



THE BROWN PELICAN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SARASOTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 52132 | Sarasota, FL 34232-0337 | SarasotaAudubon.org

April 2017

MONTHLY MEETING

Monday, April 10th

Lemur Conservation

Alison Grand and Eric Patel will share 20 years of lemur conservation both in Myakka City and Madagascar



Social Hour: 6:30pm

Business Meeting: 7:00pm

Presentation: 7:30pm

Monthly meetings are held at the First Congregational Church Fellowship Hall, 1031 South Euclid Ave., Sarasota

[CLICK: 2016-17 MONTHLY MEETING SCHEDULE](#)

Pre-meeting Dinner - New Location!

The pre-monthly meeting dinner has been moved to Gecko's Restaurant, 1900 Hillview Avenue at 5:00pm.
All members welcome!

Contact Karen Jensen (karensarasota@yahoo.com) for reservations



SAS ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

2016 - 2017

[CLICK HERE](#)



UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS & ACTIVITIES

No reservations necessary for field trips unless noted.

Suggested donation: \$3 members, \$4 non-members

SAS NATURE CENTER



Open Daily: 9:00am-1:00pm

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A Message from Our President

A Party and A Surprise



I want to thank each and every one of you who honored me on April 1st. I was thrilled, delighted and sad all at once!

I know a lot of planning (behind my back!) went into such a glorious event. Special thanks to the party committee, the speakers from far and wide, and to all who came to share my joy.

A special nod to the Venice HS Zoology Club for inducting me into their Hall of Fame--a singular tribute.

The biggest surprise of all though was the establishment of the Jeanne

Suggested donation: \$2 members, \$4 non-members.

Thursdays, April 6, 13, 20

OSCAR SCHERER STATE PARK

8:30am. Meet inside the park at Lake Osprey/Nature Center (park fee). Alternating leaders Joyce Leary (508-737-8954) and Peter Brown (508-241-5541)

Saturday, April 8th

2nd SATURDAY CELERY FIELDS WALK

8:00am. Join some of our best birders on the 2nd Saturday of each month from October through April as we explore the great variety of habitats and birds found in the Celery Fields. Meet at the SAS Nature Center.

Tuesday, April 11th

CELERY FIELDS CLEANUP

8:00am. Help clean up Palmer Blvd, our adopted road. Meet at the Nature Center parking lot. 999 Center Road, Sarasota

Tuesday, April 18th

FORT DESOTO

8:00am. Leaders: Stu Wilson (512-897-8341) and John Ginaven. Meet at the first rest stop just after the toll booths on the Sunshine Skyway Bridge (I-275).

Saturday, April 22nd

PINECRAFT PARK

8:00am. Leader: Edith Miller (941-364-3637). Meet in the Pinecraft Park parking lot. 1420 Gilbert Ave off of Bahia Vista.

Tuesday, April 25th

FORT DESOTO

7:00am. Leaders: Lynn Jakubowicz (lynn234@verizon.net) and Mary Heinlen. Meet behind Starbucks (University and I-75).

Saturday, May 6th

STAR GAZING

6:45m. The Deep-Sky Observers (www.lgdso.com) will set up their telescopes at the SAS Nature Center parking lot for some incredible star gazing. All are welcome to come and see the planets and stars

WORKSHOPS

These 2-hour workshops provide a wealth of information on a variety of topics. No reservations required. Meet at the Nature Center 1:30pm. Adults - \$5.00, Children - \$3.00

APR 5 - BUTTERFLY I.D. BASICS

APR 22 - PURPLE MARTINS

[CLICK FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION](#)

Questions? Contact Harma Nyhof, birdsrg@gmail.com

CLASSES

These classes target specific families of birds and includes a photography class. All classes meet at the Nature Center except field trips. Check times and locations for field work.

SPRING WARBLERS - April 19, 20

[CLICK FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION](#)

Questions? Contact Kathryn Young, kathwren4@gmail.com

Dubi Scholarship. This was done so well, so secretly, and with such panache, that it made me almost speechless. I will eagerly reinvigorate our scholarship program (somewhat sidelined over the past few years) to help further the cause of protecting the environment.

Thank you for all the years of support. I will not be flying away, just moving to a different perch!

Jeanne Dubi

A Celebration for Jeanne Dubi and what a Celebration it was



After months of behind the scenes planning, the day finally arrived to clear blue skies and perfect weather. The reception, fittingly held at the SAS Nature Center, was held in honor of Jeanne Dubi's 10 year tenure as President of the Sarasota Audubon Society. Yes folks, she's finally

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION CELEBRATION



In appreciation of the work of all the volunteers who carry out the many functions needed to keep our Nature Center and the Sarasota Audubon Society up and running, Marcy Packer (Volunteer Coordinator) put on a great spread, of wine, cheese, wraps, fruit, veg and dips as well as a fabulous cake.



Marcy and Jeanne presented data and stats to indicate how many visitors had visited the Nature Center, the boardwalks and the gift shop during the season. They also named and thanked all the volunteers who had helped to make this the best year ever.

Visitor numbers are up, as are donations collected at Nature Center and boardwalks.

It has been a great year and none of it would have been possible without our incredible volunteers!

So a great big THANK YOU once again for all that you do.

[CLICK HERE --> TO SEE SOME OF OUR VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION](#)



"It Takes a Village"

It was a wonderful day with over 225 people in attendance, great speeches from Susie Bowie (Manatee Community Foundation), Michael Carlson (Carlson Studio Architecture), Jon Thaxton (Senior Vice President Gulf Coast Community Foundation), Christine Johnson (Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast), Bill Johnson (Brilliant Harvest), Eric Draper (President, Audubon Florida) and our very own Veep Marcy Packer on behalf of the SAS Board of Directors. All testified to Jeanne's warm personality, determination, ability to bring people together and her meticulous planning. In recognition of all her achievements, not least the building of the SAS Nature Center, SAS members and friends contributed \$18,000 to fund The Jeanne Dubi Scholarship. Jeanne was presented with a plaque and a giant check to this effect. Matthew Press' name is the first on the plaque and he was there to witness the presentation.

Good food from Morton's, with wine and cake, not to mention a classical guitarist, and a slide show documenting Jeanne's life and history with SAS, ensured the event was enjoyed by all who came. Everything flowed smoothly and the only line was the one with folks waiting to sign the guest book.

The event was a celebration but it had its tears and poignancy too. We will all miss Jeanne at the helm, but as we were reminded, it's not goodbye. Jeanne will continue to play a very active role in SAS. And for that we are grateful.



[CLICK TO READ - ASK OTUS®](#)

OTUS - Ornithologist in General and Ospreyologist in Particular!

We know owls are observant, never missing a sight or a sound, but who knew they were scientists too? Maybe not all of them, but that wily owl who lives on Siesta Key has been gathering field data while appearing to be slumbering during the day, and busily finding food at night. And this has been going on for years!

If you need to know anything, ANYTHING about Ospreys...
just Ask Otus®, ospreyologist par excellence.
Read on for the latest observations....

Click to send your questions to: [Ask Otus®](#)

SUE G's PURPLE MARTIN REPORT



We got a jump start to breeding season this year due to the mild winter and our Purple Martins are coming along quite well. As of Sunday, April 2 we have 94 eggs and 5 hatched babies (all in one nest in the North Box). At this time last year we had 18 eggs and no hatched babies.

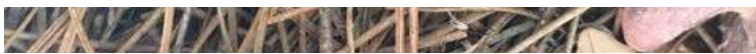
We have 4 eggs in the South Box by the county bathrooms that were due to hatch March 31/April 1, but hadn't as of April 2. There was a cold spell a couple of weeks ago and parents often delay starting to brood until the weather is better.

We are continuing nest checks twice a week - Thursdays and Sundays at 11:00am at the SAS Nature Center - weather dependent.

The Suchma House next to the SAS Nature Center is the best for visitors as the nests can be easily slid out from the box for all to see. The 2 boxes by the bathrooms require visitors to get on a step stool to see into the nest. The Suchma house will begin hatching babies mid April (a couple of weeks behind the other 2 due to Nanday damage) - so we should have babies by the April 13 nest check. I'll put a notice on the bulletin board in the Nature Center for visitors that week. It's working out well with whoever is in the area coming along with us.

For anyone interested, I'll be giving a class on the Purple Martins April 22 @ 1:30 at the SAS Nature Center.

Sue Guarasci





This baby Purple Martin is 9-10 days old - his eyes are just starting to open and his pin feathers are coming through the trailing edge of the wing. The protrusion of the pin feathers on the wing of the guy to his right looks to be a day older. If you enlarge the picture, you can see the feathers starting to come through on the back (photograph by Sue Guarasci)

Birds of the Month

Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*)

The Bird with Outrageous Legs....

I know that the bird of the month should be the beautiful Pinecraft Wilson's Warbler..... or the handsome Dickcissel..... or even perhaps those plucky little Scaly-breasted Munias. What a triple treat we've had from those very obliging long time stayers. However my heart lifts when I see those amazing Black-necked Stilts, and I must admit the Stilt is one of my favorite birds. So here we go.....



The Black-necked Stilt is one of five species of Stilt in the world, its European or Old World counterpart being the Black-winged Stilt, which it is almost identical to, apart from the white spot above the eye. Another species, the Hawaiian Stilt is rare and considered in danger of extinction.

The Black-necked Stilt is a striking black and white bird with slim wings and a needle-like bill. It has long thin legs which are a bright bubblegum pink. Its legs seem impossibly long in proportion to the rest of its body. Its field features are so unique it certainly can't be mistaken for any other wading bird. I've always been fascinated by its unique appearance, and since reading Gilbert White's 'Natural History of Selbourne' many years ago I never see one without remembering what he said.

Gilbert White was a pioneering English naturalist and ornithologist of the 18th Century. In fact he was probably the first real British naturalist, and learnt by careful observation and documentation of what he saw in the field. One day someone brought him a specimen of a Black-winged Stilt. Having studied it, he was amazed by the bird's legs. Here's what he said, 'I found the length of the legs to be so extraordinary, that, at first sight, one might have supposed the shanks had been fastened on to impose on the credulity of the beholder; they were legs of a caricatura.'

Later, having weighed and measured the bird, he had this to add, 'These birds exhibit, weight for inches, incomparably the greatest length of legs of any known bird.... It must be a matter of great curiosity to see the Stilt move, to observe how it can wield such a length of lever with such feeble muscles as the thighs seem to be furnished with...but what adds to the wonder is that it has no back toe.'

Gilbert just could not figure out the physics of how the bird was able to move



Gilbert just couldn't figure out the physics or how the bird was able to move such long legs with such small thigh muscles. I think I have to agree with Gilbert on this point, and ask myself, how does this bird manage to hold its body up when it walks and how does it manage to keep its balance? And then you see a Stilt standing on one leg without a wobble, and you realize just how graceful and elegant these birds can be.

The Latin name of the bird *Himantopus* means 'strap foot', *himas/himantos* meaning strap or thong, and *pūs/pūs* meaning foot. It's not totally clear what this means, but it seems to be an awkward metaphor implying that the legs are slender and pliant, as if cut out of leather. Gilbert clearly wasn't the only one curious about the bird's legs.

The Black-necked Stilt is found around the edges of shallow water in open country, and is clearly in its element at the Celery Fields. For nesting it needs open ground near water. Undisturbed this bird wades through its shallow wetland habitats and flooded fields with careful grace. However, when disturbed at nesting time all semblance of grace disappears and then it yaps incessantly, diving at predators to protect its young. If you are dive-bombed by a Black-necked Stilt then you are too close to a nest.

It is such a privilege and joy to have this bird with us. Let's enjoy it while we can. And try and figure out those legs.

Glynnis Thomas



(photographs by Kathryn Young)



NOTES FROM THE BIRD RECORDER

Here are the March sightings:

- **Whip-poor-will:** R. Greenspun & K. Young, Private Residence
- **Scaly-breasted Munia:** R. Greenspun & K. Young, Celery Fields
- **Dickcissel:** S. d'Hont, Celery Fields
- **Scissor-tailed Flycatchers:** J. Ginaven, Longboat Key
- **Glaucous Gull:** K. Young & R. Greenspun: Siesta Beach
- **Swainson's Thrush:** R. Greenspun, Pinecraft Park
- **Bronzed Cowbird:** S. Wilson., SAS NC feeder
- **Shiny Cowbird:** D. Gagne & K. Young, SAS NC feeder
- **Short-tailed Hawk:** D. Gagne, Pinecraft Park
- **Brown-headed Nuthatch:** S. Green, Deer Prairie Creek
- **Hairy Woodpecker:** P. Wilson, Ketona Rd., North Port
- **Bobolink:** J. Whitehead, Myakka River State Park
- **Black-throated Green Warbler:** K. Berkeley, Pinecraft (heard only)
- **Cerulean Warbler:** T. Jiamachello, Pinecraft Park (heard only)
- **Wilson's Warbler:** E. Miller et al., Pinecraft Park
- **American Woodcock:** S. Wilcox, Myakka River State Park
- **Blue-winged Warbler:** K. Doddridge & J. Ginaven, Leffis Key
- **Mississippi Kite:** S. Stuart, Myakka River State Park

Please remember to share your eBird lists to SASbirds or email me with any rare sightings at ceherzog@gmail.com.

We now have over 2166 shared lists with over 278 species found.

Thank you for making the effort eBirders!

Claire Herzog



CONSERVATION

Hello everyone, I wanted to update you on where we stand on this issue.

As most of you know, what is now the Celery Field Preserve was purchased in 1995 for flood control by the Stormwater section of Sarasota

County and became an instant Mecca for wildlife. Sarasota Audubon Society (SAS) worked with the County to improve habitat in the area and opened the 1.4 million dollar educational center on site in 2011.



Four parcels known as "The Quad" at the intersection of Apex Rd. and Palmer Blvd. were part of the Celery Fields stormwater project purchase. The NE parcel was converted to a stormwater pond and the entire property was later added to the Sarasota County Conservation Lands, Parks and Preserves. The other three parcels of the "The Quad" were placed on the Surplus Lands List in 2010 during the recent "Great Recession". The Properties were put up for sale in 2016 with two bids received. One bid from The Restaurant Supply Depot on the NW parcel, which later withdrew under extreme public pressure. The second TST Recycling to build a construction demolition/yard debris processing center on the SW parcel. This project will generate over 100 large trucks per day and storage of debris may be up to six stacks 30-50 feet high behind an 8 ft. wall. This project is still moving along and will come before the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) in few months. The SE parcel has received no bids at this time. During this process adequate notice of placing this public preserve land on the surplus land list was not provided to SAS or the stakeholder citizens of Sarasota County. Notice provided met the letter of the law but not the intent of soliciting public input on this action.

The Celery Fields is a major wildlife habitat and a worldwide destination for Eco-tourism. As such, SAS will continue to oppose the proposed land sale and zoning changes to industrial which are not a compatible use with the "Central Park" vision for the Celery Fields. "Green Space" will become increasingly important in keeping the Preserves integrity and habitat value for the future.

The SAS mission is public education and conservation of wildlife habitat. If these lands are sold it benefits one entity, if they are kept public it benefits everyone. We are joined in this effort by surrounding impacted neighborhoods, businesses, conservation groups and over 5,000 county wide stakeholders. It is imperative

CELERY FIELDS IN THE NEWS

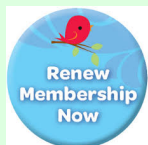
The April 2017 edition of Bird Watching magazine included the Celery Fields in its featured 'Hot Spots Near You' section



Click to read:

<http://www.birdwatchingdaily.com/hotspots/252-celery-fields-sarasota-florida/>

OOPS DID YOU FORGET?



DECEMBER WAS THE TIME TO RENEW YOUR SAS MEMBERSHIP FOR 2017

[Click Here to Join or Renew Online](#)

Or mail a check - \$25.00 per member

Payable to: Sarasota Audubon Society

Address: SAS, PO BOX 52132, Sarasota, FL 34232

For questions email: membership@sarasotaudubon.org

SARASOTA AUDUBON NATURE CENTER COMMEMORATIVE BRICKS

Help build a path to the future
Purchase a commemorative brick!



Engrave a loved one's name, or a short quote on a brick to commemorate a lasting tribute, or mark a special occasion. Ask us about other naming opportunities. Truly a gift that gives back.

[CLICK HERE TO ORDER ONLINE - BRICK ORDER FORM](#)

Audubon Advocate



Everglade Snail Kite by RJ Wiley

The Audubon Advocate is the best place to get news about

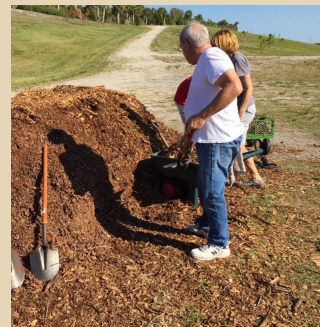
that everyone keep the pressure on our commissioners by writing emails or calling, posting letters to the editor and being available to speak your mind when this issue is heard before the Board.

Together we can make great things happen for our community.

Rob Wright, Conservation Chair

What Can Be Done In A Day?

By 16 hearty volunteers with rakes, shovels and wheel barrows?



All of this!



Florida's leading environmental issues while legislators convene in Tallahassee

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

Sarasota County Butterfly Club



Sarasota County Butterfly Club Programs, 1131 Blvd of The Arts, are open to the public (\$5.00 fee for non-members) are held most 4th Thursdays of each month Sept-May with topics appealing to all ages and levels of knowledge. Visit www.sarasotabutterfly.com to learn more!



Help support our Sarasota Audubon Society when you shop at Amazon:
[CLICK FOR DETAILS](#)

Birding Hot Spots in Sarasota and Manatee Counties

Can be purchased for just \$6.00 at the Nature Center, monthly meetings and field trips or \$7.75 by mail. Send a check to: SAS, PO Box 52132, Sarasota, FL 34232-0337. Hot Spots is also available at Environeers, Book Store 1, Selby Gardens, Historic Spanish Point, Oscar Scherer State Park and Myakka River State Park.



Save SAS some GREEN \$\$\$

We mail **600+** paper copies to some of our members. The cost of printing and postage could be put toward our new nature center and other Sarasota Audubon projects. Plus our e-Brown Pelican Newsletter (which can be

emailed right to your in-box) has direct links to other sites, videos and color photos.

If you currently receive a paper copy in the mail please consider a switch to the e-Brown Pelican.

Contact: editor@sarasotaudubon.org



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A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE WHO VOLUNTEERED THEIR TIME AND MUSCLE!

BECOME A SPOONBILL CLUB MEMBER



If you have named Sarasota Audubon in your will or beneficiary in any way, you are eligible to become a member of our legacy group,

The Spoonbill Club

[CLICK TO FIND OUT MORE](#)

Photograph by Rick Greenspun



SARASOTA
AUDUBON SOCIETY

999 Center Road, Sarasota, FL 34240
941-312-6533

[CLICK: Sarasota Audubon Web Site](#)

SARASOTA AUDUBON NATURE CENTER



What's new at the SAS Gift Shop at the Nature Center?

- * **SAS Least Bittern Tees (tan)**
- * **Vortex binocular harnesses**
- * **New Charley Harper Jigsaw Puzzles**

Please visit and peruse our large variety of items - books, bird ID guides, jewelry, artwork, SAS ball caps, kids' items and much much more

All proceeds support our Nature Center

Subscribe to SRQ Bird Alerts!

Need the latest birding info for our area?

To subscribe: [Click here to send an email.](#)

Thanks to Peter Rice for providing this service.

SAS Name Badges

Pin Badge - \$5.25, Magnet Badge - \$7.25

Add \$2.50 for shipping. Send name and address to:

Michael Fox, 2749 Ringling Ave. Sarasota, FL 34237

Write An Article!



**Submissions, comments and questions
always welcome**

Send to: editor@sarasotaaudubon.org

Marcy Packer, editor
editor@sarasotaaudubon.org