

St. Lucie Audubon Society

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



The Laughing Gull

President's Message

By Ellen Lynch

Have you been to a bank recently? Did you ever think you would approach a teller with a bandana face mask and ask for money? Situations like we have now sometimes have defied our normal thinking!

As your President this year, I have enjoyed leading our Board and Chair Persons and hope you have enjoyed our meetings and field trips up until April.

It is with some sadness that I am canceling our general meeting scheduled for May 7th in an abundance of caution. The Oxbow Eco-Center building is closed as of now (although the trails are open if you are interested). It looks like any change by St. Lucie County will still include limiting people to 10 or less, so that will not work for us. We will try to reschedule our speaker, Juanita Baker, to next season.

Our Board and Chairs have all agreed to postpone our annual election of officers until the next general meeting in October. The entire slate as presented to you in March and in our newsletter, will remain the same as this year's slate, and there are no opposition candidates, so everything will continue throughout the summer with all carrying on in their positions. We may need to make a provision in our By-Laws to handle this type of situation in the future, but until then, we are not

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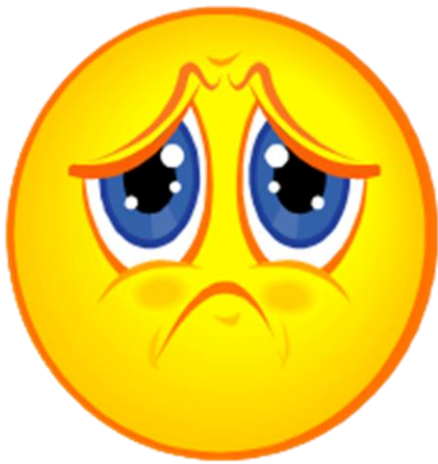
Photo by Dan Marinelli

The Laughing Gull

Thursday, May 7:
Meeting Canceled!

The May General Chapter meeting was canceled to comply with CDC guidelines on the number of people in a group.

Field Trips Canceled until further notice.



**“To cherish what remains of the Earth and to foster its renewal is our only legitimate hope of survival.”
~ Wendell Berry**

The Laughing Gull

President's Message (continued)

BY ELLEN LYNCH

(Continued from page 1)

we are not alone statewide as many of the chapters are doing things this way as well.

Now for some good news, we still have a birding challenge to participate in. The "Global Big Day" is taking place on May 9th. Here is more information:

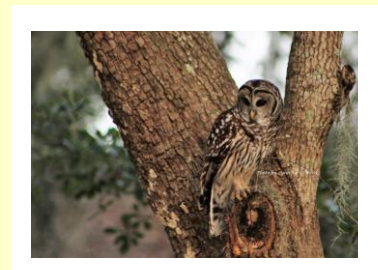
[Global Big Day](#) is an annual celebration of the birds around you, and this year is no different. While not everyone may be able to leave home to bird this year, Global Big Day is still an opportunity to check in with the birds in and around where you live. Join in on 9 May and be a part of a global birding community by sharing what birds you see with eBird.

Participating is easy. Wherever you are, you can be a part of the global community of birders on May 9. Please remember to always put safety first and follow all local safety guidelines and closures. You can enjoy birds from inside your home and still be part of the Global Big Day.

I will try to keep in touch through our website, and it is my hope that by next fall we will be ready to meet again and enjoy seeing each other and discovering birds together. I am available by email anytime:

stlucieaudubon@gmail.com

Ellen Lynch



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

The next “big event” in birding is the Global Big Day on May 9, 2020. Participation is simple, but you do need an eBird account. If you do not have an eBird account, [create one here](#). To participate in the Global Big Day, just count birds! You do not have to commit to birding for 24 hours—an hour or even 10 minutes of watching birds makes you part of the team. Visit your favorite spot or search out someplace new; enjoy a solo walk or get some friends to join in the Global Big Day fun.

Enter the birds that you see and hear via the eBird website or the eBird app on your cellphone. You can enter and submit lists while you are still out birding, and the app will even keep track of how far you have walked, so you can focus on watching birds. It is that simple!

Keep an eye on the [Global Big Day page](#) on May 9 and watch as the lists roll in. Stats are updated in real-time. The 2019 Global Big Day set a new world’s record for the most people birding in a single day, and we want to break that record this year! Please participate, even for a short time and contribute to citizen science.

Audubon Florida Jay Watch

Audubon Florida coordinates the Jay Watch citizen science program statewide. We train and support volunteers to conduct scientific surveys that measure annual nesting success and count the total number of Florida Scrub-Jays at more than 46 sites in 19 counties. We have Jay Watch sites in St. Lucie County. To learn more or volunteer, visit the Jay Watch [page](#).

Nature’s Notebook is part of the USA National Phenology Network. This program uses citizen scientists to track changes in local plants, insects, and animals that could result from climate change. Why not collect some data while you are out birding? For more information and to join Nature’s Notebook, visit this [link](#).

St. Lucie Audubon Officers & Board Members

[President](#) – Ellen Lynch

[Vice President](#) – Ed Bowes

[Treasurer](#) – JoAnn Stillman

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[Events Chair](#) – Harriet Scott

[Public Relations](#) – Ruth Neese

[Directors at Large](#) – Adella Blacka, Roger Laliberte, John Nelson

[Science Advisor](#) – Matthew Anderson

[Raffle Coordinator](#) – Wayne Pembroke

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

The Laughing Gull

Feathered Friends

BY RUTH NEESE

There was a recent conversation in the chapter Facebook group about a strange bird calling at night. That bird was a Chuck-will's-widow. My first encounter with a Chuck-will's-widow (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*) was as a child growing up on a barrier island off coastal Georgia. I nearly stepped on the bird while I was walking through the pinewoods next to my house. At the last second, the bird turned its head and I noticed the movement! Chuck-will's-widows are superbly camouflaged, their feathers being variegated shades of brown with black flecks and a brown throat, and seldom seen unless flushed from the ground.

The Chuck-will's-widow is a harbinger of spring in the southeastern U.S., well known for its namesake call on clear moonlit nights. The bird is a member of the nightjar family, a group of birds with long wings, small legs, nocturnal or crepuscular activity, and large mouths. A Chuck-will's-widow's beak is only ½ inch long, but the mouth can gape to 2 inches! This mouth is surrounded by stiff bristles that enlarge the gape, enabling the capture of large insects while in flight.

If you think you are hearing these birds for the first time this year, you are correct! Calling at night coincides with breeding season, and Chuck-will's widows call more during the full moon. Breeding and nesting begin in March and runs through June; up to 2 eggs are laid in leaf litter on the ground. There is no attempt at nest building. Incubation lasts about 20 days, and the young are capable of flight 17 days after hatching. Though listed as a Species of Least Concern, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology lists them as a Common Bird in Steep Decline.

We still have Chuck-will's-widows in St. Lucie County, even though you may never see one. You are far more likely to hear one, especially west of I-95 or near open forests in the county. Be sure to listen for the [call](#) of this enigmatic bird on a clear moonlit night.



Coming Attractions

FIELD TRIP

Field trips will resume in October 2020

GENERAL MEETING

Meetings will resume in October—stay safe and healthy!

We're on the Web!

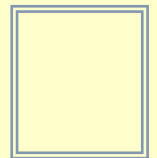
Visit us at:

<http://stluciesudubon.org>

St. Lucie Audubon Society

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