

APRIL 2024

VOLUME 49, ISSUE 7

St. Lucie Audubon Society

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



The Laughing Gull

President's Message

By Ellen Lynch

Spring is here and many of us have seen some migrant birds coming through our area. Hope you have been birding in St. Lucie County so you can count the birds seen or heard for the 70th Anniversary Bird Challenge going on now. If you can find at least 70 birds in St. Lucie County, you can get a free T-shirt for your efforts. Kathy Mayshar is the leader of this competition and she will accept your list, and provide the shirt, when you are finished. This competition will continue throughout 2024, so you can take time to accomplish finding 70 birds. Have fun with this and you will be surprised how many birds you can find here!

In April our Chapter announces a slate of officers to be voted into their jobs in May. The slate of officers for 2024-25 is as follows:

President: Peter Koch

Vice President: Ed Bowes

Treasurer: Ellen Lynch

Recording Secretary: Holly DeMarco

Corresponding Secretary: Jan Nuhn

Director at Large: Kathy Mayshar

(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



The Laughing Gull

Thursday, April 4:

Presenter: Dr. Jim Masterson

“Indian River Lagoon: An Exceptional Estuary,” presented by Dr. Jim Masterson, Assistant Research Professor, FAU Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute.

Field Trip 1: George LeStrange Preserve

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

8:00 – 10:30 AM

Leaders: Doris & Steve Brookens

Details: Join us for a fun-filled morning of birdwatching at the beautiful preserve. This event is perfect for bird enthusiasts looking to add to their 70th Anniversary Bird Challenge list.

More details on our Web page:

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

Field Trip 2: Egret Marsh Stormwater Park

Friday, April 12, 2024

Sunset Bird Walk—7:00 – 8:15 PM

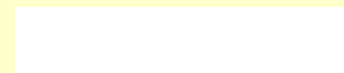
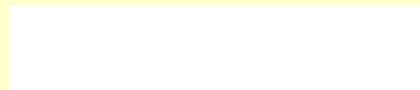
Leader: Alexis Peralta

Details: Trip limited to 20 people. Address: 7295 4th Street, Vero Beach, FL—put this in your GPS. Easy ¾ mile walking loop, but restrooms are limited. More details on our Web page:

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

Visit this Link to [register](#).

“In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.” ~ Margaret Atwood



President's Message (continued)

BY ELLEN LYNCH

(Continued from page 1)

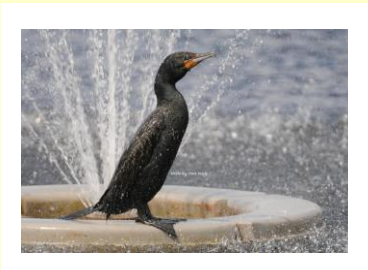
If anyone in our membership would like to be considered for any of these offices, please make yourself known. We can still add you to the final slate. At the May General Meeting we will have the final vote on the slate and the officers will begin their tenure as of June 1st.

The Grace Stock Awards has been postponed until the May meeting. Two of the three winners were unable to attend in April since they were asked to present their projects in the State level competition in early April. Please mark your calendars so you will not miss this awards program on May 2nd.

Our April 4th General Meeting will be quite exciting. We are celebrating our 70th Anniversary as a chapter at this meeting. It begins with a bird walk right before the 7 pm meeting at Oxbow Eco-Center at 6 pm. Doris and Steve Brookens will lead the walk and you will need to sign up for it on our website. Then at 7 pm we will hold our General Meeting with a speaker on The Indian Lagoon by Dr. Jim Masterson, Assistant Research Professor at FAU. Following the meeting we will be offering some refreshments including a cake to mark our anniversary. We hope many of you will attend this meeting and help us celebrate!



**St. Lucie Audubon
Society
70th Anniversary
Celebration**



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

Nesting season is in full swing! Bald Eagle and Great Horned Owl chicks will be fledging soon, Osprey are feeding their hatchlings, Eastern Screech Owls are incubating eggs, and Swallow-tailed Kites are courting and nesting now. One way to continue contributing to citizen science is by participating in NestWatch. NestWatch is a program sponsored by the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#). NestWatch is a nationwide monitoring program designed to track status and trends in the reproductive biology of birds. This database is intended to be used to study the current condition of breeding bird populations and how they may be changing over time as a result of climate change, habitat degradation and loss, expansion of urban areas, and the introduction of non-native plants and animals.

Anyone can participate as a NestWatch monitor. Just visit the [NestWatch](#) page, follow steps 1 through 4, then start looking for bird nests!

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.

St. Lucie Audubon Officers & Board Members

[President](#) – Ellen Lynch

[Vice President](#) – Ed Bowes

[Treasurer](#) – JoAnn Stillman

[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

This is a Northern Parula (*Setophaga americana*), a type of warbler. While most Northern Parulas live and breed in Florida just to our north, some do remain in St. Lucie County to breed during the summer. They are quite vocal in June and July, but they become a bit quieter in August. Their primary call sounds a bit like dragging a fingernail along the stiff teeth of a plastic hair comb.

Like all warblers, Northern Parulas are small, quick, and tend to stay high in trees. This creates what birders call "warbler neck," a pain in the neck from having your head tipped so far back for so long trying to spot tiny birds! They are high in the trees gleaning insects for food—spiders, caterpillars, moths, beetles, and others.

Northern Parulas are multi-colored, with a blue-gray hood and wings and a yellowish chest and throat. A reddish-black band runs across the chest, and they have a greenish patch on their back. The birds show two white wing bars and white crescents above and below their eyes.

Parulas are dependent upon epiphytic (air) plants for nesting. They use Spanish moss in the southern U.S. and beard moss in the northern U.S. and Canada. Levels of air pollution that kill these plants inhibit the nesting of Northern Parulas. Therefore, you are most likely to see these warblers in preserves with ample Spanish moss hanging from the trees--Bluefield Ranch Preserve, Paleo Hammock Preserve, D. J. Wilcox Preserve, Oak Hammock Park, Gordy Road Recreation Area, and St. Lucie Preserve State Park. You will hear them before you see them! You can hear their songs and calls [here](#).



Coming Attractions

FIELD TRIP

TBA

GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, May 2, 2024

“Bald Eagles of the Treasure Coast”

Speaker: Barbara Pierzakowski

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

<http://stluciesudubon.org>

St. Lucie Audubon Society

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