



THE BROWN PELICAN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SARASOTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

MAY 2023



Sarasota Audubon President Jeanne Dubi gave a presentation on April 16 to 60+ members of Sequel. The event, at The Meadows Country Club, provided information about the environmental work of Sarasota Audubon and the Quad Parcel project.

Hello Sarasota Auduboners,

As we wind down another season, there is much to reflect on: Where we are, what we have done, where we are going.

First: I want to thank all of the dedicated volunteers who make Sarasota Audubon run smoothly. Without you, we would not be able to provide all the services that make us who we are: a vital voice for birds, wildlife and the environment.

Also first: A huge thank you to our donors. Without your ongoing support, we would not have a nature center campus. You are the ones responsible for this beautiful place, a place to learn and relax while enjoying birds, plants, and wildlife -- a green haven for all.

Equally important: Along with our members and friends, we have had continuing support throughout the years from philanthropic

organizations. With our partners, Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast, we are raising funds for the Quad Parcels, a sorely needed re-wilding project. I am pleased to tell you that the Gulf Coast Community Foundation (GCCF) has once again provided a grant for the Quad -- we just received another \$75,000. Because the Quad is being designed to help filtrate pollutants from our waters, that goal aligns with the GCCF's mission to protect water quality in our region. A major project of GCCF, in collaboration with other local environmental organizations and leaders, is the [Water Quality Playbook](#). This is a road map for citizens, governments, corporations, and HOAs of best practices for water use, and has garnered national and international attention. We can be proud that GCCF saw the need for this vital project and got it done! The Playbook is well worth checking out. You can easily find the section that pertains to you.

By the time October rolls around, we expect earthmoving at the Quad to be in full swing -- another exciting and major project for Sarasota Audubon.

We will publish another newsletter or two, and send out newsworthy eblasts to keep you all informed throughout the summer.

As always, many thanks for your support and trust.

Jeanne Dubi, President
and the SAS Board of Directors

MONTHLY MEETING INFORMATION



General Meeting
Monday, May 8th
7:00 pm on ZOOM

The Florida Keys
Hawkwatch



**MIGRATORY
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Us**

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THE
HAWKWATCH**

Mariah Hryniewich & Luis Gles will talk about their work at this southernmost hawk migration monitoring site in the continental United States. Located in the Keys at Marathon, this Hawkwatch has played an important role for more than a decade towards understanding raptor populations by continually tracking the movement of birds as they prepare to cross the Florida Straits and Gulf of Mexico into the Caribbean.

[Register](#)

Notes from the NATURE CENTER



Closed for summer after May 31: Every year we have mixed feelings of pride and sadness as we prepare to close the Nature Center for the summer starting June 1. We feel pride for all the good work we did throughout the year to protect birds, provide environmental education, and help increase the number of people who have discovered birding. At the same time, we feel sadness because the volunteers will miss being together and helping visitors in the Nature Center and on the boardwalks. We will reopen in October, however, feeling reinvigorated and enthusiastic. Come visit us in May before we close for the season!



Sam Valentin (left), Director of Marketing and Communications at Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast, described the mission and achievements of that wonderful organization. CFGC has saved close to 20,000 acres from development in southwest Florida and is working on more.

Leadership Sarasota: Leadership Sarasota is a program through the Sarasota Chamber of Commerce that is designed to enhance the participants' awareness of the community and its needs and encourages the development of future leaders. A group from this year's leadership class visited the Celery Fields on April 15. SAS President Jeanne Dubi discussed the future plans for re-wilding the Quad Parcels. Jeanne is adept at imparting her enthusiasm about the project to everyone who hears her speak about it, and we now have a new group of supporters.



Barn Owl Release: The Raptor Center of Tampa Bay partnered with the Sarasota Audubon Society to release four young barn owls near the Celery Fields in April. The birds' nest had been destroyed by Hurricane Ian back in September, so the Raptor Center took them in, cared for them, and helped them learn the skills they would need to care for themselves in the wild.

When they were ready, the team reached out to Sarasota Audubon Society to identify the ideal location to release the owls. A reporter from Fox's Tampa affiliate even came out to document the release, and the birds made

their television debut later that night on the evening news.

Injured Wildlife: If you find a bird or wild animal that is injured or possibly too young to be separated from its

parents, rescue organizations are there to help. Please call them to find out what you should do. Depending on the species and circumstances, the answer isn't always what you might expect.



- Save Our Seabirds in Sarasota (941-388-3010)
- Wildlife Center of Southwest Florida in Venice (941-484-9657)
- Raptor Center of Tampa Bay (813-205-1851)

Kimberly Sullivan
Building Manager



Calling all Wingspan Players:

The monthly Wingspan play-dates have attracted dozens of SAS members to the Nature Center since they started last summer. They'll continue through this spring and summer as a way to help our members stay connected, hone their game-playing skills, and learn more about birds of the world.

Even when the Nature Center is closed during Sarasota's hottest months, we'll be opening our air-conditioned facility to gamers a couple of days every month. If you'll be in Sarasota this summer and want to play, please [email Lynn](#) to let her know your preferred schedule.

May Schedule:

- Wednesday, May 3
- Saturday, May 13

All games start at 12:30 in the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center at the Celery Fields: 999 Center Road, Sarasota, FL 34240. If you'd like to join the fun, please [email Lynn](#) so we know how many tables to set up!

Purple Martins are Fledging!



by Sue Guarasci

We have had a total of 67 Purple Martin babies fledge so far this season, with more to come!

In case you've wondered what the big black mass of netting is around the Purple Martin house, it's our new attempt at guarding against snakes.

Above: Purple Martin Fledglings
Photo Kevin Korth

Below: Snake Extenders with
Netting Photo Sue Guarasci



We are suspicious of a snake when we find eggs or young babies missing, but no destruction to the nest. Finding them can be tricky especially in the gourds which are much harder to see into.

We have tried different things in the past. This netting is the same as last year, which the snakes were able to get past. This year, we have added extenders to take the netting several feet from the pole, requiring the snake to reach out and around the full extension of the netting.

We put the extenders up in March of this season. Unfortunately, 4 days before that we discovered a snake which had eaten or destroyed 9 Eggs. Since the extenders went up, we haven't had a snake problem. We are hopeful that we have found the solution.

Last year, we lost 30 eggs/small hatchlings to 2 snakes. The first was in Terry's House by the Nature Center in late March. The total loss there was 24 Eggs and 1 Baby. Once the snake was found and removed, the parents all re-latched and had 36 Eggs, 26 of whom fledged.

The second snake was in Ed's house by the bathrooms. The Total loss there was 1 Egg and 4 babies. This happened in late June. It was too late in the season for the parents to re-latch.

The snakes are Rat Snakes, they can be up to 5 feet long. They are nonvenomous. The snakes are very good climbers and will get up the pole and into a nest, where it will stay until it has devoured all eggs and babies. The snake will then move on to the next nest.



Above: Mary Alice is one of our volunteers and, we discovered, a snake wrangler. We photograph the snake so we can get an ID and a size estimate.

**May Featured Artists - Joint Show
Jenny Cherry & April Barnwell**



Artist Jenny Cherry



Jenny Cherry is a native Floridian, now living in Sarasota. She was always drawing and painting from an early age. She and her family went often to nature centers to learn about Florida flora and fauna. Jenny attended high school at Dreyfoos School of the Arts, which taught her to use different media, and she was accepted into Ringling School of the Arts, where she refined her craft, especially in watercolor.

April Barnwell is a Sarasota freelance artist, writer, and author. She is working towards becoming an apprentice in realistic art and hopes to eventually be able to depict the world in its current state as a testimony for future generations to see the 21st century through the eyes of art.



Artist April Barnwell





The GARDEN Gate

Family Day with UnidosNow and the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program



Left to Right: Mom and daughter placing farm animals in the watershed, student translator Andres Rodriguez, and Megan Barry of SBEP. The Mission of UnidosNow is to elevate the quality of life of the growing Hispanic/Latino community in the Manatee and Sarasota region through education, integration and civic engagement.

Sarasota Audubon began planning in January with the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program (SBEP) and UnidosNow for a family learning event at the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center. A successful event happened on April 8 with multiple generations of families participating in herb planting with Andy Schneider and Glynnis Thomas of Sarasota Audubon, and watershed modeling with Megan Barry of SBEP. By the end of the morning the beds were full of fragrant, growing herbs, and everyone understood that what we do with the water in our backyards ends up in Sarasota Bay eventually. This partnership benefits everyone, and we look forward to working with the groups again next year to create a better world for birds and humans.



Next Garden Day – Saturday, May 13



Our Garden Doctor Pam Callender will be in the gardens on May 13 as we prepare for the rainy season and long tropical summer.

She will discuss Native Plants for Birds and how you can make your own garden a haven for wildlife.

**Join Pam at 9:00 am
Saturday, May 13!**

Bird Blog(s): Fort De Soto What a Difference a Date Makes!

Blog #1 Stu Wilson and Sarasota Audubon -- April 11



Today Cathy Paris and I led 20 participants on a blustery exploration of Fort De Soto Park in Pinellas County. Fort De Soto has a well-earned reputation as a spring migrant trip, but today was a flat-out bust. I've been visiting Fort De Soto nearly annually since 2005 or so and have never seen it as dead as it was today. To add insult to injury, two of our cars received parking tickets, courtesy of Pinellas County's new park admission policy

which requires visitors to find a pay station to submit their \$5 park fee (credit card only).

We made our usual stops: Ranger's house/mulberry tree area, East Beach Picnic Area, East Beach turnaround (where not a single bird, shorebird or otherwise, could be found), North Beach Lagoon, and finally the Oak Grove Picnic Area at the north end of the park, where I had my highlight of the day: a picnic lunch lovingly catered by Betty Neupert.

The only passerine that can legitimately be called a migrant was the Wood Thrush, and it was seen by only a few. No vireos, orioles, tanagers, grosbeaks, nor buntings... A total of just four(4) shorebird species... Conditions on the ground were not exactly favorable (15-20mph east-northeast winds), and we're still on the early end of the peak migration window... those are the only explanations I can come up with for today's poor production.

The list for the day includes 43 species. For reference, last year's field trip, which I also thought was fairly unproductive, notched 55 species.

April 11 Bird List

Blog #2 Billie Knight and Manatee County Audubon -- April 19



Twenty people attended Manatee Audubon's Field Trip to Fort De Soto on Wednesday, April 19th, led by Jerry and Billie Knight.

Following Monday morning's heavy rains, we were hoping some of the migrants would stay around until Wednesday...and they did! Several of the fig trees looked like Christmas trees, decorated with so many beautiful birds! Highlights included great looks at Scarlet and Summer Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Baltimore Orioles, several warblers and vireos, and shorebirds.

During the 4-hour field trip, 65 species of birds were seen, under

beautiful blue skies and temperatures in the 70s. Special thanks to Rob Carr, Bill Pelletier, and Emile Schoffelen for taking the pictures, and our eBird recorder, Debbie Carr!

When asked about the two trips, Billie Knight remarked "We went on Stu's trip the week before, and there was not a migrant in the park. Our field trip was scheduled the following Wednesday, where we had heavy rains early Monday morning, which brought the migrants down. **Timing...it's everything with the birds.**"

April 19 Bird List



CONSERVATION: N. Lido Eaglet Death



Nesting Bald Eagles at N. Lido Have Little Success

by Kylie Wilson, Audubon Florida Shorebird Coordinator

Some of you may know about the nesting Bald Eagles on North Lido; this pair has tragically lost two sets of chicks for the past two nesting seasons.

The suspected cause of loss is second-hand rodenticide poisoning. More information on the effects of rat poisons on our raptor populations can be found at R.A.T.S. -- [Raptors are the Solution.](#)

This season, the pair had two chicks again, and this time both made it to fledging! The community involved in watching this pair was very excited, especially after the last two years of failures. Then, Saturday (4/8/23), one of the fledges was seen lying in the nest and not moving. The bird had been seen alive on April 6 with the other fledged eaglet.

I recognized that the eaglet was freshly dead and therefore could be viable for tissue sampling to determine the cause of death. So, I worked to get approval to have the carcass removed and collected for testing. After many hours of phone calls and redirects (**thank you to all involved!**), I was able to get in touch with the USFWS biologist who gave the approval. Then I contacted a tree-climber who went up and recovered the eaglet that same day. **Thank you to Mike and Nancy with Raptor Center of Tampa Bay!** The bird has since been shipped to the USFWS for sampling. Preliminary results took several weeks, but today I got a reply:

"This eagle tested negative for highly pathogenic avian influenza virus and West Nile virus (and other arboviruses). The bird was very decomposed when we received it, but we did not see evidence of trauma, electrocution, or other obvious signs of death at gross examination. We are submitting liver for toxicology, and these results will likely follow our report in an addendum; the veterinary toxicology lab has been reportedly under-staffed and very busy, so there have been some slight delays in test results in some circumstances."

I can only hope that this eaglet will not die in vain and that we are able to get some conclusive answers to what is killing these birds. I will provide an update when I receive the final toxicology report.

Another article to read: ["The Deadly Meal, The Great Horned Owls of Safety Harbor - A Local Tragedy, A National Issue"](#).

Mark Schocken (retired chemist) wrote about the deaths of a Great Horned Owl family in Safety Harbor, FL. They died from eating rats who had been poisoned with anticoagulant rodenticides.

Sarasota is experiencing this same issue with our Eagles on North Lido -- for the last 3 years we have lost a nestling or fledgling and we believe the cause to be rodenticides.

Rodenticides that cause secondary poisoning to birds/pets include one or more of the following ingredients:

- **BROMODIALONE**



Read the "Deadly Meal" Article Here

- BRODIFACOUM
- DIFETHIALONE
- DIFENACOUM

Websites to find more information regarding Safer ways to kill Rats:

SafeRodentControl.org

RaptorsAreTheSolution.org

RODENTICIDES

Many dead eagles, owls and hawks test positive for rodenticides, from eating poisoned rats. Products below claim to be SAFER ways to control rats/mice without causing SECONDARY poisoning to birds and pets.



Rodenticides MOST TOXIC to birds/pets include one or more of the following ingredients:



BROMODIALONE
BRODIFACOUM
DIFETHIALONE
DIFENACOUM

Wanted: Neville Preserve Bird Counts



By John Ryan

If you are interested, or know others who are interested in adding to the bird counts for the Jim Neville Marine Preserve, I will gladly help you as needed.

The Jim Neville Marine Preserve is located on Little Sarasota Bay in Sarasota, between

Siesta Key and the mainland.

We have continued picking up trash, clearing invasives and planting native plants with high school volunteers.

Thank you for your support of this fun and gratifying project.

[Email John](#)

CLIMATE CORNER

Migrating Birds Can Partially Offset Climate Change



American Redstart Sandy & Bob Sipe, Macaulay Library

Study examines a key but costly strategy

April 11, 2023, Cornell University from ScienceDaily.com

Deteriorating habitat conditions caused by climate change are wreaking havoc with the timing of bird migration. A new study demonstrates that birds can partially compensate for these changes by delaying the start of spring migration and completing the journey faster. But the strategy comes with a cost -- a decline in overall survival. The findings by researchers from Cornell University, the University of Maryland, and Georgetown University are published in the journal Ecology.

[Read ARTICLE](#)

[Read STUDY](#)

**The Last Word Is Graphic:
Shorebird Season**



birdandmoon.com



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Activity Schedule



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