

St. Lucie Audubon Society

Fostering appreciation of nature in St Lucie County, Florida, since 1954



The Laughing Gull

President's Message

By Ellen Lynch

Our May General Meeting will wrap up our season and give us all a summer break. We will begin again on October 3rd at Oxbow at 7 pm. I believe our season was very successful and interesting. All our Board members were engaged and the Chairs did excellent jobs on programs, birding adventures, conservation efforts and memberships.

At our next meeting on May 2nd, we will be voting for our officers to carry on for next season. Once the official vote is done, the new officers (or repeat ones) will start their terms as of June 1st.

Our 70th Anniversary celebration on April 4th was so much fun! The bird walk at Oxbow brought in some new faces and some new memberships. The speaker was wonderful and the cake helped us finish up and socialize. Thanks to all who helped with drinks and set up duties.

Our chapter participated in the Earth Day Event held on 4/20 at Oxbow. Our volunteers, Peter, Wayne, Jan, and John were quite busy and talked to many people about our chapter. This event is the highlight of our season and helps us connect to the community. Thanks to these wonderful volunteers!

As I am not taking on the President's role next season, I want to let you know that I am not disappearing, just moving to take care of our

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Photo by Dan Martinelli

The Laughing Gull

Thursday, May 2:

Presenter: Barbara Pierzakowski

“Bald Eagles of the Treasure Coast” by Barbara Pierzakowski, the EagleWatch Volunteer Coordinator for St. Lucie and Martin Counties.

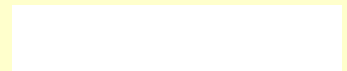
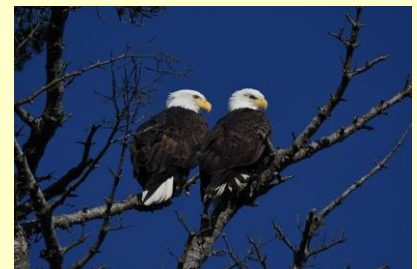
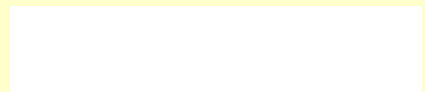
Regularly scheduled field trips will resume in October.

Check our website periodically to see if anything special pops up during the summer.

<https://www.stlucieaudubon.org/field-trips>

In the meantime, keep watch for our aerobatic Swallow-tailed Kites, fledging Osprey, and numerous species of immature songbirds. Good birding!

“My heart is light with May. The sky is soft; the coming birds are silent on their way.” ~ Mary Mapes Dodge



President's Message (continued)

BY ELLEN LYNCH

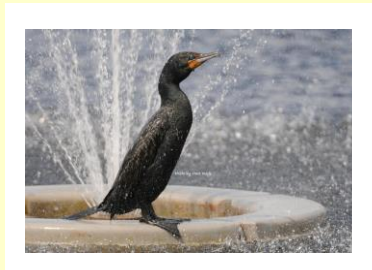
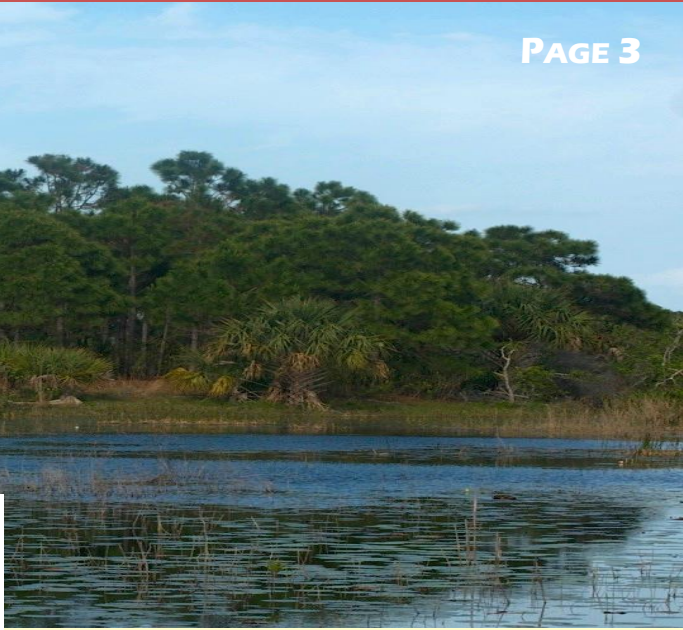
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Treasury. Our present Treasurer, JoAnn Stillman, moved to northern Minnesota and has done her job long distance all year. We thank her for all she has done for our chapter over the years. Also moving on is our webmaster, Mary Dodge, who also moved north, to Maine, and will no longer be able to handle our website. Jan Nuhn has volunteered to try to work as our webmaster and we are grateful for her speaking up when we needed someone. Thanks to Mary for all her work over many years. She has done an excellent job for us and we will miss her.

Our Program Chair, Adella Blacka, will also be moving to the west coast of Florida and we will need someone to arrange our speakers for next season. She is ready to show how it's done and give the next person some ideas for speakers next season. If you would like to give back to our chapter for providing such good birding adventures and speakers, please think about helping us and working with us on programs at our general meetings. We need you!

On May 2nd, part of our Program will be giving awards to three students chosen by Matthew Anderson (our Science Advisor) for their STEM projects. They are invited to tell us about their work

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Chapter Dues

The year for local chapter dues runs January to January. Dues can be paid by check or credit card on our Web site: <http://stlucieaudubon.org>

- Individual: \$25
- Family (2 or more people): \$30
- Sponsor: \$50
- Patron: \$100

The Laughing Gull

Photo by Ed Bowes

Citizen Science

BY ED BOWES

May brings the Global Big Day birding event. This year, the Global Big Day is happening on May 11, [World Migratory Bird Day](#). This year’s slogan is “Protect Insects, Protect Birds.” You have 24 hours to count birds, from 12 midnight to 11:59 PM on the 11th. Count birds anywhere in St. Lucie County, your backyard, a preserve, or even a supermarket parking lot, then report your observations on [eBird](#). You never know what you might spot. Your observations help us better understand global bird populations through products like these [animated abundance maps](#) brought to you by eBird Science.

Last year, [Global Big Day](#) brought more birders together virtually than ever before. More than 62,400 people from 253 world regions submitted a staggering 159,567 checklists with eBird, setting a new world record for a single day of birding. Returning again, [eBird Trip Reports](#)! You can share the trip report with friends and family as you bird throughout the day on May 11. It’s a great way to hit that 70 species in St. Lucie County goal!

President’s Message (continued from p. 3)

and they will receive monetary awards and certificates from us. You will be amazed at the level of scientific research they have accomplished. The families of these students will also be invited and so our meeting will be full of new faces. Be there to see them and their project boards.

As outgoing President, I want to say that it has been my pleasure to work with everyone and do my best to keep us current and moving forward. Peter Koch will be elected soon, and I hope he gets the support I had, and will have a successful year 2024-2025. Keep looking up (that’s where the birds are)!

Ellen Lynch

St. Lucie Audubon Officers & Board Members

[President](#) – Ellen Lynch

[Vice President](#) – Ed Bowes

[Treasurer](#) – JoAnn Stillman

[Recording Secretary](#) – Holly DeMarco

[Corresponding Secretary](#) - Jan Nuhn

[Program Chair](#) – Adella Blacka

[Birding Adventure Co-Chairs](#) – Doris Brookens, Kathy Mayshar

[Conservation Chair](#) – Diane Goldberg

[Membership Chair](#) – Jan Nuhn

[Events Chair](#) – Harriet Scott

[Public Relations](#) – Ruth Neese

[Directors at Large](#) – Wayne Landry, Kathy Mayshar, John Nelson

[Science Advisor](#) – Matthew Anderson

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

The Laughing Gull

Feathered Friends

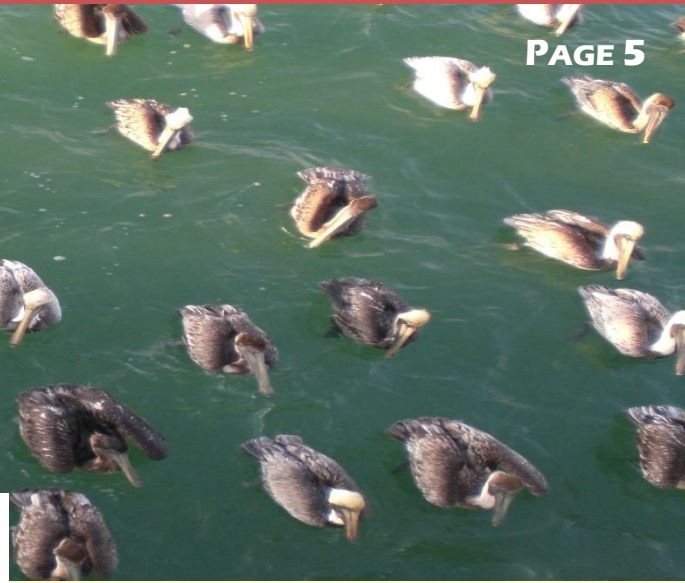
BY RUTH NEESE

There were questions at Oxbow's Earth Day festival about "weird bird sounds at night." One local caller is a Chuck-will's-widow. My first encounter with a Chuck-will's-widow (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*) was as a child growing up on a barrier island off coastal Georgia. I nearly stepped on the bird while I was walking through the pinewoods next to my house. At the last second, the bird turned its head and I noticed the movement! Chuck-will's-widows are superbly camouflaged, their feathers being variegated shades of brown with black flecks and a brown throat, and seldom seen unless flushed from the ground.

The Chuck-will's-widow is a harbinger of spring in the southeastern U.S., well known for its namesake call on clear moonlit nights. The bird is a member of the nightjar family, a group of birds with long wings, small legs, nocturnal or crepuscular activity, and large mouths. A Chuck-will's-widow's beak is only ½ inch long, but the mouth can gape to 2 inches! This mouth is surrounded by stiff bristles that enlarge the gape, enabling the capture of large insects while in flight.

If you think you are hearing these birds for the first time this year, you are correct! Calling at night coincides with breeding season, and Chuck-will's widows call more during the full moon. Breeding and nesting begin in March and runs through June; up to 2 eggs are laid in leaf litter on the ground. There is no attempt at nest building. Incubation lasts about 20 days, and the young are capable of flight 17 days after hatching. Though listed as a Species of Least Concern, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology lists them as a Common Bird in Steep Decline.

We still have Chuck-will's-widows in St. Lucie County, even though you may never see one. You are far more likely to hear one, especially west of I-95 or near open forests in the county. Be sure to listen for the [call](#) of this enigmatic bird on a clear moonlit night.



Coming Attractions

FIELD TRIP

TBA

GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, May 2, 2024

“Bald Eagles of the Treasure Coast”

Speaker: Barbara Pierzakowski

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

<http://stluciesudubon.org>

St. Lucie Audubon Society

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