



THE BROWN PELICAN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SARASOTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

JANUARY 2024



Betty Matthews, Jon Thaxton, Jeanne Dubi, Suzanne Dameron

Hello Sarasota Auduboners,

Happy New Year!! We are looking forward to making 2024 one of our best years ever, and we are off to great start. In spite of the chilly weather, we are seeing record numbers of visitors at the Nature Center.

Our annual **Holiday Luncheon** was a huge success. It was great to see old friends and make new acquaintances. We were pleased to have Susie Bowie, CEO of the Selby Foundation, and Betty Matthews, a former president of SAS, as special guests. Our speaker was Jon Thaxton of the Gulf Coast Community Foundation. He outlined the history of the environmental movement in Sarasota and the way Sarasota County is being developed as a result of the less than perfect 2050 plan -- the plan that attempted to limit sprawl. It was a sobering talk.

On December 15, **Bobby Jones Nature Park** opened to the public. Sarasota Audubon conducted a baseline bird survey in which 62 species were counted.

As we conduct regular surveys, it will be interesting to see how the newly vegetated native wetlands attract more species of birds and wildlife. We encourage you to take a walk in this vitally important green space.

On January 17 at 2 pm at the Nature Center, we will welcome **Christine Johnson of the Conservation Foundation**, who will talk about conservation easements (CEs): how lands are identified and how CEs are developed, especially how the Quad Parcels CE was created. It's an insider look at land conservation by a truly dynamic speaker and a true Audubon friend.

Jeanne Dubi, President
and the Sarasota Audubon Board of Directors



2023 Holiday Luncheon, a member gathering and fun time!

Above: Sara King, Betty Matthews and Susie Bowie
Below Left: Barb Males and Sue Herring. Right: Jon Thaxton





RODENTICIDES

Many dead eagles, owls and hawks test positive for rodenticides, from eating poisoned rats.

The following products are a **SAFER** way to control rats/mice without causing **SECONDARY** poisoning to birds and pets.



Tom Murphy Photography

FASTRAC
RATX
TERAD3
ASSAULT
PEPPERMINT SPRAY
GOODNATURE RAT TRAP

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



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DIFETHIALONE
DIFENACOU

MONTHLY MEETING INFORMATION
January 8, 2024, 7:00 PM on Zoom



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

**Sarasota History
Natural & Cultural
with John McCarthy**



John McCarthy, Selby Gardens
Historian, Storyteller

John McCarthy, Selby Gardens VP for Regional History and storyteller extraordinaire, will regale us with tales of Bertha Palmer and sons' natural legacy including Myakka State Park and the Celery Fields.

Did you know that Bertha Palmer started farming the Celery Fields 100 years ago?

Register



Bertha Palmer leading a hike at Meadowsweet Pastures, now in Myakka River State Park

Notes from the Nature Center



Above: Landscape Designer Pamela Callender teaching gardeners

January is the height of season at the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center. Talk of upcoming activities: Members-only Meet & Greet, Landscape Design class, Wingspan gaming, wildlife rehabilitation, gift shop exclusives and membership renewals -- read on!

Happy New Year to all our friends and neighbors! We hope 2024 brings you peace, happiness, and plenty of time for birding. Sarasota Audubon Society closed out 2023 on a busy note. With the winter season bringing cooler temperatures, we've witnessed the start of annual migrations for birds and Sarasota's human "snowbirds."



Jeanne Dubi and
Christine Johnson

Members Meet & Greet On January 17, 2024, 2:00 PM

Join SAS members at our Meet & Greet. We will hear from Christine Johnson of the Conservation Foundation about Conservation Easements and their importance in saving land for birds.

Wednesday January 17 at 2:00 PM
Sarasota Audubon Nature Center

Gift Shop update: Our volunteers have pitched in tirelessly to keep the Nature Center open for guests from around the world, stock our Gift Shop shelves with new items and perennial favorites, and organize birding events. We're looking forward to more of the same as 2024 begins.

Wildlife Rescue Presentation January 20: Many of us have found ourselves in the position of finding an injured animal but not knowing how to help it. Wildlife rescuers Sandy Ulrikson, Roger Riehm, and Laurie Riehm will be offering a presentation on Saturday, January 20, at the Nature Center to teach us how to help those unfortunate animals.

Kim Sullivan, Building Manager



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

The Garden Gate



How to Design your OWN Native Garden



Eco Artist and Garden Design
Teacher Pamela Callender

[Design Class Info](#)

Presented by our Garden Doctor, Eco-Artist Pamela Callender

Sponsored by Sarasota Audubon and Serenoa Chapter, Florida Native Plant Society

Native Plant Landscape Design course beginning Saturday, January 13, 2024, from 9 am – 11 am at the Audubon's Nature Center building at 999 Center Road in Celery Fields on Palmer Blvd. This class will continue on the second Saturday of every month through April 2024. **Classes are free** and open to the public.



Join Us for an Eagle Tour in February
February 10 or February 17 at 8:00 AM



The Eagle Trolley awaits! This 4-hour tour will take you to Eagle nesting sites throughout Sarasota County to see eaglets at different stages of development.

Join Sarasota Audubon and a Bald Eagle specialist to learn about the fascinating life cycle of this endangered bird.

Limited scopes and binoculars available, bring your own if you can.

Meet at the Nature Center at least 15 minutes before tour time.

**Eagle Tour
Tickets**

**January Featured Artist
Jean Nye: "The Chemistry of Color"**



We are delighted to present the artwork of Jean Nye at our Nature Center during the month of January. Jean asks, "What do chemistry and art have in common? Color!"

As an industrial and forensic chemist, Jean developed an eye for color as she titrated and used the spectrophotometer. Color identifies elements, but it also takes a mundane world and makes it sing. Jean shares her love for watercolor, oils, pastels and inks through the color in her pieces. Her favorite subjects are people, birds and flowers, but she is always open to new challenges in subject matter and techniques.

As President of the Sun Outdoors of Sarasota Art Guild, she is able to teach and learn from fellow artists. Jean's work has been chosen and awarded at many Ohio shows and at Art Center Sarasota. Jean is honored and appreciative of the opportunity to share her art at our Nature Center

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

Myakka River Christmas Bird Count



One hundred twenty-four species tallied. Quite an effort by 50 participants who covered 131 miles in 82 hours. It was a remarkable count in spite of reduced bird calls and strong northwest winds that created white caps on the lower lake. We added one new record: a single house finch sighted in Old Miakka. We also discovered a new eagle's nest in the pine flatwoods south of SR 72.

The low water created extensive shoreline and shallows – and habitat for black-necked stilts, avocets, yellowlegs, dowitchers, sandpipers and killdeer. A dozen species of ducks were sighted, including four gadwalls on the upper lake, not recorded since 2011. Large rafts of blue-winged and green-winged teal sheltered out of the wind on both the upper and lower lakes, making it challenging to identify all species within a raft, especially when they spent most of their time feeding with their bottoms up. Black-necked stilts (124) outnumbered American avocets (44). A record number of stilt sandpipers (40) were recorded, 36 of them along the upper lake shore.

Highlights this count included gadwall not seen since 2011, sora, Bonaparte's gull, American redstart, and a hermit thrush. Two bobcat, numerous deer and alligators also graced the count.

As Jon Thaxton noted, it was a glorious day with weather, friends and wildlife!

[Full Myakka CBC Report](#)

[Species List 2023](#)

Purple Martin Volunteers Needed!



Join our Team!

We are still in need of volunteers for Sarasota Audubon Purple Martin Group.

We manage the Purple Martins from January to mid July.

We need men! We need both full-time and seasonal volunteers!

We are erecting the Martin houses up at The Nature Center on Jan. 4th at noon. And we are erecting the Martin house at the restrooms on Jan. 5th at 10:00 am.

Joining our group, you will learn about the management of America's beloved bird and the Nature Center's avian ambassadors.

Contact me! "Keep 'em Flying!"

Terry Suchma

**Volunteer with Purple Martin
Team!**



Our next Palmer Blvd. cleanup is coming up:

Monday, January 8, 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!

Save the Date for next cleanup: [Monday, February 12](#)

Please complete the form before attending.

**County Release
Form**

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

Calling All Wingspan Players!



The popular bird-themed board game Wingspan will be continuing in 2024 at the Nature Center.

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](#)

January Game Dates

- Wednesday, January 3
- Saturday, January 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: Our Migrating Birds are Vanishing, Audubon Florida

by Julie Wraithmell, Executive Director
Audubon Florida

While South Florida slept on any given night this fall, so many birds migrated overhead that they were regularly visible on weather radar. More than half of America's birds make the journey to Latin



America and the Caribbean and back each year, everything from tiny hummingbirds to globetrotting shorebirds, powerful peregrine falcons to jewel-colored warblers and orioles. Florida funnels this river of North American birds each fall, and watching their passage is one of our state's greatest natural spectacles.

Unfortunately, this annual spectacle is dimming — North America's bird population has declined by 3 billion since 1970. That's more than a quarter of all birds lost in less than a lifetime, most of them migratory species that journey thousands of miles each year.

In a time when agreement is scarce in the nation's capital, the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA) program is a rare instance where both major parties have worked together since 2002 to provide funding and partnerships for conserving more than 350 species of birds — especially in sites where birds stop and spend the winter in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The program, which is up for renewal, is one of the smartest ecological investments we can make. Since 2000, more than 700 of these projects covering more than 5 million acres of habitat have helped birds in 43 countries. But each year, the program receives far more applications than it has resources, leaving many important projects left unfunded.

[Read Full Story Here](#)



Painted Bunting, Andrew West

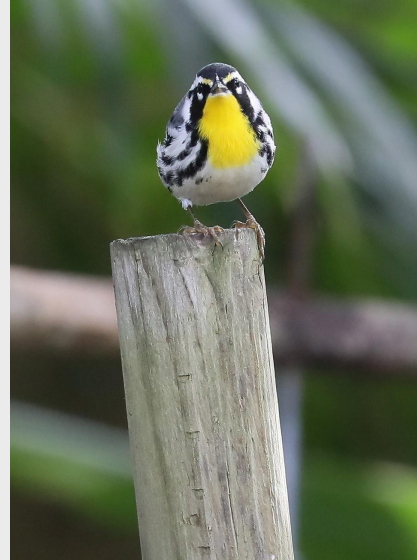


Common Yellowthroat, Andrew West

Bird Blog: Backyard Birds by Rick Greenspun

The sun finally came out around 2:30 today (12/26) and so did the birds. The oak tree still has Virginia Creeper vines with berries left, and the birds were gorging on them:

- Summer Tanager
- B&W Warbler
- Yellow-throated Warbler
- Pine Warbler
- Yellow rumps
- Downy and Red-bellied Woodpecker
- Eastern Phoebe
- Blue-headed Vireo



And the two new birds to the yard were a pair of Eastern Bluebirds that were also feasting on the berries and checking out some cavities in the dead silk oak tree.

Lovely afternoon and a Happy New Year 2024 to all!
Rick Greenspun

[Full Blog with All Photos](#)



CLIMATE CORNER
**Amazing Adaptation
of the Song Sparrow**



Cornell researchers and their colleagues have done whole genome sequencing of North American song sparrows that has revealed the genetic underpinnings for the range of body sizes. This work is the first result from a larger research effort to sequence song sparrow genomes from across North America, spanning nearly all of the 25 recognized subspecies.

The **current research is published Nov. 7 in Nature Communications** by scientists from the University of British Columbia, the **Cornell Lab of Ornithology**, Ouachita Baptist University and the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Song sparrows that live year-round on Alaska's Aleutian Islands can be up to three times larger than their cousins near San Francisco Bay.

"The size difference among song sparrows is wild to even think about," said co-author and researcher **Jennifer Walsh** at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. "Our results show that song sparrows have substantial capacity for adapting to local environmental change, and the genetic mechanisms underlying those changes are quite clear. We thought there would be a more complicated genetic component, or many more genes working together, to create the huge size difference."

[Read Full
ARTICLE](#)

**The Last Word Is Graphic:
Spirits in Birds**

Bird and Moon, by Rosemary Mosco



birdandmoon.com



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