season. It is hopeful they have seen it and will possibly use it as a nesting site next season.

The Purple Martins will continue to rear their young into early July before they depart on their yearly migration back to South America. They are highly visible to the public, and their aerial acrobatics while hunting are fascinating to observe. Sustaining and expanding this project in a downtown business district illustrates how successful conservation projects can thrive alongside human development. The City of Sanford continues to be an active and valued participant and partner in the program.



Purple Martins welcoming the day at the Sanford Marina
Photo by: Kristin Broadway

Seminole Audubon Society Has a Long History

By Phyllis Hall and Sam Kendall

The Audubon Society has a long history of advocacy for birds and the environment. George Bird Grinnel started the Audubon Society in New York City in 1886 in the pages of *Forest and Stream* magazine. It was started as a way to counter the fashion feather or plume trade that was decimating birds. The first Audubon Society grew rapidly and by 1899, 15 other states had their own Audubon Societies. The first meeting of the Florida Audubon Society was held in Maitland, Florida, on March 2, 1900. The National Committee of Audubon Societies was formed in November 1902 in Washington, D.C.



Historic logo. Photo: Florida Audubon Society
Source: <https://www.audubon.org/florida/about-us/history-audubon-florida>

In 1949, Seminole Audubon Society (SAS) was chartered in Sanford with members from all over Seminole County and parts of neighboring Volusia County. It is believed it was named Seminole to reflect on and honor the Native Americans who lived here and it related to the drainage basins surrounding Lake Monroe and the St. Johns River. The mission of SAS is to promote the awareness and protection of the plants and animals in the St. Johns River Basin to sustain the beneficial co-existence of nature and humans.

In 1999, Florida Audubon and National Audubon unified their efforts in Florida and the Florida Audubon name was changed to Audubon Florida. Each Audubon Chapter is an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit entity. SAS became a non-profit entity in 2002 with articles of incorporation.

How You Can Help Seminole Audubon Society

Our chapter is a volunteer-run non-profit. We receive a small amount of money each year from National Audubon based on an old algorithm of past memberships. The Chapter also receives the full donation for any new members who join on our website. These monies go toward our routine operating costs which include website maintenance, subscriptions like MailChimp and QuickBooks for finances, etc. The Chapter also provides scholarships for Seminole County Eco Camps. Those and other outreach activities are funded primarily from donations received at the monthly meetings and donations made through our website. If you aren't already a member of our Chapter, please join using our website link: [Seminole Audubon Society | Serving Seminole County, FL](#). You can also donate using the link on our website.

Use Nature's Pest Control Instead of Rodenticides

By Fairl Thomas, Board Secretary of Birds In Helping Hands


As the rates of human-animal conflicts rise around the nation, it is easy to assume that rodent problems are the most common nuisance species that we humans clash with. Many species of rats have adapted to thrive in urban environments and will readily make their homes where they are least welcomed, such as residences, businesses, vehicles, and more. Discovering you have a rodent problem *Continued on next page*

Use Nature's Pest Control Instead of Rodenticides

Continued from page 3

is understandably distressing, but before picking up the phone and calling an exterminator or rushing to your local store to grab a box of poison off the shelf, it is important to think twice about what you are doing and what product you will be using.

There are many birds of prey species (as well as mammals) that depend on a healthy rodent population to survive, feeding on countless rodents a year, and contributing to keeping populations in check. A problem arises when humans begin to try to take matters into their own hands as the most commonly-used rat poisons harm more than just the rats. It may seem safe, because it is available in the supermarkets, it is in a tamper-proof box, or it was put out by a professional pest control agent, but think again. The majority of rodenticides available on the market are either first- or second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides. These chemicals work by overdosing the rodent with a chemical that prevents the blood from clotting properly, causing them to die of internal bleeding after they have received a sufficient dose. While this is considered to be painless for the rodent, there are many concerns that must be considered.



ARE YOU POISONING WILDLIFE AND PETS?

Every day, wildlife and pets are in danger of being poisoned when homeowners, businesses or exterminators choose to use anticoagulant rodenticides, also known as rat poisons, to control rodents.




photo by: Mark J. Schocken

DEATH BY POISON

Rat poison is often used in bait stations, those shoebox size black boxes you see around buildings and dumpsters. The rats and mice do not die inside the stations but after eating the bait, they go back into the wild and can take more than a week to die. Weakened from internal bleeding, poisoned rodents become toxic ticking time bombs for any animal who preys on them.

All types of rodent poison can sicken and kill wildlife and pets.

Second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides are designed to be faster acting, requiring fewer visits to the bait station from the rodent than first-generation products, but they are still far from instantaneous. Each time the rodent visits a bait station, it is dosed with the poison; each time, it is becoming more and more symptomatic, and easier prey for a passing owl, hawk, or eagle.

When a bird of prey consumes a poisoned rodent, it is similar to the process for the rodents themselves. One dose will not cause too much damage but with each toxic rat consumed, the poisons bioaccumulate in the bird until they have a lethal dose themselves.

So, what do you do when you are faced with a rodent problem but do not want to risk harming secondary consumers like birds of prey? Fortunately, there are lots of options available and it is just a matter of finding the right fit for you! While some

prefer the 'easy' options of poisons, which require little to no work to implement, the first and most important steps to managing a rodent problem begin with prevention. Prevent rodents from getting comfortable in your space by making them feel unwelcome - taking away food sources (such as bird feeders or unsecured trash) and eliminating any entry points. This is commonly referred to as sanitation and exclusion prevention. In the event things are past the point of prevention, the same idea still applies! There are many non-toxic products on the market which will help make your space as unfriendly to a rodent as can be. Some options include things like peppermint scent, flashing lights, and even ultra-sonic noise machines.

Continued on next page

Do Use Safer Products	Don't Use Unsafe Products
<p>Bromethalin Examples: · Fastrac · Assault</p>	<p>Brodifacoum Example: d-Con</p>
<p>Cholecalciferol Examples: · Terad3</p>	<p>Bromadiolone Example: Contrace</p>
	<p>Chlorophacinone Example: Ratol</p>
	<p>Difenacoum Example: Di-Kill Rat Bait</p>
	<p>Difethialone Example: First Strike</p>
	<p>Diphacinone Example: TomCat</p>

Use Nature's Pest Control Instead of Rodenticides

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So, what does one do if sanitation and exclusion and/or deterrents are not cutting it for the rodent problem? There are both non-toxic and otherwise lethal rodent products available that pose minimal risk to predator species who may consume the rodents. These include products like zap traps, which use electric shock; therefore, there is no risk to non-target species as with snap traps. There are also a few chemical products on the market that can be utilized either over the counter or by professionals. Remember, any active ingredient that, when searched, comes up as an anticoagulant is not safe! There are two professional grade chemicals, bromethalin (Fastrac, Assault) and cholecalciferol (Terad3), which have undergone many studies and have been proven to pose minimal risk to secondary consumers as compared to anticoagulants.

It is important to remember, when making rodent management decisions for your property, to do your own research rather than blindly trusting what is told to you. Many pest control professionals lack the background needed to understand the impacts of their products on species beyond the rodents that they are targeting. Do not just ask if a product is safe; instead, ask for the active ingredient name and empower yourself with knowledge. When in doubt, there are many wildlife-focused non-profit organizations that can help guide you in the best actions for your situation. Best of all, let us continue to promote birds of prey doing their job because no one can do it better!



photo by: Terrie Dahl Thomas

THE TRUTH ABOUT RAT POISON

Despite the claims of the pest control industry, there is no such thing as a "safe" rat poison. Dozens of scientific studies have found rat poisons are present in the tissues of a wide variety of wildlife, including owls.

Rat poison also kills dogs and cats. Rat poison leads to a painful death for all animals who are exposed to it, whether they consume the poison directly or eat the flesh of a poisoned animal. Rat poison (rodenticide) kills the very wildlife that helps us control rats and mice.

photo by: Fred Brisard

RODENT PROOF YOUR HOME OR BUSINESS

Keep trash bins tightly closed, clean up refuse; remove pet food, spilled birdseed and fallen fruit.

Seal cracks and crevices leading into your home. Use ¼-inch metal mesh, not chicken wire, to block entry points.

Trim foliage and tree limbs at least 2 feet away from sides and roofs of houses.

Use snap traps or electronic zappers to catch any rodents remaining indoors.

NEVER use glue or sticky traps – they kill songbirds and other non-target wildlife. Attract owls to your property with a nest box – a single owl can catch 1,400 rodents a year!

If you need to hire a professional, only hire exterminators who do not use anticoagulant rodenticides and who use and are trained in integrated pest management. IPM works to permanently exclude rats by rodent proofing your home.



photo by: Mark J. Schocken

NATURE'S PEST CONTROL EXPERTS

Rats, mice, and other small animals play a critical role in the ecosystem as food for many animals and as seed dispersers for trees and plants. Using poison to kill rodents has the long-term effect of **INCREASING** the rodent population since the poison kills off the rodents' natural predators, such as owls, allowing the rodents to breed unchecked.

By using safer rodenticides and preventative measures, we can keep rodents out of our homes and businesses, protect our pets and keep the rodents in the wild where they belong.



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www.birdsinhelpinghands.org

Lake Proctor Wilderness Area Bird Surveys

By Chuck Honaker, Florida Master Naturalist and Tracey Comazzi

Chuck Honaker and his Seminole Audubon Society (SAS) group of volunteers surveyed the Lake Proctor Wilderness Area (LPWA) again in March, April and May this year. The team recorded 46 species in both March and April and 40 species in May, making the year-to-date total 71 species!



Riparian Habitat at Lake Proctor Wilderness Area
Photo by Lorri Lilja

The varied habitats within this 475-acre property, which lies to the east of Geneva in Seminole County, include sand hills, oak hammock, pine flat woods and the riparian habitat of Lake Proctor.

Below is a summary of the birds observed at LPWA in January and February this year. Notable species include Red-headed Woodpeckers (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*), Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) plus juveniles, Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*), a variety of warblers, and even a Roseate Spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*)!

The surveys begin at 7:30 a.m. the 2nd Monday of each month.

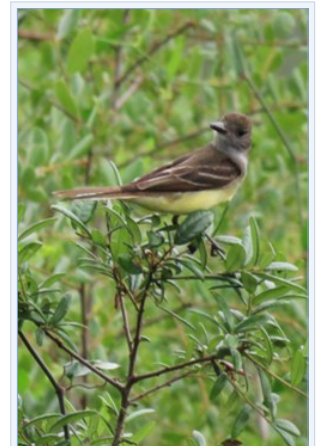
If you would like to participate, email Chuck at cwh.jr@hotmail.com. You'll find more property details and maps at www.seminolecountyfl.gov/leisure/natland/ or call 407-349-0959.

LPWA Bird Survey Data for 2026

Total Species to Date: 71	(Total species plus other taxa)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Avg. Monthly Species: 43	Monthly Total Species:	38	43	46	46	40
Common Name	Scientific Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Anhinga	(<i>Anhinga anhinga</i>)		x	x	x	x
Blackbird , Red-winged	(<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>)			x	x	x
Bluebird, Eastern (Eastern)*	(<i>Sialia sialis ssp.</i>)	x	x	x	x	x
Bobwhite, Northern	(<i>Colinus virginianus</i>)		x		x	x
Cardinal, Northern	(<i>Cardinalis cardinalis</i>)	x	x	x	x	x
Catbird, Gray	(<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>)	x	x	x	x	
Chickadee, Carolina	(<i>Poecile carolinensis</i>)	x	x	x	x	x
Crane, Sandhill	(<i>Antigone canadensis</i>)	x	x	x	x	x
Crow, American	(<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>)	x	x	x	x	x
Crow, Fish	(<i>Corvus ossifragus</i>)	x	x	x	x	x
Dove, Common Ground	(<i>Columbina passerina</i>)			x	x	x
Dove, Mourning	(<i>Zenaida macroura</i>)	x	x	x	x	x
Duck, Black-bellied Whistling	(<i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i>)					x
Duck, Ring-necked	(<i>Aythya collaris</i>)		x	x	x	
Duck, Wood	(<i>Aix sponsa</i>)	x	x	x	x	x
Eagle, Bald	(<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>)	x	x	x	x	x
Egret, Great	(<i>Ardea alba</i>)		x		x	x
Flicker, Northern (Yellow-shafted)	(<i>Colaptes auratus</i>)				x	
Flycatcher, Great Crested	(<i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>)				x	x
Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray	(<i>Poliophtila caerulea</i>)	x	x	x	x	x
Grackle, Boat-tailed	(<i>Quiscalus major</i>)		x	x	x	x
Grackle, Common	(<i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>)	x	x	x	x	x
Grebe, Pied-bill	(<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>)		x			
Hawk, Red-shouldered	(<i>Buteo lineatus</i>)	x	x	x		x



Eastern Towhee
Photo by Connie Dolan

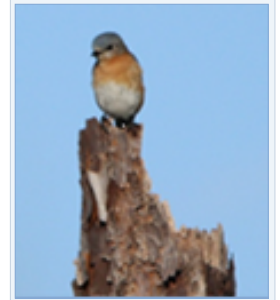


Great Crested Flycatcher
Photo by Connie Dolan

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LPWA Bird Survey Data for 2026 Continued from page 6

Common Name	Scientific Name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Heron, Little Blue	<i>(Egretta caerulea)</i>		x	x	x	x
Heron, Tricolored	<i>(Egretta tricolor)</i>			x	x	x
Ibis, Glossy	<i>(Plegadis falcinellu)</i>			x	x	x
Ibis, White	<i>(Eudocimus albus)</i>			x	x	x
Jay, Blue	<i>(Cyanocitta cristata)</i>	x	x	x	x	x
Kestrel, American	<i>(Falco sparverius)</i>	x			x	
Killdeer	<i>(Charadrius vociferus)</i>		x			
Kingfisher, Belted	<i>(Megaceryle alcyon)</i>	x	x	x		
Kinglet, Ruby-crowned	<i>(Corthylio calendula)</i>	x	x	x		
Kite, Swallow-tailed	<i>(Elanoides forficatus)</i>			x		
Martin, Purple	<i>(Progne subis)</i>				x	
Mockingbird, Northern	<i>(Mimus polyglottos)</i>	x	x	x	x	x
Nuthatch, Brown-headed	<i>(Sitta pusilla)</i>	x	x		x	x
Owl, Barred	<i>(Strix varia)</i>	x				
Owl, Great Horned	<i>(Bubo virginianus)</i>			x	x	
Parula, Northern	<i>(Setophaga americana)</i>			x	x	x
Phoebe, Eastern	<i>(Sayornis phoebe)</i>	x	x	x		
Redstart, American	<i>(Setophaga ruticilla)</i>					x
Robin, American	<i>(Turdus migratorius)</i>	x				
Shrike, Loggerhead	<i>(Lanius ludovicianus)</i>		x		x	
Sparrow, Swamp	<i>(Melospiza georgiana)</i>		x	x		
Spoonbill, Roseate	<i>(Platalea ajaja)</i>				x	
Stork, Wood	<i>(Mycteria americana)</i>					x
Swallow, Tree	<i>(Tachycineta bicolor)</i>		x	x		
Swift, Chimney	<i>(Chaetura pelagica)</i>					x
Thrasher, Brown	<i>(Toxostoma rufum)</i>			x	x	
Titmouse, Tufted	<i>(Baeolophus bicolor)</i>	x	x	x		x
Towhee, Eastern (White-eyed)**	<i>(Pipilo erythrophthalmus ssp.)</i>	x	x	x	x	x
Turkey, Wild	<i>(Meleagris gallopavo)</i>	x				
Vireo, Blue-headed	<i>(Vireo solitarius)</i>	x				
Vireo, White-eyed	<i>(Vireo griseu)</i>		x	x	x	x
Vulture, Black	<i>(Coragyps atratus)</i>	x	x		x	x
Vulture, Turkey	<i>(Cathartes aura)</i>	x		x	x	x
Warbler, Black-and-White	<i>(Mniotilta varia)</i>		x			
Warbler, Palm	<i>(Setophaga palmarum)</i>	x		x	x	
Warbler, Palm (Western)	<i>(Setophaga palmarum ssp.)</i>		x			
Warbler, Palm (Yellow)	<i>(Setophaga palmarum ssp.)</i>		x			
Warbler, Pine	<i>(Setophaga pinus)</i>	x	x	x		
Warbler, Yellow-rumped	<i>(Setophaga coronata)</i>	x	x	x		
Waxwing, Cedar	<i>(Bombycilla cedrorum)</i>			x	x	
Woodpecker, Downy	<i>(Dryobates pubescens)</i>	x	x	x	x	x
Woodpecker, Pileated	<i>(Dryocopus pileatus)</i>	x	x	x	x	x
Woodpecker, Red-bellied	<i>(Melanerpes carolinus)</i>	x	x	x	x	x
Woodpecker, Red-headed	<i>(Melanerpes erythrocephalus)</i>	x	x	x	x	
Wren, Carolina	<i>(Thryothorus ludovicianus)</i>	x		x	x	x
Wren, Northern House	<i>(Troglodytes aedon)</i>	x			x	
Yellowthroat, Common	<i>(Geothlypis trichas)</i>	x		x		



Eastern Bluebird
Photo by John Carey



Wood Ducks
Photo by Connie Dolan



Bald Eagle at LPWA
Photo by Chuck Honaker

* According to the Florida Bluebird Society, eBird now uses Eastern Bluebird (Eastern) (*Sialia sialis*) for the Eastern Bluebirds seen in Florida.

** 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.

Seminole Audubon Society Celebrates Earth Day 2026 at Lawton Elementary School

By Lynne Smith



Earth Day participants (L to R): Chloe Tomlinson, Lynne Smith, Terri Layton, Joy Rector, Kristin Broadway
Photo provided by Lynne Smith

"Happy Earth Day!" I called out, as over 350 people strolled through a multitude of exhibits at Lawton Environmental Study Area, (LESA) on April 22, 2026. LESA is a shady two acres next to the playground at Lawton Elementary School in Oviedo. It's abundant with trees, plants, gardens, flowers, squirrels, birds, insects, and on this particular day, abundant with humans. This is the site of their annual *Earth Day* celebration. Seminole Audubon Society members, Joy Rector, Kristin Broadway, Terri Langford, Lynne Smith and Chloe Tomlinson of *Wild Birds Unlimited*, set up three tables laden with bird feeders, feathers, eggs, pamphlets, a raffle, a science experiment, stickers and enthusiasm.

From 3 to 6 pm a steady stream of parents and children strolled through a variety of educational exhibits from organizations such as NASA, Oviedo Garden Club, Central Florida Astronomy Society, Florida Native Plant Society, Seminole Audubon, Florida Trail Association, Wild Birds Unlimited, and many more. Respective experts in their fields shared their wisdom, and provided examples of our beautiful and unique planet Earth. Seminole Audubon and Wild Birds Unlimited teamed up to give out information about feeding birds, identifying birds, how they fly, what they eat, where they live and more.

It was a wonderful afternoon and lots of bird knowledge was shared.

May every day be Earth Day!



Our teacher, Joy Rector, explaining about feathers and eggs.
Photo provided by Lynne Smith

Volunteers Needed For Planting at the New Goldsboro Museum



Seminole Audubon Society received a grant funded by the Florida Power and Light/Audubon Florida Plants for Birds Grant program to provide native plant landscaping at the new Goldsboro Museum. The museum is expected to be completed in the summer or early fall 2026. If you are interested in helping with planting, please contact Phyllis Hall at phylliscath814@gmail.com. The date will be announced as soon as the building has been completed and the landscape area prepared for planting. Please plan to bring your own planting tools.

Volunteer Opportunity!

Become the Next SAS Newsletter Editor

Compile and format the Jay Newsletter. It is published 5 times a year. Articles and photographs are submitted by members and the editor formats them into the software. You can even write articles yourself! Corrinne Wertz will take care of all the proofreading. She is truly a joy to work with and there is very little she does not know about grammar and spelling!

Currently, the newsletter is published in Microsoft Publisher and we will most likely be transitioning to Canva. Orientation and training will be provided.

This position is rewarding, exciting and the subjects covered are varied. You will learn a great deal and work with talented and knowledgeable people, while making good friends as well. Apply today!

Program and Field Trip Notes:

Bird Anatomy

Sunday, March 8, 2026

by Phyllis Hall



Jenny Bouchenot
Photo by Leslie Martin

Jenny Bouchenot is a University of Central Florida Integrative and Conservation Biology PhD candidate. She received a bachelor's degree in biology and then a master's degree defending her thesis on non-lethal predictors of organ level metal contaminants in Red-shouldered Hawks. Her current PhD dissertation research investigates pollutants in 23 species of Florida raptors. She is a graduate teaching assistant for the comparative vertebrate anatomy dissection laboratory at UCF. Jenny volunteered for over ten years with the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey, was a founding officer of the Kighthawk Audubon campus chapter at UCF, and a Florida Audubon CLI alumna, class of 2017. She currently bands birds with Andy Boyle at Lake Lotus Banding Station.

Jenny provided an overview of avian anatomy focusing on feathers, bone structure, internal organs and muscles. The internal organs, in particular the liver and kidney, filter a bird's blood. The blood feathers are actively growing feathers and predict the health of the internal organs. Stress bars on feathers are indentations that indicate points in a bird's life of sickness, mechanical trauma, and stress with increased cortisol levels. Birds have been the bio-monitors of the environment since early mining days. The canary in the coal mine is an example. Canaries would die 15 minutes

before humans, alerting miners to toxic air. Pollutant uptake within birds includes biomagnification and bioaccumulation. Biomagnification resists metabolic breakdown and has higher values at higher trophic levels. Bioaccumulation is internal or external and anatomically-dependent. Jenny presented data from her research with a focus on the Red-shouldered Hawk. The ecotoxicology reports included heavy metals and elemental contaminants. Common sources of these contaminants are fertilizer, landfills, and roads (rain runoff). In our home environments (microenvironments), we can help by planting native plants to eliminate the need for fertilizers, read the labels on household cleaners and eliminate lead paint. Do not use lead weights for fishing nor bullets containing lead for hunting, and do not use rodenticides.

Annual Meeting Vote to Approve Upcoming Board Terms

Sunday, March 8, 2026

At the monthly meeting on March 8, a short meeting was called to order with the agenda item of approving the upcoming terms for the SAS Board. The motion was made and seconded to approve the 2026-2028 terms for Tracey Comazzi, Leslie Martin, Peggy Stickney, and Phyllis Hall. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

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

Emeralda Marsh

Saturday, March 14, 2026

by Leslie Martin

In mid-March, a small but mighty group of birders visited Emeralda Marsh Conservation Area in Lake County near Lake Griffin. This property has year-round access to a boat ramp, but it also has a 4-mile seasonal wildlife drive that is open to vehicle traffic on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from the third weekend in February through the last weekend in May. Hiking or biking is allowed all year.

Emeralda Marsh offers a unique chance to look for birds, and to see the St. Johns Water Management District's restoration efforts to restore connectivity of the marsh to the lake while also reducing phosphorus and nutrients from former farmland.



Emeralda Marsh Field Trip Group
Photos by: John Carey

We saw a whopping 56 species of birds on the drive! Huge numbers of American Coot, estimated close to 1,000, were seen as well as Ring-necked Duck and Blue-winged Teal, Limpkin, Purple Gallinule and a Black-crowned Night Heron. We saw all five woodpecker species. The highlight was watching both the male and female Snail Kites perched and hunting over the water. It was quite exciting!

To see a map of Emeralda Marsh Conservation Area visit www.sjrwmd.com/lands/recreation/emeraldamarsh.



Snail Kite
Photo by: John Carey

Bird-watching Cruise

Saturday, April 18, 2026

By Phyllis Hall

Colin, the captain of St. Johns River Eco Tours, kept the group entertained and engaged with fun facts of birds, plants, and river history. We saw a nest of a Great Blue Heron and two Osprey nests. We also saw lots of Little Blue Heron, various egrets, Limpkin, Common Gallinule, Red-shouldered Hawk, Black-crowned Night Heron, Red-bellied Woodpecker, turtles, manatees, and alligators of various sizes.



Bird-watching Cruise Group
Photo by: Phyllis Hall

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, 2026.

Watch for the next newsletter to learn of the exciting field trips and programs for the 2026 - 2027 season.

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

Lake Proctor Wilderness Area in Geneva has been selected for the 2026 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.



WELCOME

New Members or New to Our Chapter !

Susan Angermeier	Astatula	Eustacia Kanter	Sanford
Patricia Fredette	Sanford	Rosa Malagon	Sanford
Max Hitchcock	Lake Mary	Wyatt Reeley	DeBary

The National Audubon Society has updated and is still refining its roster system. If you are a new member and do not see your name here, be sure to sign up on our website, www.seminoleaudubon.org, and select "Join Our Newsletter" to be included on our mailing list.

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.

2026-2027
Board of Directors & Committee Chairs (eff. 7/1/26)
SeminoleAudubon@gmail.com

Board	Name	Term
President	Phyllis Hall	2026/2028
Vice President	Leslie Martin	2026/2028
Treasurer	Jan Peters	2025/2027
Secretary	Peggy Stickney	2026/2028
At-Large	Lewis Gray	2025/2027
At-Large	Tracey Comazzi	2026/2028
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, Fred Milch, Paul Comazzi, Norman Moss

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

Education: Cecilia Carey (Chair), John Carey, Joy Rector

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

The Jay Newsletter. Open (Editor-Chair), Corrinne Wertz (Proofreader)

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

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. Phyllis Hall (Interim)

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

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, John Carey, Chuck Honaker, Connie Dolan, Field-Trip Release keeper: Peggy Stickney

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