

MARCH 2020

VOLUME 45, ISSUE 6

# St. Lucie Audubon Society

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



## The Laughing Gull

### President's Message

By Ellen Lynch

As I showcased some of our board and chair members activities last month, I mentioned more to come. We have very active and dedicated members that help provide our chapter with a variety of services and information.

Have you noticed how wonderful our monthly newsletter is? Every month we get a synopsis of activities and some learning facts about birds in our newsletter. The editor and publisher of this document is Ruth Neese, PHD. She is a past president and advocate for birds. She is a board member of the Treasure Coast Wildlife Center (with her husband, Ed Bowes) and she creates our newsletters all by herself. She works full time for IRSC as a Professor in the Nursing School. She is so busy that she is unable to attend most of our meetings, but she is always there in spirit. We do appreciate her commitment to providing us with updates and teaching us about local birds. Thank you, Ruth!

If you have enjoyed and learned a lot from our speakers this season, you can thank Kevin Hinkle. He took over the Program Chair from me this year. He has had to learn how to find speakers and book them, keeping them happy and informed about our meetings. It is wonderful to have variety and interesting programs. If you get a chance, let Kevin know how you like the programs and offer any advice for new speakers

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*Photo by Dan Marinelli*

Thursday, March 5:  
Speaker: Tyler Beck

The speaker for our March general meeting will Tyler Beck, Florida Wildlife Commission Snail Kite Conservation Coordinator. His topic is “Snail Kites: A Real Florida Survival Story”

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Monday, March 16, 2020  
Orlando Wetlands Park & Blue Heron Wetlands

**Where:** 25155 Wheeler Rd, Christmas, FL 32709

**When:** Meet at 8:30 am in the Orlando Wetlands parking lot. We will be boarding trams promptly at 9:00 am for out tour.

**Guide:** Linda Sullivan

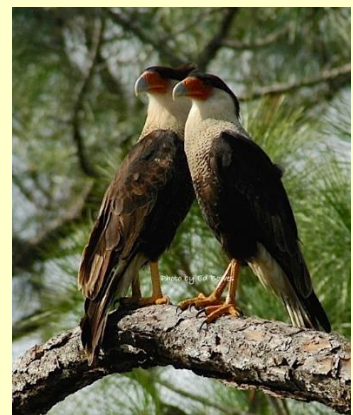
**Details:** We will look for Least and American Bittern, Purple Gallinule, Limpkin, and Osprey. Black-bellied Whistling Duck, other waterfowl, Crested Caracara, and Snail Kites are possible.

Full details at

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

**Contact:** Doris Brookens at cell: 717-576-7876 email:

[dorisbrookens@gmail.com](mailto:dorisbrookens@gmail.com)



**“Everyone likes birds. What wild creature is more accessible to our eyes and ears, as close to us and everyone in the world, as universal as a bird?” ~ David Attenborough**

# President's Message (continued)

BY ELLEN LYNCH

(Continued from page 1)

as he is already working on next year's lineup. Kudos to Kevin!

At our March meeting we will not only have a great speaker, but we will be awarding three cash honorariums to local students who had projects in the S.T.E.M. contest this school year. Our Science Advisor, Matthew Anderson, and member Kirk Fusco, volunteered to be judges for this contest and they chose the three award winners for our Annual Grace Stock Conservation Awards. These students and their families are invited to our meeting to show their project and give us a summary of their objectives. By doing this, our chapter encourages young scientific students to work on conservation ideas and it promotes our commitment to advocate for habitat conservation for birds. This will be a highlight of our meeting and it is my hope you will join us to see and meet these wonderful students. We want to thank Matthew and Kirk for taking time to do this important event.

As you can see, we are a working team and everyone is doing their part to make our chapter the best it can be. Soon we will be holding elections for officers and Board Members at Large. If you are interested in serving and joining our team, please let us know as we will open the nominations to the floor at our next meeting. We would love to have you in our circle! See you on March 5<sup>th</sup>.



## 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

The next “big event” in birding is the Global Big Day on May 9, 2020. Participation is simple, but you do need an eBird account. If you do not have an eBird account, [create one here](#). To participate in the Global Big Day, just count birds! You do not have to commit to birding for 24 hours—an hour or even 10 minutes of watching birds makes you part of the team. Visit your favorite spot or search out someplace new; enjoy a solo walk or get some friends to join in the Global Big Day fun.

Enter the birds that you see and hear via the eBird website or the eBird app on your cellphone. You can enter and submit lists while you are still out birding, and the app will even keep track of how far you have walked, so you can focus on watching birds. It is that simple!

Keep an eye on the [Global Big Day page](#) on May 9 and watch as the lists roll in. Stats are updated in real-time. The 2019 Global Big Day set a new world’s record for the most people birding in a single day—more than 32,500 people in 171 countries reported 6816 species. Join in this year!

**Project Feederwatch** starts Saturday, November 9 and runs through April 3, 2020. Join the team of citizen scientists by counting birds who visit your yard and feeders! The Cornell Lab of Ornithology uses the data to identify changes in winter ranges and bird species at risk. You can join Project Feederwatch here: <https://feederwatch.org/about/how-to-participate/>

### St. Lucie Audubon Officers & Board Members

President – Ellen Lynch

Vice President – Ed Bowes

Treasurer – JoAnn Stillman

Recording Secretary – Kathy Mayshar

Corresponding Secretary - Jan Nuhn

Program Chair – Kevin Hinkle

Birding Adventure Co-Chairs – Adella Blacka, Doris Brookens

Conservation Chair – Diane Goldberg

Membership Chair - Carol Pembroke

Events Chair – Harriet Scott

Public Relations – Ruth Neese

Directors at Large – Adella Blacka, Roger Laliberte, John Nelson

Science Advisor – Matthew Anderson

Raffle Coordinator – Wayne Pembroke

Board members may be contacted by email at [stlucieaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:stlucieaudubon@gmail.com)

## The Laughing Gull

# Feathered Friends

BY RUTH NEESE

The largest member of the corvid family you will see in St. Lucie County is the American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*). These crows are 15 – 20 inches in length with a wingspan of 33 – 39 inches. American Crows are all black—plumage, beak, legs, and eyes. The bill is heavy and straight, and the wings are broad, rounded, and spread like fingers at the wingtips.

American Crows are intelligent, social, and often travel in large flocks. They are capable of problem solving and have been documenting using tools (sticks, strips of paper, etc.) to obtain food. Crows can also learn to identify individual humans and remember whether a particular person was “good” or “bad” from a crow perspective.

American Crows are omnivorous, eating a wide range of food. They will glean seeds and grain from fields; pluck berries and nuts from shrubs and trees; raid bird nests for eggs or nestlings; and visit landfills, dumpsters, and garbage cans for human leftovers. Crows have also learned to steal food from open-air restaurant tables, even when humans are sitting at the tables.

American Crows and the other local crow species, the Fish Crow, are nearly identical. Fish Crows are slightly smaller than American Crows. Their call is the only reliable means of identifying the two species, unless they are side-by-side. American Crows vocalize with the stereotypical “caw-caw,” while Fish Crows call a higher pitched “ca-hah” or “ah-ah.”

Look for American Crows across St. Lucie County, from the beach to the Okeechobee County line. They can be seen in Bluefield Ranch Preserve, Pinelands Preserve, Teague Hammock Preserve, George LeStrange Preserve, and Fort Pierce Inlet State Park. Be sure to note what the crows sound like to confirm your ID!



## Coming Attractions

### **FIELD TRIP**

Thursday, April 9, 2020

Circle B Bar Reserve

### **GENERAL MEETING**

Thursday, April 2, 2020

Todd Weissing of the Rivers Coalition, "Our Waters, Past, Present and Future"

## We're on the Web!

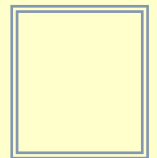
Visit us at:

<http://stluciesudubon.org>

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