

JANUARY 2021

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St. Lucie Audubon Society

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



The Laughing Gull

President's Message

By Ellen Lynch

I know you are reading this a bit before we turn the page on 2020, but HAPPY NEW YEAR 2021! Nothing means more than having hope that the new calendar year will bring relief from our anxiety over the virus and economic hardships. I am surely hopeful that we will be happier, and our environment will be cared for more by our new administration in Washington.

Our Program for the January 7th general meeting has changed. Sam Fried will not be available for us this winter, but we have already found a wonderful replacement. Adella Blacka, our temporary Program Chair, has announced she has booked Adam DiNuovo, who will speak to us about "How Bird Banding Aids Conservation."

His talk will be a good Segway into our newest project with the St. Lucie County Environmental Resources Department. Our past President, Eva Ries, has written a grant proposal that was submitted to Florida Audubon for \$1000 to cover some costs for the banding of Scrub Jays on public lands in St. Lucie County. This project is already underway and there are some equipment costs that we can request funds to purchase, thereby making us a partner in this project. If you recall, we partnered with the St. Lucie Co. ERD a year ago to provide nesting platforms for osprey and great blue herons on Wesley Island.

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Photo by Dan Martinelli

Thursday, Jan. 7:

Speaker: Adam DiNuovo

Adam DiNuovo, seabird biologist and SW Florida Shorebird Program Manager for Audubon Florida, will be speaking on “How Bird Banding Aids Conservation.” In this talk, he will discuss how banding gives researchers a view of the amazing lives of birds and how the stories birds can tell helps us conserve them.

Scheduled Field Trips Canceled until further notice. Watch our website for pop-up trips. We hope to be able to resume our trips soon!

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

“The conservation of natural resources is the fundamental problem. Unless we solve that problem, it will avail us little to solve all others.” ~ Theodore Roosevelt



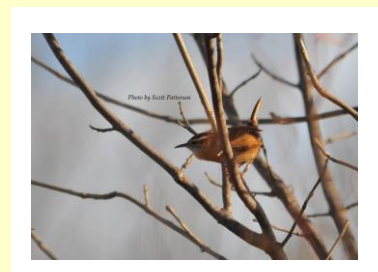
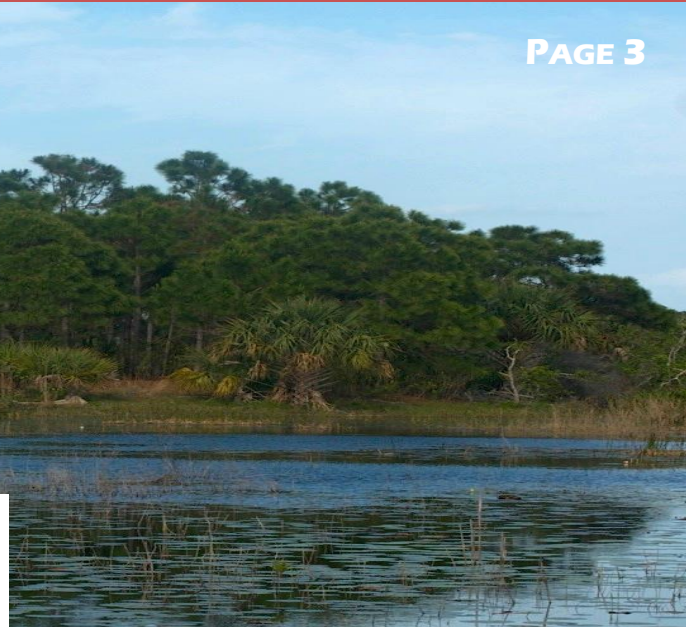
President's Message (continued)

BY ELLEN LYNCH

(Continued from page 1)

We actually received an award from Florida Audubon for the best project that year! If we receive these funds, we can help St. Lucie Co. band the scrub jays in our parks for scientific research. We will find out if we qualify for the grant in early January. Let's keep our fingers crossed!

Our Christmas Bird Count took place on December 19, 2020. All teams were successful in finding and counting our local birds. We are all very grateful to Ed Bowes, our Vice President and Citizen Science Chair, who works tirelessly to organize our count by teams and compiles all the data we collect to submit to Florida Audubon. Our success every year is due in part to his leadership. Thanks Ed! Watch our website for a report with all the data collected in the near future.



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

Our Christmas Bird count was a success, thanks to everyone who participated on a team! All the teams reported a bit of difficulty locating birds this year, likely due to the weather being less glorious than forecast. I am still compiling data, but here are a few highlights:

- Twenty-eight people participated;
- Team 7 reported 18 Roseate Spoonbills and a Great Horned Owl;
- Team 2 spotted a rare bird—a Black-throated Blue Warbler—and two Frigatebirds;
- Team 6 counted 600 Black-bellied Whistling Ducks; and
- The count included 400 Brown Pelicans, 12 White Pelicans, 5 Northern Harriers, 80 American Kestrels, 9 Bald Eagles, 8 Crested Caracara, 2 Sharp-shinned Hawks, and 750 American Robins. Well done!

Florida has approved a native plant license plate! The Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) worked very hard to accomplish this goal. The license plate will help fund the mission of FNPS. The catch is that a minimum of 3000 license plates must be pre-ordered before production will begin. To see a sample plate and place an order, visit this [link](#).

The Great Backyard Bird Count is coming in February!

The count runs for four days, from Feb. 12-15, 2021. You can count birds on one, two, three, or all four days. All you have to do is observe birds for at least 15 minutes on one of the four days, then submit your count list. No travel is necessary—just stay in your backyard! Participation is free, but you must create an account. More information can be found [here](#).

St. Lucie Audubon Officers & Board Members

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Program Chair – Kevin Hinkle

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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

The Laughing Gull

Feathered Friends

BY RUTH NEESE

One of our rare intermittent visitors has returned this year—a Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*). You may notice from the photos that it is not a noticeably purple bird. The “purple” in the name comes from a purple sheen on some hard-to-see wing feathers. Purple Sandpipers are slate gray above with gray speckling on a white belly. The bill is long, slightly drooping, and orange at the base. They have a rounded belly that can make their legs appear short; the legs are actually long for their size.

A Purple Sandpiper counts are rare here because they do not normally travel this far south. This species has the northernmost winter range of any shorebird. They are rarely seen south of North Carolina in the winter. In the summer, they breed as far north as Baffin Bay in Canada and northern Greenland.

These sandpipers favor rocky coastlines where they forage for invertebrates in crevices. They may also be found looking for food along wrack lines with other shorebirds. In St. Lucie County, you are most likely to find a Purple Sandpiper along the edge of the rip rap off downtown Ft. Pierce. In Martin County, they favor the exposed rocky surfaces near the Gilbert’s Bar House of Refuge. There was one sighted near the House of Refuge just before Christmas.

The east coast of Florida is a major migration pathway. Thousands of birds pass through here every year. You never know what you might find, so keep those eyes open!



Coming Attractions

FIELD TRIP

Field trips are on hold at this time.

GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, February 4, 2021 via Zoom

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

<http://stluciesudubon.org>

St. Lucie Audubon Society

P.O. Box 12474

Ft. Pierce, FL 34979

