Southeast Volusia Audubon Society
April 2021
Protecting Birds and their Habitat

The Skimmer

Come join us for our ANNUAL Meeting of the Southeast Volusia Audubon Society

When: Thursday, April 8, 2021; 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm
Where: Plants for Birds Garden @ the Marine Discovery Center
520 Barracuda Blvd., New Smyrna Beach, FL 32169

Agenda:
- Welcome to our Garden & Brief Business Meeting
- Future Plans & Projects
- Pot Luck Dinner (dessert provided)
- Sunset Bird Watching Tour

If you bring a dish to share, please mark your item if contains nuts.
Hope to see you there!

What’s in this Issue:

Thursday, April 8 at 5pm Potluck Picnic at Plants for Birds Site
President’s message
Shorebird Steward Volunteers Wanted
P4B’s Outreach Coordinator
Personal Birding Trip Report
Indian River Lagoon Algal Bloom: Manatee Loss
My Favorite Bird
Now What? It's April, the north is thawing out, leaves are in full bloom down here, and birds are migrating north along with some of us. So as we stated "Now What?"

While we all can take a deep breath that SEVAS has survived and thrived with the pandemic let's not get complacent. In fact let's remain vigilant as we move to summer and all that it brings. Whether it's those cookouts and gatherings we yearn for or just some old fashion family gatherings let's remain vigilant that a health crisis still remains. Let's exercise some personal discipline so we all can regroup in the Fall.

Let's also remember that we represent Audubon. We are Audubon! We respect our environment, we love our birds and we work for both. Reduce waste, buy local, recycle and compost to support Mother Nature. Summer is to recharge yet remain faithful to our cause.

Perhaps that "recharge" will include time spent learning more about our feathered friends as they nest in our yards or local parks. Is there a book about birds or birding that you have wanted to read? Is there a course on Nature Photography or Bird Song ID that you wanted to take? (there are lots on you tube, or Cornell Lab of Ornithology). Could it be a time to introduce a friend, relative or a whole group to the joys of birding? Or, perhaps it is an opportunity to replace some of your ornamentals with native plants to enhance the bird habitat in your yard or community.

Summer is also the time for planning, whether it's your personal garden, a well earned vacation or for SEVAS our programs and activities for next year, beginning in October. There are already some ideas on the drawing board but it would be great to hear from some of you what type of programs you would like for SEVAS. Is there a speaker you have heard, a program you have seen, a topic you think would be of interest to our SEVAS audience? If so, please let Joyce Riddel or Marsha know via the president.sevas@gmail.com email address. Our interests are varied so all suggestions are welcome.

Summer is also a time to stay connected. It is our hope to help with that by hosting a Zoom once in a while and perhaps a President's letter to "keep in touch". And, the new Southeast Volusia Audubon website is a great place for you all to send in pictures or articles about what you are up to. Or, if you are Face Book participants why not add a bit of news or some pictures to our Southeast Volusia Audubon FB page? Staying in touch will help us come back in the Fall with a stronger SEVAS bond, ready to pursue our goals and activities for another year.

Thank you for all you do for birds and the environment, and stay safe, Marsha and Bill
We have an “Outreach Coordinator” Joyce Riddel

We would like to introduce you to Shannon Murphy. Shannon has been a volunteer with SEVAS helping to design and plant our Plants for Birds Garden since 2019. She graduated from University of Central Florida last May with a bachelor’s degree in biology, with a focus on environmental services. Currently Shannon works part time for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission. Now, things have come full circle for Shannon, at our Plants for Birds Garden located at the Marine Discovery Center which is the previous site of Shannon’s alma matter, NSB high. Now that we have a lovely garden, we need to let everyone know how they can join us in creating native habitats for our birds. Please welcome Shannon to help us plan and execute our outreach strategy. No Bugs, No Birds, Go Native, that is our motto.!

Shorebird Steward Volunteers Richard Fasse

Last year I volunteered for two shifts guarding a Least Tern colony on two small oyster islands near Oak Hill. I kayaked to the islands and met Matt Anderson from FWC. I stood by on a busy weekend with Matt in the event boaters ignored the posted signs to stay off the little islands. They are located near a cut through from Mosquito Lagoon to the ICW and a lot of boats go by.

Fortunately there were no incidents for my shifts, but the nesting colony of 40 Least Terns ultimately failed to raise a chick. The previous year two large dogs were let loose by a nearby resident and destroyed the colony. But last year it appears it was high tide and high winds that caused them to abandon the colony.

April is when the Least Terns return and if they set up on the little islands again volunteers will be needed to help. I am going north this summer so I won’t be able to help much so please check it out and volunteer with a good group of biologist types from FWC and Volusia County. I finished an online training session today that lasted about an hour. This group also provides nest Stewardship at Dunes Park and Disappearing Island.

Contact Jean Olbert <jean.olber@myfwc.com> to volunteer.

More information is available at:
https://fl.audubon.org/get-involved/coastal-bird-stewardship
Please Help Save the Manatees

As the direct result of human derelictions there has been massive losses in seagrass coverage. During the 2020-2021 winter season, there has been very little seagrass or vegetation for manatees to eat in the immediate vicinity of warm water locations along the IRL, leading to many manatees suffering from malnutrition. During the cold of winter, traveling further for forage would mean deadly exposure to cold water, so the manatees ultimately choose to forgo feeding over dying from the cold. For more information please go to: education@save the manatees.org

Just Any Other Day….Or Was It??? Joyce Riddle

Marsha Cox and I often start our Thursday’s with an early morning of gleaning (harvesting the left over crops) at Green Flamingo Organics off Putnam Farm Road in Oak Hill. The gleaned produce goes to Gifts of Love food bank in Edgewater.

Of course, we never leave home with out our binoculars! So last Thursday we headed south on Putnam Farms Road after gleaning back to US1, then down to the Buddhist Monastery in Mims, and finally back to Shiloh Road in Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, again off US1. A great Loop for birding.

We counted 36 species. Here are a few of our highlights. First of this season for us Swallow Tailed Kite, White Pelicans, Glossy Ibis, Blue Grey Gnatcatchers, Northern Perula, Roseate Spoonbills, Foster’s Terns, Redwing Blackbirds, lots of other wading birds, the usual back yard warblers and hawks, woodpeckers and as we headed home for the day, a bald Eagle.

A beautiful day of natural beauty and joy. Head out and let us know what you spy!
At least once or twice a month, and often three or so times a week, "My Favorite Bird" stops by to share some joy. The 'Pileated Woodpecker' (Dryocopus pileatus) is not shy to announce her presence. Striking black, colored back, bright red crest, and long gray bill, this crow sized friend likes to make a grand entrance, flashing her white edged wings and belting out a 'jungle sound like' call. Before long, the intermittent drumming announces to all in the area, that the "Star of the Show" has arrived.

When the drumming commences on a favorite wooden utility pole top, (now concave due to years of drumming activity) we start our musical collaboration. She, with the lead drumming and my response with a B-flat 'Flutter', two octaves below middle C.

If the hope is that the musical interlude develops into a "Pileated Prelude in B-flat" the fear is that her intensity will change the concavity of the pole top, thereby changing the pitch of our musical repartee, pushing it beyond my 'one note' musical ability, leading to the sad ending of an "Unfinished Symphony".