



August 2025 Newsletter PASCO AUDUBON

A Sneak Peak at Our 2025-6 Schedule!

Upcoming Events

Saturday, August 2nd

Bird walk in Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park. Meet at 7:30am in the Education Center parking lot.

Saturday, August 16th

8am Birding by Bike in Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park details p. 3

Recent sightings...



Tufted Titmouse in Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park

August Walk in Starkey Park

Next Saturday, August 2nd, we'll take our monthly walk in Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park. We'll leave from the Education Center parking lot at 7:30am. Who knows - we may catch an early migrant warbler or two, and will likely see a lot of younger recently fledged birds. All are welcome. Our walk will likely be 1-2 miles and will probably last around 2 hours.

As the summer progresses, you may well be curious about the upcoming season schedule. We've done our best to pull together our prospective schedule for you in this issue. We'll endeavor to keep it updated online. We've tried to prepare a wide range of educational programs to be engaging, informative and inspirational. Our field trips include walks that are in the surrounding area and also some that are a bit further afield and an overnight trip to the Panhandle. Our Birding-by-Bike adventures led by Bob Burkard are also inserted throughout the schedule for those who enjoy a more active birding experience, and we're really grateful to Bob for offering these sessions for us all. Finally, you'll see some special events in the schedule - the Audubon Assembly, Christmas Bird Count, photography competition and our international trips to Colombia and Costa Rica. We hope that you'll find plenty to look forward to!



Mississippi Kite at Crews Lake Wilderness Park



Prairie Warbler at Green Key

July 6th: Birding-by-Bike on the Pinellas Trail Report by Bob Burkard



American Kestrel by Bob Burkard

On our July 6th Birding-by-Bike outing we rode 8 ½ miles on the Pinellas Trail and identified 40 different species of birds. The weather was nice with a slight breeze that helped keep the Florida summer heat at bay for the morning. I always love seeing the Eastern Meadowlarks and American Kestrels.

While our group is always looking for rarer birds in an area, it sure is fun seeing so many of the more common birds that live in our area of Florida.



Eastern Meadowlark by Bob Burkard



Carolina Wren in Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park

August 16th: Birding-by-Bike in Jay B Starkey Wilderness Park by Bob Burkard

I am currently vacationing in our RV with weeklong stays in Georgia, Pennsylvania and Maine this summer and so I am rescheduling our August Birding-by-Bike to Saturday August 16th. It sure is fun hearing the northern birds singing and calling each morning. My favorites are the American Robins, Wood Thrushes, Scarlet Tanagers, and Northern Flickers that I heard so often growing up in the northern woods but did not fully appreciate until I moved to Florida.

For our August outing we will meet at the Education Center at 8:00 am and bike back into the park. I hope that you will brave the Florida summer heat and join me for this ride.

Our Birding-by-Bike outings are scheduled for the remainder of 2025 and have been inserted throughout the event schedule across the next few pages.

I am planning our Birding-by-Bike outings for 2026 and would appreciate recommendations on other locations for these adventures. Note: Flatwoods Park is extremely crowded on the weekends, and I will schedule a Birding-by-Bike outing at that location on a weekday if anyone is interested.



Common Nighthawk in Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park

Previewing our 2025-6 Schedule

Have you been wondering what we have in store for the coming season? Well, there's lots to look forward to. I'll aim to give you a month-by-month look at what we have planned. Now of course, the best laid plans can encounter issues, so we always recommend that while you put these on your personal calendar now, you do double-check with our monthly newsletter and/or website to ensure that there have been no adjustments. There is no charge for any of our walks or programs, although trips may include a parking charge or road tolls. We welcome everyone to all of our events! We have included our Birding-by-Bike events through December, but anticipate that dates for the remainder of the season will be added at a future date.

Year-round Weekly Events

One thing to be aware of that you won't see on this schedule is our weekly Wednesday walks (aka Birding 102). This group meets almost every Wednesday morning at a local birding spot, with the location announced on Monday morning. While there's no cost for this, we don't publicize it widely and you do need to be on a special email list to hear about it. The regular group runs October through April, but there is a small subset of our 102 group - the 'summer' group for those who really want to continue through the heat and humidity. You can reach out to me to be added to either or both lists if you're not already on them (president@pascoaudubon.com).

September 2025

We do not normally hold events in September as it is still very hot and many of our members have not returned from their summer escapes. However, September can be a very good month for migratory birds, so in an attempt to take advantage, we've planned a field trip.

September 6th - Our monthly birding walk in Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park. Hoping to find some of our early fall migrants, we'll leave from the Education Center parking lot at the summer start time of 7:30am.

September 7th - Birding-by-Bike in Starkey Wilderness Park. Meet in the Education Center parking lot at 8am.

September 20th - John Chesnut Sr. Park (Pinellas)

Our September newsletter will give you specifics on the meeting location and time, but this park is well known for its fall migrants - both warblers and flycatchers.



Barred Owl in John Chesnut Sr Park

October 2025

October 4th - Our monthly walk will take place at **8am** from the Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park Education Center parking lot.

11am FEATURE PRESENTATION: Tracy Muzycska from Florida Department of Environmental Protection will brief us on the project to locate and support **Black Rails in Werner-Boyce Salt Springs State Park**. This exciting project is currently in its second year, and is a collaboration between Werner-Boyce staff, FWC and Pasco Audubon. A team of our members have been working closely on this and we're looking forward to sharing the details thus far and exciting plans for the future with you at this meeting.

October 11th - Field Trip to Lake Dan Preserve (Hillsborough County) - details TBD.

October 16-18 Audubon Assembly - Howey-in-the-Hills (Lake County). Florida Audubon's annual meeting including workshops, field trips and great opportunities for collaboration, planning and socializing with Audubon members around the Florida. For details and to register follow the link at <https://www.audubon.org/florida/get-involved/audubon-florida-assembly> .

October 19 - Birding-by-Bike at Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area - details TBD

October 25th - Cross Bar Ranch (Private - Pasco County) This is always a hot ticket for our members with the opportunity to see Burrowing Owls and, if lucky, Florida Scrub Jays (the only known Florida Scrub Jay family in Pasco County). Both the Burrowing Owls and the Florida Scrub Jays have had a successful breeding season. We usually see a large number of species in this location. This trip is limited to 10 vehicles and is the only trip we have with reservations required. I will maintain a list and, if applicable, a wait list for this event.



Florida Scrub Jay



Burrowing Owl

Both photographs were taken in Crossbar Ranch by Christine Rowland

November 2025

November 1st - Our monthly walk in Starkey Park will leave at 8am.

FEATURE PRESENTATION: **Don Fraser** will give a practical introduction to the **iNaturalist** app. If you're not already making use of this simple and exciting app, you probably should be. Whether your primary interest is birds, butterflies, or anything flora and/or fauna, this is the app for you. Don will help us all make the most of the features this app offers, so this will be a great opportunity to learn something really useful. Meet at 11am in the Starkey Environmental Education Center.

November 8th - Field trip to **Honeymoon Island (Pinellas)**. This will be our first field trip here since it reopened after suffering major damage from the hurricanes last summer. Always a wonderful spot for shorebirds and the Osprey Trail for late migrants if it is not overly buggy. Details TBD.



Piping Plover on Honeymoon Island

November 9th - Birding-by-Bike on the Pinellas Trail - Meet at the Brooker Creek Preserve parking lot at 8am.

November 22nd - Field Trip to **Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive** (Orange County). Always a great opportunity to get a close-up look at many species we usually only see at a distance. This 12-mile drive through the area will give us lots of opportunities to see a very wide range of birds. Hopefully it will already be hosting thousands of ducks and shorebirds. It is also a reliable place to see Fulvous Whistling-ducks - a species we don't see in our part of the state. Details TBD



Fulvous Whistling-ducks



Gray-headed Swamphen

Both photographs taken on Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive by Christine Rowland

December 2025

December 6th - Our monthly walk in Starkey Park will be followed by...

FEATURE PRESENTATION: Bob Burkard, who will let us know **How to be a Successful Bluebird Landlord in your own Backyard**. Bob leads our Eastern Bluebird monitoring program throughout our area, keeping records on 37 boxes. He'll brief us on what has been happening with them, but will also focus on what you can do for them in your own backyard.



Eastern Bluebirds

December 14th - Birding by Bike - Good Neighbor Trail, Brooksville. Carpooling to the area will be arranged.

December 15th - The West Pasco Christmas Bird Count. This is always a huge event for us, typically involving about 50 birders as we survey our area for birds. More information will be forthcoming. Preparation for this event includes scouting the area heavily in the couple of weeks prior to the big day, so no field trips this month.

January 2026

January 3rd - Join us for our first monthly bird walk of 2026. Meet in the Education Center parking lot at 8am.

FEATURE PRESENTATION - Plants for Birds. We are finalizing details for this presentation and will update our schedule accordingly.

January 17th - Circle B Bar (Polk County) - Always a member favorite. This field trip involved a 3.5 mile walk over several hours, but we are usually rewarded with great views of many species. We typically find Painted Buntings, and sometimes find some really special birds with past trip lists including Snail Kite and last year American Bittern, with all getting great looks. We usually add a trip to another location such as Lake Moreton following Circle B Bar. Look for more details in our January newsletter.



American Bittern at Circle B Bar

January 31 - February 1st - Panhandle Weekend - we are hoping to visit St. Marks National Wildlife Reserve and Tall Timbers Research Station. Many more details to come on this trip.

February 2026

February 7th - Our monthly walk in Starkey Park - meet in the Education Center parking lot at 8am.

FEATURE PRESENTATION - Ron Smith on Fort De Soto Park. Many of us have enjoyed birding at Fort De Soto over the years - the most prolific birding hotspot in our region. Ron has seen more species there than any other birder (299) and we're really honored to have him with us to share his know-how and experiences. There will be insights for all of us. Meet in the Education Center at 11am.



Scarlet Tanager at Fort De Soto

February 6-12 - Winter Shorebird Survey -

This is when we participate in FWC's survey of shorebirds. We are responsible for 4 locations within Pasco County and Fred Howard Park. Please contact Christine at president@pascoaudubon.com if you are interested in helping out.

February 21 - Paynes Prairie (Alachua County) We visited here for the first time a couple of years ago. This is an excellent spot for a wide range of birds. There are a number of excellent trail options in the area, and we'll be studying eBird closely as the date approaches in hopes of finding the best birding experience possible. We will likely see Snail Kites and White-crowned Sparrows (both common here in the winter) with a long list of other birds. There are almost always a good selection of rarities in the area, and we'll see what we can find. While this can be taken as a single day field trip with a 2-hour drive there and back, some may want to turn it into a weekend. More details will be forthcoming on this trip.



Snail Kite on LaChua Trail



Sora at The Celery Fields

February 28th - The Celery Fields (Sarasota). Always another favorite with great looks at wetland birds such as Gray-headed Swamphen, Black-necked Stilt, Sora, and often rarities. Last year we were treated to both Crested Caracara and Tropical Kingbird! Details TBA.

March 2026

March 7th - Monthly Walk Starkey Park - meet in the Education Center parking lot for an 8am start.

FEATURE PRESENTATION - We are working to confirm an exciting presentation on one of Tampa Bay's most significant conservation projects. More details will be included on our website once we are able to confirm details.

March 7-16 - Colombia: Birding the Central Andes - While this exciting trip with Holbrook Travel is currently full (limited to 8 birders + leader), the wait-list is open. Contact president@pascoaudubon.com for additional details.

March 21st - Field trip to Croom Tract and Chinsegut (Hernando County). This is always a popular trip with Croom providing excellent opportunities to see the Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and Bachman's Sparrows, while our second stop at Chinsegut has to be the very best spot in the region for Red-headed Woodpeckers, and has an outstanding feeder station where we were able to see Pine Siskin as well as a good selection of regular visitors. There are great photographic opportunities in this location. Details TBA.



Red-headed Woodpecker at Chinsegut

March 28th - Felts Audubon Preserve (Manatee) along with a second stop, TBD. Felts Preserve is a small property that was gifted to Manatee Audubon. It has a trail and a bird blind and is a place where we can hope to see Painted and Indigo Buntings at this time of year, along with a larger general list. We will likely partner this visit with a visit to a beach location, giving us a broad selection of birds for the morning.



Painted Bunting

April 2026

April 4th-5th Easter Weekend

April 11th - SEASON FINALE

8am - Monthly Walk in Jay B Starkey Wilderness Park

11am - FEATURE PRESENTATION - Klenisson Brenner bringing us Birding in Brazil - a photographic tour

And... **The Annual Birds and Wildlife of Tampa Bay Photography Competition Awards**

April 12th - Field Trip - Migration at Fort De Soto. This annual field trip is a week or two earlier than we would normally hold it as a result of our second international trip, but holding it earlier will increase the likelihood of seeing tanagers and grosbeaks along with the earlier migrating warblers, although we may well miss some of the later migrants we normally see here.



Worm-eating Warbler at Fort De Soto Park

April 16th - 26th - Birding Southern Costa Rica - This small-group trip with Holbrook Travel is currently full, but if you would like further information with a view to adding your name to the wait list, please contact me at president@pascoaudubon.com.



Black-throated Trogon at La Selva OTS, Costa Rica

May 2026 will include our monthly walk and a field trip in East Pasco - date TBD.

Our website is pascoaudubon.com

Our official Facebook page is Pasco Audubon

But we also have Pasco Audubon Bird Board on Facebook to share special sightings

Our mailing address is:

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