

# THE Skimmer

November 2023



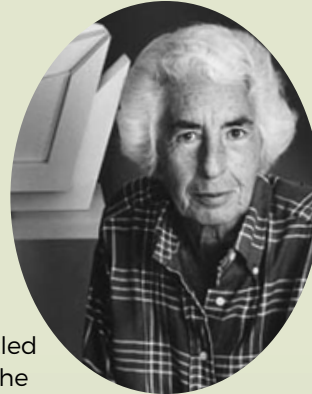
SOUTHEAST VOLUSIA AUDUBON SOCIETY (SEVAS) NEWSLETTER | PUBLISHED OCT-APRIL

## Champions of Conservation by Marsha Cox

**Our new series highlights environmental heroes to inspire us all. Some you know, some you may not have heard of, but all have made notable contributions to "the movement."**

This month's champion is our own Doris Leeper. Born in 1929 in Charlotte, North Carolina, Doris "Doc" Leeper attended Duke University with the idea of becoming a brain surgeon, hence the nickname "Doc".

Instead, Doris found her passion and graduated with a degree in art history. Her forte was painting and sculpture and in 1958 she moved to Eldora, south of New Smyrna Beach, to focus on just that! One piece, entitled Steel Quilt, is on permanent display at the Orlando airport, and her work is featured all over the country. In 1982 Doris founded the **Atlantic Center for the Arts**, a 69-acre ecological preserve on Turnbull Bay as an artist residency that is world renowned. In 1999 Doris was inducted into the Florida Artists Hall of Fame.



Throughout her life Doris was aware of the importance of preserving the natural world. And this is how [continued on page 7](#)



## Plants for Birds P4B by Joyce Riddel

### Committing, Advocating, Preserving

As our new season begins I was reminded about the importance of our SEVAS conservation program, Plants for Birds. I attended the Audubon Florida Conservation Initiatives Zoom last week, where each of our state chapters made commitments to conservation efforts.

Along with advocating to protect our wetlands, watersheds and waterways we are working to preserve a conservation corridor across Florida. Many chapters, along with SEVAS, committed to continuing their work through Audubon's national Plants for Birds Program.

Here is a what our chapter has planned for this year:

- We have applied for the Audubon/Florida Power and Light Plants for Birds grant to expand the gardens at Chisholm Elementary School. Along with the staff and students and our partner Lindley's Nursery, we hope to plant a meadow and a micro forest this year. Grant awards will be announced in Dec. [continued on page 7](#)



Giant Leather fern  
photo: james st. john

## Monthly Meeting Nov 9, 7pm

This month, we welcome **Florida Sea Grant** agent, Carolyn Kovacs. Don't miss her informative talk about the impacts of hurricanes on the ecosystem and sand dunes preservation.

Learn about natural beach dynamics, different methods of shoreline stabilization, and the affects of last year's hurricanes on our local beaches and dunes. She'll also talk about the importance of dunes, and some of the plants that build them.

Please join us - our meetings are open to all.

*"Today's good mood is sponsored by Florida."*

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**Our mission: Protecting birds and their habitats through Education, Advocacy, and Action.**

The Southeast Volusia Audubon Society (SEVAS) was started in the early 1970s as the New Smyrna Beach Audubon Society by a group of neighbors who were interested in protecting the local birds and wildlife around Smyrna Dunes Park. We are now one of three Audubon Florida chapters in Volusia County, each with its own identity and focus.

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## PRESIDENTS' POST

### Chapter of the Year!

Our message is going to be brief this month as we think this "picture" says it all.

After a three-year hiatus, the 2023 Audubon Florida Assembly is back- LIVE, in person! We had a wonderful time networking, sharing, and celebrating recently in Tampa, and we returned with a very special surprise!



"Conservation in a Changing Landscape" was the theme and we learned what Audubon Florida and local chapters are doing to help birds survive in challenging times. We also had enjoyed connecting with members of other chapters and sharing how we are all working hard to contribute to conservation efforts. Ideas were shared, new friends were made, fun field trips were offered, and informative learning sessions were available.



This year Bill and I accepted this award on behalf of our Southeast Volusia Audubon Society (SEVAS) chapter and membership. The Chapter of the Year Award for Small Chapters (under 500 members) was awarded to SEVAS "for proving that with vision and enthusiasm a small chapter can do great things."

Hear! Hear! In particular this award was for contributions to conservation efforts through our bird-friendly gardens and Purple Martin complex. It was also for working with partners such as Atlantic Center for the Arts in their "Put a Bird On It" program and Chisholm Elementary School in their P4B garden this past year.

**This is your chapter. Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers and partners that were part of those conservation efforts. We couldn't be prouder of you all. Well done!**

We'll share more details about the Audubon Florida Assembly next month. This month let's just celebrate this recognition!

On another note, beginning with this edition of *The Skimmer*, we've added a column entitled Champions of Conservation, a nod to the shoulders we stand on.

**Bill & Marsha Cox**  
[president.sevas@gmail.com](mailto:president.sevas@gmail.com)



# Year at a Glance

SAVE THE DATES!

## Monthly Meetings

October-April, SEVAS meets at 7PM on the 2nd Thursday of the month in NSB at the Marine Discovery Center. We are honored to have speakers who touch on myriad topics close to our hearts. Open to all.

**Nov 9: Carolyn Kovacs, Florida Sea Grant: Hurricanes!**

**Dec 14: Trey Hannah, Marine Discovery Center**

**Jan 11: Michael Brothers, Birding expert: Shorebirds**

**Feb 8: Jessy Wayles, Indian River Lagoon Nat'l Estuary: Seagrasses and Impacts**

**Mar 14: Brittany Piersma, Audubon West Everglades: Burrowing Owls**

**Apr 11: Donna Althearn, Volusia beekeeper: Bees**

## Annual Events

SEVAS members participate in various counts and citizen science projects through the year. Service is fun together, so join a team--everyone is welcome and no experience is necessary.

### **Dec 30: SEVAS Christmas Bird Count, (CBC)**

Since 1900, tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas brave snow, wind, rain, or sunshine to collect data used to assess populations, and guide conservation action.

SEVAS currently has 10 teams that bird in Volusia County- join us! Jenifer Russel is our compiler this year, so sign up to become part of our count! See more about this coveted event on page 5.

Email Jenifer at [petdocmd@yahoo.com](mailto:petdocmd@yahoo.com) or contact us at [president.sevas@gmail.com](mailto:president.sevas@gmail.com).

### **Early February: FL Shorebird Alliance Winter Shorebird Survey, (WSS)**

The FSA is a statewide network of local partnerships committed to advancing shorebird and seabird conservation. The Winter survey helps to identify key wintering sites to guide future conservation efforts, and recognize long-term trends in population and distribution.

### **Feb 16 - 19: Audubon Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)**

Since 1998, every February this worldwide event gets birders to count as many birds as they can find in their favorite areas, to help expand our understanding of birds. Participants are asked to count for at least 15 minutes (or longer) on one or more days of the four-day event and report their sightings online.

Little Blue Heron  
photo: vickie j anderson

# SEVAS in the Field

OUTINGS & TRIPS

## TUESDAY MORNING BIRDERS

TMB walks are essentially leaderless, but several experienced birders are always available to help. Meet at the site at 8am and plan to spend about two hours:

**November 7:** Riverbreeze Park, Oak Hill

**November 14:** Buschman Park, Port Orange

**November 21:** Turtle Mound, Canaveral National Seashore

**November 28:** Marine Discovery Center, NSB

## BIRDS & BREWS

Third Thursday of the month. B&B walks provide an end of day birding jaunt and a libation of choice at a local pub or restaurant. We bird different sites, and enjoy time to connect afterwards.

**November 16 4pm:** Sugar Mill ruins, 600 Old Mission Rd, NSB  
Afterward birding, we'll gather for libations at the Riverdeck on Riverside Dr in NSB.

## FIELD TRIPS

SEVAS field trips are longer outings to further out areas. Overnights will have additional costs. We usually meet locally to carpool. Stay tuned!

**December TBD:** Merritt Island NWR, Black Point Drive

**January 13 630am:** Lake Apopka

**February 17 7am:** Merritt Island NWR, Black Point Drive

**March 3 630am:** Orlando Wetlands

**March 16 7am:** Lake Apopka

**April 4-6:** South Florida Overnight

Stay up to date!

Check our [Facebook](#) and [MeetUp](#) pages for changes, additions, or cancellations.

SEVAS birding events are free and open to all. Some locations require an entrance fee, but most do not.

# Amazon Wish List

We now have an Amazon "wish list" of needed items if you'd like to contribute.

Right now, we need to update and stabilize our table for community outreach events, so items include table cloths, hangers for our posters, and wind weights to secure our tent. We'll add items as we need, so check our Wish List often! We appreciate you!

FYI, we "table" regularly, and invite you to join us. Basically, "tabling" is setting up a SEVAS table at a high traffic community event to raise awareness of our mission, and gain support for our projects and activities. We attract people, raise money, advocate for the birds and their habitat, and make connections. If you'd like be part of the fun, please email [president.sevas@gmail.com](mailto:president.sevas@gmail.com) for more info.

# Recent Happenings

## FOS Monthly Meeting with Christie Miller



Christie Miller, from the Lyonia Environmental Center (LEC) in Deltona, kicked off our monthly meetings on October 12. She shared about Jay Watch, Audubon Florida's popular community science program, dedicated to protecting threatened Florida Scrub-Jays.

Florida Scrub-Jays are endemic to Florida. That is, they are found nowhere else on earth, and they are in decline - primarily due to loss of habitat. In fact, the state's population is estimated to have declined by 90% since the early 1800s.

**You can help!** Get trained, and join a Jay Watch survey team. Remarkably, 97 volunteers invested some 985 hours performing field surveys across the state, in 2022 alone.

You can learn more and see recent reports [here](#).



## Tuesday Morning Birders (TMB) Takes Flight!



TMB is on! Our season opened on Oct 24 at MDC, with 10 friends. The birds of the day were two active kingfishers and a stunning prairie warbler.

On Oct 31, 12 birders gathered to walk the trail around the Eldora House. We found 22 species total including Eurasian Collared-Dove, Roseate Spoonbill, and about a dozen manatees cavorting by at the dock.

A beautiful morning and almost no bugs. Win win.

## Birds & Brews (B&B) Evenings Now On Tap. FOS at Spruce Creek



Kim Ramos led us on a walk on trails at the Spruce Creek Preserve. There were about 16 birders and we found 19 species. Always good to find more birds than birders! Bugs turned out to be few and far between - which might explain why the birds were not plentiful either. No bugs, no birds, but Kim was confident that would change and highly recommends this under-birded spot for migrating warblers right now.

Afterwards we met at the Hidden Lakes golf club for a catch up.

Join us on Nov. 16 at Sugar Mill ruins, 600 Old Mission Rd, NSB. Later, we'll gather at the Riverdeck on Riverside Dr in NSB.



Sand Hill Cranes  
photo: gary\_leavens



# Upcoming Events

## CBC 23: Christmas Bird Count

You can add to over a century of community science by joining a SEVAS count!

National Audubon's Christmas Bird Count (CBC) started in 1900, and this will be the 124th year! The CBC was originally created to counteract the "Christmas Side Hunt", a long held holiday tradition where hunters would choose sides, hunt, return with their quarry, pile up the feathers and fur, and declare the team with the highest pile the winner.

About this time, some scientists and conservationists were becoming alarmed with declining bird populations, and hunting competitively was part of that concern. So an ornithologist by the name of Frank M. Chapman suggested a different way of "hunting". He proposed a "Christmas Bird Census" where groups of people would go into the field, count the birds that they saw and document the numbers. That first year 27 counters from Toronto, Canada to Pacific Grove, California listed 90 species.

Over 120 years later, from Dec 14 to Jan 5 each year, birders from across the continent sign up to participate in a nearby count. This year, **our SEVAS CBC is Saturday, December 30.**

After the data is compiled, Audubon and other organizations use it to assess the health of bird populations and to inform conservation planning and action. For instance:

- Past CBC data informed Audubon's Climate Change Report which predicts how climate change will likely affect the ranges of North American birds.
- The EPA has used CBC data as a predictor of climate change.

The SEVAS Christmas Bird Count is an important citizen science conservation opportunity and we hope you will join us December 30th. For more info, email Jenifer at [petdocmd@yahoo.com](mailto:petdocmd@yahoo.com) or contact [president.sevas@gmail.com](mailto:president.sevas@gmail.com).

## Help Save the Jays! Become a Jay Watch Volunteer

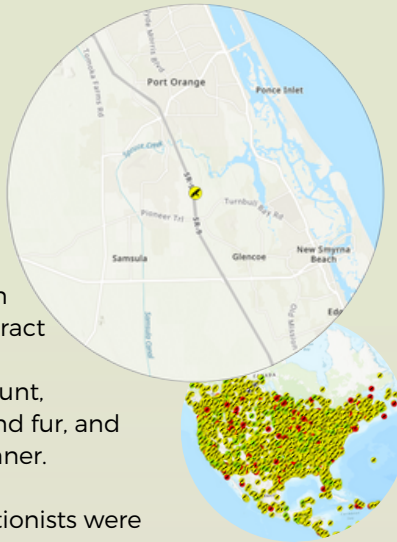


The beautiful Florida Scrub Jay, Florida's only endemic bird species, is now considered "threatened" by USFWS, mainly due to loss of habitat and decreased use of controlled burns in scrub pine areas. At our October meeting, Christie Miller from the [Lyonia Preserve](#) in Deltona spoke to us about efforts by Audubon Florida to monitor their numbers.

The [Jay Watch program](#), is a volunteer citizen science program that provides training opportunities to conduct surveys of the Scrub Jay population as a way to determine the health of the species.

To become involved contact Audrey DeRose Wilson at [audrey.derosewilson@audubon.org](mailto:audrey.derosewilson@audubon.org).

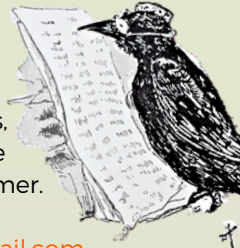
To see the Jays "in person", visit the Lyonia Preserve in Deltona.



## SEVAS Book Club Begins. New members are always welcome.

Come read with us. The SEVAS Book Club will resume our meetings in January, 2024. Dates, times, and book selections will be included in the next Skimmer.

Contact [bethchew99@gmail.com](mailto:bethchew99@gmail.com) for more info.



## Florida Master Naturalist Program Wildlife Monitoring Class



A special topics class in Wildlife Monitoring is set for Dec. 6, 7 and 15, to be held at the [Marine Discovery Center](#). This

course is designed to provide training in principles and commonly used techniques for surveying and monitoring wildlife. People that complete this course will better understand the reasons for tracking wildlife and the methodologies used.

This course includes both classroom instruction and hands-on experience and will cover surveying and monitoring mammals, birds and herps.

The mission of the [Florida Master Naturalist Program](#) (FMNP) is to promote awareness, understanding, and respect of Florida's natural world among Florida's citizens and visitors.

Interested persons should check the FMNP's website for more info. Details should be posted soon.



Florida Scrub Jay  
photo: NASA/glenn benson

# Birding Out the Door

John Kendall

*This occasional column features vignettes of our local members on a simple day out the door, with varied sightings and tips.*



Palm, Cape May, mixed warblers  
photos: j kendall

After some vismig (visible migration) at Turtle Mound, I've found that birding the roadsides of Canaveral NS, and beachside neighborhoods, can be quite productive in fall.

The drive between the Apollo lots often holds warblers, flycatchers, sparrows and sometimes pipits, Blue Grosbeaks, sandpipers and plovers. On colder windy days, weird sights like a meadowlark or a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher are not too rare.

I recently spied a FOS Yellow-rumped Warbler, a bittersweet moment for me. Sweet as FOS, but bitter as it portends the end of migration. Soon they will comprise a boring 90% of the warblers we see!

Despite the slowness, there's always a stop at Eldora -today's surprise was a White-winged Dove feeding on ground near same fruiting Cabbage Palm that held a pair of Scarlet Tanagers just 6 days ago. Wary, it flew atop Eldora House for a photo.



Scarlet Tanagers  
photo: j kendall



White-winged Dove  
photo: j kendall

On to Lot 3 to see if the east winds are bringing any seabirds, as recently we've had shearwaters, frigates, and Lesser Black-backed Gull.

But not today- no North tail-wind to aid migration and "only" 15-17 knots.

Of course tomorrow is another day.

# Conservation Corner

Bob Chew

After a great summer in Rhode Island, here are some of the good and bad things going on:

Volusia County council members voted to put \$20M toward a [Volusia Forever](#) conservation project. (Daytona Beach News Journal, 8/1/23).

USFWS is considering restoring the manatee's endangered status, due to the loss of most of the seagrass in the Indian River Lagoon (IRL). (Insider Climate News, 10/11/23)

Florida's \$117B budget was the state's largest for the environment, with \$7.3B. Of that, \$1.6B is going towards the Everglades and water-quality projects. The IRL, one of the most biologically diverse estuaries in North America, will get \$10M. (TC Palm, 6/15/23).

Efforts are ongoing to restore Mosquito Lagoon, and include replanting seagrass, rebuilding oyster reefs, planting clams and planting mangroves. Special thanks to the [Marine Discovery Center](#) and [Riverside Conservancy](#) and others for the hard work.

The [Florida Right to Clean Water](#) amendment's petition to amend Florida's Constitution is making progress to get on the ballot. SEVAS board supports this important initiative. Sign [HERE](#). Special thanks to the East Central Florida Regional Coordinator, Jim Durocher.

Governor DeSantis approved a back-door ban on new fertilizer ordinances. The provision had been slipped into the implementing bill at the urging of a fertilizer industry lobbyist, former House Speaker Steve Crisafulli. Friends of the Everglades is concerned this is a first step in undermining, or even altogether killing, fertilizer bans with summer "blackout dates." (Friends of the Everglades, 6/15/23).

At a time when shorebird populations are seeing steep declines, Volusia County voted six to one approving the 18-month pilot program that will allow residents to bring their dogs to a section of Ormond Beach. (News 6, 7/11/23).

As you can see, progress is being made in many areas but at the same time, there are many areas where problems for the birds and the environment are getting worse.

We need your support!

## Sign up for Our Monthly Skimmer!

News cycle making you dizzy? Keep calm and subscribe to The Skimmer, our SEVAS digital newsletter!

Published Oct-Apr, you'll discover actions you can take to stand up for birds and the wild places they need.

Visit [sevolusiaaudubon.org](http://sevolusiaaudubon.org) to sign up, and please share this copy with a friend!



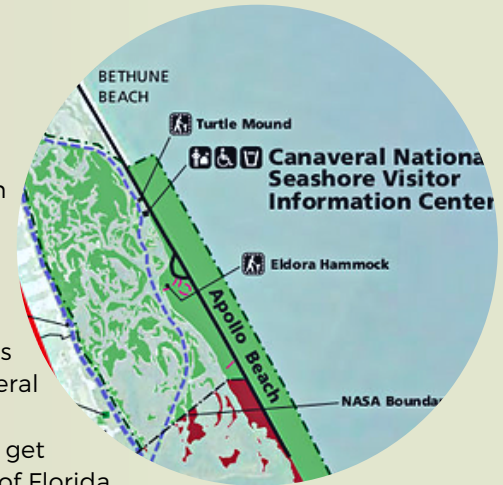
### Champions of Conservation by Marsha Cox (from page 1)

many of us know her best. In the 1970s, Doris became deeply involved in the environmental movement. From her home in Eldora, she was acutely aware of the importance of preserving the surrounding area and was instrumental in the creation of the Canaveral National Seashore in 1975. If you have ever visited this amazing National Park, you will immediately recognize the importance of preserving it.

Doris recognized it as well. With the threat of development of the land south of Turtle Mound, Leeper mobilized her friends, politicians, and other concerned citizens to create resistance to development and eventually the establishment of the Canaveral National Seashore. If you have not read Clay Henderson's book, *Forces of Nature*, I highly recommend it. In particular read the chapter entitled "National Seashores" to get a real sense of "the fight" that Doc and her colleagues fought to preserve that piece of Florida coastline and nearly 58,000 acres of barrier island, beautiful beaches, lagoon, and habitat for many endangered species.

Doris Leeper was quoted as saying "if I had my druthers, I would rather be known as an artist". Yet it was her love of nature, recognition of the importance of preserving the natural world, and her willingness to use her prestige as an artist to preserve that world that made her an important champion of conservation.

Prior to her death in 2000, Audubon Florida presented Doris Leeper with the Polly Redford award for her "personal dedication and moral courage on behalf of the cause of conservation." When you next visit the Canaveral National Seashore and enjoy its pristine beauty, remember Doris Leeper and her role as a champion of conservation.



### Plants for Birds, P4B by Joyce Riddel (from page 1)

- We are planning educational programs at the Babe James Center, Marine Discovery Center, Chisholm Elementary and at Historic Myrtle Park. These will include, "how to use binoculars", bird house building, bird walks and talks, as well as "hands in the dirt." garden maintenance and planting.

As we expand our efforts from garden installations to educational events in those beautiful gardens, we need volunteers to join us in sharing the many reasons to protect and expand our native habitats. These important and beautiful habitats are vital to birds and people too! Have a [read here](#) for more on bird-friendly communities.

If you have interest in gardening or in educating our community on how native gardens increase biodiversity, community and joy, please contact me. Joyce Riddel, [jpearce.riddel@gmail.com](mailto:jpearce.riddel@gmail.com) or 386-314-6543. Watch for planting dates and garden maintenance announcements on our Meetup site, too!



Joyce Riddel at a P4B event  
photo: susan dayer

## Three Weeks Away!



### Orange Audubon Society's 8th annual North Shore Birding Festival Nov 30 - Dec 4, 2023

Celebrate the top eBird hotspot in Florida! Lake Apopka North Shore, an Important Bird Area. Many trips are based out of the McDonald Canal, CR 448A and Mount Dora. Other trips and the keynotes are at Wekiwa Springs SP.

All levels of birders, nature photographers and other outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy the field trips. Field trips feature the Young Birder rate, and many include a box lunch. There are also college student travel scholarships. Reservations are required. **Many trips are full but still some great trips are available, click [HERE](#).**

For more, email, [festival@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:festival@orangeaudubonfl.org) or call 407-637-2525.

# The BirdWord Puzzle

Robert Merideth

*"The state with the prettiest name,  
the state that floats in brackish water,  
held together by mangrove roots."*

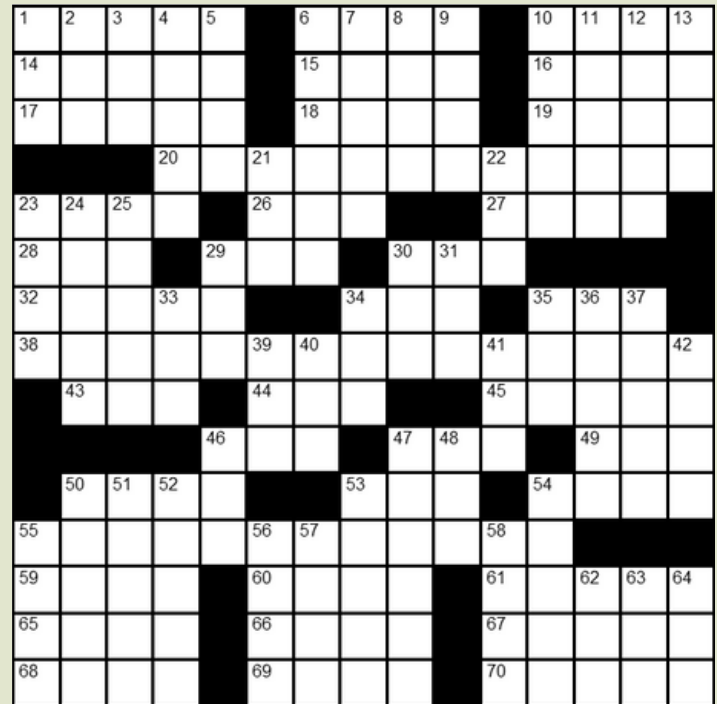
Elizabeth Bishop

## Going Coastal?

\*\*theme word clues  
answers can be found [online here](#)

### Across

1. Small sandpipers, collectively
6. An NCO, e.g. at Patrick Space Force Base
10. Solitary
14. \_\_\_ long story short
15. Reverse
16. The Great Skua is considered an aerial \_\_\_ predator
17. Tire pattern
18. Siestas
19. Red-eyed Vireo (bird code)
- \*\*20. The rusty headed "dancing heron"
23. Web page code
26. Modern address
27. Fly like an eagle
28. Successor to the 1990s adventure, puzzle-solving video games, *Myst* and *Riven*
29. National birders' group, briefly
30. Bag-checking org.
32. Mushroom variety
34. 19th-century naturalist Thomas \_\_\_, presently a phoebe namesake
35. Once around the track
- \*\*38. Plump rock-loving shorebird with yellow legs and bill base
43. Yaupon Brothers product
44. Bird bander's mist \_\_\_
45. Colorado city, home to a Black Swift colony
46. Marine Discovery Center, in short
47. An itinerary abbr.
49. Nickname of prior White House resident
50. Black-necked Stilt (bird code)
53. "Much \_\_\_ About Nothing"
54. They're red, blonde, and amber
- \*\*55. Dark, coastal bird with a bill that some say "holds more than its belly can"
59. Overdue
60. American rapper and actor



Robert Merideth

61. Fed. agency that protects migratory birds
65. Oklahoma city near Salt Plains NWR, a Whooping Crane stopover
66. Mexican film director, Guillermo del \_\_\_
67. Female Ruff
68. Alternative magazine, \_\_\_ Reader
69. Celestial sci.
70. Pre-Columbian site in Oaxaca, Monte \_\_\_

### Down

1. Payment, abbr.
2. County fair corn serving
3. Barely manage, with "out"
4. Oyster's prize
5. "The Sweetest Taboo" singer
6. Type of swan
7. One of the kites
8. Gross domestic products, abbr.
9. Sheer nonsense
10. A Florida key
11. Papageno, the bird catcher, appears in this type of musical theater
12. "When pigs fly!"
13. Important door sign
21. Electronic style of reggae
22. Fed. legislation protecting biodiversity
23. Camel's feature
24. Rainbow \_\_\_
25. "Common" or "Thick-billed" seabird
29. Entirely
30. *The Joy Luck Club* author (and birder!) Amy \_\_\_

31. Sydney airport code
33. Govt. pollution-control agency
34. College entrance test
35. *Charlie's Angels* actress, Lucy \_\_\_
36. Earth Day month
37. British astronaut and author of *Space: The Human Story*
39. Conclusion
40. Part of a min.
41. Group of dolphins
42. Relatives of wheats and barleys
46. Map abbr.
47. *The Skimmer* bigwig
48. Book's "road map," abbr.
50. Small goose
51. Out
52. Stockholm native
53. Rare bird \_\_\_
54. B & W landscape photographer Adams
55. Chicken cordon \_\_\_
56. Hummus holder
57. Environmental Council of (the) States, briefly
58. Energy field emanating from a living being
62. Florida Winter Shorebird Survey mo.
63. State with Northern Cardinal as state bird, abbr.
64. Member of Cong.



Reddish Egret  
photo: andrea westmoreland



# Signs of Nature

How is nature impacting you? Put your thoughts in the next newsletter.  
[sevasnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:sevasnewsletter@gmail.com)

## I Love the Unexpected Awe Its

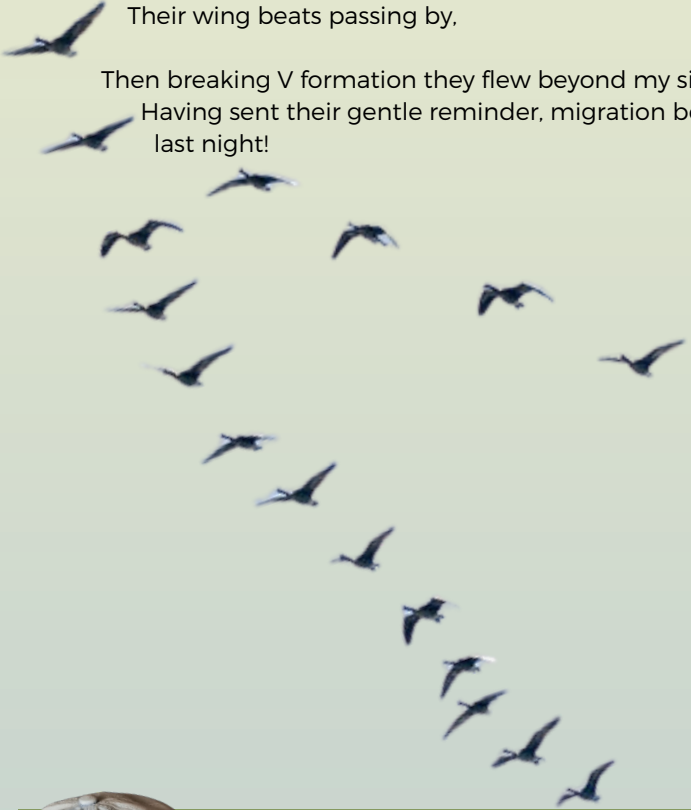
*anonymous*

Wonder and surprise,  
 It caught my eye this morning in the bright  
 blue morning skies,

For over the marsh I spotted a perfectly formed V,  
 And iridescent floating cloud,  
 A sign of things to be,

It took my breath it's beauty,  
 white sequins in the sky,  
 Reflecting light in rippling waves  
 Their wing beats passing by,

Then breaking V formation they flew beyond my sight,  
 Having sent their gentle reminder, migration began  
 last night!



## The Clapper Rail

*anonymous*

I've always longed for chickens,  
 Those friendly giving birds,  
 But living in my neighborhood, that  
 longing seemed absurd.  
 For there are city laws against that "country"  
 sort of thing,  
 In keeping with the HOA's unnatural  
 form of living,  
 You must own property, not yard,  
 A place with ample space,  
 To keep chicks locked in suburbia would be a cruel  
 disgrace,  
 And neighbors would object, I fear, to roosters morning call,  
 Get out of bed, at the break of dawn. Why it's morning "all,  
 y'all",



**Clapper Rail**  
 photo: greg schechter

But I marvel, yes, I always do - as nature finds its way,  
 To give us all we need in life, it happens every day,

The Clapper Rail so chicken-like,  
 Nature's gift to me,  
 With raspy cluck and stilted flight is chicken-like, you see,  
 Dear Clapper Rails have made their home in the marsh  
 beyond my door,  
 And have tempered the chicken longings that I always  
 had before,

No eggs to offer, so very shy, I rarely see them there,  
 Yet, their "goodnight, sleep tight" evening callings  
 Let me know they care.



## Logo Wear

Our Skimmer logo is on file with  
**Beach Embroidery & Screen!**  
 You can take in a favorite hat (or any  
 piece of apparel) and get it added  
 for just \$10!

They look great, so start sporting yours!

Bonus for us - free advertising for our SEVAS  
 chapter here, and when you take it on trips out  
 of town. call 386 478 3931



## Be a Part of We!

**We** make a tangible difference in Volusia  
 County...**We** support our birds and elevate our  
 local habitat...**We** offer free and fun events to the  
 public...**We** use our skills and talents for good... **We**  
 meet and network with like-minded in our  
 community... **We** educate and nurture future  
 generations... [president.sevas@gmail.com](mailto:president.sevas@gmail.com)



**Volunteer with SEVAS!**

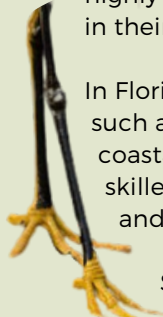
# Bird of the Month

Liz Payne Merideth

The Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) is a medium-sized heron found in various parts of the Americas, including Florida. It is known for its striking appearance, characterized by all-white plumage, a slender black bill, and long, black legs with bright yellow feet. During the breeding season, Snowy Egrets often gather in colonies, where they build their nests in trees and shrubs near water. They lay pale blue-green eggs and both parents take turns incubating them. They also develop lacy plumes on their back, head, and chest, which were once highly coveted by the fashion industry, leading to a decline in their population.

In Florida, "Snowies" can be spotted in a variety of habitats such as saltwater and freshwater marshes, ponds, lakes, and coastal areas. Often seen wading in shallow water, they are skilled hunters, feeding on small fish, crustaceans, insects, and amphibians.

Snowy Egrets are common and widespread, and their populations are considered stable. Like other wading birds, Snowies play a crucial role in maintaining the balance of aquatic ecosystems. Remember to observe these beautiful creatures from a respectful distance to avoid disturbing them.



Snowy Egret  
photo: liz payne merideth

## BECOME A MEMBER TODAY

Yes!

I would like to protect and conserve habitat and wildlife in Volusia County!

Annual Memberships benefit you, the birds and our shared environments.

Join here, or securely ONLINE at [sevolusiaaudubon.org](http://sevolusiaaudubon.org).

Single \$20    Family \$25

Complete this form, make your check out to **SEVAS**, and mail to:

Southeast Volusia Audubon Society  
PO Box 46 New Smyrna Beach, FL 32170

Scan this code!



Your membership includes our digital newsletter, The Skimmer, October to April, as well as member emails with announcements and event reminders.

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Year-round resident    Snowbird    Volunteer    I'd like to add an additional contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Got Skimmers?  
Merritt Island NWR