

NOVEMBER 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 local chapter is happily moving along with many of our activities being scheduled and events planned. Here are our coming events!

In November our chapter will give a talk on Florida birds, how to identify them, and what Audubon is all about, to the residents of Del Webb, a gated community in the Tradition area. We were invited by a resident there, Wayne Landry, who thought his neighbors would be interested in learning about the birds they see in their area daily. Ed Bowes has offered to provide the talk at their community center on November 17th, at 6:30 pm. Any of our members who would be interested in attending to represent our chapter are welcome to attend as well. **Thank You Ed** for your efforts to open birding experiences to new people and teaching them about our feathered friends.

Our Annual Christmas Bird Count Event is now scheduled for Saturday, December 18th. Please mark your calendars now so we can get all the volunteers needed to participate. Ed Bowes will be in charge of scheduling the volunteers and the zones they are assigned to that day. More information can be found in this issue's Citizen Science section.

Our Annual Adams Ranch Tour fundraising event is also now scheduled. Harriet Scott has confirmed three dates, January 22,

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Photo by Dan Marinelli

Thursday, Nov. 4:

Presenter: **Richard Forster, MD**

“Herons of Florida.” This presentation is in-person only; there will not be any virtual broadcast.

Field trip: Egret Marsh Storm Water Park and Wildlife Sanctuary

Tuesday, November 30

8:00 – 10:30 AM. Masks are required!

Leaders: Alexis Peralta and Kathy Mayshar

Details: 7295 4th ST, Vero Beach, FL 32968

This is a working stormwater treatment facility that uses algae to scrub nitrogen & phosphorus from stormwater. 54 species of birds have been sited at this facility! Easy walking on approx. ½ mile paved and milled surface path. Use the restroom before arrival.

Contact: Kathy Mayshar cell: 772-359-9108 or email: cmectvtfl@gmail.com

Sign up for the trip [here](#) or visit our website to register.



“The care of rivers is not a question of rivers, but of the human heart.” ~ Tanako Shozo

The Laughing Gull

President's Message (continued)

BY ELLEN LYNCH

(Continued from page 1)

February 19th, and March 5th. She has also confirmed the caterer for those dates and we will soon have all the information and reservation links on our website. If you have not had the opportunity to visit Adams Ranch, please consider choosing a date and making a reservation. The cost will be \$40 per person including a hearty buffet breakfast, a riding tour (on a school bus with no windows), and a visit to the Bud Adams Museum on the grounds. The event is held rain or shine. A great **Big Thanks to Harriet** for working on this event and making it so wonderful every year!

Just a friendly reminder to all of you; as you shop for the holidays, please remember that using Smile.Amazon.com is a wonderful way to support our chapter, as the donations from Amazon are adding up. We have received over \$100 from Amazon over the last year and a quarter from your purchases using this website. You just need to use the Smile.Amazon website and choose St. Lucie Audubon as your recipient, and we get a percentage of what you spend without any cost to you! Thanks for using this way to purchase your gifts in the past, and I challenge you to do more in the future!

Happy Thanksgiving to All!



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

Time for the Christmas Bird Count!

It's that time again—time for the 122nd annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC)! The CBC is conducted between December 14 and January 5 each year, and the St. Lucie Audubon Society count will be held **Saturday, December 18, 2021**, rain or shine. The count begins just after sunrise and lasts for a minimum of 8 daylight hours. Nocturnal birding, or owling, is optional for any team that wants to look for nocturnal birds on count day. Whether the teams will meet at the Oxbow Eco-center after the count has yet to be decided.

Since the CBC began over a century ago, it has relied on the dedication and commitment of volunteers. You do not have to be an expert birder to participate on a count team. If you would like to join a CBC team, contact our local compiler, Ed Bowes via email at slacbc2010@gmail.com or via phone at 772-607-4028. Participate in the CBC and contribute to science that has been helping birds for over 100 years!

Project Feederwatch starts November 13th! You can count the birds that visit your backyard feeders all winter and report these counts to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. There is a fee of \$18 to participate for the 2021-2022 season. For more information and to join, visit this [link](#).

The **Florida Keys Hawkwatch** raptor count is wrapping up at Curry Hammock State Park just north of Marathon. This year, they counted Swallow-tailed Kites for the first time, totaling 1619 kites! You can follow the count on Facebook or visit the Web page [here](#).

This year's count included 3227 Peregrine Falcons, 4695 Broad-winged Hawks, and 3555 Osprey!

St. Lucie Audubon Officers & Board Members

President – Ellen Lynch

Vice President – Ed Bowes

Treasurer – JoAnn Stillman

Recording Secretary – TBA

Corresponding Secretary - Jan Nuhn

Program Chair – Adella Blacka

Birding Adventure Co-Chair – Doris Brookens

Conservation Chair – Diane Goldberg

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Events Chair – Harriet Scott

Public Relations – Ruth Neese

Directors at Large – Adella Blacka, Kathy Mayshar, John Nelson

Science Advisor – Matthew Anderson

Raffle Coordinator – Wayne Pembroke

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

Feathered Friends

BY RUTH NEESE

It's mid-autumn and our migrants have been arriving since August. Raptors and passerines have passed through St. Lucie County on their way south. Some do linger, much to the delight of local birders. One of these travelers is the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.

A year-round resident in north Florida, this tiny bird only visits our area in the winter. The Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila caerulea*) is between 3.5 and 4 inches long! This gnatcatcher also prefers dense vegetation high in trees, so finding it is literally a "pain in the neck."

When foraging, gnatcatchers flick their tail from side to side to flush insects. They also tend to vocalize frequently, which is the easiest way to locate these tiny birds. Calls tend to be a high-pitched, sharp, nasal, mewling "zee" or "chay" coming from high in a tree. You can hear a variety of their calls at this [link](#). Use your binoculars to watch the ends of the tree branches for movement once you hear the calls.

Blue-gray Gnatcatchers are a pale blue-gray color with light gray underparts. The top of their tail is mostly black with white edges, while the underside of the tail is white. They show a prominent white eyering, and during breeding season, the males will have a black V in their foreheads.

Blue-gray Gnatcatchers frequent oak trees locally, especially Live Oaks. Look for them in preserves with lots of oak trees that have gaps in the foliage cover. Remember, you will hear one before you see it! They can be found in Bluefield Ranch Preserve, Pinelands Preserve, Paleo Hammock Preserve, Savannas Preserve State Park, Oak Hammock Park, and at Oxbow Eco-center.



Coming Attractions

FIELD TRIP

December—Virtual Birding 101

GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, Dec. 2, 2021

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

<http://stluciesudubon.org>

St. Lucie Audubon Society

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