

MARCH 2021

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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 Ellen Lynch

Our Chapter has been working on quite a few projects and I want to let you know how we are progressing.

We have been awarded a grant from Florida Audubon for Scrub Jay banding in St. Lucie County. News from Eva Ries, our member and representative for the Environmental Resources Dept of St. Lucie County, has reported much success in the efforts to band the different families of Scrub Jays in our public parks. Hopefully we can get a more detailed report from her at our general meeting in April.

Our Science Advisor Matt Anderson and Kirk Fusco have volunteered to be judges at the recent virtual STEM Fair. They worked together to find three projects that represent conservation issues and have named the winners for first, second and third place awards. The Grace Stock Conservation Awards are an annual event for our chapter and we look forward to hearing about the projects by these local students. The First-place award goes to Madison Adkins, the Second-place award goes to Lilian Crawford, and the Third-place award winner is Tyler Daniel. They will be invited to attend our general meeting on March 4th and receive their awards as they tell us a little about their projects. We love to support our young students in their quest to help our planet and find ways to conserve our resources.

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Photo by Dan Martinelli

The Laughing Gull

Thursday, March 4:
Speaker: Matthew R. Anderson

Matthew R Anderson, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection. Indian River Lagoon Aquatic Preserves on *Oystercatchers & Shorebirds: Wing and a Prayer.*

Field Trip: Sunset Birding at the C23/C24 Reservoir, Tuesday, March 9 from 4:00 to 7:00 PM.

We will meet at 4 PM at Paleo Hammock Preserve to caravan to our destination. The Reservoir is a water impoundment area surrounded by a level mowed berm. You may walk along the berm or bring a chair and bird from the parking lot. The big attraction is the hundreds of birds returning to roost. For questions, contact Doris Brookens at cell: 717-576-7876 email: dorisbrookens@gmail.com

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

Photo by Hart Rufe



“The wilderness holds answers to questions man has not yet learned to ask.” ~ Nancy Newhall

The Laughing Gull

President's Message (continued)

BY ELLEN LYNCH

(Continued from page 1)

Finally, we have decided to hold one Adams Ranch Tour event this spring. We have booked the date, Saturday, April 17th, for our annual fundraiser. The event will be scaled down to permit social distancing and masks will be required, but we can offer the tour to 35 people on that date. An outdoor breakfast will also be served. Watch for the event to be advertised on our website, and, of course, it will be first come, first served. These events sell out quickly, so if you are interested, please make your reservation right away on line. If you are a new member, this is a great opportunity to see this well known, and historic ranch and the beautiful land in western St. Lucie County.

See you on March 4th at the general meeting!



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

It's hard to believe, but spring migration is upon us! The first Swallow-tailed Kite has been sighted in St. Lucie County, and more will be returning. Our migratory bird population will be northbound, and St. Lucie Co. is a stop on their journey. Now would be a good time to invest in a pair of good binoculars (or upgrade your existing optics). The National Audubon Society publishes the [Audubon Guide to Binoculars](#) on its website. This guide describes binoculars with a price range and good viewing for every user. The guide is updated regularly. Take a look in preparation for spotting those departing "snowbirds."



Florida has approved a native plant license plate! The Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) worked very hard to accomplish this goal. The license plate will help fund the mission of FNPS. The catch is that a minimum of 3000 license plates must be pre-ordered before production will begin. To see a sample plate and place an order, visit this [link](#).

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. You can even learn how to become an official NestWatch citizen scientist!

St. Lucie Audubon Officers & Board Members

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

The Laughing Gull

Feathered Friends

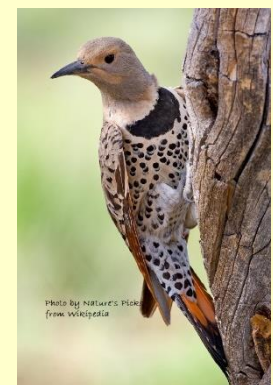
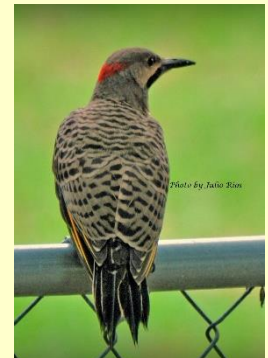
BY RUTH NEESE

Almost everyone has seen a Red-bellied Woodpecker. Fewer of us have seen a Northern Flicker, even though these woodpeckers are native to the area. Northern Flickers have been in decline since 1966, with a 49% drop in population between 1966 and 2012 according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey. Here in Florida, we see the yellow-shafted subspecies, *Colaptes auratus auratus*, which refers to the yellow color of the wing feather shafts.

Like other woodpeckers, there are subtle color variations between male and female Northern Flickers. Males have a black moustache (photo 1), while females lack this black marking (photo 2). Both sexes have a brown face with a gray crown, a red crescent at the nape of the neck, a black bib, and overall brown upperparts with black barring. Underparts are light beige to white with black spots. In flight, eastern Northern Flickers show yellow under the wings and tail feathers.

Unlike most other woodpeckers, you are more likely to see Northern Flickers on the ground! Their preferred foods are beetles and ants, which they dig up using their slightly curved bill. They are cavity nesters like other woodpeckers, and will sometimes forage on tree trunks.

Because they forage on the ground, yet need trees for protection, look for these birds in edge habitat. That means along the edges of woodlands, open fields with scattered trees, and the edges of wetlands. They have been recorded in Sheraton Scrub Preserve, Indrio Savannahs Preserve, Paleo Hammock Preserve, and Bluefield Ranch Preserve.



Coming Attractions

FIELD TRIP

March 9, 4:00 PM—Sunset Birding at C23/C24
Reservoir

GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, April 1, 2021 via Zoom

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

<http://stluciesudubon.org>

St. Lucie Audubon Society

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