



LAUGHING GULL

President's Message

From Ed Bowes



I have two quick points to make. First, remember to vote and do not walk in unprepared! The 11 amendments and multiple local races make the ballot very long this year.

Second, **conservation does not have a party** and conservation efforts require bipartisan cooperation. Vote for elected officials that will honor the public's right to breathable air, clean water, and viable wild places.

IMPORTANT DATES

Bird Counts



Christmas Bird Count: December 22, 2012. Ed Bowes is coordinating again.

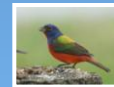


Bird-A-Thon: April 6 or 7, 2013. You have the option of counting one of those days. More details later.

Special Events



Adams Ranch Breakfast: February 23, 2013. Cost \$25 per person. Registration required.



Painted Bunting Trip: March 2, 2013. Cost \$10 per person. Registration required.

"Ocean Drift Seeds" November 1 at 7 PM at the Oxbow Eco-Center

Dr. John Brolman will be speaking on "Ocean Drift Seeds and Native Flowers from the Treasure Coast." John is Professor Emeritus of horticulture with the University of Florida Indian River Research and Education Center. He is an expert on seeds dispersed by ocean currents.

Feathered Friends by Ruth Neese

This week, I have been treated to Tricolored Herons leaving my backyard canal and hunting in my yard. These medium-sized herons are year-round residents in Florida, the Caribbean, and along the southeastern and Gulf coasts of the U.S.

The Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*) was formerly known as the Louisiana Heron. A slender day-heron, these birds are called tricolor for a reason. Their upper parts are slate-gray while their bellies and foreneck are white with chestnut markings on the neck. Adults may have some maroon feathers on their backs. During breeding season, adults of both sexes

develop white plumes on their heads and maroon markings become more prominent. In South Florida, these birds start breeding as early as February. Breeding activity peaks in March.

Tricolored Herons feed almost exclusively on fish, which is why I was surprised to find one in my yard stalking lizards! They hunt in brackish and salt water by stalking or canopy feeding (extending wings forward to cover the head and neck). These birds crouch while hunting and are solitary feeders. Keep an eye out for these colorful hunters!



Tricolored Heron in non-breeding plumage

Field Trip – Sunday November 18 STA-1 Wellington, FL



STA-1 wetland in central Palm Beach County near the Everglades Agricultural Area

November 18 Field Trip—This trip is led by the Audubon Society of the Everglades in partnership with the South Florida Water Management District. This is a carpool drive around water management areas. We are limited to a total of 20 participants with 4 people per car preferred.

We will meet in the Winn Dixie parking lot at the corner of Port St. Lucie Blvd. and Bayshore DR in Port St. Lucie at 6:30 AM sharp and carpool from there. Call Dorothy at 772-349-6025 ASAP to register.



Conservation Corner: Birds and Window Collisions

By Ruth Neese

Who among us has not been startled by a sudden loud bang or mysterious thump while at work or at home? Typically, after an interior inspection proves no ceiling collapse or furniture failure, we go outside to examine the exterior. Sometimes we find a stunned bird, staggering around or upright but immobile. At other times, we are saddened to find a dead songbird lying on a sidewalk or in the grass. These birds were victims of window collisions.

Window collisions have long been recognized as a serious problem for birds, but most people have no concept of the magnitude of the problem. The best current estimates from ornithologists and the National Audubon Society put the death toll at more than one billion birds per year in the U.S. alone. That estimate is based on one bird fatality per building per year. Worldwide, window collisions kill at least 100 billion birds a year. Let that sink in; only

habitat destruction equals that number!

Windows are equal opportunity killers of birds. Windows in buildings of all types with panes of every size have documented bird kills. A bird's vulnerability to window-strikes is not influenced by its age, sex, or whether it is migratory or resident. No season of the year, time of day, or weather condition lacks documented window-kills. Research by Daniel Klem and others have demonstrated that glass expanses of 21 square feet near ground level up to heights of 10 feet in suburban and rural areas receive more bird strikes and are responsible for more kills. This describes many suburban buildings, especially public buildings, businesses and houses "built for the view." The picture above shows the window-kills from Union Station in Washington,

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D.C. for a single three-month period during migration. There are 123 carcasses, and that is just one building! Birds that are only stunned may or may not recover.

What can you do to prevent window-kills? First, become aware of how dangerous windows are for birds, then implement one or more of these suggestions:

1. Move feeders, water, and perches to within 3-feet of the house. Fewer injuries occur within that space.
2. Cover the exterior of windows with netting.
3. Place decals or hanging strings on windows. These must be separated 4-inches vertically or 2-inches horizontally.
4. Use a one-way film that makes the window appear opaque from the outside yet does not obstruct the view from inside.
5. Keep drapes or verticals closed in rooms where you do not spend time.

Other tips are available from the National Audubon Society. Make your windows bird safe today!

Sponsors Wanted!

St. Lucie County has a policy of charging non-profits for the use of county facilities.

Our cost is **\$45 dollars a month**, payable in advance. We are looking for sponsors to underwrite the cost of our monthly meetings at the Oxbow Eco-Center.

In return, we will acknowledge individual or company names in our newsletter several times during the ensuing year. If you are interested in sponsoring St. Lucie Audubon's monthly programs, please send checks to:

St. Lucie Audubon Society

PO Box 12474

Ft. Pierce, FL 34979

If you have not paid chapter dues within the past year, this will be your last newsletter!

Please support the *Laughing Gull* newsletter by becoming a chapter member.

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Board members may be contacted by email at stlucieaudubon@gmail.com

Membership Application

A one-year chapter membership extends from January to January. You may use the coupon below to begin or renew your membership.

SLAS is now offering a Chapter-only annual membership for those who want to financially support their local chapter. The following dues options apply:

- Individual: \$20 per year**
- Family: \$25 per year**
(for 2 or more people in same household)
- Sponsor: \$50 per year**
- Patron: \$100 per year**
- Lifetime: \$500**

Each local membership includes a subscription to the monthly newsletter "The Laughing Gull". You may receive "The Laughing Gull" via standard mail or electronically via email. Please indicate your preference below.

Please make checks payable to and send to:
St. Lucie Audubon Society, P.O. Box 12474,
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Thanks for your support.

Remember!

A St. Lucie County-specific bird checklist is available on our chapter Web site. The birds are listed in taxonomic order and the list indicates when you are most likely to see a particular bird in St. Lucie Co.

Visit
<http://stlucieaudubon.org> to download the list. It's free!



Call to Artists

"Birds of a Feather"

The Art Mundo Gallery in Ft. Pierce is seeking submissions of original artwork, two or three dimensional, in any medium. The theme of the art is to be birds, in any setting, genre, medium, or interpretation.

If you have created your own artistic expression of "birds," now is your chance to enter! Entries must be received at the gallery on **November 7, 2012 between 3 PM and 7 PM**. Art Mundo is located at 111 Orange Avenue in Ft. Pierce.

There is a \$20 entry fee for non-members and more details are available at <http://www.artmundo.org/OpportunitiesCallstoArtists.html>

Coming Attractions: November Field Trip & Speaker

**December Field Trip: Saturday,
December 8, 2012 to the Indrio
Savannas**

This trip will be led by Sam Fried. He leads birding trips across the country and we are pleased to have him lead another trip for our chapter.

A highlight of a trip to the Indrio Savannas is the potential for seeing an endangered species—the Florida Scrub Jay. This park is located just north of Indrio RD in Ft. Pierce on the west side of US 1. Meet no later than 7:30

AM in the parking lot of the Indrio Savannas Preserve. Call Dorothy to register—772-349-6025.

**December Speakers: Thursday,
December 6 at 7 PM at the
Oxbow Eco-Center**

Mark & Claudia Harrison

“Red Stag Ranch”



Mark your calendars!

Help our chapter save printing and mailing costs by signing-up for the email newsletter. The newsletter can then be printed out if you prefer to read it offline. To request the email version, send your name and email address to eddie_ruth@msn.com

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Fort Pierce, FL 34979