



THE BROWN PELICAN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SARASOTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

SUMMER 2024



Sarasota Audubon Birders at Myakka River State Park

Hello everyone,

We hope everyone is having a wonderful summer full of plenty of travel and beautiful birds. Although the Nature Center is closed for the summer, we have been working diligently on some ongoing projects that will be a focus throughout the next season.

We are always looking to enhance the experience for visitors of all ages, especially some additional programs for youth and families. We are also very

invested in conservation in the area. In particular, our efforts have been aimed at blocking the rezoning of the property along Raymond Road and protecting Celery Fields and the very special species that reside there. While we expect to break ground on the Quad Parcels this fall and expand the acreage of natural flora and fauna, we must be diligent that we aren't losing ground in the area that surrounds us. Look for more communication on these issues and how you can help in upcoming Brown Pelican newsletters.

We are so looking forward to seeing everyone again soon!

The Sarasota Audubon Board of Directors

MONTHLY MEETING INFORMATION

Meetings will resume in October

Notes from the Nature Center



Above: Farewell Jeanne and welcome Sara at the Sarasota Audubon Board Meeting in June

Notes from the Nature Center, July 2024

by Kim Sullivan, Building Manager

You might think that things would quiet down at the Nature Center

when we close our doors for the summer, but you'd be surprised! We're busier than ever with plans and preparations for next season. We're cleaning, sorting, doing inventory, ordering supplies, and of course stocking the gift shop with exciting new merchandise. We had some of our local volunteers show up on a recent Saturday morning to help organize the donations we had received from generous donors last season. Brand new items will appear on the gift shop shelves, while gently used items will be sold at bargain prices at our patio sale next winter.

The Sarasota Audubon Society's Board of Directors gathered here in June for the first board meeting with newly elected president Sara Reisinger at the helm. There was even cake to thank outgoing president Jeanne Dubi for her service and welcome Sara. Chef Julia Child is credited with having said, "A party without cake is just a meeting." Would the world-famous chef agree that this was both a meeting *and* a party?

Kim Sullivan, Building Manager

There's more: Read Full Text of Kim's
NOTES

Wingspan The Summer Option!



Wingspan is happening this summer at the Nature Center. The Nature Center is closed but will be open for gamers only on game days.

Whether you like birds or games or just having fun with terrific people, you should be coming to the Nature Center to play Wingspan. No experience is necessary. No birding knowledge is required. It's free, and we supply the games. We only ask that players be SAS members and at least 18 years old.

Summer Game Dates

- Weekly on Wednesdays at 12:30 P.M.

All games start at 12:30 P.M. in the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center at the Celery Fields: 999 Center Road, Sarasota, FL 34240.

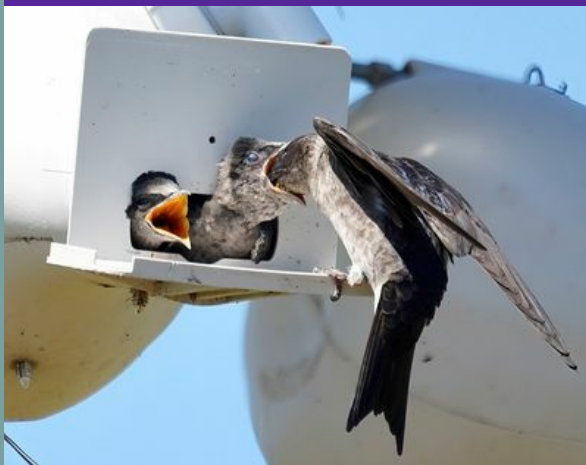
If you'd like to join the fun, please [email Lynn](#) so we know how many tables to set up!



The Garden Gate

Purple Martins Affected by El Niño!

by Christian Dillon



Year	Days Delayed	El Nino	Rainy	Cold February
2018	0	No	No	No
2021	3	No	No	No
2023	5	No	No	No
2022	10	No	No	Yes
2019	13	Yes	Yes	No
2020	16	Yes	No	No
2024	20	Yes	Yes	Yes
2017	24	No	No	Yes
2016	33	Yes	Yes	Yes
2015	48	Yes	Yes	Yes

I am very proud of our Purple Martin volunteer, Christian Dillon. Christian has been an eager, diligent, responsible and dependable volunteer this season. In April he told me he was not only a bird nerd but a numbers nerd.

All season long I have been lamenting the poor season we had this year. Due to the cool weather, we noticed the birds arriving late and slower, nesting late and laying eggs late this season. Our arriving nesting bird numbers were down only slightly. The birds laid fewer eggs, and many eggs were not viable. We found missing young without any indication of predation, leading me to think that the martins elected to do brood reductions.

Somehow, the martins, in their little bird brains, know how many of their young they are able to feed throughout the season. This number is known only to the

martin brains. If they had five small young and only could feed three they removed two, and only three nestlings remained in the nest. If the nestlings were older and larger where the martin parents could not remove them from the nest, some of the birds starved and we found them dead. This is Nature!

Terry Anne Suchma

Christian:

The goal of this research was to confirm Terry's wisdom about the effects of El Niño and to find out how cold is too cold for Purple Martins. This information can help the people who care for Purple Martins to know when nesting will start and to be better prepared to support the martins. It also gives us clues about how martins might be affected by ongoing climate change. I used weather data from 2015 to 2024 in Sarasota to see which factors affect when martins start laying eggs.

El Niño & Weather Effects on Purple Martin Nesting Habits By Christian Dillon, June 2024 [Read Full Article Here](#)

**Join Us in 2025 on a
Birding Trip to Peru!**

travel to

PERU

Sarasota Audubon Society trip
with Holbrook Travel to PERU
May 8th - 20th, 2025



**Limited space available!
Full itinerary coming soon!**

Destinations on this active 13 day birding excursion, led by local guides, include Lima, Tambopata, Yucay, Machu Picchu, and the Ballestas Islands.

Highlights

- Spot some of the 400-plus species found in Machu Picchu & surrounding areas.
- Explore the Amazonian lowlands by boat and on foot to look for colorful macaws, tanagers, and the enigmatic Hoatzin.
- Discover the mist-fed ecosystem of Lomas de Lachay, home to an oasis of dwarf forest in the Peruvian desert.
- Visit Pantanos de Villa, a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance that provides critical habitat for waterfowl and migratory shorebirds.
- Travel by boat to witness the seabirds of Ballestas Islands, including the Humboldt Penguin, Peruvian Booby, Inca Tern, and the near-threatened Peruvian Diving-Petrel.

Interested? Email Trip Leader, Kylie Wilson, to add your name to the update list!
khwilson1994@gmail.com

Email Kylie

**Conservation: Beach Nesting Birds
Lido and Longboat, June 28 Update**



Above: Least Tern chick on Longboat *Photo Hayley Rutger*

Longboat:

Least Terns on Longboat are looking great! Water came up relatively high a few days ago, but the elevation of the nesting site kept everyone safe! New chicks are still popping up, and the colony appears to be very comfortable. Our false effigies appear to be working, as crows are now absent from the area, leaving adults to focus on defending against gulls and the occasional beachgoer. Some of these chicks are already growing in feathers, so come check them out before they take off!



North Lido:

We have achieved flight, ladies and gentlemen!! While placing some new "No Fireworks" signs at nearby beach accesses, I watched one of our first chicks take a quick flight to the waterline! They really do grow up so fast! I've counted 216 chicks so far, but more are on the way with several parents sitting on eggs again. More chick crossing signs were installed recently in the area to hopefully alert more beachgoers to our growing flightless chicks. Check out this video showing an inquisitive chick by our very own Miri Hardy!

<https://www.facebook.com/100000498275097/videos/403138606045158/>

South Lido:

WE HAVE CHICKS!!! A super shout-out to Beth and Kylie of FWC and everyone involved with Sarasota County at Lido Beach. You all really worked so hard for these Least Terns, and this is the awesome reward! We have a flourishing colony of 332 adults, 178 nests and, as of Saturday night, 6 tiny downy chicks!!! More and more are popping up every day. The Least Terns worked really hard for this moment too after losing not one but two sites prior to this. Congratulations to our latest feathered parents! Come look at this thriving colony and their new fuzzy kids!

If you are able to assist, contact Emily via email at the button below.

**Yes, I Will Take a Bird Steward
Shift**

A Dolphin Tale

By Barbara Moffet, Sarasota Audubon Newsletter Editor
In the Washington Post



The longest-running wild dolphin research study paints a fuller picture of the marine mammals; they're not "humans in wet suits." (Photo: Brookfield Zoo Chicago's Sarasota Dolphin Research Program under NMFS/MMPA Scientific Research Permits)

By Barbara S. Moffet

June 1, 2024 at 7:00 a.m. EDT

SARASOTA, Fla. — The research vessel Martha Jane glided slowly across the teal waters of Sarasota Bay on Florida's Gulf Coast under a cloudless sky tailor-made for tourists on a recent day. "There's 2094!" one of the scientists on the boat called out. "She's still with us!"

The bottlenose dolphin known to researchers as 2094 had poked her dorsal fin out of the water for only a few seconds, but that was enough to identify her as a young female that had been the focus of a dramatic rescue from a fishing line a year ago.

The world's longest-running study of a wild dolphin population, the Sarasota effort has sighted and recorded more than 5,750 dolphins and made the shallow waters of Sarasota Bay a living laboratory for 53 years.

Among the program's key findings: The individual dolphins here live in specific "neighborhoods" generation after generation, forming a mosaic of adjacent communities along Florida's west coast. Many males forge buddy pairs for protection and stay together for life. And hetero- and same-sex interactions are used to establish and maintain social bonds over dolphin life spans that can stretch well past the age of 60.

[Read FULL Article](#)

Bird Blog: Summer at South Lido
by Lou Newman



Above: The Estuary at Punta Rasa near Buenos Aires, Argentina

I went to South Lido Beach exceptionally early on Saturday, June 22, 2024, so I could photograph the setting moon over the Gulf of Mexico with a tidal pool and the beach in the foreground. The setting moon was disappointing, but boy, the morning was far from disappointing. The Least Terns were having a feeding frenzy in the tidal pool, where a school of small bait fish had been trapped by the outgoing tide.

Be sure to click below for full photo essay - ahhh, lovely!

**Full Article - With
Photos!**



The Last Word Is Graphic

Zygodactyl

BirdWord, by Cornell Lab, All About Birds

***Zygodactyl: adj. [Greek zygo (yoked, or paired) + dactyl (toed)]
Having two toes facing forward and two facing backward. A
feature of several orders of birds, including cuckoos,
woodpeckers, and parrots.***



Pileated Woodpecker by [John Fox](#), Yellow-billed Cuckoo by [Lindell Dillon](#), both via [Birdshare](#). Featured in [Living Bird, Winter 2016](#).



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AUDUBON SOCIETY

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