



THE BROWN PELICAN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SARASOTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

APRIL 2026



Save the Date for the Giving Challenge on April 15-16, 2026

Dear Members,

We are very excited to be re-introducing our first in-person monthly meeting this month! The meeting will be held on Monday, April 13, at 7 p.m. at our Nature Center and will feature ornithologist and author Tina Morris, who also will be attending in person. The meeting will be hybrid, so those who have already returned north can still enjoy on Zoom. We are very much looking forward to seeing everyone for a lively evening. We will have a few copies of Tina's book, "Return to the Sky," for sale, and she is happy to sign them after her presentation. You can also [purchase online here](#) using code **CPG35** to get a 35% discount.

April also marks the return of the Giving Challenge. The Community Foundation of Sarasota County has announced that it will host its 10th online giving day from noon to noon, April 15-16, 2026. This bi-annual event is an incredible opportunity to see your donations doubled! **Every donation up to \$100 is matched by**

The Patterson Foundation. So mark those calendars, and be ready to "Be the One for the Birds." (The Giving Challenge theme is "Be the One.") We have so many exciting projects that can benefit from this fantastic event.

As the season begins to wrap up, we start looking forward to the next year. We have created some outstanding programs over the last year and need some help bringing them more fully to life. Please check out the open volunteer positions below to see if any is a good fit for you. We would love to have you!

Thanks!

Sara Reisinger

Sarasota Audubon President

On behalf of the Board of Directors



The annual election of officers will occur by email vote after the general meeting on Monday, April 13, 2026. Please check your email on April 13/14. You will have 24 hours to respond. The following people have put forward their names:

- President – Sara Reisinger
- 1st Vice President – Bill Sullivan
- 2nd Vice President – Lynn Jakubowicz
- Secretary – Sindhu Daggumalli
- Treasurer – Jeanne Dubi

If there are any other members who would like to stand for election, please contact [Karen Willey](#) before Sunday, April 12th.

Nomination for Office

MONTHLY MEETING INFORMATION
Hybrid: In Person OR Zoom-in
Monday, April 13, 7 p.m. at the Nature Center



Above: Tina Morris, Wildlife Biologist

Below: Young Bald Eagles



**Return to the Sky: The
Reintroduction of the
Bald Eagle,
with Tina Morris**

As the bald eagle, our national symbol, was facing extinction in the continental U.S. in 1976, Tina Morris was beginning her graduate work at Cornell University. By luck and circumstance, she was selected to reintroduce the species into New York State in the hope that eagles could repopulate eastern North America.

Tina completed her graduate work in ornithology and wildlife biology at Cornell in 1978, writing her thesis on the adaptations of hacking techniques to reintroduce bald eagles. Following her studies at Cornell, she worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy for several years, focusing on endangered species and critical habitat conservation, before embarking on a 23-year career teaching English and biology.

[Join at Nature Center](#)

[Register for Zoom](#)



Presented by the
Community Foundation of Sarasota County

Save the Date!

APRIL 15-16, 2026 NOON to NOON

Celebrating the 10th Giving Challenge

Classes from Sarasota Audubon! For Beginners to Advanced Birders



[Warblers and Similar Species ID](#)

Saturday, April 4, 5:30-6:30 p.m at the Nature Center.

In this comprehensive classroom course you will discover the key identification markers for various warblers and similar species. Get ready for migration identification!

Instructor John Groskopf.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

[Advanced Nature Journaling](#) with Jenny Cherry. \$40 Saturday, April 11, at the Nature Center, 11 a.m.- 5 p.m. A nature journal is a lens that focuses your attention, enriches your experiences and develops your skills as a naturalist. This practice also enhances your observations, curiosity and joy. Nature journaling can consist of field notes, field sketches, observations, thoughts, feelings or anything that captures your curiosity. For this Advanced art class, Jenny will show us how to draw a Purple Martin -- with the birds flying by right next to us!

[Birding 201](#) with Jamie Rotenberg. Saturday, April 11, 3:30-5pm at the Nature Center. This more advanced course is designed for birders seeking to enhance their skills. It builds upon the knowledge gained in Birding 101. Meet inside to begin with and then move out to the gardens and boardwalk.

Bluebirds! Informational session with Faith Jones of the Florida Bluebird Society. Saturday, April 18, 1 - 3 p.m. at the Nature Center. Faith will inspire us with the latest update on these beautiful jewels. Evelyn MacQueen, whom we just lost, was instrumental in getting this class added to the roster. May she rest in peace. This one is free! No registration required.

Notes from the Nature Center



As we spring into spring at the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center, there's excitement in the air and water in the ponds. We're thrilled that we received rain in March to help relieve some of the drought that had turned our ponds into mudflats.



Gift Shop Update: Can you find your umbrella or a hat to keep dry this spring? Not to worry if you can't because the Gift Shop at the Nature Center has you covered (literally) with bucket hats, baseball caps and birdy umbrellas. Stop by and check them out!

We will also be carrying a very limited supply of the book "Return to the Sky" by Tina Morris. She will be speaking at our 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.

Bluebirds, Bluebirds, Bluebirds: On Saturday, April 18, Faith Jones of the Florida Bluebird Society will be leading a class about Bluebirds at the Nature Center. Join us at 1 o'clock to hear all about these beautiful blue marvels.

Purple Martins: Come check out the action on Thursday and Sunday mornings at 10 o'clock, weather permitting. Note the new time, as the weather warms, we start earlier to beat the heat!

Bird Trivia: Last chance of the season to prove your superior bird knowledge to fellow bird lovers. Join us on Tuesday, April 14, from 2 to 3:30 at the Nature Center. Members only, please. Light refreshments will be served. No advance registration necessary.

Wingspan: Of course we're playing Wingspan this month! The first and third Wednesdays of the month at 12:30 p.m. are set aside for anyone interested in playing this engaging, competitive, bird-themed board game at the Nature Center. Members only, please. Scroll the newsletter down to RSVP.

Volunteer Appreciation: Our annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon is coming up this month. If you're a volunteer, you should have received an invitation and a request that you RSVP so we'll have enough food for everyone.

Last Hurrah: The Nature Center is starting to wrap up its programming for this season. We've still got some terrific presentations and walks coming up. Make sure you come visit before we shut down the Nature Center on May 15. The grounds, boardwalks and Mt. Celery are open all year from dawn to dusk, but you won't have our docents, naturalists and groundskeepers on hand to answer questions. Take advantage while you can!

Enjoy this beautiful season,

Kim Sullivan, Building Manager

[Read Full Notes](#)



**Quads Planting March 14
Big Thanks to ALL!**



Above: SE Quad planting of the Pollinator Garden

On March 14, we had 16 volunteers help us plant 202 plants in the pollinator garden in the SE Quad. It took no more than two hours! So grateful to all who came out to help us in our re-wilding efforts. There were some Gulf Fritillary caterpillars that hitched a ride from Sweet Bay Nursery. We welcomed them to their new home.

Many, many thanks again,
Jeanne Dubi

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



Calling all Current Volunteers! We Appreciate You

The heart of our operation is our volunteers. We are looking for you to step up if you assisted anywhere in the organization this year:



- Education Committee
- Teaching a Class
- Tending the Gardens
- Leading a Tour
- Gala Committee
- Fly Wild Festival
- Docents and Bird Naturalists

If this is you, please join us on
Saturday, April 11, 1 p.m. at the Nature Center

Click the button below to RSVP so that we can order enough food. RSVP by April 4.

ALL Volunteer Appreciation RSVP

Conservation: Bravery in the face of Bees



Margaret Lanier with rescued owlets at Pinecraft Park

My wife, several others and I witnessed a real act of bravery this morning by SAS member Margaret Lanier. We were at Pinecraft Park photographing the Barred Owls. There were two owlets high up in the hollow of a tree.

To make a long story short, the owlets were attacked by a swarm of bees and had to jump from the nest. Margaret (knowing she was allergic to bee stings) went into the bushes to check if the owlets were OK. While in the process the bees swarmed over her and she was stung multiple times.

Sarasota County Natural Areas team was working in the park with heavy equipment and mulching some branches and downed trees nearby, which we think may have agitated the bees. Margaret returned to the park (after getting some first aid), and Sarasota County Animal Services was able to retrieve both owlets.

The owlets are currently housed at the Wildlife Center of SW Florida. They have not been medically cleared to be returned to Pinecraft Park. The plan is to return them once they are cleared, but they didn't have a time frame for the return.

Margaret is one brave lady!
Jim Mann, SAS member

Editor's Note: Kylie Wilson and Liz Gandy co-manage Pinecraft Park, they are both biologists and understand the consequences of this encounter. Liz Gandy followed up with this comment: "This was a most unexpected outcome of the machinery work, but something we will all take away as a lesson for when bee hives are in proximity to project areas!"

We will follow up with the owlets' progress in next month's Brown Pelican newsletter.

For rescue needs contact:

SARASOTA COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES
(941) 861-9500

SAVE OUR SEABIRDS on City Island near Ken Thompson Park
(941) 388-3010

WILDLIFE CENTER OF SW FLORIDA in Venice
(941) 484-9657 FROM 8 AM-6 PM

FOR AFTER-HOURS WILDLIFE
EMERGENCY RESCUE ONLY: (941) 416-4967

LOCATION: 925 NORTH JACKSON ROAD
VENICE, FLORIDA 34292

Bird Blog: Students Visit from St. Pete
by Brynn Fricke



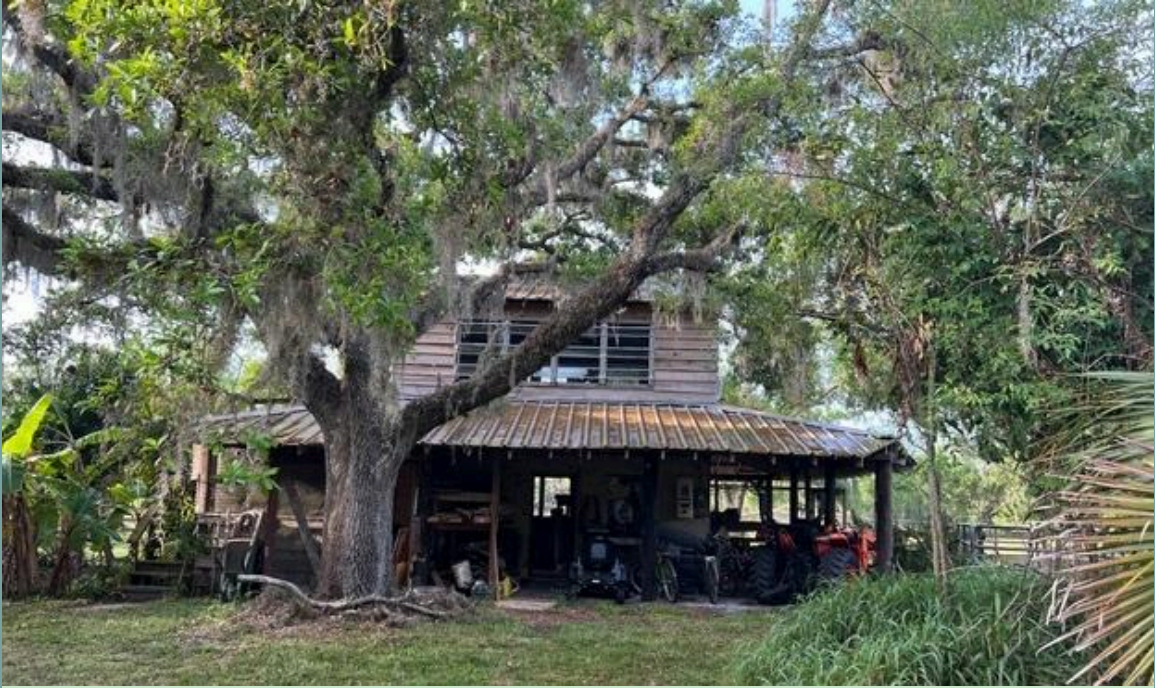
We want to welcome our newest Celery Fields Bird Naturalist, who is super qualified and will bring vast knowledge to our group. I did a shift with her on Raymond recently and she can spot and hear birds like none other! Read on for her first Bird Blog:

Super awesome morning with Sara Reisinger and the high school group from Shorecrest Preparatory School in St. Petersburg. The class had a challenge to get 50 species on their life list, so they all had Merlin out logging their birds and listening for birds. Some of them were really curious about the birds and were asking us lots of questions! They really liked the gator at the Palmer boardwalk and the sandhill cranes flying by.

When we got back to the visitors center, the purple martin experts were giving a talk and taking the houses down, and we got to see the first egg laid!!!

[Read Entire Blog - Lots more bird sightings!](#)

Jean Blackburn Garden & Birding Tour A Member-only Event



Friday, April 3

9 a.m. - Noon, Members only

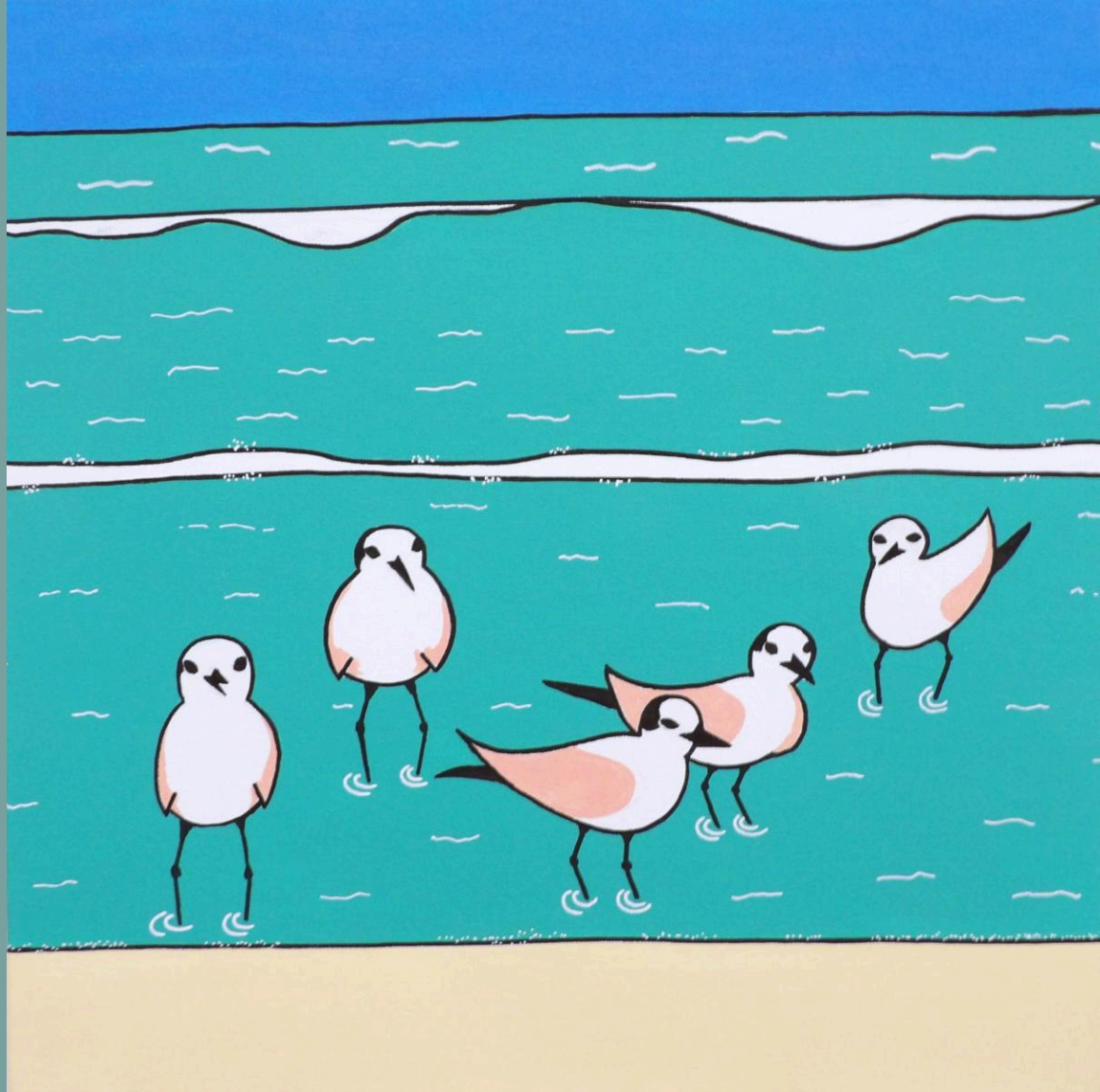
Rescheduled due to illness, so if you thought you missed it, there are still a few spaces available.

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](#)

Art Update: EILEEN SAUNDERS



The Sarasota Audubon Art Committee is pleased to announce Eileen Saunders as our artist for April into mid-May.

Eileen Saunders is a Florida artist and illustrator based on Longboat Key, where coastal landscapes and the birds that inhabit them inspire her vibrant work. Her latest collection features birds of the Gulf coast in pop-art style, rendered in pink because "grey is boring".

Saunders' work has been featured in local exhibitions, public murals, and private commissions. Her colorful perspective captures the simplicity of both human experience and the beauty of coastal environments.

Find her work at www.eileensaunders.com and on Instagram @eileensaunders_creative



**Volunteer Opportunities
Join us during this busy time!**

Class Registrar Needed

We need someone with the following skills to assist with class registrations.

Class Registrar Skills

- ✓ Tech savvy
- ✓ Track registration
- ✓ Proficient in Excel
- ✓ Maintain lists in Member Planet
- ✓ Send lists to instructors
- ✓ Respond to questions



If you can help over the summer remotely with registration and setup, please

[Contact Karen](#)

Youth Outreach Booth Volunteers Needed



Festivals and Fun!

We need folks who love to do hands-on activities with kids for outreach at various fairs and festivals throughout the year.

To help, please [click here](#) and say "Youth Outreach".

Social Media Masters Needed



We need a Team!

Facebook and Instagram need constant updates. We need folks to feed us images from our tours and classes. And also folks to do daily uploads.

To help, please [click here](#) and say "Social Media" and let us know your preferred role.

Purple Martin Volunteers Needed



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.

To help, please [contact us](#).

Click a name to email:

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

Bluebird Monitors Needed



Photo: Evelyn MacQueen

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Evelyn MacQueen. Evelyn was a dynamo and worked tirelessly to promote awareness of the Eastern Bluebird in our area. She coordinated the Sarasota Audubon Bluebird program at the Celery Fields, she spoke at local events and gave bluebird tours in Manatee and Sarasota counties. She will be missed!

With this great loss, bluebird monitors are needed now more than ever! This is a great way to learn about the breeding and nesting habits of these birds.

You can 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.

Big thanks to Christian Dillon, who is taking the Bluebird lead. [Click Here to email Christian](#) to volunteer for the team.

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

All Volunteer Opportunities

Join Us for Wingspan, The Game



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, April 1
- Wednesday, April 15

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, April 2
- Thursday, April 9
- Thursday, April 16
- Thursday, April 23
- Thursday, April 30

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](#)

[Membership Reminder](#)



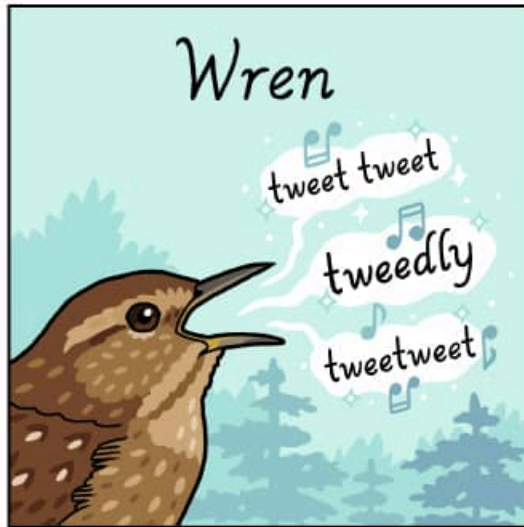
If you have received a notice from Member Planet and already renewed, thank you!

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

[Renew or Join Sarasota Audubon](#)

The Last Word Is Graphic Bird Sounds Guide

Bird Sounds





SARASOTA
AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

Contact Editor



Activity Schedule



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