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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

It is that time of our season that we offer up our nominations for officers for next season. Our nominations are posted in April for a vote at our May general meeting. All officers begin their positions beginning June 1st, but since we do not meet during the summer months, the positions actually begin in September at our first board meeting. The nominations for officers for next year are:

- o Ellen Lynch, President
- o Ed Bowes, Vice President
- o JoAnn Stillman, Treasurer
- o Kathi Weissberger, Recording Secretary
- o Jan Nuhn, Corresponding Secretary
- o Director-at-Large, Tom Stillman

Anyone else in our chapter who wants to run for any of these offices can add their name to the nominations at this juncture. Please contact Ellen Lynch if you are interested.

At our April 7th general meeting we will be giving annual awards to three students in St. Lucie County. These students were involved in the STEM competition and were chosen by our representative, Diane Goldberg, due to their conservation topics and excellence in their projects. The Grace Stock Conservation Award winners are:

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Photo by Dan Martinelli

The Laughing Gull

Thursday, April 7:
Presenter: Anna Forsman

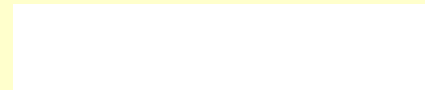
“Purple Martins: Using DNA to Investigate Behavior” by Anna Forsman, PhD, research scientist at the University of Central Florida.

Field trip: Egret Marsh Stormwater Park
Friday, April 8, 2022
8:30 – 10:00 AM

Leader: Kathy Mayshar

Details: Trip limited to **20 people**—currently 6 spots available.
Address: 7295 4th Street, Vero Beach, FL—put this in your GPS.
Easy ¾ mile walking loop, but restrooms are limited. More details on our Web page: <https://www.stlucieaudubon.org/field-trips>

Visit this Link to [register](#).



“In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.” ~ Margaret Atwood

The Laughing Gull

President's Message (continued)

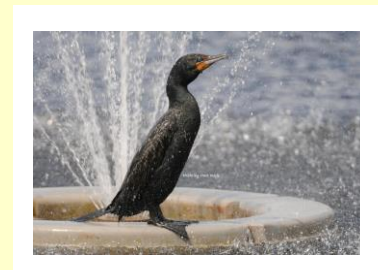
BY ELLEN LYNCH

(Continued from page 1)

- First Place: Brittney Viamontes
- Second Place: Yashaira Marroquin-Gomez
- Third Place: Paula Arana

All three winners are being invited to attend our April 7th meeting to show their projects and receive the monetary awards of \$100, \$75, and \$50. This annual award presentation is a highlight of our chapter business in that it encourages our youth to participate in scientific studies and conservation in particular. We are very proud to hold these awards, we hope you attend our meeting either in person or on Facebook Live Streaming.

See you in April!



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

Optical aids make for better birding. There has been discussion of choosing binoculars here before. The National Audubon Society updates its [guide to binoculars](#) every year. However, for some kinds of observation—scanning the waterfowl far out on a lake, studying shorebirds on a wide-open mudflat, or checking out that hawk perched on a distant snag—even the best binoculars won't do the trick. That is when you need a spotting scope. A spotting scope allows you to ID distant birds and learn details you would never notice with binoculars.

But how to choose a spotting scope? Start with your budget; what can you afford? Top quality spotting scopes can cost \$2000 or more. However, serviceable scopes can be had for less than that. Keep two things in mind when choosing a scope—whether you want fixed or zoom eyepieces and the quality of the glass. Buy a scope with the best quality glass you can afford. And don't forget the tripod! You will need a tripod that adjusts smoothly and easily while remaining steady in the wind. Much more information on choosing a spotting scope [here](#).

Looking for a project not related to birds? There is a webpage for that! All federal level citizen science projects can be found at <https://www.citizenscience.gov/#> There are several federal projects active in Florida at this [link](#).

And don't forget about state-level citizen science projects! FWC has several options for participation, too. Just click this [link](#). Be a citizen scientist!

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

[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

[Membership Chair](#) - Carol Pembroke

[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

The Laughing Gull

Feathered Friends

BY RUTH NEESE

The smallest dove you will find in St. Lucie County is the Common Ground-Dove (*Columbina passerine*). These little doves are only 5.9 to 7 inches in length with a wingspan of 10 inches. As the name suggests, Common Ground-Doves are typically found on the ground. They feed and nest on the ground, and even in flight they seldom get more than 6 feet above the ground. The wings make a whirring sound during flight.

Common Ground-Doves are brown overall with a grayish-brown back. They have prominent black spots on the wing coverts and show rufous patches on the wings in flight. Males have a pinkish wash on the head, neck and chest with a bluish crown, while females are duller. Both sexes show fine scaling on the neck and chest feathers and a red-orange beak with a black tip.

Both males and females make a repeated, high-pitched coo, heard year-round at all hours of the day. Each sequence of coos contains 1–13 rising notes, and a sequence may be repeated 4–5 times per minute for many minutes on end. Ground-doves use variations of this song while courting, while waiting for a mate to return, and when flushing from a nest.

Look for Common Ground-Doves on the ground in open, grassy areas. They do occasionally visit suburban bird feeders, but require nearby shrubby cover to remain safe from predators. They will not come to bird feeders without cover. They can be found in St. Lucie County in Pinelands Preserve, Paleo Hammock Preserve, George Lestrangle Preserve, Savannas Recreation Area, and Bluefield Ranch Preserve.



Coming Attractions

FIELD TRIP

TBA

GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, May 5, 2022

“Voyagers on the Open Sea: The Pelagic Birds of Florida”

Speaker: Michael Brothers

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

<http://stluciesudubon.org>

St. Lucie Audubon Society

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