

NOVEMBER 2023

VOLUME 49, ISSUE 2

St. Lucie Audubon Society

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



The Laughing Gull

President's Message

By Ellen Lynch

We are finally in the Florida fall season and many of us have seen the beginnings of migration here in St. Lucie County. Some warblers, kingfishers, kestrels, and even northern harriers were spotted already. It is always so much fun to see them back again after a long hot summer. Keep looking around and you can see many winter visitors at your favorite parks and preserves.

The **annual Adams Ranch Tour**, our fundraiser, has been posted on our website and reservations are now being accepted for any of the three dates offered: Jan 20th, Feb 17th, and March 16th. If interested, please make your reservation now since these tours do sell out very quickly. The cost is \$45 pp. and includes an outdoor "cowboy style" hot breakfast and a bus ride through the Adams Ranch by a member of their family. Think Yellowstone!

We are planning some special activities for our 70th anniversary, and one is going to be a challenge to increase our membership by 70 people by the end of 2024. We will celebrate at one of our general meetings with a delicious cake and drinks. You can help by talking about our chapter to your friends and neighbors. If we each found one more member, we can easily reach our goal.

(continued on page 3)

Inside This Issue

President's Message	1
Field Trip and Speaker	2
President's Message (cont.)	3
Chapter Dues Schedule	3
Citizen Science	4
Officers & Board Members	4
Feathered Friends	5



Photo by Dan Marinelli

Thursday, Nov. 2:

Presenter: Kathy La Martina

“History of Water Management in South Florida” presented by Kathy La Martina, the South Florida Water Management District representative for Martin and St. Lucie counties.

Field trip: Egret Marsh Stormwater Park
Friday, November 17, 8:30 – 10:00 AM
Trip Leaders: Alexis Peralta & Kathy Mayshar

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. **Limit 19 people!** Questions? Contact Doris at (717) 576-7876 or email dorisbrookens@gmail.com

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

“Between every two pine trees there is a door leading to a new way of life.” ~ John Muir



President's Message (continued)

BY ELLEN LYNCH

(Continued from page 1)

I want to wish you all a wonderful Thanksgiving and try not to remember that the turkey is a bird.... Gobble, gobble, "Lets continue to have some fun!"

Calling all Photographers!

Audubon of Martin County is hosting a juried photography contest and exhibition that is open to all photographers. Any photos entered must have been taken in Florida. See the flyer on the last page.

Categories:

- Birds / Wildlife
- Landscape / Flora
- Creative Category
- Cellphone Photography

Contact Audubon of Martin County board member, Sonia Sousa, with any questions at soniasousa7@gmail.com

Detailed info at this link:

<https://www.onlinejuriedshows.com/Default.aspx?OJSID=58611>



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

Thank you to everyone who participated in the October Big Day! To see the complete stats for the world, by hemisphere, and by continent, visit this [link](#). For Florida, 275 species were counted; the state came in #4 in the U.S. for species counted.

Our chapter goal was to count 100 species, but we did not quite get that many. The results for St. Lucie County were:

- 86 species counted
- 38 eBird lists submitted
- 25 people submitted lists
- Top number of species—Adella Blacka at 51!
- Ed Bowes counted 37 species
- Ellen Lynch counted 33 species

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.

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 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

President – Ellen Lynch

Vice President – Ed Bowes

Treasurer – TBA

Recording Secretary – Holly DeMarco

Corresponding Secretary - Jan Nuhn

Program Chair – Adella Blacka

Birding Adventure Co-Chair – Doris Brookens, Kathy Mayshar

Conservation Chair – Diane Goldberg

Membership Chair – Jan Nuhn

Events Chair – Harriet Scott

Public Relations – Ruth Neese

Directors at Large – Wayne Landry, Kathy Mayshar, John Nelson

Science Advisor – Matthew Anderson

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

The Laughing Gull

Feathered Friends

BY RUTH NEESE

One of the birds recorded for the St. Lucie County October Big Day was a Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*). *Nycticorax* means “night raven,” and refers to the primarily nocturnal feeding habits of these birds. The croaking, crow-like call of Black-crowned Night-Herons also fits the name.

Black-crowned Night-Herons are most active at night or at dusk, which makes them a bit more challenging to find. During the day, they are usually seen in a roost or lurking in the shadows of mangrove roots. They can be found in fresh, salt, and brackish wetlands and marshes.

Black-crowned Night-Herons are stocky birds with short legs, compared to other herons. They have a heavy black bill, yellow legs, grayish-white underparts, gray wings, and a dark gray cap and back. Adults also have a long white head plume. Juveniles are similar in shape with a heavy dark bill and overall brown and white spotting.

Black-crowned Night-Herons are opportunistic feeders, meaning they will eat a wide variety of terrestrial, freshwater, and marine organisms. Their diet includes worms, fish, mollusks, lizards, snakes, turtles, rodents, birds, and eggs. They also eat carrion, plant material, and garbage. This means you could spot one of these birds near roadkill or at a landfill at the right time of day.

You will have to be patient and quiet in order to find one of these herons. Some of the best places to see them in St. Lucie County are Ocean Bay Riverside Park, Teague Hammock Preserve, Pinelands Preserve, Savannas Preserve State Park, and the wetlands on Summerlin RD. One may occasionally be spotted along a canal or in a swale in the western portions of the county. So keep your eyes open at dusk when you are traveling through the right habitat; you could see a Black-crowned Night-Heron!



Coming Attractions

FIELD TRIP

Wednesday, December 6, 2023

Green Cay Nature Center

GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, December 7, 2023

“Around the World with Disney Conservation”

We're on the Web!

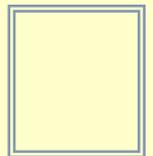
Visit us at:

<http://stluciesudubon.org>

St. Lucie Audubon Society

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Ft. Pierce, FL 34979





"Florida's Natural Beauty" Juried Photography Contest & Exhibition

Enter the contest on the Online Juried Shows website through Nov. 30, 2023
Visit www.onlinejuriedshows.com and look for the Audubon of Martin County logo

Gallery exhibit and opening reception to be at The Elliott Museum in Stuart, Florida



Photography categories:

- Birds
- Wildlife
- Flora/Landscape
- Cell Phone Photography
- Creative category

Awards:

- Best In Show: \$300
- Each Category:**
- First place: \$200
 - Second Place: \$100
 - Third Place: \$50
 - Honorable Mention Awards

Brought to you by Audubon of Martin County: www.audubonofmartincounty.org