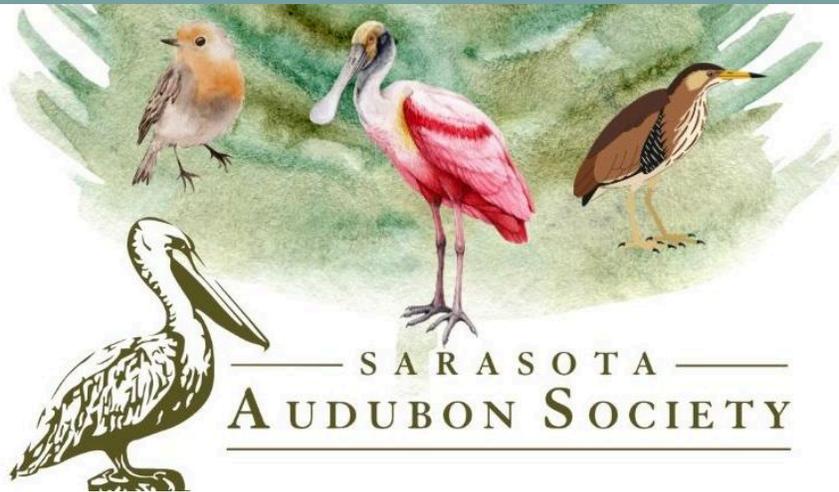




THE BROWN PELICAN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SARASOTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

JANUARY 2026



Dear Members,

All of us at the Sarasota Audubon Society are hoping you have had a happy and safe holiday season. We have a busy new year shaping up! Read on for opportunities to volunteer, to donate or to learn from our amazing team.

Join us this month for member-only events:

- Jan. 13 Bird Trivia - 2 p.m. at the Nature Center
- Jan. 14 Shawn Carey "Birds of Tanzania" - 2 p.m. at the Nature Center
- Jan. 21 Birds & Brews - 6-8 p.m. at Big Top Brewing
- Various Dates: Wingspan the Game

[CLICK HERE](#) if you wish to verify your membership using our new Member Planet platform. Renewal reminders are automatically sent out two weeks before your due date.

Thank you for being part of this birding year with us, there was so much to celebrate. We're excited for what's ahead, and we look forward to welcoming you to the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center at the Celery Fields in 2026 as new journeys take flight.

Happy New Year!

Sara Reisinger

Sarasota Audubon President

On behalf of the Board of Directors

MONTHLY MEETING INFORMATION

Monday, Jan. 12, 7 p.m. Zoom



Above: Joanna Wu, Ph.D. Candidate, UCLA

Below: Belted Kingfisher



The Most Overlooked Birds in North America: Females with Joanna Wu, UCLA

Joanna Wu, Ph.D. candidate, is studying survival and habitat use differences between female and male birds. Her research explores survival by sex in North American birds and how scientists study survival.

Joanna is committed to amplifying underrepresented voices in science and is a member of the Galbatross Project—a collective of scientists, birders, writers and conservationists dedicated to raising awareness about often-overlooked female birds.

[Register](#)



Sarasota Audubon Presents

Fly Wild

A Day of Birds, Nature & Exploration

February 21, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Join us to connect with birds and nature in new and exciting ways. This year's festival highlights guided nature walks, a community bird-a-thon, a photo contest, a children's scavenger hunt, nonprofit booths with family-friendly activities, interactive exhibits and expert talks.

The Bird-a-thon and the Photo contest require registration. Click each button below for more information and to sign up.

[**Bird-a-thon Information**](#)

[**Photo Contest Information**](#)

We will need lots of volunteers. If you wish to help out, contact Kim Sullivan, our Volunteer Coordinator, using the button below.

If you wish to sponsor our event, please click here.

[**Detailed Sponsorship Information for Fly Wild!**](#)

**New Classes from Sarasota Audubon!
For Beginners to Advanced Birders**



Announcing New Classes for the 2025-26 Audubon Calendar Year

Birds of the Celery Fields, **NEW DATE Jan. 18**: Introductory Course, \$10 Members, \$20 non
Sunday, Jan. 18, 3:30-5 p.m. -- SAS Nature Center and Celery Fields

Learn which birds are at the Celery Fields this time of year with master birder Forrest Rowland. This was rescheduled from December.

Avian Field Methods: Advanced Field Methods, \$20 Members, \$40 non
Thursday, Jan. 15, at 2 p.m. **and** Saturday, Jan. 17, at 3:30 p.m. -- SAS Nature Center

This course is for experienced birders interested in practical field skills used by professional avian biologists. With the re-wilding of the Quad Parcels, these skills will allow participants to quantify change-over-time outcomes on our bird populations and aid and enhance our conservation efforts.

Gulls & Terns ID with John Groskopf: \$20 Members, \$40 non.
Friday, Feb. 13, at the Nature Center at 5:30-6:30 p.m.
Saturday, Feb. 14, at Siesta Key Beach at 6:45-8 a.m.

This is an advanced Bird Identification course with John Groskopf to learn the secrets of Gull and Tern identification. NOTE: This is a class on the first day and a field trip on the second day.

Warbler ID with John Groskopf: \$20 Members, \$40 non, Saturday, March 7, 5:30-6:30 p.m. -- SAS Nature Center

In this comprehensive classroom course you will discover the key identification markers for various warblers and similar species. Instructor John Groskopf.

A Look Ahead: The Quads in 2026



Work finally began in the Southeast Quad parcel in July 2025. Project concept and design began way back in 2020. The permit process was long and arduous, but we are finally coming out the other end, and planting has begun! Looking ahead, here is a timeline of anticipated completion steps:

January 2026 in the SE Parcel:

- Install the Pond
- Plant over 9,000 littoral and wetland plants
- Purchase and deliver first batch of trees for the Woodland
- Plant a pollinator garden

February 2026 in the SE Parcel:

- Start Woodland planting
- Tour the SE Quad on *Fly Wild!* Day, Feb. 21

March 2026 in the SE Parcel:

- Continue planting in the Woodland

April 2026 in the SE Parcel:

- Review and plan for grand opening of SE Quad;
- Set up maintenance plan

May/June 2026



Pictured above is Jeanne Dubi with the first Gumbo Limbo planted on the SE Quad.

- Break ground in the Southwest Quad for Children's Play Area, Parking Lot, Picnic Pavilion and Restrooms.

It has grown 3 feet since July!

Ongoing:

- Review plans and costs for all three Quads, including the NE
- Raise funds to continue to re-wild the Quads!

[Donate to the Quads Re-Wilding](#)

Notes from the Nature Center

January hours:

Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - Noon

Saturday - Sunday, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.



Happy New Year! We here at the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center hope that the start of 2026 sees all of our members healthy, happy and prosperous. With the

holidays largely in the rear view, it's time to get back to business. In other words, let's raise some money, spot some birds and learn some new things.

Gift Shop Update: There are lots of terrific benefits that go along with Sarasota Audubon membership, and my favorite is a 10% discount in the Gift Shop. Remember to ask for the discount before making your purchase. What's new in the Gift Shop, you might ask? Well, we have Celery Fields tea towels that are both decorative and practical, extremely cool bird-themed jewelry, "Bad Hair Day" bunting postcards and so much more. Come see for yourself.

Afternoons at the Nature Center: January brings the start of our busy season. Starting in January, we will be open not only from 9 a.m. to noon every day but also until 3 p.m. on weekends. Make a plan to visit us soon.

Bird Seed: Many visitors come to Celery Fields to see birds enjoying our feeders. Those feeders are filled daily by dedicated volunteers, and the seed isn't cheap. Please consider donating to the Bird Seed Fund. You can slip cash into the donation box on the Docent Desk, or use a credit card to [make a donation on our website](#). Whichever you choose, the birds thank you.



A pair of Nanday Parakeets tussling at the feeders (*Lyn MacEachern*)

Members Meet & Greet: Please join us on Tuesday, Jan. 14, from 2-3:30 for our first Members Meet & Greet of 2026. Shawn Carey of Mass Audubon will present the Birds of Tanzania. Remember to update your membership if it has expired.

Games for Birders: We will host two bird-based games at the Nature Center for our members this month.

1) Wingspan

-- Beginners through advanced welcome on the first and third Wednesdays of every month at 12:30.

-- Experienced players only are invited to Thursday evening games. Check the [website calendar](#) for details.

2) **Bird Trivia** on second Tuesdays at 2 p.m. in the Nature Center starting in January.

See you at the Nature Center!

Kim Sullivan, Nature Center Manager

[Read Full Notes](#)

Art Update: Nature Photography of Peter W. Agnes Jr.



Above: Black Skimmer (*Peter W. Agnes Jr.*)

Peter W. Agnes Jr.
Nature Photographer

Our SAS Nature Center artist for the month of January is nature photographer Peter W. Agnes Jr.

Peter's interest in nature photography became serious after spending summers in the Belgrade Lakes region of Maine. Spending his summers in Maine and winters on Florida's west coast has been a bird photographer's paradise. He has also photographed on many expedition trips to wildlife destinations in the Arctic, Antarctica, the Subantarctic, Africa, the Galapagos Islands, and Central America, among others.



Peter tries to record moments that reveal some aspect of a bird's behavior that cannot be appreciated fully without the aid of a camera. He has a special interest in capturing expressive behavior in birds.

Below: Osprey in Flight (*Peter W. Agnes Jr.*)



EAGLE NEST TOURS

REGISTER NOW BEFORE THEY FILL UP!

Join a Bald Eagle specialist for a bus tour & see eaglets at different stages.

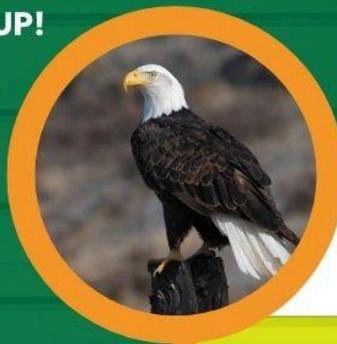
Limited scopes and binoculars (please bring your own if available).

Meet at the Nature Center.

Upcoming Tour Dates:

- Feb. 7
- Feb. 14

Cost \$ 60



Eagle Trolley Tickets

Volunteer Opportunities
Join us during this busy time!



Purple Martin Volunteers



It's Almost Purple Martin Time! Perched upon their stately birdhouses outside the entrance to The Nature Center for seven months of the year and greeting the hundreds of visitors yearly, the Purple Martins have become the Ambassadors of The Sarasota Audubon Society.

Purple Martins are neo-tropical migrants, which means they travel to and from North America and the tropics of South America. They have a long tradition of bird management going back hundreds of years beginning with coastal Atlantic Native Americans.

Today they are blue-listed, meaning they are at risk but not officially endangered, and this is why we manage them. They are the most semi-domesticated wild birds in the world. While Purple Martins don't want to sit on our finger, they do allow us to bring down their birdhouses, look inside, change out their nests and count their eggs and young.

Managing Purple Martins is educational, interesting and fun. Why not join us? We are looking for volunteers to work with us **one hour a week** from February to mid July.

It's a great opportunity to learn about the breeding cycle of Purple Martins and how to support these beautiful purple gems of nature. To help, please contact us. Click a name to email:

[Terry Anne Suchma](#) or [Sue Guarasci](#)

Bluebird Monitors

Bluebird monitors are also needed. This is a great way to learn about the breeding and nesting habits of these popular birds of happiness!

Work with the Bluebird Team once a week (or every other week, they are flexible!) to collect data. The weekly task takes about half an hour. You could also assist with cleaning nest boxes at the end of season.



This opportunity begins Feb. 1st. To help [Click Here to email Evelyn](#) who is pictured above.

Nature Center Docents Needed



Docents are the face of Sarasota Audubon Society, greeting the general public as they come to visit our Nature Center, gardens, boardwalks, etc. We meet and greet visitors and answer their questions (as best we are able). Docents also process the cash and credit card sales of merchandise in the gift shop.

Questions? Email Sue

Volunteer to Docent

Bird Naturalists Needed

Bird Naturalists only need two hours for a shift, 8:30am-10:30am. Palmer Blvd or Raymond Road. Choose your preferred site and day of the week.

Greet visitors, point out birds, flora and fauna and impart the history of the Celery Fields. Training provided! Watch wildlife and meet folks -- what could be more rewarding?



Questions? Email Helen

Volunteer Bird Naturalist

To check out any or all of the Volunteer Opportunities at Sarasota Audubon, click button below.

All Volunteer Opportunities

Christmas Bird Count: Myakka Report by Belinda Perry



Despite windy conditions and low water levels, we tallied 121 species, one species higher than last year. Our highest tally of 126 species was in 2022. Forty-five participants covered over 143 miles in 78 hours, on foot and by vehicle. Smaller flocks of Tree Swallows, American Robins, Red-winged Blackbirds and ducks continued the downward trend since 2019.

It's been eight years (2017) since we recorded less than 10,000 individual birds. This year a total of 9,147 individuals were seen or heard. Twenty different species, commonly seen by several teams in the past, were observed by only a single team this year. For example: Wood Ducks, Green Herons, Western Sandpipers and Black-bellied Plovers.

Highlights of rarely observed species included an American Pipit, two Ovenbirds, a Hermit Thrush and a Grasshopper Sparrow by a team with Forrest Rowland. A Ring-necked Duck and a Merlin were seen in Big Flats Marsh. An American Goldfinch, seen off SR 72, and a Semipalmated Plover along the lower river were noted.

[Full Report: Myakka CBC](#)

[Myakka CBC Species List](#)

Wingspan TOURNAMENT

Sunday, Jan. 11, 4-8 p.m.



What: Wingspan Tournament

When: Sunday, Jan. 11, 4 p.m. -- finish (probably around 8 p.m.)

Where: Sarasota Audubon Nature Center, 999 Center Rd.

Why: To have fun, socialize and raise a few dollars for Audubon!

How: We will play 2 games; scores added to determine top 3 players; using all expansion cards including Asia

What to expect:

- Randomized tables for each game; 4-5 players per table
- Light refreshments between games; filtered water available, so please bring a refillable water bottle.
- Entry fee is \$20; **pre-registration by Jan. 9 is required**; we must have 12 players minimum for tournament.
- Top 3 players will be rewarded with gift certificates to the Audubon gift shop.

[Wingspan Tournament Registration](#)

Calling All Wingspan Players!

We've got plenty of games, plenty of players who are eager to teach newcomers and plenty of candy to help keep you going.

Current Schedule for Wednesdays:

- **Wednesday, Jan. 7**
- **Wednesday, Jan. 21**

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

Wingspan Evening Sessions -- Oceana Edition: For you night owls or holders of day jobs, Stacy Perry will be hosting Wingspan games on Thursday evenings at 6 p.m. Experienced players only at these sessions, please.

Evening Schedule for Thursdays (experienced players):

- Thursday Jan. 8
- Thursday Jan. 15
- Thursday Jan. 22
- Thursday Jan. 29

All games start at 6 p.m. in the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center at the Celery Fields: 999 Center Road, Sarasota.

If you'd like to participate, please [email Stacy](#) before the next evening game to let us know you're going to be there.

Don't Miss Monthly Guided Walks!



Did you know that Sarasota Audubon volunteer guides provide guided walks at area parks? Some occur every month, others are for specific groups such as Young Birders. Don't miss out on the benefits of birding with an expert.

Check out opportunities on our online [Events Calendar](#). The calendar is continually updated and offers the latest on tour guide changes.

Sarasota Audubon Events Calendar

The Last Word Is Graphic Happy New Year!



Click the Graphic Above to Verify Your Membership in Sarasota Audubon



SARASOTA
AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

Contact Editor



Activity Schedule



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