

OCTOBER 2023

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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

Most of us are birders and we consider looking for birds is a lot of fun. Others have fun working on native butterfly and bird gardens. Even others have fun working at the Adams Ranch Fund Raisers. All together we all have the ability to have fun in our Audubon Chapter.

Our hard-working Board has met, and our planning has begun for all our general meetings (go to our website to see the list of programs for the season). Thanks Adella!

Did you know that we will be celebrating our 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2024? Our chapter began in 1954 and I have been told we are one of the oldest established chapters in Florida. We are looking for ideas to celebrate this event and your input would be appreciated. If you have a good idea for an Anniversary event, please let us know. You can come to our meeting on October 5<sup>th</sup> or send us an email with your ideas. We will talk about it at the meeting and choose the best idea for our celebration. The email address is [stlucieaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:stlucieaudubon@gmail.com).

Matthew Anderson, our Science Advisor, will be attending the annual Florida Audubon Assembly in Tampa in October. He will represent our chapter and if you have any thoughts to bring to the table, please let him know.

Our Adams Ranch dates have been confirmed for next year. Harriett

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Thursday, Oct. 5:  
Presenter: Diane Goldberg

“Butterflies and Birds for Your Backyard” will demonstrate how gardening with native plants saves water and brings beautiful guests to your yard.

Field trip: Savannas Preserve State Park  
Thursday, October 19, 8:00 – 10:00 AM  
Trip Leader: Lorraine Morecraft

This trip will explore pine flatwoods and offer views of the largest remaining remnant of freshwater marsh that used to cover much of southeast Florida. This will be a walking tour approximately 2 miles in length. Please wear appropriate shoes and bring binoculars, water, and snacks.

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

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

***“A forest bird never wants a cage.” ~ Henrik Ibsen***



# The Laughing Gull

## President's Message (continued)

BY ELLEN LYNCH

(Continued from page 1)

Scott has made the arrangements with the ranch and the dates for our fundraiser will be January 20<sup>th</sup>, February 17<sup>th</sup> and March 16<sup>th</sup>. There will be more information to come as we get closer to the time.

We can announce the opening of our own U-Tube Channel! John Nelson has done a wonderful job putting it together. He states that it is half done, he expects to add more content, including an interview with me at Oxbow, talking about our chapter. If you are interested, and I hope you are, go to U-Tube and search St. Lucie Audubon to find it. Enjoy!

One last thing, Ed Bowes has announced that our Christmas Bird Count will be held on Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup>. We will need all of you to help get our count done on that day, so please mark your calendars now.

With all the exciting happenings in our new season, there's one important thing we need to accomplish, **let's have some fun!**



### 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

You have the chance to participate in the [October Big Day](#) of Birding on Saturday, October 14! By participating, you will also be celebrating [World Migratory Bird Day](#) and [Global Bird Weekend](#). Global Bird Weekend is a team event that starts Oct. 13 and ends Oct. 15. A team is not required to participate in October Big Day, but you will need an [eBird account](#). Then on October 14, you count birds for any period of time—10 minutes to 8 hours—and enter your count in eBird. You can count the birds on your backyard feeders, as you walk around the neighborhood, in a local park, or make a day of traveling in the county. **Our goal is to count 100 species for St. Lucie County on October Big Day!**

**SAVE THE DATE:** Christmas Bird Count will be held Saturday, December 16—rain or shine. Please mark your calendars and watch for more info from Ed Bowes.

### Remember:

[Project Feederwatch](#) starts November 1<sup>st</sup> and runs through April 29<sup>th</sup>! 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 2023-2024 season. This year, there is an added option to count mammals! For more information and to join, visit this [link](#).



### St. Lucie Audubon Officers & Board Members

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

## The Laughing Gull

# Feathered Friends

BY RUTH NEESE

Fall migration is in full swing! Barn Swallows led the charge and now the warblers and raptors are passing through. The local population of one raptor swells with migration, the Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*). These are the most common hawks in North America. Resident Red-tailed Hawks are less common in South Florida than further north, but are relatively easy to find here in the winter. They are large hawks from the Buteo family, meaning they have broad, rounded wings and a short, wide tail. Large females may be mistaken for eagles if seen from a distance! Were you aware that almost every eagle “scream” you have ever heard in a Hollywood movie was actually a Red-tailed Hawk?

Adult Red-tailed Hawks can be identified by their brick-red tails. Immature birds have a brown tail with multiple dark brown stripes. Both adult and immature hawks will have a distinctive field mark called a belly band. This is a row of darker feathers running across the bird's midsection, which can usually be seen when the tail is not visible. When in flight and seen from below, these hawks are mostly light colored with a dark leading edge on the wings, dark tips on the primary feathers, and a dusky trailing edge on the wings. Nineteen plumage variations have been documented in Red-tailed Hawks, from almost white to almost black!

Buteos hunt by soaring over open fields and making a slow, controlled dive toward their prey with their legs extended. Buteo hawks are not built for speed. They are built for extended periods of soaring and for strength. In flight, these hawks are pale below with dark tips on the primary feathers and a darker trailing edge on the wings. Look for them riding a thermal as they travel south or perched at the top of a pine tree. The numbers of migrants will be peaking in October. Red-tailed Hawks are a very different “snowbird.”



## Coming Attractions

### **FIELD TRIP**

Thursday, November 10, 2022

Egret Marsh Stormwater Park

### **GENERAL MEETING**

Thursday, November 2, 2023

“History of Water Management in South Florida”

## We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

<http://stluciesudubon.org>

*St. Lucie Audubon Society*

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