



November 2024 Newsletter

PASCO AUDUBON

Formerly known as West Pasco Audubon

Upcoming Events

Saturday, November 2nd

Bird walk in Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park. Meet at 8am in the Education Center parking lot. p.1

Talk: Recycling Matters with Sally Conde - 11am in the Starkey Education Center

Saturday, November 9th

Birding by Bike - The Pinellas Trail. Details p.2

Saturday, November 16th

Field Trip to Bahia Beach Nature Preserve with Lilian Saul. Details p. 2

Saturday, November 23rd

10am Talk on Red-cockaded Woodpeckers by Vince Morris at Heartwood Preserve. Details p. 3



In the Halloween Spirit - Magnificent Frigatebirds at Terra Verde

November Talk: Recycling Matters with Sally Conde

This month our guest speaker is Sally Conde, Project Coordinator for Recycling and Education for Pasco County. She'll be speaking to us about why recycling matters, curbside recycling in Pasco County and what it entails. This is a presentation requested by Pamela Graber, and we hope that it helps us all to become better stewards of our environment, hopefully having a positive impact on birds and other wildlife.

The presentation will be on November 2nd at 11am in the Starkey Environmental Education Center and is free - all welcome.

Before Sally's talk, we'll have our monthly bird walk in Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park, leaving from the Education Center parking lot at 8am. Our winter visitors, both human and feathered, will be returning to us and should make for some interesting sightings. Hope to see you there!

November 16th: Field Trip to Bahia Beach Preserve with Lilian Saul

Meet in the parking lot at 2513 W. Shell Point Road, Ruskin, FL 33570 for an 8am walk. This walk in will be led by Lilian Saul - leading a final walk before leaving our area. Lilian has been an amazing asset to us, and I'm sure that many of you will want to benefit from her expertise one final time. She tells me that this is a relatively short and easy walk that we will take very slowly, and anticipates that we will get a really good list of birds, including plenty of waders and ducks. Its a new location for our walks, so there will be something new for most if not all of us, but Lilian knows this hotspot well, and will be able to help us make the most of our time there.

There is no charge for this trip but we recommend that you let us know if you plan to attend in case we would like to add details or make changes. Please let me know if you plan to attend at president@pascoaudubon.com.



Blue-winged Teal

November 9th: Birding by Bike on The Pinellas Trail with Bob Burkard

This month our Birding by Bike ride will be on the Pinellas Trail. Meet in the parking lot at Brooker Creek Preserve (3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs) at 8 am. This is a great ride to see a good range of birds from Bald Eagles, to Eastern Meadowlarks, and the sparrows are returning! Do let Bob know if you plan to attend or if you have a question at Robertburkard9@gmail.com.



Alder Flycatcher



Eastern Meadowlark

Heartwood Preserve - Upcoming Events

Laura Starkey, Director of Heartwood Preserve, invites you to the **Heartwood 8th birthday celebration** on the afternoon of **November 2nd from 4-7pm.** with live music, light refreshments, craft table and photo booth. Please RSVP your plan to attend to info@heartwoodpreserve.com or call/text 727-376-5111.

Also, there is a special presentation at **10am on November 23rd** when Vince Morris of the Florida Forestry Service will give a presentation on the **Red-cockaded Woodpecker** and the very successful long-term project to strengthen the population in the Withlacoochee State Forest Croom Tract in partnership with Hernando Audubon. This is a fascinating and encouraging project and I hope that many of you choose to attend.

Both of these events will be held at the welcome center at 4100 Starkey Blvd, Trinity, Florida.



Red-cockaded Woodpeckers at Croom

Thank you to Tom Crites and JoAnn Sinatra

Thank you to Tom Crites for stepping up and agreeing to run the refreshments at our meetings, and to JoAnn Sinatra for agreeing to assist. It's always wonderful to come in from a walk and have something to snack on and a cup of coffee before the program begins. Thanks to Tom and JoAnn for keeping up the tradition!

Pasco Bald Eagles and Hurricane Milton

Update from Kimberly Rexroat

With the recent Hurricanes that affected our area, our Bald Eagles faired reasonably well. Hurricane Helene claimed PS006, the nest located off Scenic Drive in Port Richey. The nest was in a dead Cypress tree and Hurricane Helene sheared off the top of the nest tree. We are watching this pair of eagles but as of yet we have not been able to locate where they are rebuilding their nest.

Hurricane Milton claimed PS030 located in Land O' Lakes. The nest tree could not withstand the winds and fell. We are thankful the nest tree fell into the water and not on the neighbor's home. The eagles are currently building a new nest just a few trees down from their old nest tree.

* Kimberly is the EagleWatch Coordinator for Pasco and Hernando Counties.



Bald Eagle on a nest at Starkey Market on October 10th - the day after Milton.

Interested in learning more about what happens to birds in hurricanes (which varies tremendously by species)? There is an excellent presentation by Dr. Ken Meyer of the Avian Research and Conservation Institute on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfjmCnrByhE>. This was actually given virtually to Orange Audubon several years ago, but applies as well today as it did then. ARCI has transmitters on many birds, so they have a wealth of information.

Warning: Phishing Emails

Please be aware that a couple of our Board members have received some fairly sophisticated phishing emails purporting to be from me, asking for financial help in bill payment. It's fairly easy to spot these emails in that they DO NOT originate from my email addresses. But still, rest assured neither I nor any other member of our Board of Directors will ever ask for your help in making payments. Email or call me directly if you ever receive an unusual email and have a question. Please never engage in responses or reveal any personal information to them.



Photography Workshops Are Back by Request!

by Patricia Goldberg

One of the most common complaints I hear from birders in the field is that they wish their photos would turn out better: fewer “misses”, less blurry, better lit... Birds are extraordinarily difficult subjects, being small and active and skittish. The little ones can be notoriously tough to just see clearly, often either hiding in dense foliage or sitting against bright sky high up in a tree. So, it is no wonder that, no matter how much we spend on good gear, they frequently elude capture with our cameras. But you can improve your success rate. Photography involves a unique combination of technical skill / competency and aesthetic awareness. They both matter. And they both involve overcoming learning curves to improve, which can be intimidating without help. But we are here to help!

Photography 101 is a series of five workshops aimed at helping both new and developing photographers improve image quality and impact through growing technical competencies and integrating artistic principles. We review different camera setting options – the mechanics of where and how to change settings as well as how these changes affect images. We also spend some time learning to critique photographs to spot problems and trouble-shoot how to solve them. Finally, we examine historic fine art pieces to see how artistic principles can be applied to photography to improve appeal. Format includes interactive seminars and hands-on exercises with your camera. Bring whatever gear you have (even if it’s just a phone).

Dates and times: Monday November 11, Saturday November 23, Monday December 2, Saturday December 14, and Monday January 6, from 11-1, extending into 2pm for those that want additional hands-on practice/help. Location: Starkey Wilderness Park Education Center, 10500 Wilderness Park Blvd., New Port Richey. Bring a bag lunch. And a hard copy or digital download of your camera manual.

Contact Pat Goldberg to get on the email update list and to confirm dates and time:
projects@westpascoaudubon.com

The Pasco Audubon Society Presents:



Nature Photography Workshops



Would you like to improve your photography skills? Want to learn what those buttons and dials do? Make your images more compelling? Come join us for a series of five fun and informative sessions on improving technical competency and applying artistic concepts with your camera!

Bring whatever gear you have (even if it's just a phone). We will start with some classroom exercises followed by hands-on practice. Please bring a hardcopy of your camera's manual or download one to your phone, if possible. Led by Patricia Goldberg.

M Nov. 11, Sa Nov. 23, M Dec. 2, Sa Dec. 14 and M Jan. 6

11:00 am - 2:00 pm Jay B Starkey Park Education Center

\$5 donation per workshop suggested

Space is limited. Contact Pat at projects@westpascoaudubon.com to reserve your spot today!

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Pasco Audubon Society Presents:



Nature Photography Workshops

11 am - 2 pm at Jay B Starkey Park Education Center



Session I - Monday November 11 details techniques for improving focus (getting those crisp images) and incorporating basic artistic principles to make your shots stand out.

Session II - Saturday November 23 focuses on getting exposure right, even in tricky situations, and incorporating more art in composition.

Session III - Monday December 2 will help you level up and learn to use aperture and shutter speed creatively and effectively.

Session IV - Saturday December 14 examines recognizing and using different lighting to your advantage, as well as special tricks and tips for challenging situations.

Session V - Monday January 6 will help you level up by learning about manual exposure, how to use your flash effectively, and more advanced tips for creating compelling images.

Space is limited. Contact Pat at projects@westpascoaudubon.com to reserve your spot today!

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A Weekend Birding in South Florida - January 24-26th

by Klenisson Brenner

It was a pleasure to speak to you on October 5 about the amazing birding scene in South Florida. I hope you will join us for our January field trip to Miami. The trip will be from January 24-26, and the schedule will be the following:

Friday*, January 24 (at dusk): Canal C-III (Barn Owl, Short-eared Owl and more)

Saturday, January 25: Tour around Miami-Dade County in search of the exotics and more (Red-masked Parakeet, Mitred Parakeet, Yellow-chevroned Parakeet, Great Black-backed Gull, White-crowned Pigeon etc.)

January 26: Lucky Hammock (Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Swainson's Hawk, White-tailed Kite, Tropical Kingbird and more)

***Friday night is optional**, with the idea that as the trip down to Miami from Pasco is lengthy, many will opt to travel down on Friday and stay overnight prior to starting our day early on Saturday morning.

Driving in Miami can be really stressful, and even on weekends we can get heavy traffic. For this reason, for Saturday, January 26, we will rent a van and I will be your chauffeur. We will therefore limit the number of people to 14. On November 3, at 3pm we will send you a link for you to register. Registration will be open until November 30, at 11:59pm. We anticipate that the rental cost of the van will be in the range of \$25-30. Those who register will receive later on an email from me with more information so you can plan your stay in Miami.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at klebrenner@gmail.com.

International Travel - After Costa Rica

by Christine Rowland

Last year we were surprised by just how many of you wanted to make the trip to Costa Rica - so many that we actually needed two separate trips, going in February and March of 2025 respectively. Holbrook travel has already been in touch to ask about interest in future trips. While we will not begin registration for any further trip until these two trips are completed in early 2025, we understand that we do need to begin thinking ahead and planning, as the most popular locations can fill quickly.

If you think you might be interested in a future trip, please email me at president@pascoaudubon.com. Those who respond will be given a list of 3 potential trips with links to the itineraries and eBird trip reports etc. on the Holbrook site. I will be asking each respondent to rank the trips in preference order and we will select the option that has the greatest support from potential travelers among our membership. In coming up with a short list, cost, safety and variation in bird species were all considered.



Purple Gallinule

Blue-headed Vireo

Field Trip Report - John Chesnut Park - Saturday October 19th

Our October field trip was planned to be a visit to Honeymoon Island, but unfortunately the combination of hurricanes Helene and Milton have left all of our barrier islands and coastal parks closed, and we switched our destination to John Chesnut Park, just reopened that morning. While most of the park remained closed, we were able to bird two trails, with 9 of us finding 34 species on the walk, with highlights including Purple Gallinule and the first Blue-headed Vireo of the season. Thanks to all for sharing in the morning.

Looking Ahead to The Christmas Bird Count - December 17th

This year our Christmas Bird Count will be on December 17th. For anyone unfamiliar, the Christmas Bird Count is an annual tradition nationally (more info at <https://www.audubon.org/community-science/christmas-bird-count/history-christmas-bird-count>). It's a day-long effort to document every species of bird in a defined area - both the number of species and number of birds. This is a significant citizen science project that has been continued annually in West Pasco for 36 years. Last year, in spite of 17 mph sustained winds that prevented the use of boats, we were able to report 154 species on the day. Unfortunately, several of our regular participants are unavailable this year, meaning we could really use some extra pairs of eyes. For those of you who are reading this and are birders, please let me know if you are available to help by emailing me at president@pascoaudubon.com. It is vital that we have a headcount of participating birders soon so that we can plan our organization for count day, including obtaining permits for restricted areas.

If you are not an intermediate or experienced birder, we may well have ways in which you can participate, and will share more information with you in next month's newsletter.

Board of Directors Elections:

Nominees to Date - Kimberly Snaric and Joanne Chamberlain

Where are we in the process? Nominations are open until October 31st, the final nominations will be announced at our November 2nd meeting and voting will take place at our official annual meeting on December 7th.

As mentioned in last month's newsletter, we are taking nominations for our Board of Directors. Last month we learned that Peter Day would be resigning as Secretary and Board Member, and that Mike Kell, while staying on the Board, will be relinquishing his role as Vice President for Education. We are very happy to announce that we have had a volunteer step up and be willing to be nominated for the Board, with a view to taking on the Secretary role. And that someone is Kimberly Snaric. If you are a member of our 102 group, take field trips, or were a part of this past season's photo competition you will know Kimberly. She is a very organized individual and brings youth and energy with her.

As a result of the damage caused by Hurricane Milton, we are very sadly and unexpectedly losing our treasurer, Lilian Saul. Lilian has not been with us for a long time but has become a very important member of our community not only as a fellow and knowledgeable birder, but as an executive member of our Board holding the title of Treasurer. As she is leaving our state shortly, we have needed as a Board to take emergency action to appoint an interim treasurer allowing for a smooth transition to take place. We have been very fortunate indeed that long-term Pasco Audubon member Joanne Chamberlain indicated, when asked, that she would be willing to step into the role. At our Board meeting on October 24th we passed a resolution to appoint her as interim treasurer in accordance with our bylaws. In order to take on the position permanently she will need to be voted onto the Board at our regular annual meeting (December 7th) and then appointed to the Treasurer role by the Board of Directors at our January Board meeting.

If you would like to reach out and also stand for the Board of Directors, please reach out to one of our Nominating Committee members: JoAnn Sinatra (josizoo@aol.com), Joe Colantonio (jcolantonio@verizon.net) and Pamela Graber (pamela.graber@gmail.com). Please note that we are still hoping to find someone who would be interesting in taking on the position of Vice President for Education. Could that be you? Let us know if you might be interested or have a question.

Wild Birds Unlimited (Odessa) - Store Closing

We are sad to share that Lisa and Kathy Massey-Williams, who have been wonderful community partners since their arrival in the area in 2019, are closing their story on October 31st. We're sorry to see them leave and wish them the very best in their future endeavors. Thank you Lisa and Kathy for your support over the past 4 years - we'll miss you both.

Looking Ahead - December Events

- December 7 - 8am Bird Walk in Starkey Park
 11am Bees and Beekeeping with Bob Burkard
 (at the Starkey Environmental Education Center)
- December 14 - 8am Birding by Bike in Starkey Wilderness Park
- December 17 - Christmas Bird Count - All Day

Pasco Audubon Board of Directors

Christine Rowland, President - president@pascoaudubon.com

Mike Kell, VP for Education - jmike65@gmail.com

Don Fraser, VP for Conservation - dmfraser31@gmail.com

Lilian Saul, Treasurer* - ljsaul604@gmail.com

Joanne Chamberlain, Interim Treasurer* - rijoraja@aol.com

Peter Day, Secretary - pird@mac.com

Patricia Goldberg, Special Projects projects@westpascoaudubon.com

JoAnn Sinatra, At-Large

Ken Landry, At-Large

Stasi Gerges, Student Advisor

Other Important Contacts:

Fran Sigurdson, Membership Chair fsigurds@gmail.com

Bob Burkard, Birding by Bike and the Bluebird Project robertburkard9@gmail.com

*We are transitioning Treasurer roles this month from Lilian, who is leaving the area, to Joanne who will take over the role. See more info in the Board Elections article on p.9.