



**MAY 2022**

**VOLUME 47, ISSUE 8**

# 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 regular meetings and activities wind down for the summer after our last meeting on May 5<sup>th</sup>. We have had an extraordinary season this year with challenges from the pandemic, to successes with memberships and meetings held on Zoom, Facebook and in-person. Our team of Officers and Program Chairs have been awesome, and we have held together to provide very interesting meetings with learned presenters and different topics to appeal to many of our members.

There are plans already in motion for next season which will begin in October. Though we are not meeting during the June to October time frame, we are still doing Audubon business and we keep in touch when important items come up that need our attention. We answer our voice mail inquiries and respond to people who send in emails with questions. Please feel free to contact us via our website anytime if you have any questions or comments that you want to bring to us. Our website is kept up to date by our board and our webmaster, Mary Dodge. Thanks Mary, for your time and professionalism, as you assist us with keeping our members and the public informed on activities and birds of interest.

I want to remind you all that we have received donations from our use of Smile.Amazon over this last season. Please remember when you are

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## The Laughing Gull

Thursday, May 5:

**Presenter: Michael Brothers**

"Voyagers on the Open Sea—the Pelagic Birds of Florida" by Michael Brothers, Adjunct Professor of Environmental Science - Stetson University and retired Director of Marine Science Center in Ponce Inlet, Florida. **Zoom Presentation Only!**

**Field trip: TBA—watch our website and social media for summer opportunities**

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



***"Birds are indicators of the environment. If they are in trouble, we know we'll soon be in trouble."* ~ Roger Tory Peterson**

# President's Message (continued)

**By ELLEN LYNCH**

(Continued from page 1)

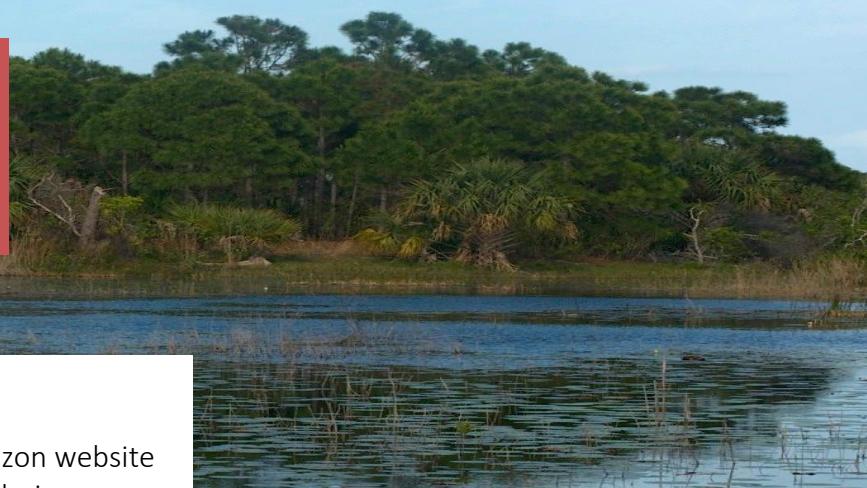
ordering online with Amazon, just use the Smile.Amazon website and choose St. Lucie Audubon as your non-profit of choice.

Without you paying any more for your order, Amazon sends us a percentage of all our orders on a quarterly basis. This donation is growing as more of us are remembering to use this way to order online. This is a Win-Win for Amazon and us! Please use it and let's get even more donations as we go through the summer months.

Our last event for the season was Earth Day, held on 4/23 at the Oxbow Eco-Center. We were able to inform people about our chapter and hopefully educate some of the children who visited our booth. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped that day including Tom and JoAnn Stillman, Diane Goldberg, Marjorie Flory, Kathi Weissberger and husband, Adella Blacka, Matthew Anderson, and Jan Nuhn.

We wish everyone a summer full of birds and exploration.

Ellen Lynch, President



## 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**

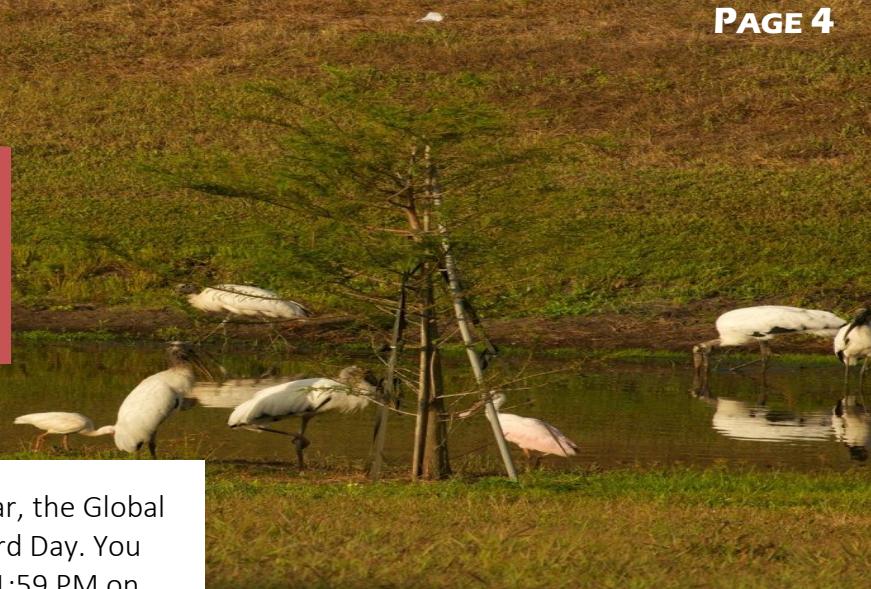
May brings the Global Big Day birding event. This year, the Global Big Day is happening on May 14, World Migratory Bird Day. You have 24 hours to count birds, from 12 midnight to 11:59 PM on the 14<sup>th</sup>. Count birds anywhere in St. Lucie County, your backyard, a preserve, or even a supermarket parking lot, then report your observations on [eBird](#). There is even a mobile [eBird app](#) now! 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 51,000 people from 192 countries submitted a staggering 134,000 checklists with eBird, setting a new world record for a single day of birding. New for this year, [eBird Trip Reports!](#) You can share the trip report with friends and family as you bird throughout the day on May 14. Let's set a record for participation and species counted in St. Lucie County this year!

Looking for a project not related to birds? There is a webpage for that! All federal level citizen science projects can be found at <https://www.citizenscience.gov/> There are several federal projects active in Florida at this [link](#).

And don't forget about state-level citizen science projects! FWC has several options for participation, too. Just click this [link](#). Be a citizen scientist!

**Want to build a nest box for your favorite cavity-nesting bird(s)?** Visit the Cornell Lab of Ornithology [NestWatch](#) web page. There are plans for dozens of nest boxes, from ducks to Great Crested Flycatchers. The site includes information on siting your nest box, excluding predators, and preventing unwanted guests, like bees, wasps, and squirrels. You can even learn how to become an official NestWatch citizen scientist!



### 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](mailto:stlucieaudubon@gmail.com)

# Feathered Friends

By RUTH NEESE

Spring has begun, and that means it is time for our nightjars to return! The two species of nightjar we see in St. Lucie County are the Chuck-will's-widow and the Common Nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*). This section will discuss the Common Nighthawk.

Common Nighthawks are striking in the air, with long, narrow pointed wings, prominent white bars on the underside of the wings, and a white throat patch. The birds have a short neck and barely visible bill, giving them a big-headed look. They have a medium-long tail with wide dark bars.

On the ground, they are nearly invisible due to effective camouflaging. They are mottled gray, brown, white, buff, and black in color, which allows them to blend in with vegetation on the ground or in trees. During the day, they roost motionless on tree branches, fence rails, or on the ground. They are so difficult to see that I have almost stepped on one more than once!

Common Nighthawks lay their eggs on the ground without a nest. The eggs and young blend in with surrounding materials so well, that they are nearly invisible, too!

These birds return to Florida in the spring to breed. Common Nighthawks are crepuscular birds—seen mostly at dusk and dawn as they hunt for insects on the wing. They are amazing aerialists, looping and diving in pursuit of their prey. As they fly, they make a characteristic *peent* call. In a deep dive, you may hear a “boom” as the bird pulls up. Air rushing over the wingtips produces this booming sound.

Look for these aerialists flying at dusk and dawn over open grassy areas near wetlands. In St. Lucie County, watch for these birds at McCarty Ranch Preserve, around fresh-water marinas and parks, ball fields, and along the C-24 Canal Road.



## Coming Attractions

### **FIELD TRIP**

TBA

### **GENERAL MEETING**

See you in October!

### **We're on the Web!**

Visit us at:

<http://stluciesudubon.org>

*St. Lucie Audubon Society*

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Ft. Pierce, FL 34979

