



THE BROWN PELICAN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SARASOTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

May 2017

MONTHLY MEETING

Monday, May 8th

My Bird Can Eat Your Bird

David Sadkin of Anna Maria Island's Wildlife Inc. will bring an owl to demonstrate the unique adaptations of this most perfect predator.



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

Pre-monthly Meeting Dinner

Gecko's Restaurant, 1900 Hillview Avenue at 5:00pm.

All members welcome!

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



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A Message from Our President

Another fabulous....

Well, another fabulous SAS year is coming to its official close. We have more members than ever, visitor numbers are up from last year, the

gardens are looking great despite the lack of rain, and we are financially in the black!

We have had great programs, wonderful volunteers, including bird naturalists, docents, our Board of Directors and generous donors.



Folks, we are in great shape!

Everyone has worked hard to make SAS and our lovely Nature Center such a success. So thanks to everyone for making it happen. There is no magic wand - it is ALL down to dedicated, talented, hardworking volunteers and members. We are a model of what amazing things can be achieved when we all pull together.

Now we all need a break, so enjoy the summer wherever that may be. See you all again in October.

Jeanne Dubi



This will be our last issue of the Brown Pelican until September.

Wishing you a very happy and healthy

summer!

SAS SUMMER HOURS

BROWN PELICAN

Next Issue..... September 2017

NATURE CENTER

May 1st - May 31st

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

June - July - August - September > CLOSED

October 1st - May 31st (2018)

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

2017-18 ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

Be sure to look out for the 2017-18 SAS Activity Schedule which will be mailed out in September. Sign up early for trips, classes and workshops!



STAR GAZING

Saturday, May 6th

8:00pm

The Deep-Sky Observers (www.lqdsso.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

WORKSHOP IN SESSION



Last month a Butterfly I.D. Basics workshop was taught by Karen Finch and Karen Rosenbeck of the Sarasota Butterfly Club ...and as you can see it was very popular.

Kudos to Kathryn Young, Education Chair and Harma Nyhof, Education Registrar for an extremely successful season.

CONSERVATION



"SAVE THE CELRY FIELDS PRESERVE" May 2017 Update to Proposed Land Sale

At this time only the SW parcel of the four parcels known as "The Quad" located at the intersection of Apex Rd. and Palmer Blvd. has an active bid on the property. This bid from TST Recycling is to build a construction demolition/yard debris processing center on the site. The project that will generate tremendous large truck traffic and storage of debris may be up to six stacks 30-50 feet high behind only an 8 ft. wall. This project is currently being reviewed by county staff for concurrency with planning and zoning codes and will require the property to be rezoned and a Special Exception granted for this use before the sale is final. After staff review, the project will go before the Planning Commission and later before the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) for a final approval or denial.

SAS has written to the BCC and met with one commissioner to express our opposition and concern for this project based on traffic issues, negative impact on habitat/wildlife, safety and ecotourism. We discussed how rezoning these lands to industrial uses would not be compatible with the existing or future vision for the Celery Fields Preserve area. We also pointed out the lack of adequate public notice and stakeholder involvement when these public preserve lands were placed on the surplus land list for sale. On a positive note we suggested the land would have more long term value as a gateway transition zone into the more active portion of the Celery Fields. Suggested uses ranged from additional habitat with walking/bike trails, playgrounds, grassed overflow parking, Sheriff's substation or even a small Eco-lodge for out of town visitors.

Remember the SAS mission is public education and conservation of wildlife habitat. If these lands are sold one person benefits and the public loses more "Green Space" that cannot be replaced. We are joined in our effort by Florida Audubon, the surrounding impacted neighborhoods, businesses, conservation groups and over 6,000 county wide stakeholders. Over the coming months it is imperative 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.

Please keep your focus positive on the eco-value this land provides and feel free to suggest alternative land use options.

Rob Wright - Conservation Chair

SUE G's PURPLE MARTIN REPORT



Purple Martin fledging is upon us.

Our first scheduled fledging should start April 30 and May 1 in the South box by the bathroom in compartments 2, 4 & 6; and North box in compartment 2. The Suchma house by the Nature Center is 3 weeks behind; with earliest fledging dates of May 9, 10, 11 & 12.

Our last nest checks will be Sunday, April 30 and Thursday, May 4 @ 11:00 in the Suchma House only as the young in the other boxes are too close to fledging to bring those boxes down.

The young are often on the porch for several days before fledging and become increasingly excited as the date approaches. Premature fledging

TRADITION IN THE MAKING....



Member Bill Knapp is donating \$226 to Sarasota Audubon for the 226th bird found at the Celery Fields, a White-faced Ibis photographed well by Rosemary Harris.

Way to go Bill and Rosemary!

In fact Bill donated \$225 for the 225th bird so the challenge is on to find the next new bird for the next donation from Bill.

What will it be? A Ruff? A Chuck-will's-widow?
Something we can't even imagine?

Thank you Bill for your generosity and for giving us something more to seek out.

Anyone want to do a match?

Jeanne Dubi

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

PINECRAFT PARK - April 22, 2017

Twenty two people arrived for this trip and so we divided into two groups. One group was led by Edith Miller and the other by Steve Nicolls.

One group saw both the Cooper's Hawk nest and the Ruby-throated Hummingbird's nest. Later on the same group encountered the Barred Owls. One adult was present but while the group was watching a second adult flew in and appeared to 'kiss' the first one. Then the young Barred Owl joined them. He apparently wanted 'kisses' too! Maybe he was jealous!

We had 35 species in all including Prairie Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler and a Common Yellowthroat

Near the entrance as we were leaving, we found the Yellow-throated Vireo nest where both parents were feeding their young.

Edith V. Miller

FORT DESOTO - April 25, 2017

Migration had been slow for us birders so far, and most of us had slim hopes for any interesting birds on our last birding trip of the season, to Fort Desoto on April 25th. However, a front passed through with very little rain, but some strong winds, a couple of days previous to our trip and we began to hear reports of Scarlet Tanagers raining all over town! We were not disappointed.

The trees were decorated with bright red dots, which turned into Scarlet Tanagers through our binoculars. Just to add more color, there were also lots of Blue Grosbeaks, Indigo Buntings, Summer Tanagers and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. Other highlights were Swainson's Thrush, Cape May Warbler and Tennessee Warbler (a life bird for many of us). Also seen were Yellow Warblers, Orchard Orioles, Yellow-throated Vireos, Ovenbirds and a Veery.

About 20 people were in our group and all were very happy with the 53 species of birds seen!

Martha Straub

become increasingly excited as the date approaches. Premature fledging can happen as the birds jostle for food or are knocked by older birds. If they are on the ground and can't yet fly, the parents won't feed them and they are vulnerable to predators. They are the exception to the rule to leave young birds alone. Checking the ground anytime you're in the area is very helpful. If you can - pick them up, keep in a well ventilated box or bag and let Terry Suchma (630 308-0972) or me (941 448-6363) know.

Fledging usually takes place in early morning (1-2 hours after sunrise) and can take place all in 1 day, or over 2-3 days. So let's keep our eyes out.

The parents will gather the young together at a daytime perch site within a mile from the box. They will return to roost at the box at night for 1-2 weeks and continue to use the same daytime perch.

Sue Guarasci



Young peering out of their compartment #4 in South box - they are scheduled to start fledging May 1
(Photograph by Sue Guarasci)



Parents feeding their young
(Photograph by Kathryn Young)



Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*)



Sarasota is such a great place for birders, isn't it? The winter certainly has its charms with the arrival of ducks, rails, sparrows etc. And then the long awaited Spring migration can produce such marvels, especially in the Warbler species. However one of the most eagerly anticipated single bird species is surely the Bobolink. It is so predictable that Jeanne Dubi long ago named tax day as the day it would arrive. It used to turn up like clockwork on the Walker parcel at the far end of Raymond Road, but with the re-jig of the Celery fields it has a less certain place to go. However, thankfully, it is still showing up.

Bobolink is the standard English name for a single species in the New World blackbird family (Icteridae). It is the only bird in the genus *Dolichonyx*, meaning 'long claw' (*dolikhos*=long, *onux*= claw). The specific *oryzivorus* is from the latin *oryza*= rice and *vorare*= devour, so its name means a long-clawed rice eater! In fact an old name for this species is 'Rice bird' because on migration they would migrate in flocks feeding on cultivated grains and rice. The English name 'Bobolink' is from Bob O'Lincoln, echoing the birds bubbling song, which of course we seldom if ever hear. Sibley describes this song as 'a bubbling, jangling, rising warble with short notes on wide pitch range'. If you have the Sibley app it's worth listening to it. There's an odd mechanical aspect to the song that makes it sound like a child's toy. Thoreau recorded a Cape Cod boy's reaction to a singing Bobolink: 'What makes he sing so sweet, Mama? Do he eat flowers?'

By the way, the collective name for a group of Bobolinks is a 'chain'. Bobolinks undertake the longest migration of any North American land-bird species, its greatest mileage being from southern Canada to the grasslands of Northern Argentina. One bird was tracked migrating 12,000 miles over the course of the year, often flying long distances up to 1,100 miles in a single day, then stopping to recuperate for days or weeks.

Along with Meadowlarks the Bobolink is the quintessential songbird of North American grasslands. It breeds in open grassy fields, especially hay fields, across southern Canada and the northern United States. Females lay 5/6 eggs in a cup-shaped nest, which is always situated on the ground and is usually well hidden in dense vegetation. Both parents feed the young.

So a thought about the birds that arrive on tax day. Firstly, what a privilege to be a staging post on their long journey north. When the Bobolink stops with us for a week or so it's only half way on its long journey. It's a traveler passing through. And as with all travelers we must show it hospitality. The best way to do this is to hang on to those untidy grassy meadows, where they can rest and forage on seeds and insects.

Secondly, no wonder they are hard to see. They feed on the ground in the long grass, so patience is certainly needed to see them but they do stay and rest up for quite a while, so we can all get to see them.



A very intent fledgling learning to fly
(Photograph by Rick Greenspun)

SAS DONOR TREE



It's spring and everything is alive and growing and so is our 'Donor Tree'.

SAS Board Member and resident artist, Sara King, has planted and is watering (created and is painting) this glorious tribute to all of the donors that helped make our Nature Center a reality.

Once completed all donors will have a leaf on the tree commemorating their generous contribution to the Sarasota Audubon Society Nature Center at the Celery Fields.



Sara King hard at work adding donor leaves

HOW DO OUR GARDENS GROW?



And lastly, the male birds are very distinctive as well as being gorgeous. A male Bobolink in spring is unlike any other Florida bird in color pattern, with totally black underparts and tail and a mostly black head, sharply contrasting with a creamy nape and neck and otherwise white scapulars, lower back and rump. They can hardly be mistaken for any other bird. The females are a little more challenging to identify, being rather sparrow-like in appearance. If you get a chance to see one with fairly close or prolonged views look for the pale unstreaked nape and evenly buffy underparts, as well as its location and habits.

By the way, you might ask why we don't see Bobolinks on their fall migration south. The reason is that in the fall males resemble females and juveniles, making them less distinctive. In addition, fall flocks generally feed in agricultural fields north of Florida and acquire the enormous fat supply needed for a long nonstop flight to South America.

So I guess the message is, enjoy them while you can.

Glynnis Thomas

Meet Our New Beach Nesting Bird Coordinator, Greg Taylor



A warm welcome to Audubon Florida's Greg Taylor who is our new Shorebird Project Coordinator. Greg will be organizing volunteers and lending his expertise in helping our precious beach birds nest and raise their young successfully.

There are already several hundred Black Skimmers at Lido, nesting Snowy Plovers on Siesta, and a welcome sight of a small colony of Least Terns on Lido too.

Greg will be leading a walk on Lido - please join us as we say hello to him.

BEACH NESTING BIRD WALK

Saturday, May 6th

8:00am

North Lido Beach

(north end of Lido Beach, where the wide sandy area curves out into the water. Head toward the big group of terns and skimmers and look for the guy with the binoculars)

If you'd like to volunteer as a Beach Nesting Bird Monitor, call Greg at 561-370-8360 or email gtaylor@audubon.org



RENEW YOUR SAS MEMBERSHIP

[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@sarasotaaudubon.org

SARASOTA AUDUBON NATURE CENTER



Check out how the SAS gardens are growing and thriving



Stop by and enjoy a relaxing time viewing the bird feeders from our beautiful new gazebo

(Photographs by Sara King)



"The Teacher"

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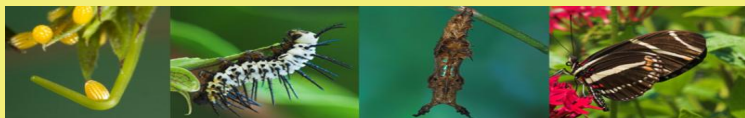
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Birding Hot Spots in Sarasota and Manatee Counties

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.



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!

Audubon Advocate



Everglade Snail Kite by RJ Wiley

The Audubon Advocate is the best place to get news about Florida's leading environmental issues while legislators convene in Tallahassee

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WHAT IS IT?



Spotted while I was on a nature walk in the GTM Research Reserve (formerly Guana River State Park) in Ponte Vedra, FL. This one-year old Gopher Tortoise is exercising its camouflage strategy next to a pine cone.

Nature is amazing!

Jeanne Dubi



NOTES FROM THE BIRD RECORDER

Here are the May sightings:

- **Short-tailed Hawk:** N. Stuart, Myakka River State Park
- **Swainson's Warbler:** S. D'Hont, A. Cape, Pinecraft Park: K. Doddridge, Leffis Key
- **Bell's Vireo:** M. Press, Durante Park, Longboat Key
- **Whimbrel:** G. Lawrence, Leffis Key
- **Bronzed Cowbird:** Celery Fields Nature Center, bird feeders
- **Brown-headed Nuthatch:** S. Green, Deer Prairie Creek
- **Dickcissel:** K. Young, Celery Fields
- **Bobolink:** J. Dubi, R. Greenspun, Celery Fields, J. Whitehead., Myakka State Park
- **White-rumped Sandpiper:** K. Young, C. Herzog, N. Edmondson, R. Greenspun, Myakka River State Park
- **Carolina Chickadee:** A. Nilssen, Siesta Key, Heron Lagoon
- **White-faced Ibis:** Rosemary Harris, Celery Fields (seen in March but reported & confirmed in April)

Claire Herzog



Trip Advisor ranks the Celery Fields 22nd out of 140 "Things To Do" in Sarasota?

[CLICK HERE TO SEE!](#)

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Michael Fox, 2749 Ringling Ave. Sarasota, FL 34237



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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Marcy Packer, editor

editor@sarasotaudubon.org



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

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[CLICK: Sarasota Audubon Web Site](#)

SARASOTA AUDUBON NATURE CENTER



Thank you for supporting our SAS Nature Center Gift Shop this season! All proceeds help keep our wonderful Nature Center going.

We will continue to provide a variety of bird and nature related items for our valued visitors.

Our shop is open through the end of May and will reopen in the fall with even more selections.

Please stop in!

Write An Article!



**Submissions, comments and questions
always welcome**

Send to: editor@sarasotaudubon.org