

NOVEMBER 2022

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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

Hi friends and visitors from up-north! We are going to have our first general meeting in person at the Oxbow Eco-Center on Thursday night, November 3rd at 7 pm. We will be so glad to be together again in person and to catch up with everyone. Our speaker will be past President, Eva Ries. She is our expert on the Florida Scrub Jays and I am sure her presentation will be very good and informative. She has been working with the Scrub Jay colonies here in St. Lucie County for years. She has recently banded many of the birds and taken counts every summer. If you cannot attend in person, don't forget we will broadcast it live on our Facebook page.

Our Chapter participated in the Indian River Lagoon Science Festival on October 22nd. Volunteers manned the booth and we were able to educate children and adults on the local birds in our area. Thanks to Diane Goldberg, Richard Lynch, Jan Nuhn and Phil.

We are still working on developing a YouTube channel for our chapter and John Nelson is leading us through this development. Please send pictures or videos to John as content for our channel. This is an on-going project and we will need your help to make it successful. If you have any pictures or videos from one of our Birding Adventures, please send them to John at: floridawildoutdoors@gmail.com

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Thursday, Nov. 3:

Presenter: Eva Ries

“Amazing World of the Florida Scrub Jay.” Eva Ries will be discussing the fascinating, family-oriented lives of Florida Scrub Jays. **Face-to-face at Oxbow Eco-center and on Facebook Live.**

**Field trip: Egret Marsh Stormwater Park
Thursday, November 10, 8:30 – 10:00 AM
Trip Leader: Doris Brookens**

The walk is easy on a paved and milled path that is about ½ Mile. Please use the restroom before you arrive. There is a Location map at the website link below.

Questions? Contact Doris at (717) 576-7876 or email dorisbrookens@gmail.com

Please register on our Web page:
<https://www.stlucieaudubon.org/field-trips>

“...I keep looking for one more teacher, only to find that fish learn from the water and birds learn from the sky.” ~ Mark Nepo



President's Message (continued)

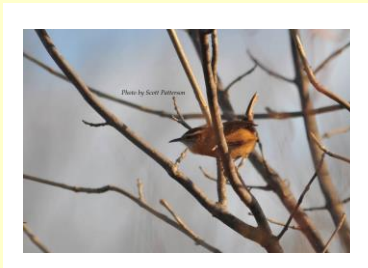
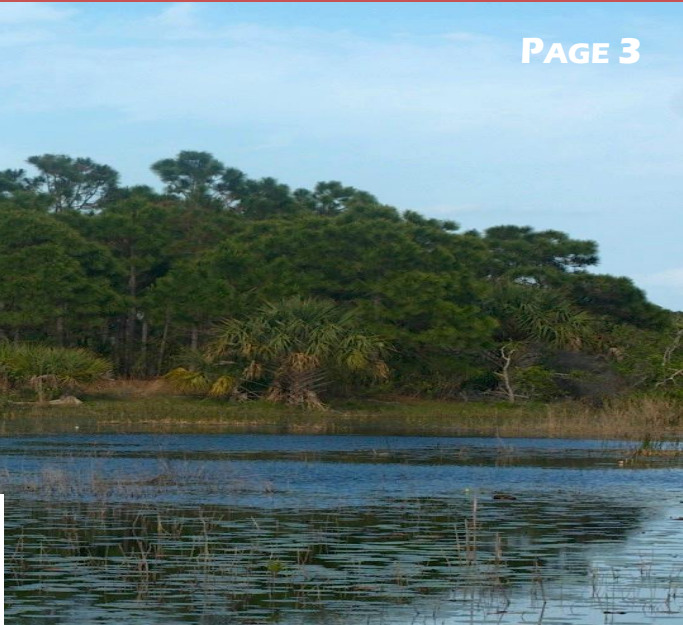
BY ELLEN LYNCH

(Continued from page 1)

Mark your calendar for this year's Christmas Bird Count to be held on Saturday, December 17th. We will need volunteers to work the area and count our birds on that day. Ed Bowes will be our Chair for this event and will send out more information as we get closer to that date.

Sadly, one of our newly elected Director-at-Large officers unexpectedly passed away over the summer months, Tom Stillman. As a memorial to his participation in our chapter, the board has decided to plant a tree in his memory at Oxbow Eco-Center. The staff there are welcoming to our idea, and a perfect spot is being found on their grounds. Diane Goldberg will help us decide on the species of tree depending on the location. Soon there will be a new tree with a plaque for us to watch grow. Our condolences to our Treasurer, JoAnn Stillman. She is a wonderful officer and we want to extend our support and love to her as she moves forward.

See you on November 3rd!



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

Hurricane Ian made landfall on the west coast of Florida on September 28, 2022, devastating the coastline and destroying entire communities of plants. This event occurred near peak migration bird time in October. What does this mean for citizen science? It means that winter bird counts, like Project Feederwatch, are even more important in Florida this year.

Strong hurricanes blow migrating birds off course and strip trees and shrubs of fruits, berries, and insects. This creates difficulties finding food for migrating and resident bird populations. Both migrants and resident birds may shift their ranges in search of food. Sometimes, these changes become permanent.

By counting and reporting the birds you see at your feeders and in your yard here in Florida this winter, you help biologists and ornithologists track changes in bird populations that resulted from Hurricane Ian. You can do this by joining Project Feederwatch (information below) or by counting and reporting birds on eBird. If you need information on eBird, visit this [link](#).

Project Feederwatch starts November 1st and runs through April 29th! 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 2022-2023 season. For more information and to join, visit this [link](#).

The Pelican Island Audubon Society is holding a conference on sustainable landscapes on January 21, 2023. Cost is \$25 for the day and the fee includes a box lunch. For more information and to register, visit the website [here](#).

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

The Laughing Gull

Feathered Friends

BY RUTH NEESE

Many members of our Facebook group have been excitedly posting photos of a colorful migrant, Painted Buntings (*Passerina ciris*). These striking members of the cardinal family only visit our area during migration, and a few overwinter locally. They are not summer residents.

Mature male Painted Buntings are impossible to miss, with their vivid fusion of green, red, blue, and yellow plumage. This beautiful plumage gives the species its common name. Females and immature males are a distinctive bright green with a pale eye ring. That means if you see a “greenie” here in St. Lucie Co., you cannot determine if the bird is a female or immature male.

Painted Buntings eat seeds most of the year, and forage on the ground for seeds of wood sorrel, spurge, St. John’s wort, sedge, pine, and various grasses. They can be attracted to feeders, but you must provide the right seed and appropriate landscape. For landscape, you need bushy cover—hedges, brushy shrubs, or yews. This cover must be within four feet of your feeders. Painted Buntings prefer feeders that exclude larger birds like Blue Jays, grackles, and large doves. In the winter here, the favored seed for buntings is white millet. So, shrubby cover plus white millet usually equals a visit to your yard from these little jewels.

There is a downside to the habits of our migratory Painted Buntings. The colorful males are illegally trapped and sold as cage birds because poachers know they will be concentrated in South Florida. Illegal trapping is a significant problem in Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade counties, but you could find cage traps anywhere in South Florida. If you post photos of Painted Buntings online, please do not include location information! Poachers monitor social media sites, too. If you find a cage trap or witness anyone trapping these birds, report it to the FWC at 888-404-3922 or send a text to Tip@MyFWC.com .



Coming Attractions

FIELD TRIP

Thursday, December 1, 2022

Indrio Savannas Preserve

GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, December 1, 2022

“Prescribed Fire”

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

<http://stluciesudubon.org>

St. Lucie Audubon Society

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