

JANUARY 2019

VOLUME 44, ISSUE 4

# St. Lucie Audubon Society

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



## The Laughing Gull

### President's Message

By Eva Ries

After a very busy 2018 full of birding, events, and programs....a new birding year is upon us!

Up for an adventure at one of the biggest historical gems in the county? Our annual fundraising event of the year, a tour of the Adams Ranch, is here! We have tour dates in January, February, and March, so don't delay—get your ticket today! Reserve your ticket online here: <https://www.stlucieaudubon.org/slas-store>

In February, the chapter will support the *2019 St. Lucie Regional STEM Fair* by awarding the Grace Stock Environmental Award to three outstanding student projects. We are proud to again support our county students as they explore science, technology, engineering, and mathematics through the learning experience of participating in projects for the STEM Fair.

Keep an eye on the skies for our resident and dry season migratory birds, especially hummingbird species as they are seeking out blooms and feeders in the area.

As always—Happy Birding!

### Inside This Issue

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



Photo by Dan Martinelli

Thursday, January 3

Speaker: Ken Gioeli

The speaker for our January meeting is Ken Gioeli, UF Extension agent. His topic is "Bats of Florida." His presentation will include a demonstration of outdoor bat detection, so the meeting may run longer than usual.

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## Field Trip, Saturday, January 12 Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge

**Meet:** Home Depot parking lot Okeechobee RD, Ft. Pierce at 6:15 AM Saturday, Jan. 12. Leave at 6:30 AM

**Guides:** Avid birders Doris and Steve Brookens

**Details:** The wildlife viewing is phenomenal! A drive along Blackpointe Drive at MINWR (\$10 fee per car), followed by lunch (bring a lunch and drinks), then a stop at the Ritch Grissom Memorial Wetlands, AKA Viera Wetlands, in Viera, FL. This will be an all-day trip. For full details and to sign up for the trip, click [here](#).



**"If we can teach people about wildlife, they will be touched. Share my wildlife with me. Because humans want to save things that they love." ~ Steve Irwin**



# Conservation Corner

BY DIANE GOLDBERG

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has updated its Species Conservation Measures and Permitting Guidelines twice in 2018. Eight species from the state-threatened species were given conservation guidelines in July. These species were Barbour's map turtle, Big Cypress fox squirrel, Black Creek crayfish, blackmouth shiner, Florida burrowing owl, Florida pine snake, saltmarsh topminnow and Santa Fe crayfish.

The Species Conservation Measures and Permitting Guidelines were updated again in December to include an additional nine species from the FWC Imperiled Species Management Plan. The species included Florida bog frog, crystal darter, Sherman's short-tailed shrew, Georgia blind salamander, Southern tessellated darter, and four species of wading birds—Little Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, Reddish Egret, and Roseate Spoonbill (see spoon bill in photo at right). Noticeably absent from the new list was the Florida subspecies of Sandhill Crane, which does not migrate and can be found only in Florida.

Species guidelines are designed to be a tool for landowners, consultants, agency partners and other interested parties on how to conserve these species. The guidelines offer options for avoidance, mitigation, and minimization of take (death of individual animals). More information [here](#).



## Chapter Dues

The year for local chapter dues runs January to January. Dues can be paid by check or via Paypal 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

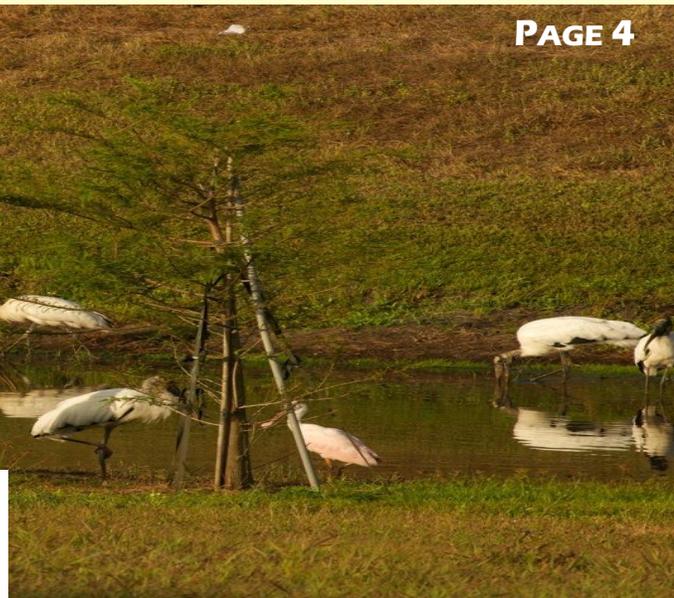
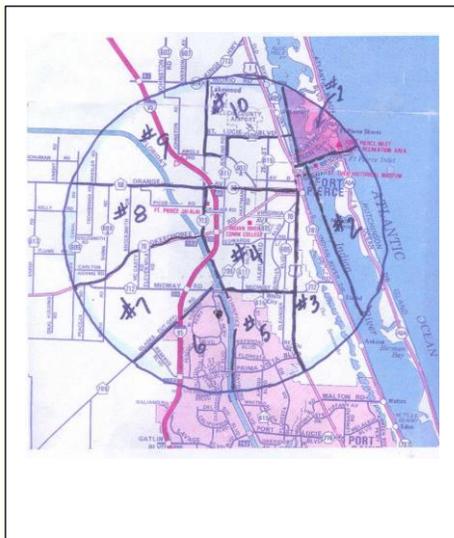
By Ed Bowes

A big thank you to everyone who participated in our chapter's Christmas Bird Count on December 22<sup>nd</sup>. The weather was beautiful—clear, sunny, and cool with minimal wind. A special shout-out goes to Tim Towles from Indian River County who counted the birds in the Ten Mile Creek Water Preserve Area! This is the first year that the Ten Mile Creek project will appear in our count results.

All of the 10 teams had a great day, with most teams averaging 50 species. There were some special sightings and some first-time birds this year. The team from Area 9 spotted four Sharp-tailed Sparrows and 324 Cattle Egrets. The Area 6 team sighted the first ever Purple Swamphen on our CBC! Another first came from the Area 2 team, with a report of 60 Surf Scoters.

I will be providing a synopsis report as soon as I have all of the count lists. Thanks again, everyone!

If you are birding, report what you see for science! The better the data, the better scientists can guide conservation efforts for birds and other species. Report bird sightings to eBird at <https://ebird.org/home>



### St. Lucie Audubon Officers & Board Members

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Vice President – Ellen Lynch

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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



White-winged Doves (*Zenaida asiatica*) were originally from the U.S. desert Southwest. They now can be found along the coast of the Southeastern U.S. These doves are present in St. Lucie County year-round, but are not as common as Mourning Doves or Eurasian Collared-Doves.

White-winged Doves are slightly larger than Mourning Doves and are an overall brown color. They lack any spots or marks except for a black stripe on the cheek and a white stripe along the edge of the folded wing (photo 2 by Hart Rufe). When viewed close-up, adults have bright blue skin around the eyes. Locally, hatch-year birds may show a white stripe on the cheek (photo 1 by Ed Bowes). In flight, the white wing crescent becomes a bold white stripe that sets off dark outer wings. The tail feathers also have a white tip when fanned out.

They will visit backyard seed feeders and birdbaths. Elevated feeders, especially those with a large flat surface are preferred. Sunflower, milo, and safflower seeds are some of their favorites.

Look for these doves scattered in the more western portions of St. Lucie County, although they are now seen more frequently in the western suburbs. They are commonly seen perched on utility wires running across open grassy fields. White-winged Doves have also been sighted in Ft. Pierce Inlet State Park.



## Coming Attractions

### **FIELD TRIP**

Saturday, February 9, 2019

Joe Overstreet Landing, Kenansville, FL

Guide: Linda Sullivan

### **GENERAL MEETING**

Thursday, February 7, 2019

Speaker: Matthew Anderson—"Spoil Island Bird Usage:  
Birds in the Indian River Lagoon"

## We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

<http://stluciesudubon.org>

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