

APRIL 2019

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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 Eva Ries

Our third and final Adams Ranch fund-raising tour for the year was a smash hit, and kudos to Events Chair Harriet Scott for organizing the event, answering many inquiries, and bringing about another chapter success!

April is upon us with great field trips, another great guest speaker, and awards for the winning projects from the St Lucie County Regional Science Fair in February. Don't miss it!

The chapter will be an exhibitor in the St. Lucie County Earth Day Celebration on April 13 at the Oxbow Eco-Center. Come out and help us work our exhibitor booth, or come as a visitor – all are welcomed.

The skies are filled with the sounds of whistling Swallow-tailed Kites, the plaintive notes of Cedar Waxwings, trills of various wood warblers such as the Northern Parula, and the sexy notes of Mr. Northern Cardinal, who seems to have a loudspeaker in every shrub and tree to send the ladies his sultry call!

Have you seen a life bird? One you haven't seen in a while? Your favorites? Share and post photos [HERE!](#)

And as always.....happy birding!

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*Photo by Dan Marinelli*

# The Laughing Gull

Thursday, April 4

Speaker: **Gabby Barbarite**

The speaker for our April meeting is Gabby Barbarite, an alumna of Harbor Branch/FAU. Her doctoral research was on the infectious risk of various *Vibrio* species in the Indian River Lagoon. She will be providing an overview of the activities at the Harbor Branch campus.

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## Field Trip, Saturday, April 6, 2019 Spoil Island Boat Trip, Indian River Lagoon

**Deadline: Sign up by March 24! Space is limited!**

**Guide:** Matthew Anderson, Florida DEP

**Time:** 7:45 am to approximately 1 pm

**Details:** This 4-hour boat tour is in conjunction with the Friends of the Spoil Islands. Matthew Anderson, FL Department of Environmental Protection will be our guide for the day. Matthew is a shoreline bird expert, familiar with the waters and has a wealth of information about birds in this area. Full details and the sign up can be found [here](#).

**“When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.” ~ John Muir**



# Conservation Corner

**BY FLORIDA CONSERVATION VOTERS**

Florida Forever has reappeared in the Florida Senate again this year. A bill sponsored by Senator Linda Stewart and Darryl Rouson (S0994) would guarantee funding the Florida Forever Trust Fund at \$100 million dollars a year. The bill would also prohibit the use of Land Acquisition Trust fund monies from being used for any other purpose.

This type of bill became necessary when the Florida legislature refused to honor the will of Florida citizens in 2014. At that time, the Florida Water and Land Conservation Initiative passed with 75% voter approval. Instead of fully funding conservation initiatives as directed by voters, legislators diverted money to expenses such as staffing and office supplies. S0994, along with its companion bill in the House (HB1341), would prohibit this monetary diversion and ensure the funding of the Florida Forever Trust Fund. Please let your state representatives know that you support these bills. You can find that information [here](#).

Your voice will undoubtedly be needed on environmentally sensitive legislation during this session. Please stay on top of this!



## 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

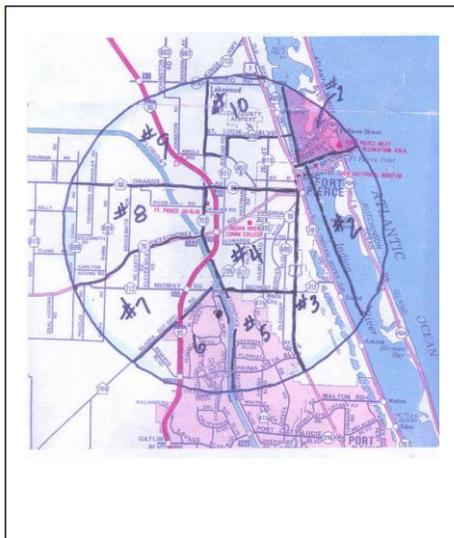
## Citizen Science

By Ed Bowes

Nesting season is in full swing! Bald Eagle chicks will be fledging soon, Osprey chicks will be close behind, and Swallow-tailed Kites and Northern Parulas 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. It is a nationwide monitoring program designed to track status and trends in the reproductive biology of birds, including when nesting occurs, number of eggs laid, how many eggs hatch, and how many hatchlings survive. 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 in Nestwatch! Cornell is looking for nest monitors now. Visit their [website](#) for full information on how to become a Nestwatcher.

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

President – Eva Ries

Vice President – Ellen Lynch

Interim Treasurer – Ed Bowes

Recording Secretary – Kathy Mayshar

Corresponding Secretary - Liz Dunleavy

Program Chair – Ellen Lynch

Birding Adventure Co-Chairs – Adella Blacka, Doris Brookens, Kathy Mayshar

Hospitality - JoAnn & Tom Stillman

Conservation Chair – Diane Goldberg

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Citizen Science – Ed Bowes

Public Relations – Ruth Neese

Events Chair – Harriet Scott

Raffle Coordinator – Wayne Snowy

Director-at-Large – John Nelson

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

## The Laughing Gull

# Feathered Friends

BY RUTH NEESE

Moving on from Willets to something MUCH smaller! Our year-round resident is the White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*). This tiny insectivorous bird is 4 – 5 inches in length and very secretive. It spends its time in very shrubby habitat gleaning insects from foliage. During breeding season, males sing all day long. As a consequence of this activity, it is more easily located by sound than sight.

When you do see a White-eyed Vireo, it will have olive-green upperparts, yellow sides and spectacles, a white throat and two white wingbars. You might note a yellow wash on the tail and wings, too. This bird gets its name from its eye color—a black pupil sits in a white eye. The yellow spectacles outline this white eye. Its legs and beak are black, and the beak is slightly downcurved.

Nests are located in a Y-shaped fork in a shrub about 2-6 feet above the ground. Nests are pendulous, and constructed from spiderweb and other insect silk. The vireos will then fill the shell with leaves, plant fiber, even bits of paper. Plant material is stuck to the outside of the spiderweb shell to serve as camouflage.

Look for this bird in thick cover, along woodland edges, overgrown fields, waterside thickets, and in mangrove stands. In non-breeding season, watch for vireos eating fruit in sumac bushes, dogwood tress, and wax myrtle. White-eyed Vireos have been recorded in Bluefield Ranch Preserve, Pineland Preserve, Paleo Hammock Preserve, Teague Hammock Preserve, George LeStrange Preserve, and the Savannas Recreation Area.

Top photo by Hart Rufe. Bottom photo by Linda Sullivan.



## Coming Attractions

### **FIELD TRIP**

Monthly field trips will resume in October.  
See you then!

### **GENERAL MEETING**

Thursday, May 2, 2019  
Speaker: Multiple for "Show & Tell"

## We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

<http://stluciesudubon.org>

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