



THE BROWN PELICAN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SARASOTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

MARCH 2026



Volunteers prepare the kids activity tables at Fly Wild! Festival Feb. 21.

Dear Members,

We want to thank everyone who volunteered, participated or attended the inaugural Fly Wild event. It was a huge success, and it was all because of you! We look forward to making it even better next year.

We have been many new programs this year, and it's exciting to see them all come to life. Many of you have attended our new classes or come to Birds & Brews or gone to our trivia days. If

there is anything that you think we could add or you would like to see or see more of, please let us know. We love to create connections within Audubon and are always looking for ideas.

With that, next month is our board of directors elections. If you want to take part in the decision making or just want to be involved in continuing to make SAS a vital part of the wildlife and conservation community, join us! Let us know by the end of March if you would like to be considered for the next fiscal year's board of directors.

Enjoy what I consider to be the most exquisite month in Florida!

Happy March!

Sara Reisinger

Sarasota Audubon President

On behalf of the Board of Directors

MONTHLY MEETING INFORMATION

Monday, March 9, 7 p.m. Zoom



Above and Below: Tammy and David McQuade, Big Year Birders

Chasing the AOU and North America Big Year Record with David and Tammy McQuade

Dave and Tammy will recount their third attempt at trying to break the American Ornithologists Union (AOU) and North America "Big Year" records.

They will share their amazing photographs as well as what they learned about doing a Big Year on a larger scale. They will talk about some of the incredible places they visited along with some of the stunning birds they saw. Of course, they'll highlight some of the challenges encountered along the way.



Register for Zoom March

9

Sarasota Audubon & Manatee Meet-up Saturday March 7, 4-6 p.m.

New time: 4-6 p.m. at Felts Preserve in Palmetto



Join us at Manatee Audubon's Felts Preserve
Saturday, March 7

4600 24th Avenue East, Palmetto, FL 34221
4 - 6 p.m.

We are looking forward to a relaxing afternoon of
connection, conservation and nature appreciation. Hope
to see you there!



Sarasota Audubon Presents

Fly Wild

A Day of Birds, Nature & Exploration

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



What an amazing turnout! We estimate that 1,000 people came to the Fly Wild! Festival on Feb. 21 at the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center. Big thanks to all who helped to make this success. Every volunteer, every organization that participated made an impact. Well done!

[Observer Article about Fly Wild!](#)

Bird-a-thon Brought in Over \$6,000



Above: A few of the participants in the Fly Wild! Bird-a-thon. (Left to right) Barb Males, Anne Brooks, Cathy Paris, Kylie Wilson, Sanjay Velagapudi, Roland Bendever and Sophia Haakman

A big thank you to all participants of the 2026 Fly Wild! Bird-a-thon! Together we **raised \$6,863** for Sarasota Audubon conservation and education initiatives.

Winners for most species

- Team “PEEP-LE” Sanjay Velagapudi and Roland Bendever notched a fairly astounding 99 species! Each received a **Vortex Crossfire CF-65 scope**.
- Giving them a run for the money was “Gannet Be Done” Tanish Anche and Sue Guarasci, with 95 species.
- and “Bin Chickens” Sophia Haakman and Zachary Matthews, with 91 species.

All three of these “teen-teams” deserve commendation — including Sue G., who’s not a teen.

Winner for Best Team Name is “No Egrets” (No Regrets?) Erin Smith and Cassidy Russell, who will **share an REI gift bag worth over \$200**.

Winner for Most Money Raised is “Birds Actually” Anne Brooks and Barb Males, with \$1,830. They each received a **Haikubox bird audio home recorder**.

Thank you to all of our Birding Teams!!!

Photo Contest Shines Light on Florida Birds



#1 Judge's & People's Choice: Mom and Owlet at the Nest

(Mark Schocken)



#2 Judge's & People's Choice: Clowning Around -- Reddish Egret
(Jean Polarolo)



#3 Judge's Choice: Sunset Spoonbill at Ding Darling

(Steve Nelson)



#3 People's Choice: Intensity, Little Blue Heron

(Craig A. Schwartz)

[View All 20 Finalists Here](#)

New Classes from Sarasota Audubon! For Beginners to Advanced Birders



Nature Journaling with Jenny Cherry:

Beginning Nature Journaling: \$20

Saturday, March 28

Advanced Nature Journaling: \$40

Saturday, April 11,

both at the Nature Center, 11 a.m.- 5 p.m.

Butterflies with Naomi Deutsch:

\$10 Members, \$20 non, Saturday, March 21, 9-10:30 a.m.

You will learn about the butterflies at the Nature Center and the host plants in our native gardens.

Bird Photography with Forrest

Rowland: \$10 Members, \$20 non.

Saturday, March 14, at the SAS Nature Center, 8-10 a.m. He will cover beginners' bird photography with birdwatching tips.

Shorebird ID with Forrest Rowland: \$20 Members, \$40 non. Saturday, March 21, at the Siesta Key Beach, 8-10 a.m. He will include photography

tips as well.

[Evolution of Birds with Forrest Rowland](#): \$20 Members, \$40 non. Saturday, March 28, at the Nature Center, 3:30-5 p.m. Learn about the early ancestors of birds and how geology -- both prehistoric and contemporary -- has shaped bird evolution.

Don't forget the super popular **[Birding 101](#)** and **[Birding 201](#)** --and the Birding 101 class is FREE! There is no reason to say "I'm not sure" anymore. Join a class and take off on a new experience!

All Class Registrations

Notes from the Nature Center



If you haven't been out to enjoy the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center yet this season, then you're missing something special. That streak of blue. A flash of purple. Rustling leaves followed by a burst of red. Yellow, black, green, you name it! This time of year the Celery Fields is inundated with birds of every color and size, all emitting their unique calls – or silently soaring overhead. Don't miss out! Come visit soon before we close for the summer in May.

Gift Shop Update: The new stock of Roseate Spoonbill caps is soaring in as I write this! And in response to requests from visitors at Fly Wild! Day, we're also beginning to stock travel-sized sunscreen. We will also be carrying a limited supply of the book *Return to the Sky* by Tina Morris. She will be speaking at our April monthly meeting presentation on April 13, so if you would like to purchase a copy of her book beforehand, you can bring it to the meeting to have it signed.

Fly Wild! Festival: Huge thanks to everyone who attended and volunteered at our Fly Wild! event last month. Perfect weather, fun activities, delicious food and the nostalgia of a trolley ride all contributed to an enjoyable day for attendees of all ages.



Bird Trivia: Show off your birding knowledge to people who will appreciate it. Bird Trivia will be held at the Nature Center on Tuesday, March 10, at 2 p.m. Members only, please! No registration necessary. Light snacks will be served.



Members Meet & Greet: Our next Meet & Greet is scheduled for Wednesday, March 11, at 2 p.m. Our presenter will be **John Ryan of Sarasota Bay Watch**, who will give us an update on their good work in Sarasota Bay. Members only please – and if your membership has lapsed, you can renew at the Docent Desk before the event.

Join Us – It's Healthy! Spring is a terrific time to start something new, and research published in the [*Journal of Neuroscience*](#) reveals that birding can have a beneficial impact on our brains as we age. We hope you'll come by the Nature Center to get started on your new, healthy hobby. Birding 101, Birding 201, Nature Journaling, Photography, Avian Field Methods, not to mention nature walks are all available in March. Check the [Events Calendar](#) for dates and times. Your brain will thank you.

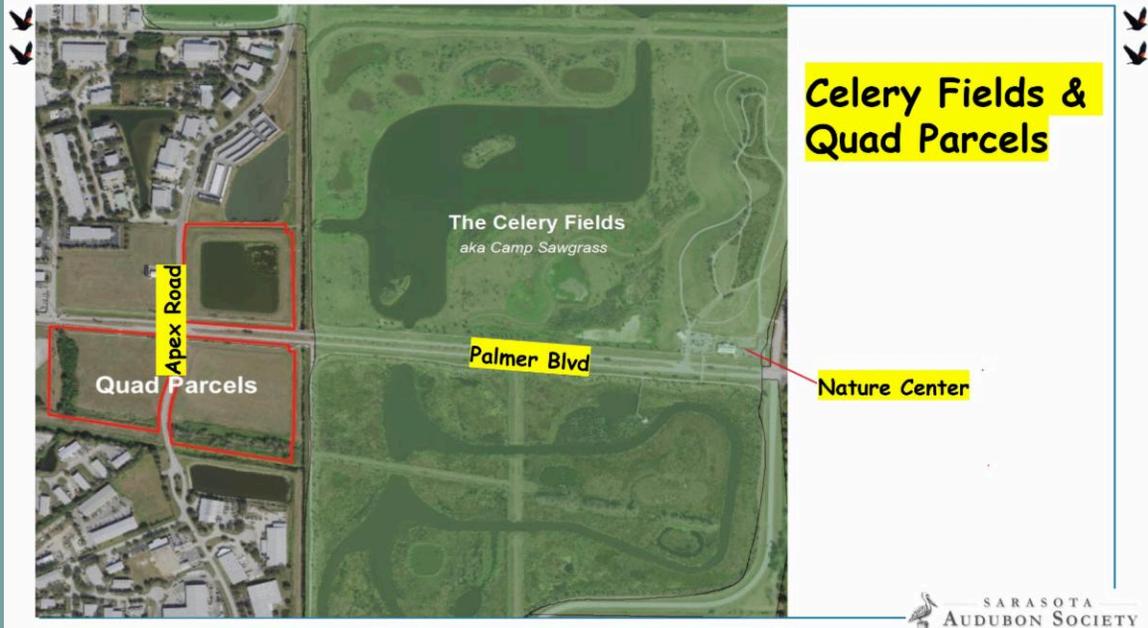
Wingspan: These days, the temperatures can be unpredictable, so it can be tough to plan your days. But one thing you can count on is that it will be cool and comfortable inside the Nature Center during our Wingspan games. Scroll down for registration links and details.

Enjoy this beautiful season,

Kim Sullivan, Building Manager



Quads Planting March 14 Following Native Landscape Talk 9 a.m. Talk, 10 a.m. Planting



Above: SE Quad before planting of the Pollinator Garden

Saturday, March 14 **Attend one or both. All are welcome!**

9 a.m. at the Nature Center Home Landscape Design with Native Plants by Pamela Callender "Mitigating HOA Concerns"

10 a.m. at the SE Quad Pollinator Garden Planting
Join members of Sarasota Audubon, Florida Native Plant Society and the Founders Garden Club to help plant the pollinator garden at the SE Quad.

WHEN: March 14 at 10 a.m. until noon

WHERE: SE Quad -- Park in SW Quad, which is directly across Apex Road from work site, just south of the Palmer Blvd. roundabout.

WHAT to BRING: Gloves, rakes, shovels, pitchfork, hat and water

CONTACT: **Jeanne Dubi**

Registration not needed -- just show up!

Thanks to the Sarasota Founders Garden Club for underwriting the garden and to Pam Callender for layout and design.

Jean Blackburn Garden & Birding Tour

A Member-only Event



Thursday, March 26
9 a.m. - Noon *Members only

A renowned local artist, Jean has developed a bird- and butterfly-friendly yard with many fruit trees over the past 35 years. In addition, she has hundreds of native plants on her 14-acre property. Walk the property and see the busy feeders.

This is a Members-only Event limited to 20 participants.
Address available at registration.

[Register Blackburn Tour](#)

Duette Preserve - Members Only
Wednesday, April 1, 7 a.m. (Early Bird 6:15 a.m.)



An **“Early Bird” optional** tour begins at 6:15 a.m. for those early risers interested in trying for a few nocturnal species like Barred Owl, Chuck-will’s-widow & Eastern Whip-poor-will - now’s your chance! We will meet early, **plan to arrive at 6 a.m.** for 6:15 a.m. start time at the Bear Bay Road entrance to Duette Preserve.

The later guided walk begins at 7:30 a.m. The “Early Bird” walk will return to the Bear Bay Road entrance by 7:15 a.m. to join this walk. Participants will search for the Florida subspecies of Grasshopper Sparrow, habitat specialist Bachman’s Sparrow, and hope to run into other rarities like Vesper, White-throated or White-crowned Sparrows. Pine specialists such as Brown-headed Nuthatch reside here, as do scarcer Northern Bobwhite, Wild Turkey and many other fun birds. The open habitats today offer good photo opps, as well.

There is no fee to visit the park, nor is there infrastructure beyond dirt roads (translated: no restrooms).

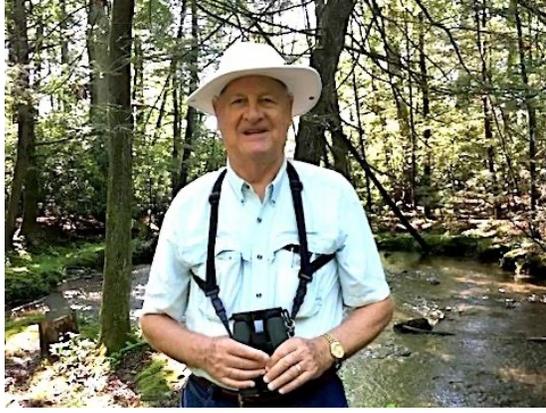
This is a Members-only event. Registration is required.

[Early Bird Tour](#)

[7:30 a.m. Tour](#)

John Ginaven Educational Fund Writes Its Last Check

The John Ginaven Educational Fund (JGEF) was established after the death in February 2024 of long-time Sarasota Audubon member and Manatee County resident John Ginaven.



Whether in his educator or birder role, John's enthusiasm was contagious.

The JGEF was an attempt to honor John's memory. It sought to assist any resident of Sarasota and Manatee County wishing to further their involvement in the natural sciences as well as any project in the area that contributed to the joy of birding and/or the

conservation of bird life.

Since its beginnings in March 2024, the JGEF amassed nearly \$43,000 in contributions, which allowed it to make 47 awards to 33 different individuals and 11 different organizations. The final check was written on Feb. 2, 2026, to Monica Brunory of Bradenton to purchase a pair of Nikon Monarch binoculars to further her new birding hobby.

The JGEF was a project of Sarasota Audubon and administered by an ad hoc committee consisting of SAS Board Member Stu Wilson, Manatee Audubon member Kathy Doddridge (also once a student of John Ginaven), and John's widow, Teresa Ginaven of Longboat Key. All three members derived great personal satisfaction in administering the JGEF, and they hope the Fund has left its mark on the community.

Art Update: SUN OUTDOORS ART GUILD



Above: "Early Morning Mist," a felted piece by Rosy Ferner

Sarasota Audubon Society Art Committee is pleased to announce that our exhibitors for March come from Sun Outdoors Art Guild.

The group's talented artists will have an assortment of their lovely artworks and photographs on display at the Nature Center.

Please come and take a look during our open hours, from 9 a.m. – 12 daily Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

Below: "Rosy Speaks," a watercolor by Jean Nye



Membership Reminder



If you have received a notice from Member Planet and already renewed, thank you!

To check if you have renewed, click the button below.

Renew or Join Sarasota Audubon



SARASOTA

Bird Trivia

AUDUBON SOCIETY Fun



Test your bird knowledge with trivia games.

Second Tuesday of the month

Jan 13

Feb 10

Mar 10

Apr 14



2 - 3:30 p.m. at the Nature Center
Member-only event

Volunteer Opportunities Join us during this busy time!



Purple Martin Volunteers



It's 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.

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 until 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.

To help [Click Here to email Evelyn MacQueen](#), who is pictured.

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, 8:30 to 10:30 a.m., 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](#)



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, March 4**
- **Wednesday, March 18**

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, March 5**
- **Thursday, March 12**
- **Thursday, March 19**
- **Thursday, March 26**

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!

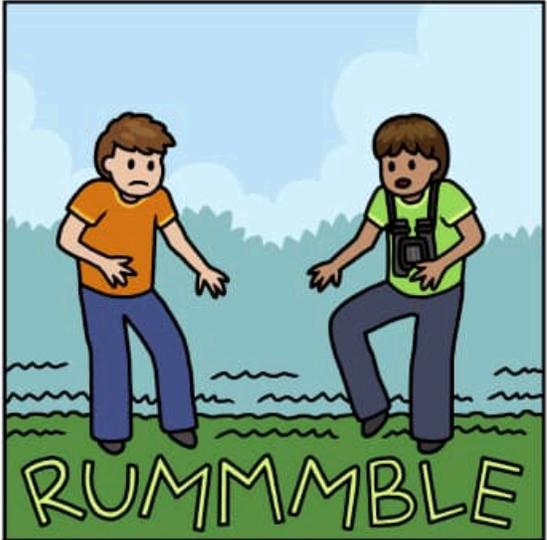


Did you know that Sarasota Audubon volunteer guides provide guided walks at area parks? Some occur every month, others are for specific groups such as Young Birders. Don't miss out on the benefits of birding with an expert.

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
Irruption**



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Contact Editor



Activity Schedule



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