



THE BROWN PELICAN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SARASOTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

DECEMBER 2023



Hello Sarasota Auduboners,

Thanks to 70 generous donors, **Giving Tuesday** was a huge success. Within one day, we received over \$15,000. This once-a-year, nationwide effort helps to keep non-profits afloat to continue their crucial work. In our case, Sarasota Audubon, which had been hit with unexpected repairs and maintenance issues since the summer -- some due to vandalism -- will use some of these funds to offset those costs. Giving Tuesday kicks off the giving season, so we look forward to more donations coming in. We are always so grateful for your support.

And **Re-Wilding the Quad Parcels** continues to be near and dear to so many. On that point, the County has finally approved our plans for the SE Quad (yea!). We must now make sure that we have enough funds for that section

of the Quads, so please keep those donations coming. On January 17th, Christine Johnson of the Conservation Foundation will be our Meet and Greet speaker at the Nature Center. Both Christine and I will share our updated plans at that time.

We hope to see many of you at the **Holiday Luncheon December 13** at the Palm Aire Country Club. Jon Thaxton, Senior VP for Community Investment at the Gulf Coast Community Foundation and former Sarasota County Commissioner, will be our featured speaker. His environmental work on the County Commission can still be felt today. Some of you may remember that Jon was once the Conservation Chair of Sarasota Audubon. His particular bird passion is the Florida Scrub-Jay. Maybe he will recount some of his birdy experiences.

There is still time to register for the **EcoSummit on** December 5-6 with keynote speaker Carl Hiasen, panel discussions on sustainability topics, storytelling and music. So much to see, so much to learn.

On December 15 at 9 am, **Bobby Jones Nature Park** is having an opening day. This is another re-wilding project that took many years to come to fruition, but it is finally here. Sarasota Audubon will be there along with other like-minded organizations to kick off this newest place to enjoy birds and nature.

Smith Properties/Raymond Road Farm status. We now believe that the Planning Commission will not make its final recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) until February, which means the BOCC will not deliberate on the rezone application until March. *Stay very tuned!!*

Jeanne Dubi, President
and the Sarasota Audubon Board of Directors

Time to Renew Local Membership



— S A R A S O T A —
A U D U B O N S O C I E T Y

Thank you to our local members who have made a
commitment to the birds and our community!

MONTHLY MEETING INFORMATION December 11, 7:00 PM on Zoom

Good Bird Photo



- excellent lighting
- subject in focus
- field marks clearly visible

Great Bird Photo



- peerless athleticism
- levitation??
- powerful

General Meeting
Monday,
December 11th
7:00 pm on ZOOM

Finding Joy & Humor
in Familiar Birds
with Rosemary Mosco



Rosemary Mosco, Science Writer, Naturalist, Cartoonist

Rosemary Mosco is the brilliant cartoonist from "The Last Word Is Graphic" in our own Brown Pelican newsletter. She will speak to us about her comics, which she mixes with science to stealthily inspire folks to protect birds and other wildlife. She also wrote a fun book about the history and biology of pigeons.

Don't miss a lighthearted, fun December meeting!

Exceptional Bird Photo



- nyooooom

[Register](#)

Notes from the Nature Center



Above: Young Birders and chaperones at the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center

Lots happening at the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center, as you will see below. Talk of the Holiday Luncheon and lots of activities: Members-only Meet & Greet, Wingspan gaming, Young Birders Club, students from Ringling College of Art & Design choosing Sarasota Audubon for their nonprofit project and more -- read on!



Attendees learned about helping bees by planting the right kinds of flowers and trees.

Members Meet & Greet On November 15 A Big Success

About 40 attendees braved the area's first rainstorms in months to hear native Sarasotan Ashley Williams discuss her journey to becoming a UF/IFAS master beekeeper. It was fascinating to hear how one little \$60 mail-order queen bee could change a life and improve the environment.

Gift Shop update: It's holiday time, and you know what that means: Finding gifts for friends and family who are impossible to buy for. But the Nature Center Gift Shop has you covered with lots of unique nature-themed gifts for adults and children. Stop by for honeybee earrings, bird-themed scarves, Sarasota Audubon t-shirts and caps, birding guides, binocular harnesses, and so much more! We're open every day from 9 a.m. to noon – yes, even on Christmas Day for you last-minute shoppers!



Kim Sullivan, Building Manager

[There's more: Read Full Text of Kim's NOTES](#)



The talk around the Nature Center this month is all about the upcoming Holiday Luncheon. Last year's was a huge success with a sold-out crowd and delicious food. This year we will celebrate the season again at the Palm Aire Country Club in Sarasota.

If you'd like to attend, but you're shy about going alone, don't worry! Lots of our members "go stag," and they make new friends at the event. If you don't know anyone and aren't sure where to sit, tell the person checking you in at the desk. We want newcomers to feel comfortable and enjoy themselves.

A few tickets remain!

Guest Speaker [Jon Thaxton](#) has a lot to share about our local habitats and fauna and the philanthropic work of the Gulf Coast Community Foundation.

[Tickets & Information](#)

Garden in a Bag

Seed Bomb Bag Vision Board

EACH GARDEN TAG WILL HAVE A WRITTEN THANK-YOU MESSAGE FROM THE AVIAN ALLIES AND THE LOWER NAME



BURLAP SACKS AS OUR SEED BOMB GOODIE BAGS, EACH WITH 3 SEED BOMBS INSIDE + 3 GARDENER TAGS.

THE ATTACHED TAGS WILL HAVE OUR AVIAN ALLIES LOGO, AND DIRECTIONS WITH HOW TO PLANT THE BOMBS.

SEED BOMBS WILL CONTAIN A VARIETY OF NATIVE MILKWEEDS TO BENEFIT POLLINATORS

TAG MOCK UP:



FRONT

BACK



WE ARE CONSIDERING PRINTING TAGS WITH PRINTER INK OR WITH BLOCK PRINTING STAMPS



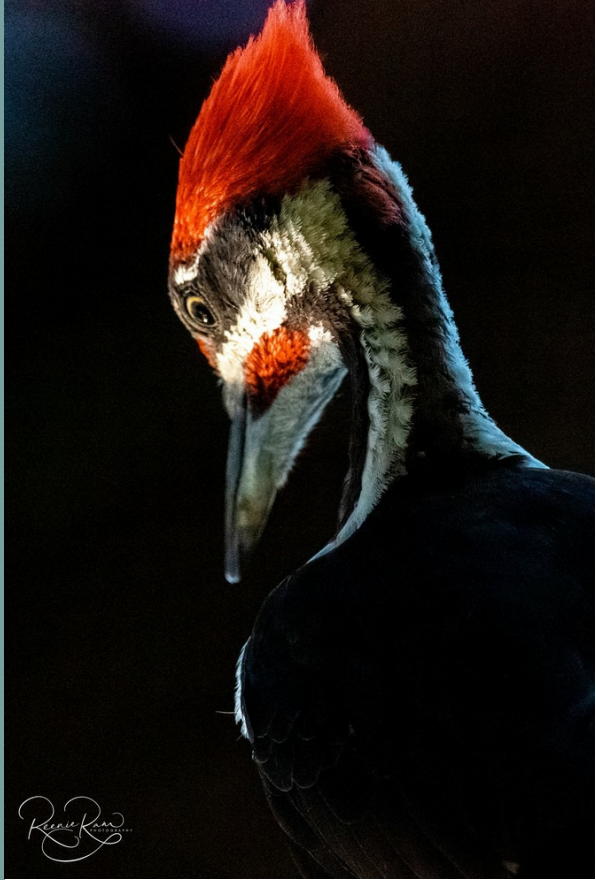
WHAT THE PROCESS WILL LOOK LIKE: USING CLAY, EARTHWORM CASTINGS, AND OUR FLOWER SEED MIX. THE BOMBS WILL DRY FOR 3 DAYS TO ENSURE THEY WON'T BEGIN GROWING OR MOLD



Big, big thanks to our Avian Allies, a team of creative, energetic bird lovers from Ringling College of Art and Design. Bella Gazoli, Judy Lin, Caterina Ciao, and Kurt Fleischer (aka the Avian Allies) worked with SAS Board Members Jeanne Dubi and Sue Herring as well as Karen Willey on ideas to raise not only funds but also awareness of our Quad Parcels project.

The students developed an idea to make "Seed Bombs" consisting of clay, earthworm castings and native milkweed wildflower seeds. The Seed Bombs are included in a goodie bag, complete with directions for planting and plant tags in an organic compostable, reusable burlap sack. Avian Allies organized a GoFundMe campaign to raise funds for the Seed Bombs and then, when GoFundMe donations exceeded the needs of the project, they decided to put the excess funds into a gift card to a native plant nursery. Some lucky donor at an upcoming Quad Parcels fundraiser will receive not only a Seed Bomb, but the beginning of a bird-friendly garden!

**November Featured Artist
Reenie Ram Photography**



Reenie Ram grew up in Massapequa, Long Island, NY. She worked as a police officer for NYPD until becoming disabled by the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Reenie now volunteers with Sarasota Audubon as a bird naturalist and bird nest monitor.

Following her disability and other resulting medical conditions, Reenie took her love for wildlife and nature and turned to photography as an outlet. Now living in Florida, Reenie says her lens is the view into the soul of each animal, showing her that they feel the same emotions we do. Following them on their journeys brings her wellness and inner peace.

**CALL FOR ARTISTS
& PHOTOGRAPHERS**

Call for Member Artists & Photographers

SARASOTA
Audubon
Society



February 2024 Art & Photo Show

If you would like to participate in our annual Member Art & Photo Show, please complete and send us the "Show Entry/Prospectus Form".

The deadline to apply is January 10, 2024

All artworks and photographs should be originals and they must be framed, gallery wrapped, or metal printed and able to be hung on our display hooks. Framing specs are on the entry form.

For questions: SAS.Art.Committee@gmail.com

ARTIST ENTRY FORM



<https://www.fosbirds.org/birdingclubs.html>

Use the QR Code for information on upcoming December Outing!



Volunteer Opportunities



It takes a lot of effort to keep



our Native Gardens looking beautiful. If you have a couple hours a week to share with us, it will make all the difference. And the birds will thank you!

Garden Volunteer

— SARASOTA —
AUDUBON SOCIETY

Feeder Team Volunteers Needed!

Help us attract more birds!



DUTIES: Fill bird feeders at the Gardens gazebo

Sign up now at: Volunteer@SarasotaAudubon.org



Our next Palmer Blvd. cleanup is coming up:

Monday, December 11, at 9:00 AM

Live life cleaner, make the Earth greener!

**Volunteers are required to fill out and submit a county release form
BEFORE arriving at the Nature Center.**

Hope to see you there!

Please complete the form before attending.

**County Release
Form**

**RSVP to our cleanup coordinator, Shelley
Yarosh**

Volunteer Spotlight





Over the past five years Kylie Wilson has been the Audubon Florida Shorebird Stewardship and Monitoring Coordinator for Sarasota beaches. Last summer as she was repairing the safety enclosures for nesting Least Terns and Black Skimmers, she set down her binoculars. When she returned to retrieve the binoculars, they were gone! Sarasota Audubon stepped up to donate a pair to replace the missing equipment.

Says Kylie, "I am deeply thankful for Sarasota Audubon's continued support of both myself and the local Shorebird Stewardship program. These binoculars are excellent, and I am looking forward to using them at the beach and beyond!"

Sarasota Audubon is grateful for the service Kylie provides to the birds and for teaching our members about our vulnerable breeding shorebirds.



The GARDEN Gate



Nature Center Native Garden Day



Second Saturday of each Month 9 - 11 am

Join us for Native Garden Inspiration with
Pamela Callender, Eco Artist



Learn how to
create habitat for
birds and pollinators



Calling All Wingspan Players!



We're keeping our minds sharp and having fun playing this popular bird-themed game at the Nature Center, and we want you to join us!

No, you don't have to know how to play, and you don't even need to know anything about birds. Our experienced players are happy to teach you the rules and give you tips for success, and the game itself teaches new facts about birds.

If you're going to attend, please [RSVP to Lynn](#)

December Play Dates

- Wednesday, December 6
- Wednesday, December 20

All games start at 12:30 pm 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!

CONSERVATION: Green Expo and EcoSummit

Green Living Expo FREE

December 2-3, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm



GREEN LIVING EXPO

DECEMBER 2-3, 2023
MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM
SARASOTA, FLORIDA

Explore solutions to go green at the FREE Green Living Expo. Demo and buy sustainable products and services from select green businesses and non-profit organizations.

The Expo will highlight green solutions for energy conservation, waste reduction, water protection, local food, and nature conservation. It's a two-day trade show loaded with ideas and demonstrations about how to reduce our impacts on the environment.

The event is being held in conjunction with the EcoSummit (December 5-6 at Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall)

Admission is free with [advance registration](#) or \$5 per group at the door.

**Free EXPO
Tickets!**



To preserve quality of life, we must find a new balance with nature

ECO SUMMIT

DEC 5-6, 2023
VAN WEZEL PERFORMING ARTS HALL
SARASOTA, FL

Science & Environment Council 2023 EcoSummit

December 5–6, 2023
Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall

Don't miss this popular regional environmental summit for lively, solutions-oriented lectures, panel discussions, storytelling, and music. Dozens of national, regional, and local experts will share fascinating insights and future-forward innovations for recharging our environment and reducing our impacts -- crucial to sustaining our coastal community's environment-based quality of life.

Sarasota Audubon President Jeanne Dubi is featured in a panel discussion on Tuesday, December 5, at 3:20 pm. If you can only attend one day, this is the one to be at.

[Click for
Tickets](#)

Bird Blog CAUTION: Gray-headed Swamphen



Gray-headed Swamphen

(*Porphyrio poliocephalus*)

Looking like an oversized version of a Purple Gallinule with a massive red bill, the Gray-headed Swamphen is an impressive bird and the largest rail in North America. Originally from southern Asia, it became established in southern Florida in the mid-1990s when birds escaped from captivity and began breeding. Like gallinules, this species forages in marshes by wading, swimming, and even climbing to reach aquatic vegetation, insects, and animal prey. **Swamphens are aggressive competitors and may dominate or displace our native North American rails.**

[Read Entire Article Here](#)

[Earlier Correction for Purple Swamphen](#)

CLIMATE CORNER The American Flyways Initiative



The Americas Flyways Initiative (AFI) is a hemispheric, innovative, and visionary approach led by The National Audubon Society, BirdLife International, and the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF) to protect, conserve, and restore nature and address biodiversity loss and the climate change crisis across the Americas.

AFI is built upon and inspired by the groundbreaking foundation launched in 2021 by BirdLife International, the Asian Development Bank and the East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership. **The Americas hold three of**

The Americas Flyways Initiative (AFI) was officially presented at The Climate Week in New York as a cohesive and relevant opportunity for synergy, integration, and harmonious coexistence that unites people and nature beyond borders, seeking healthy and prosperous environments.

the eight major migratory bird flyways in the world, which makes this region pivotal to planetary biodiversity and climate change response. Nevertheless, stopover and wintering sites are disappearing at a rapid pace along these routes.

[Read Full
ARTICLE](#)

The Last Word Is Graphic: Christmas Field Guide

Bird and Moon, by Rosemary Mosco

Christmas Field Guide

birdandmoon.com

Mistletoe



Highly poisonous semi-parasite of the order Santalales. Its name means "poop twig" and it enjoys watching you kiss.

Reindeer

(a.k.a. Caribou)



Both sexes have antlers. Some subspecies are highly endangered. Questionably aerodynamic.

Poinsettia



A Mexican & Central American plant that looks extra-festive thanks to a bacterial infection.

Holly



Varied plants of the genus *Ilex*. Typically only female holly plants bear red fruit, and only if a male is within an unchaste 25 foot radius.

Two Turtle Doves



Streptopelia turtur & relatives. Increasingly rare. Awkward, noisy, & full of love, much like Christmas.

Partridge in a Pear Tree



Can - can somebody get me down? I'm a ground bird. Please? Somebody? Hello?

★ Happy holidays to those of you who overwinter as adults! ★

NOTE: Rosemary Mosco of bird and moon comics will be our Guest Speaker at the December General Meeting on Zoom!



SARASOTA
AUDUBON SOCIETY

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