

JANUARY 2024

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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

Happy New Year Everyone! I do think we have a lot to celebrate from our past year and there is more celebration to be found in this new year of 2024!

We can celebrate the achievement of developing a YouTube Channel for our chapter with the wonderful technical help from our Director-at-Large, John Nelson. The more we use these Public Relations channels the better for our growth and prosperity.

We can also celebrate the accomplishments of Diane Goldberg as she is our "Person of the Year" for 2023. She has worked so hard to get petitions for the Clean Water Act to be on the Florida ballot in 2024. She has reported that she has personally sent in 5000 petitions for screening. We really appreciate her dedication and service to our chapter. A certificate of Appreciation will be presented to her at our General Meeting soon.

We have sold out all the dates for our Annual Adams Ranch Tour and Breakfast. We start the first tour group on January 20th. Our volunteer "cowboys" Harriett, Liz, Henry, Richard, Wayne and I will be hard at work at the ranch that day. Hoping for good weather!

Our Board is working on holding our 70th Anniversary as a chapter in April. There will be additional information coming your way, but **save**

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Photo by Dan Martinelli

The Laughing Gull

Thursday, Jan. 4:

Presenter: Tim Brown

“Treasure Coast Wildlife Close Up and Personal,” presented by Tim Brown, Education Director, Treasure Coast Wildlife Center.

Field trip: Bluefield Ranch Preserve
30501 Bluefield Road, PSL, FL, 34987
Saturday, January 20, 2024, 7:30 – 10:00 AM
Trip Leader: Eva Ries

Bluefield Ranch is the most remote preserve in the county and preserves the largest stand of scrub in St. Lucie Co. We will be looking for species that thrive in that habitat. This is a 2-mile walking tour, so wear comfortable shoes.

Please use the restroom before you arrive. There is more information at the registration link below.

Questions? Contact Doris at (717) 576-7876 or email dorisbrookens@gmail.com

Please register on our Web page:
<https://www.stlucieaudubon.org/field-trips>

“A walk in nature walks the soul back home.” ~ Mary Davis



The Laughing Gull

President's Message (continued)

BY ELLEN LYNCH

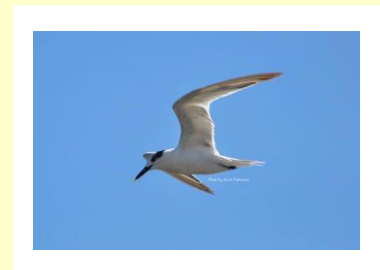
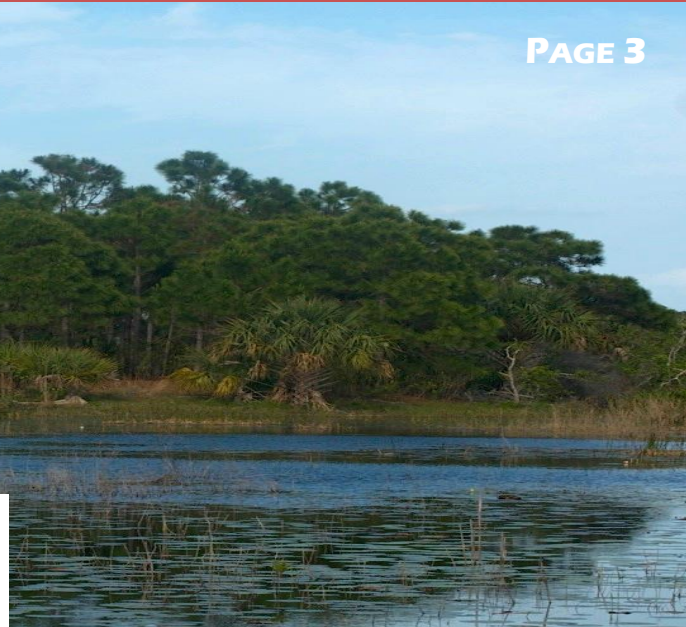
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the date: April 4, 2024 at the Oxbow Eco-Center.

We are still working to support our goal for 2024, to add 70 (for our Anniversary number) NEW members to our chapter by the end of the year. Please help us by talking about our chapter and birding opportunities to anyone who might be interested. We have a beginning amount of 20 new members already! Let's keep working on it.

We will have a booth on Saturday, January 13th from 9-2 at the St. Lucie County History Center on Seaway Dr. in Ft. Pierce. The event is open to the public and will host BBQ meals and a Summerlin Fish Fry as well as story tellers and museum docents. The museum will be free to enter and we can possibly find some new members there? I will be looking for a few volunteers to work the booth that day. I have already committed to being a volunteer inside the museum as I do once a week as a volunteer there. Please let me know if you can spend some time that day for our booth. I am sure you will like the atmosphere and birds that come by....

With the new beginning we have for 2024, let's keep in mind that we care about our county and local communities and want to stand for the birds, wildlife, and habitat it takes to keep them around. The more we show others that we care, the more people we can get involved. I do believe this year will mark one that we will remember as a successful year for St. Lucie County and our Audubon Society! And don't forget we want to have some fun too!



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 time to plan for participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count! This global bird count takes place annually on President's Day weekend. That means this year's count runs from February 16 to 19, 2024. Count birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more days that weekend at one or more locations—it's your choice! Keep track of the kinds of birds you see and how long you watched.

- Make your best estimate of how many birds you saw of each species. For example, 5 Northern Cardinals, 30 American Crows. Huge flocks may be a challenge, but your best guess is still valuable.
- Enter your list(s) online at www.eBird.org. Put in a new checklist: for each new day; for each different location; for the same location, same day, if you counted at a different time of day. You can start entering bird lists at midnight local time on the first day of the count, anywhere in the world.

For all the details, visit the Cornell Lab of Ornithology website at <https://www.birdcount.org/>. There are lots of helpful videos on and links to get you started.

Project Feederwatch started November 1st and runs through April 29th! 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 2023-2024 season. For more information and to join, visit this [link](#). There is still time to participate!

Florida Young Birders Club field trip January 27, 2024 at George LeStrange Preserve. More details at this [link](#).

The **15th Annual Everglades Birding Festival** is January 11 - 15, 2024. More information at this [link](#).

The **25th Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival** is January 24 - 28, 2024. More information at this [link](#).

St. Lucie Audubon Officers & Board Members

President – Ellen Lynch

Vice President – Ed Bowes

Treasurer – TBA

Recording Secretary – Holly DeMarco

Corresponding Secretary - Jan Nuhn

Program Chair – Adella Blacka

Birding Adventure Co-Chair – Doris Brookens, Kathy Mayshar

Conservation Chair – Diane Goldberg

Membership Chair – Jan Nuhn

Events Chair – Harriet Scott

Public Relations – Ruth Neese

Directors at Large – Wayne Landry, Kathy Mayshar, John Nelson

Science Advisor – Matthew Anderson

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

The Laughing Gull

Feathered Friends

BY RUTH NEESE

One of the birds you might spot on a trip to Bluefield Ranch Preserve is the Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Corthylio calendula*). The Latin name loosely translates to “small bird with a fiery crown.” Kinglets are indeed tiny birds; they are smaller than warblers, averaging 3 – 4 inches in total length. And the male Ruby-crowned Kinglet does have a fiery, but seldom seen, crown of feathers.

Ruby-crowned Kinglets are more readily identified by behavior and less subtle field marks. For behavior, they forage almost frantically through shrubs and the lower branches of trees, seldom perching for long. They also constantly flick their wings, which is a key identification clue. Prominent field marks are the bright white eye ring and the single white wingbar. Their overall color is olive-green.

They have a very thin bill and their favorite food is insects. Their frantic foraging is how they glean insects and spiders from the leaves and bark of trees and shrubs. Berries are an occasional food item, and Project Feederwatch states they will come to bird feeders stocked with mealworms.

Because of their tiny size, drab color, and near-constant motion, you must be alert in order to see one of these little beauties. As you walk through the scrub, keep a sharp eye on mid-level branches, especially if you see flying insects in the immediate area. Your reward could just be the wing-flicking of a Ruby-crowned Kinglet.



Coming Attractions

FIELD TRIP

TBA

GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, February 1, 2024

“History of Human Relationships with the Waterfowl Group”

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

<http://stluciesudubon.org>

St. Lucie Audubon Society

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