Southeast Volusia Audubon Society  
December 2021  
Protecting Birds and their Habitat

The Skimmer

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December Field Trips Schedule
Christmas Bird Count Jan 2, 2022
Several links of Interest to Birders

SEVAS December meeting:
Thursday December 9, 2021 at 7pm via Zoom
Guest Speaker: Don Chalfant
Topic: Bird Name Origins"
   Subtitled "Do Sapsuckers Suck Sap?
   Do Nuthatches Hatch Nuts?"

Birds get their name for a variety of reasons: dominant color, habitat, behavior, significant field mark, or named for a person. We'll explore examples of these.

Don Chalfant, known here as a Snowbird and in Michigan as a Snowwimp, is our speaker this evening. He received both a Bachelor's and Master's degree from the University of Michigan, and is a retired elementary school teacher, now spending most of his time in retirement sharing his passion for birding and wildlife photography. Here in New Smyrna Beach he has led bird walks for the Marine Discovery Center for the past twelve years, and he now serves as Field Trip Coordinator for SEVAS.
From our Co-Presidents

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology recently put out a small pamphlet entitled "I'm Helping Birds!". In it they listed 7 simple actions that we all can take to help birds that included keeping cats indoors, using less lawn and planting natives, and avoiding pesticides. The last "action" was "Watch Birds, Share What You See". In other words, join the ranks of Citizen Scientists. This term is used to define any non scientists, such as birdwatchers, who make observations and contribute their findings as scientific data. And once those observations are shared, they become part of a bigger pool of data.

With the COVID pandemic, the interest in community based science has increased dramatically. Just about anyone can be a citizen scientist. You don't need a special degree or formal training. It only takes an interest in nature, a desire to be outdoors, a willingness to volunteer some time for the cause of conservation and the environment, and a bit of training. And, there are many opportunities that Audubon, both at the national and state level, offers to their volunteers. Here are a few of the opportunities that you can take part in here in our local area.

**Christmas Bird Count:** For SEVAS — 1/2/22
**The Shorebird Count** walk our beaches and count shorebirds looking for endangered birds. — 2/4/22
**Great Backyard Bird Count** — 2/18-21/22
Count the birds that come to your yard to feed. Submit your bird sightings on line at eBird.
**Jay Watch:** Volunteer to monitor Florida scrub jays to play a role in furthering conservation.
**Eagle Watch** — Monitor eagle nesting areas
To learn more go to Jay Watch and/or Eagle Watch Audubon Florida

**Global Big Day** a world wide event that has birders submit sightings from anywhere in the world — even your own yard — to eBird 5/14/22

These are just a few of the many volunteer opportunities to combine your love of bird watching with the important job of building scientific knowledge about our natural world. And, we can all do it. And, it's fun!! You can provide the scientific community with information about the birds that are in your little part of the world. Check with us to find out the next SEVAS opportunity or go to Audubon.org and find out more about the National events. Then grab your binoculars and come join us!
2021 Christmas Bird Count

SEVAS will be participating in the Christmas Bird Count this year on Sunday, January 2nd. There are 10 areas that we are assigned to and there are lots of opportunities for birders with all levels of experience. If you would like to participate in this "Citizen Science" project please let us know by email at president.sevas@gmail.com. Have fun, enjoy the outdoors and the birds, and share your sightings at the end of the day. Join one of our teams!

Don Chalfant Field Trip Co-ordinator

First Field Trip of the Season:

Seven members enjoyed a comfortable walk at the Marine Discovery Center on a beautiful November morning, made even more beautiful by the appearance of 34 bird species. A feature of the birding at the MDC is that almost every participant saw almost every bird. Highlights: four yellow-crowned night herons, loggerhead shrike, gray kingbird, and roseate spoonbill
Four Birding Trips Planned for December.

December 2, Birds and Brew Dunlawton Bridge
Meet at the site, under the Dunlawton Bridge, at 4:00 for about an hour of birding at this prime local site. Then we’ll adjourn to a nearby pub for libation, discussion of the birds seen, and perhaps dinner. Minimal walking, mostly standing.

December 11 — A One Morning Bird Challenge

Let’s try something different: see (or hear) as many species of birds as possible in one morning of birding in Volusia County. You may begin at any time in the morning, but must end in time to attend a summary meeting at noon at the Marine Discovery Center. There we'll have lunch (bring yours), discuss your sightings, the sites you chose to bird, and perhaps discover some county sites we’ve not considered before.

Form your team (one car) and work on your itinerary now in preparation. Questions? Drop an email to coordinator Don Chalfant at screechowl@comcast.net

December 17 — Lake Apopka
Meet at Walmart parking lot (southwest corner) for carpooling and a 7:00 AM departure to one of the most exciting birding destinations in central Florida. Expect more American Coots and Common Gallinules than you’ve ever seen before, plus target species such as Gray-headed Swamphen, Purple Gallinule, American Bittern, Fulvous Whistling-Duck, maybe even a Snail Kite. Leaders are Ken Wenzel and Don Chalfant. Bring a lunch. Little if any walking; birding from car.

December (Date to be determined) -Shiloh Road.
Meet at the Dunkin’ Donuts parking lot for carpooling and a 7:00 departure. Shiloh Road is actually part of Merritt Island NWR. The section we will bird is entirely in Volusia County. The road will probably reveal Belted King-fisher, Anhinga, and common wading birds; and leader Kim Ramos can usually be counted on to discover a few surprise sightings. Minimal walking, mostly birding from car.
Clean Water is Vital to the Health of the Environment
Submitted by Joyce Ridel
As we all know, clean water is vital to the health of our environment and the wildlife that depends upon it. We have heard the sad story of our starving manatees due to the loss of sea grass. Our birds are effected as well by the pollutants coming from upland sources into our lagoon and estuaries. For information on efforts to keep our waterways healthy and to learn how you can support these efforts, follow Dream Green Volusia and the Volusia and Brevard County Environmental Alliance on Facebook and if you are in town, get your free “Save The Lagoon” lawn sign.

“North Shore Birding Festival 2021 Dec 2-6 on Lake Apopka”
There is a link to sign up for festival updates and programs National Audubon has designated Lake Apopka North Shore “An American Bird Conservancy Globally important Bird Area.”

Halifax River Audubon website — for more local birding field trip opportunities They also have a “Meetup” page to sign up for trips.

You Tube “Protecting the Hooded Grebe The Mating Game | BBC Earth”
This is a 3 minute You Tube video about a small team of people and a dog who are protecting the beautiful hooded grebe mating site in Patagonia.

Wading bird nest counts in Everglades low in 2020
https://daytonanewsjournal-fl-app.newsmemory.com/?publink=19b600251_1345fd3

The “Explore Volusia” December calendar has many family friendly outdoor options:
http://www.volusia.org/explorevolusia

Book suggestion from Lois Troxell
Migrations by Charlotte McConaghy
In a disappearing world, a woman arrives in Greenland to follow the last Arctic terns in the world on their final migration to Antarctica. An ode to the possibility of hope against all odds.