

OCTOBER 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

St. Lucie Audubon is back in session as of October! We are looking forward to a successful and interesting new season. Our Board of Directors has already met and started working towards providing us with projects, field trips, and wonderful speakers for our upcoming meetings. Check our website for the listings each month.

This season, we are going to provide some options for our members regarding the general meetings. The monthly general meetings will take place at the Oxbow Eco-Center as usual, but for those of us who cannot attend in person, we are going to offer our meetings on our Facebook Page, streaming live. This will begin at our first meeting on October 7th at 7 pm. We hope this will add flexibility for those out of town, or not able to attend. If you attend our meeting in person, we will require a mask during the meeting indoors and we will place the chairs apart so some social distancing is provided. As things might change during the year, we can also change and adapt to anything that needs to be done. It is our hope that everyone can enjoy our meetings and keep in touch this way. Please feel free to let us know if you like this idea or have another suggestion for us. We are open to being flexible.

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Photo by Dan Marinelli

Thursday, Oct. 7:

Presenter: John Nelson

“An Evening with Clyde Butcher and Nathaniel Reed” is an interview with these famous champions of the natural environment. Join us on Facebook Live!

**Field trip: Ft. Pierce Inlet State Park,
Saturday, October 16
8:00 – 10:30 AM. Masks are required!**

Leaders: Tim Towles and Billi Wagner

Details: Ft. Pierce Inlet State Park charges an admission fee of \$4 for a single-occupant vehicle or \$6 for a vehicle with 2 – 8 occupants. Meet in the main parking area.

October is a good time to see migrating birds as they pass by on the Eastern Flyway. You will be looking for shorebirds, warblers, and perhaps a passing raptor.

Bring water and wear beach-worthy shoes. Restroom facilities are available.

Contact: Doris Brookens for questions at 717-576-7876, email dorisbrookens@gmail.com

Sign up for the trip [here](#) or visit our website to register.

***“Nature is painting for us, day after day,
pictures of infinite beauty.” ~ John Ruskin***



President's Message (continued)

BY ELLEN LYNCH

(Continued from page 1)

Now on to some other good news! During the summer break we received some new members and sponsors. We want to welcome new members, Sadruddin Patel, George Cathcart, and a new sponsor, Robert Hoopes. We also received some noteworthy donations, a donation from Janice Rosier in memory of Jody Rosier, a donation from the Network for Good, and a very large and generous donation from Sally and Jack Chapman. We thank them all!

Our website is your best bet for finding interesting things to do and participate. Thanks to our webmaster, Mary Dodge, for keeping us all up to date and providing expert services for our chapter!

See you on October 7th!



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

Conservation News

By Ed BOWES

The Florida Rights of Nature Network is currently holding a petition drive to place five constitutional amendments on the ballot in 2022 to give rights to nature. One of these petitions is the Right to Clean Water. This amendment would acknowledge that bodies of water in the state of Florida have four fundamental rights: the right to exist, the right to flow, the right to be free of pollution, and the right to maintain a healthy ecosystem. The amendment would also strengthen pollution protection of Florida waters and permit Florida citizens to take direct action against polluters without having to go through a government agency.

You can read more about all five proposed amendments [here](#).

You can read the full text of each amendment at FL5.org and obtain petitions to sign for each amendment.

Project Feederwatch starts November 13th! You can count the birds that visit your backyard feeders all winter and report these counts to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. There is a fee of \$18 to participate for the 2021-2022 season. For more information and to join, visit this [link](#).



St. Lucie Audubon Officers & Board Members

President – Ellen Lynch

Vice President – Ed Bowes

Treasurer – JoAnn Stillman

Recording Secretary – TBA

Corresponding Secretary - Jan Nuhn

Program Chair – Adella Blacka

Birding Adventure Co-Chair – Doris Brookens

Conservation Chair – Diane Goldberg

Membership Chair - Carol Pembroke

Events Chair – Harriet Scott

Public Relations – Ruth Neese

Directors at Large – Adella Blacka, Kathy Mayshar, John Nelson

Science Advisor – Matthew Anderson

Raffle Coordinator – Wayne Pembroke

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

Feathered Friends

BY RUTH NEESE

If you want to see excited birders, make sure to be present when one spots their first rail. Rails are secretive birds that live in grassy wetlands and marshes, making them difficult to spot. They are often seen by accident when someone is trying to determine if a particular reed is actually a bittern. Suddenly, a small bird appears from the reeds and disappears almost as quickly—a rail. Several species of rail live in Florida.

The Clapper Rail (*Rallous longirostris*) is a year-round resident of coastal Florida, living in saltmarshes and mangrove swamps. Normally secretive and well camouflaged, the bird is more often heard than seen. Their loud “kek-kek-kek” call is very distinctive. Clapper Rails very seldom fly, and feed by probing the ground for crustaceans, mollusks, slugs, and insects. Fiddler crabs are a favorite food item. It is during feeding that you are most likely to glimpse one of these rails when it wanders out of dense cover for a moment.

Clapper Rails are one of the larger rails found in Florida, with a compact body, short tail, and longer legs. These birds range in length from 12.6 to 16 inches and weigh approximately three-quarters of a pound. They have a long, slightly decurved beak that is yellowish in color with a darker tip. The feathers range in color from reddish to gray with dull striping on the flanks and gray cheek patches. They walk with their neck outstretched and their tail erect. To hear a Clapper Rail, visit this [page](#).

If you are birding the edges of a saltmarsh or mangrove stand, or kayaking through channels in a marsh, have your camera ready! You never know when a Clapper Rail might pop out.



Coming Attractions

FIELD TRIP

November TBA

GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, Nov. 4, 2021

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

<http://stluciesudubon.org>

St. Lucie Audubon Society

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