



# THE BROWN PELICAN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SARASOTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

## FEBRUARY 2023 IT'S ALL HAPPENING!

**Hello Sarasota Auduboners,**

Well, Sarasota Audubon's Nature Center has been hopping!

**In January, we had five (5) New College students** in mini-internships. They worked on media, communications, gardening, birding skills, nature center management, and an ADA accessibility study for our local hot spots. What a great learning experience for them and for us too. We hope to be able to engage with more students in the future.

**On January 14, we had a gardening learning day.** Pam Callender, our native plants expert, was available to answer questions from members and the general public. Afterwards, a swarm of visitors and volunteers pulled weeds and mulched the paths, making the Butterfly Garden look fabulous. Come visit on the next **Gardens Day, Feb 11, 9-11am.**

**In January,** several community groups came for Nature Center tours and then were taken over to the Palmer Blvd boardwalk to meet the docent on duty and learn about wetlands and birds.

**On Wednesday, January 18,** our second meet and greet event took place at the Nature Center. These events are fun occasions to meet others and to learn something about our local environment too. Hope to see you at the next one on **March 15 at 2pm.**

**Celery Fields Explorers,** our kids' environmental education program which you support, had 4 trips to the CF in January, serving 212 elementary schoolers. This program is funded by SAS member donations and operated by Around the Bend Nature & Discovery Tours. The best result: getting kids outdoors and away from computers and cell phones!

Sarasota Audubon Board of Directors

# MONTHLY MEETING INFORMATION

**General Meeting**  
**Monday, Feb 13, 2023**  
**7:00pm on ZOOM**



**Danielle J. Whittaker,**  
**Evolutionary Biologist & Author**



## **The Secret Perfume of Birds**

Smell has been called the most ancient sense, yet the myth that birds have no sense of smell has persisted for nearly 200 years. Recent research has demonstrated that, like other animals, birds can use smell to navigate, find food, avoid predators, and even communicate with each other.

The primary source of odors in most birds is preen oil, used by birds in grooming and maintaining their feathers. By smelling odors from this oil, birds can recognize and assess potential mates and rivals.

Whittaker will discuss her research on dark-eyed juncos (*Junco hyemalis*), a widespread North American sparrow, investigating how these odors are produced, what they communicate, and how they relate to bird behavior. Additionally, she will draw connections to our understanding of the human sense of smell, which has similarly been underestimated.

**Register**

**Notes from the NATURE CENTER**





**Top: John Ryan of Sarasota Bay Watch speaks at member event. Next: David Gnass of Save Our Seabirds in Ghillie suit. Gift items available in the Nature Center**

**Another Successful Members Meet & Greet:** The Nature Center welcomed more than 60 members on January 18 for our second Meet & Greet event with John Ryan of *Sarasota Bay Watch*. Check out the website: [Sarasota Bay Watch](http://Sarasota Bay Watch).

**Wildlife Rescue Workshop a Great Success:** Too often people find an injured bird or other animal in the wild and they don't know how to help the creature. That's when David and Linda Gnass from *Save Our Seabirds* come to the rescue! The pair has spent years helping wildlife in distress, and they brought their wealth of knowledge to the Nature Center on January 28 for a wildlife rescue clinic. They demonstrated the nets they commonly use to catch injured animals and displayed items that pose significant risks to wildlife, like fishing lines and hooks. *Save Our Seabirds* CEO Aaron Virgin was also in attendance to answer questions from the audience. The event drew to a close after David Gnass donned a ghillie suit to demonstrate a tactic he sometimes uses to capture injured birds. Check out the website: [Save Our Seabirds](http://Save Our Seabirds)

**Restocking the Gift Shop:** We are pleased to report that many of our high-demand items have been restocked. Hurry in to get yours. These popular items are practically "flying" off the shelves.



**Calling all Wingspan Players:** Last summer the Nature Center started hosting Wingspan board games for SAS members. The number of players has grown over the months, which reflects the growing popularity of this engaging bird-themed game. It's perfect for everyone, from brand new gamers to experienced players. If you'd like to join the fun, the February games are scheduled for **Wednesdays, February 1 and 15 and Saturday, February**

**11. All games start at 12:30** in the Audubon Nature Center at the Celery Fields: 999 Center Road, Sarasota.

If you'd like to join the fun, please email Lynn at [lynn234@verizon.net](mailto:lynn234@verizon.net).

**Membership Alert:** Many thanks to our members who have renewed their memberships for 2023. Your support for the Sarasota Audubon Society is greatly appreciated. If you haven't renewed yet, there's still time. Just go online to our website [www.sarasotaaudubon.org/](http://www.sarasotaaudubon.org/) and click Membership. Or, if you have time, come see us at the Nature Center at 999 Center Rd. and renew in person. We're open from 9 a.m. to noon every day, and until 3 p.m. on weekends this winter.



Kimberly Sullivan  
Building Manager

**Full Notes from the Nature Center  
Report**

**Members Art Show in February  
Opening Reception  
February 4th 4pm - 6pm**



# SAS MEMBER ART & PHOTO SHOW

February 1 to 28 9a-12p

**OPENING RECEPTION**  
**SAT., FEBRUARY 4, 2023**  
**4 to 6 PM**



## *Celebrate Our Members*

Please join us during the month of February. The event is free and open to the public during normal business hours (9a - 12p daily).



## *Vote for People's Choice Award*

Look at the display of artwork and photographs and vote for your favorite.



## *Refreshments*

Light refreshments will be served.



SARASOTA  
AUDUBON SOCIETY

999 Center Road  
Sarasota, FL 34240

941-312-6533  
[www.SarasotaAudubon.org](http://www.SarasotaAudubon.org)



## The GARDEN Gate



**Bluebird boxes and Purple Martin houses  
are now occupied!**

---

**Join us for the next Gardens Day with expert Pam Callender  
Saturday, Feb 11, 9 – 11am**



SARASOTA  
AUDUBON SOCIETY

**Gardens Day!**  
**at the Celery Fields Audubon Nature Center**



**2nd Saturday of the Month  
9:00am - 11:00am  
Join us for Native Garden  
Education & Enhancement  
Learn to garden for the birds!**



**Sarasota Christmas Bird Count Report**





The 72nd annual Sarasota Christmas Bird Count (part of an Audubon series now in its 123rd year), held on December 31, 2022, produced 160 species (pending review of 9 rarities) and an additional five Count Week birds. Should all the rarities pass muster with the state reviewer, this count will go down as... average, literally equalling the running average over the last ten years. The 160 species tally compares to an all-time high species count of 173 achieved on the 2018/2019 Count and the 165 species (2nd highest ever) achieved on the Count a year ago.

Somewhat ironically, our total of individual birds, about 39,000, was well above the 30,000 individuals counted a year ago. The 39,000 number is the highest count of individual birds for the Sarasota CBC in recent memory (but far from the all-time high due to the one-million Tree Swallows reported on a Count prior to my tenure).

We had a rather amazing two First Ever species on the Count: The first was an immature Iceland Gull which Matthew Press found on Lido Beach at first light. The second was a Warm-eating Warbler found by Sue Guarasci, Bill Pranty, and Mary Heinlen on the Ringling Museum grounds. Both birds were very well documented. Besides the two First Evers, we had a Second Ever: a Parasitic Jaeger spotted by Matthew off Lido Beach.

The most productive area on this Count was, as usual, Celery Fields and vicinity (Area #8), where eight exclusive species (i.e. found nowhere else in the circle) were notched. Check out the links below for full checklist and report.

[Full Species List](#)

[Full Sarasota Report](#)

**CONSERVATION:**

# Rodenticides Risk to Birds of Prey



Adult Bald Eagle Carrying Rodent to Eaglets in Nest

by Tim Smith Instagram [@nokomis\\_wildlife\\_images](#)

## Birds of Prey are at Risk Due to Rodenticides

by Arianna Lockman, New College of Florida Intern

The use of rodenticides, also known as rat poison, has been a common practice by many throughout the years. However, researchers have realized that rodenticides are impacting more than just the rodent population.

Birds of prey, or raptors, such as eagles, hawks, ospreys, vultures, owls, and falcons, often feast on rodents as their main source of food. The use of rodenticides often leaves remnants in the deceased animal. Therefore, when another animal consumes the dead rodent, the animal is also consuming rodenticides. Approximately 30% of birds of prey are near threatened, vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered, according to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

### A Deeper Insight: Audubon's EagleWatch Program

Audubon's EagleWatch program began in 1992 with only 22 volunteers. Now the program has over 600 volunteers monitoring eagle nests all over the state of Florida. The program specifically seeks active nesting sites and possible threats to these nesting locations. These dedicated volunteers work to monitor and protect approximately 40% of Florida's nesting pairs as Florida has one of the highest densities of these incredible birds of prey. EagleWatch Program Manager Shawnlei Breeding states that their data are reliant on nest reports from volunteers and the community. Says Shawnlei: "There are approximately 164 documented nests in Sarasota and Manatee counties combined. EagleWatch has data for 90 or so of those



nests. Last season, volunteers monitored 88 nests in Manatee and Sarasota county. Of those nests, 73 were occupied by eagles and 75% of those nests were successful in fledging young. Volunteers reported 108 chicks hatched and 88 of those fledged, for a productivity rate of 1.21 chicks per Occupied Nest and a Fledge Rate of 81%."

Audubon's EagleWatch program is always in need of good information and volunteers; contact them to report eagle nests so they can add to the current map. Visit [\*\*Audubon Florida's EagleWatch\*\*](#) website to learn more.

[Read Entire Article](#)

## CONSERVATION

### Protect Florida's Natural Resources

#### Florida Right to Clean Water - FAQ Friday!

by Liz Lindsay, Florida Right to Clean Water

For decades, environmental activists have been fighting a losing battle trying to change state legislation with little progress. The protection of Florida's natural resources requires a constitutional

amendment. [\*\*FloridaRightToCleanWater.org\*\*](https://floridarighttocleanwater.org) would like to invite you to attend our FAQ FRIDAY. Please see the link below for more information. This is a statewide citizens' initiative to amend the Florida Constitution for the 'Right To Clean Water'. We need 223k petition signatures by March 1, 2023 in order to trigger Florida Supreme Court review. We need 900k signed petitions by November 2023 in order to be placed on the November 2024 ballot. This event is a rare opportunity to get answers from constitutional and environmental law experts. Read the full text of the amendment and submit your questions within the registration form or send questions to [\*\*admin@floridarighttocleanwater.org\*\*](mailto:admin@floridarighttocleanwater.org) attention FAQ FRIDAYS. Please share this with all your environmental friends!



#### FAQ FRIDAYS at 4pm EST:

**February 3rd:** Public sector (health, safety, environment, government).

**February 10th:** Private sector (property, business and economic interests).

## CLIMATE CORNER ☐

### Hope for Birds in Biodiverse Habitats The Quads Will Provide This!



### **Biodiversity safeguards bird communities under a changing climate**

University of Helsinki from *Science Daily*

Climate change has undisputable global effects on ecosystems and ecological community compositions, but why certain communities are better able to resist the effects of climate change than others remains unclear. In a recent scientific study covering nearly all North American bird species, researchers studied community composition changes and community diversity over half a century. Consistently, bird communities with higher species richness and a larger variety of functional properties changed less radically in their community composition following climate change.

Functionally diverse bird communities help maintain ecosystems via plant seed dispersal, pest insect control and even pollination of flowering plants. Climate change reshuffles the composition of these important bird communities and therefore threatens their ability to provide ecosystem services.

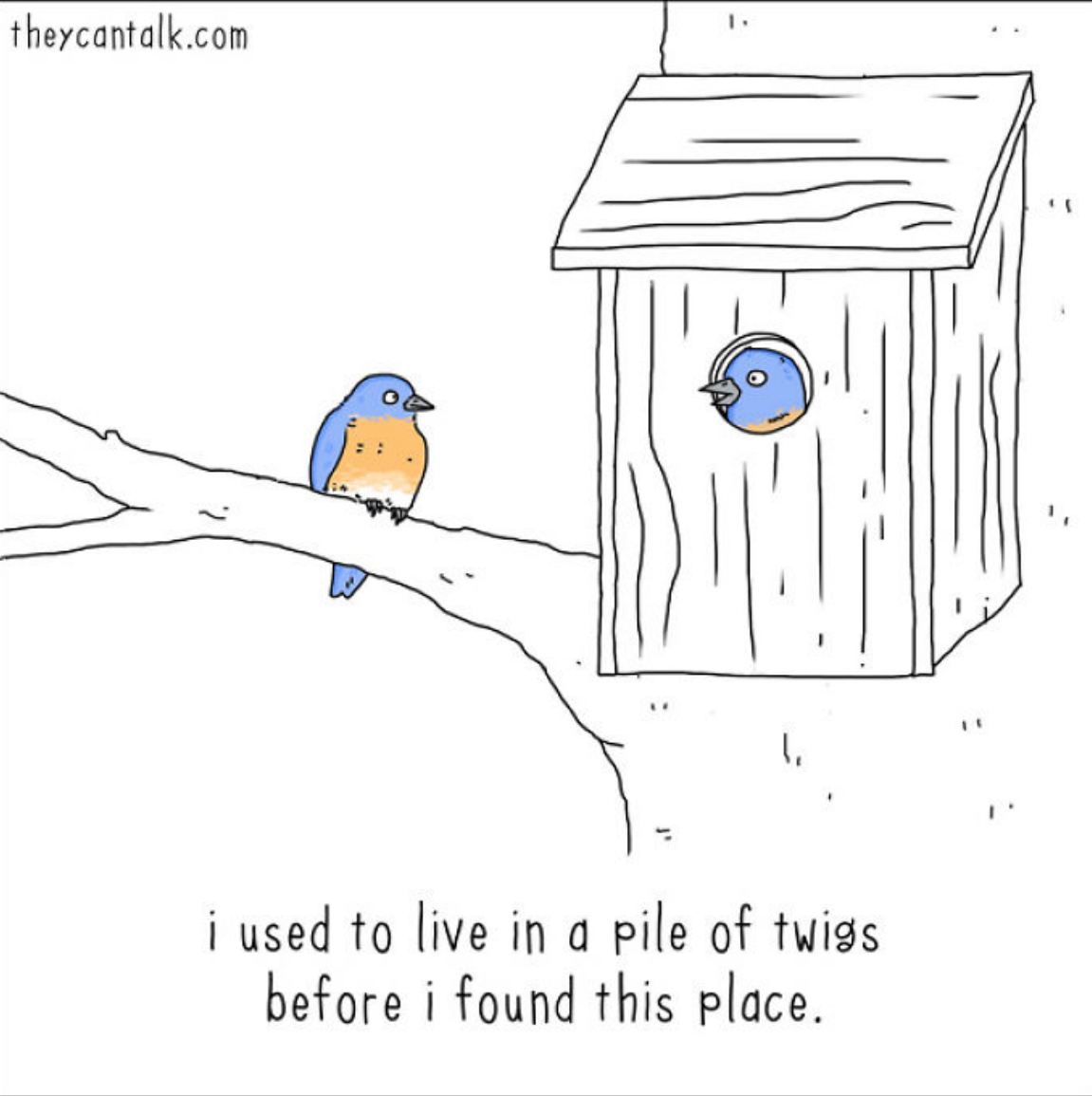
"Our results strengthen the understanding that biodiversity safeguards ecosystem functioning and that the biodiversity and climate crises need to be mitigated simultaneously to avoid multiplicative effects," Marjakangas emphasizes.



The study is based on a community science database from 1966-2016 covering all of North America, and it was published in the International Journal Scientific Reports.

[READ Entire Article Here](#)

## The Last Word is Graphic:



SARASOTA  
AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

[Contact the Editor](#)

[Activity Schedule](#)



Like us on  
**facebook®**



Follow us on  
**Instagram**

