

THE Skimmer

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



The Power of a Cup of Tea Marsha Cox

This series, Champions of Conservation, highlights environmental heroes to inspire us all. Meet Harriet Hemenway and Minna B. Hall.

Our November Bird of the Month was the Snowy Egret. The actions of this month's two Conservation Champions helped prevent the extinction of this beautiful bird and save many more. And the importance of sharing a cup of tea is an integral part of the tale.



Apparently, in the late 1700s Marie Antoinette attended a ball wearing a hat festooned with a bird plume. That simple act started an international fashion craze, and plumes became the "latest." Some hats used full-sized birds as decoration!

Feathers have been adorning clothing for centuries, but by the late 1800s the demand for plumage had taken over the millinery trade. The bird annual loss was estimated between five to fifteen million birds, and many North American species were hunted to near extinction. It was said that a pound of feathers was worth more than the equivalent in gold! To add to the problem, the plumage was at its best during the breeding season, causing *continued on page 7*

Monthly Meeting Dec 14, 7pm

Our speaker this month is Volusia County's Tommy Nordmann, Environmental Education Specialist. He will speak about programs like **Explore Volusia**, and **Volusia Forever** that enable Volusia County visitors and residents to discover the beauty of Natural Florida. Learn about local conservation lands where native plants and animals are able to flourish without threat of development.

Please join us - our meetings are open to all.

*"Breaking News:
Snow in Florida!
Oh. Wait. That's sand."*

Riverside Conservancy Awarded Grant

IRL Restoration Model Supports Habitat, Manatees, Clams, and Shore

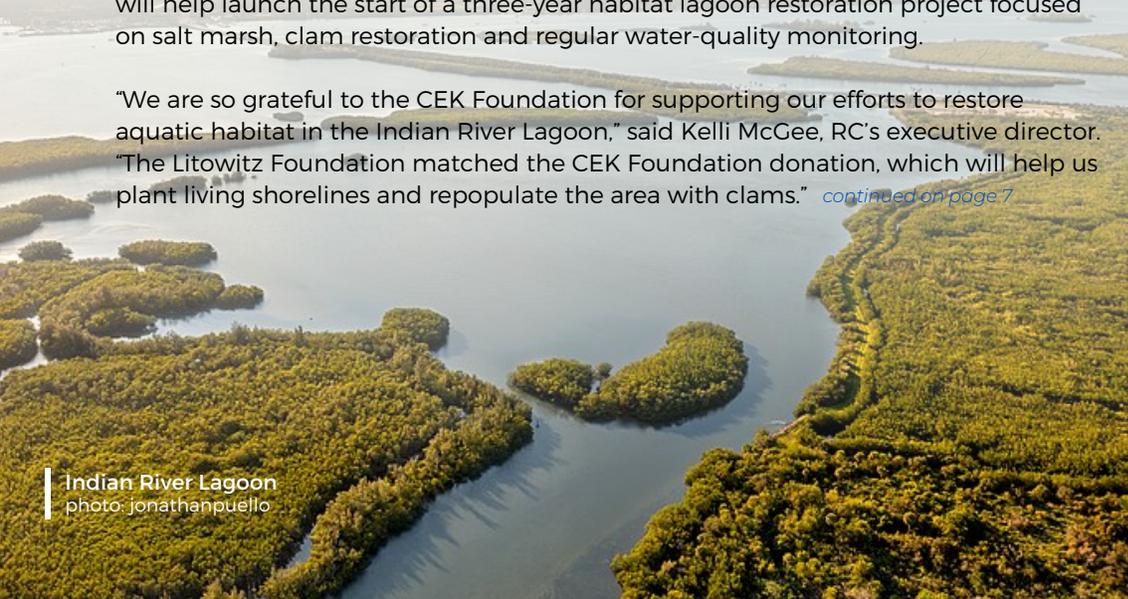
Our own back yard hosts a most spectacular body of water: the Indian River Lagoon. Home to more than 4,300 species of plants and animals, the IRL is one of the most biodiverse estuaries in the Northern Hemisphere. It also needs tending.

Riverside Conservancy (RC) in Edgewater, has been awarded a \$50,000 grant from The Chuck and Ernestina Kreutzkamp (**CEK**) **Foundation** of San Diego. This grant will help launch the start of a three-year habitat lagoon restoration project focused on salt marsh, clam restoration and regular water-quality monitoring.

"We are so grateful to the CEK Foundation for supporting our efforts to restore aquatic habitat in the Indian River Lagoon," said Kelli McGee, RC's executive director. "The Litowitz Foundation matched the CEK Foundation donation, which will help us plant living shorelines and repopulate the area with clams." *continued on page 7*

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Indian River Lagoon
photo: jonathanpuello



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.

BOARD MEMBERS

Presidents Bill and Marsha Cox
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Vice-President Vacant

Secretary Jane Talbot

Treasurer Jenifer Russell

Programs Trish Wheeler

Field Trips Don Chalfant

Education Joyce Riddel

Conservation Robert Chew

Membership Dean Spears

Webmaster Jane Talbot

Plants for Birds Susan Dayer

Purple Martin Project Richard Fasse

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PRESIDENTS' POST

Audubon Florida 2023 Assembly

Conservation in a Changing Landscape was the theme of the Audubon Florida (AF) annual assembly in Tampa. It was a terrific weekend and a great way to find out what the 40+ chapters across the state are doing. In addition to learning forums and networking sessions, there were local field trips, a keynote address, an awards dinner and a chapter celebration breakfast. Each meet was an opportunity to exchange ideas, learn, and get recharged for the conservation work ahead. You can find a full wrap up [here](#), and these are a few of our highlights:



"Perspectives from the Next Generation" was an especially inspiring and thought provoking learning session that highlighted five young conservationists active in Audubon work. Each shared their story of how they started and how we can get young people engaged with AF. Their experiences were varied but they agreed on these basic premises for local chapters:

1. provide networking and mentoring experiences for students
2. recruit from local colleges or high schools
3. include students in research projects with chapter programs
4. don't be afraid to pay students for their time
5. make and keep connections through social media
6. tap into the younger generation's passion for the environment

One SEVAS goal in 2024 is to use some of these ideas to appeal to a next-gen audience. We seek a younger cohort to join in our bird conservation journey. One that is as excited as we are to keep the energy thriving,

"Meeting the Challenge: Bird Conservation in a Changing Landscape", a morning plenary session, focused on what AF does to meet the challenges they face.

Did you know that:

1. Least Terns have taken to nesting on gravel roof tops, because of the loss of beach habitat? AF provides support for these birds with shade sources and protective railings for the chicks on these roof tops.
2. Bald Eagles are losing nesting areas due to loss of habitat and storm damage? Eagle Watch volunteers through AF monitor nesting sites, report damage, educate landowners and power companies about nesting areas as a way of protecting our eagle population?

These are but two of the many ways that AF and its chapters are involved in helping our birds and wildlife meet the challenges of a changing environment.

We are proud to be part of such a progressive conservation organization, and hope you are, too!

Bill & Marsha Cox
president.sevas@gmail.com

Well done!!



**Kudos to
 Stephen Kintner
 of
 West Volusia Audubon!
 Winner of the 2023
 National Audubon
 Callison Volunteer
 Award**

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.

Dec 14: Tommy Nordmann, Volusia County: Explore Volusia Conservation Lands

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 or contact us at president.sevas@gmail.com.

February 2-8: FL Shorebird Alliance (FSA) 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.

Surf Scoter
photo: len blumin



SEVAS in the Field

OUTINGS & TRIPS

Stay up to date!

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

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:

December 5: Indian River Lagoon Park, NSB

December 12: Spruce Creek County Park

December 19: El Dora Trail, Canaveral National Seashore

December 30: Christmas Bird Count Locations, TBD

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.

December 21 4pm: Smyrna Dunes Park, 2995 N. Peninsula Ave, NSB. After birding, we'll gather for libations at Norwoods in NSB, 400 2nd Ave E. nb: There is a Volusia County park entrance fee or pass required (unless you are on a bike).

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 17: Merritt Island NWR, Black Point Drive
7am meet in Edgewater at Dunkin **OR** meet at **8am** in Titusville at Parrish Park.

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

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 "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 we need 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 for more info.

Recent Happenings

November Meeting with Florida Sea Grant and Carolyn Kovacs



Florida Sea Grant Agent Carolyn Kovacs spoke on hurricanes, their impacts on the ecosystem, and dunes preservation.

We learned about natural beach dynamics, different methods of shoreline stabilization, and the affects of last year's storms on our local beaches and dunes. She stressed the import of sand dunes, and some of the plants that build them.

Tuesday Morning Birders Meet Locally Each Week



Fun at the recent TMB walk. 10 folks attended, 18 species were observed, including 7 Roseate Spoonbills!

Canaveral Beach Clean Up Burns Thanksgiving Calories



Kudos to the 10 SEVAS members that helped with the shorebird habitat beach cleanup on Nov 25 sponsored by [Cape Canaveral National Seashore](#).

Recent weather had stirred things up and it was a mess, so Conservation Chair Bob Chew rallied members of SEVAS to spend a few hours collecting trash at the Apollo Beach area, and you did, Thank you!

The report is that there were 20 participants in all that picked up 18-26 bags of trash.

Thank you Richard Fasse for "creating" the pickup sticks. The turtles and birds thank you! Stay tuned, we've been invited to return, and we'll have another clean up scheduled soon.

Local Rare Bird Alert Active Now for Sightings - Join the Text Chain



Nothing is worse than finding out after the fact that something cool was spotted nearby and you missed the chance to see it.

In the past seven days, these novel birds were confirmed: Flamingos, King Eider, Surf Scoters, Purple Gallinule, Snail Kite, Ash-throated Flycatcher, White-crowned Sparrow.



Flamingos at Haulover 12/1/23 photos: jtalbot & lizpm

Thanks to John Kendall for enacting the SEVAS text list to share the news out quickly when a rare/uncommon bird is found, like today's flamingos!

This list is ONLY for rare/uncommon sightings, NOT for general chatter. We aim to notify friends in real time and we currently average one text/day.

Other unusual animals such as whales are worthy, as are occasional reports of significant migration movements of songbirds or seabirds. This alerts others to head out to seawatch or visit their favorite warbler spots. If you'd like notifications, email John Kendall jeffro595@yahoo.com.

First of Year NSB Market Tabling Event a Success! Visit Us Again Off Canal on Dec 9



Thank all who contributed to our FOS Farmer's Market tabling event. On hand friends included Richard Fasse and Dean Spears, who handled the set up and heavy lifting. Bill and Marsha Cox took the first shift working the booth. Jane Talbot and Joyce Riddel were there with smiles for the all-important back up and take down, and back to Dean for completion and transport.

Thanks to all who contributed fundraising items, too ... our first sale was the one-of-a-kind woodpecker feeder, handmade from hurricane salvage material. Richard, I think we could have sold more of those.

We signed up 4 new members who expressed interest in becoming involved, and garnered an impressive list of folks who will be added to our mailing list. Shop local for the holidays and stop by and say hi at our next event on Dec 9th.



Ruby-Crowned Kinglet photo: wildreturn

Upcoming Events

Christmas Bird Count (CBC) and After Party Saturday, December 30

The SEVAS Christmas Bird Count is an important citizen science conservation opportunity. We hope you will join us for a fun way to literally make your birds count. For more info, contact Jenifer petdocmd@yahoo.com or president.sevas@gmail.com. Newbies are invited! We are readying our teams, and everyone is welcome, regardless of skill level.

- We compile our data with eBird, and will share stories about our day at the eatery at 5PM.
- Don't use eBird? You can still participate by emailing a yardbird list and we can submit it on your behalf.
- If you can't bird with us, you can share your eBird lists from the day with the username: sevasbirdlist.
- If you would like to count your feeder birds, and your location is within the SEVAS 16-mile count circle, you can email it or submit an eBird list and share it with sevasbirdlist.
- At 5PM we'll meet at **The Half Wall**, 1889 State Road 44 New Smyrna Beach, (386) 426-5350, for a no-host dinner gathering to talk species totals.

LOOK FOR SEVAS CBC RESULTS in the January *Skimmer*. 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.



Raptor Exhibit Ribbon Cutting at Marine Science Center Dec 12

The new exhibit is complete! It is dedicated to the center's permanent raptor residents, who, due to injuries, cannot be returned to the wild. The exhibit will feature a rotation of screech owls, red-shouldered hawks, red-tailed hawks, Cooper's hawks, peregrine falcons, and great horned owls.



Admission will be free from 9-10 AM for the opening ceremony.

SEVAS Book Club Begins. Only a few spots left.

There are a few openings in the SEVAS book club. If you'd like to come read with us. Contact bethchew99@gmail.com for more info.



Purple Martin "Gourd Raising" Celebration Wednesday, January 3, 10am

"Scouts" are the first Purple Martins to return to south Florida from Brazil, and usually arrive mid-January. Last year they were first reported in December, so we want to be ready for the birds who nested last year. We anxiously await their safe return, and hope they arrive with additional tenants for a full residency in 2024.

Come celebrate with a brief presentation and a hands-on preparation activity. We'll add nesting material to each of our 12 gourds, using both pine needles and cedar shavings. All supplies will be provided. When the gourds are ready, we'll head outside to secure the race and raise them up! [Sign up here](#) for more info or to be a volunteer observer.

Happy Holidays

FROM SOUTHEAST VOLUSIA AUDUBON SOCIETY

Piping Plovers
photo: FWS/gene nieminen



Call for Volunteers

Joyce Riddel

Like many non-profit organizations, our successes depend upon you, our members and friends. We could not have gained the recognition as Audubon Florida's "Best Small Chapter" without dedicated volunteers like you, your time and talents. Thank you all very much.

**Volunteer
with SEVAS!**

Over the past four years we have made tremendous progress to support our mission, "Protecting birds and their habitats through Education, Advocacy and Action". Because education is primary on this statement, we have chosen to bring back a long-standing committee.

To this end, we need your help to build the reinstated SEVAS Education Committee. We seek leaders and followers, experts and novices who have an interest, a passion even, for education and telling our very important story. This group will work with our community partners, the Marine Discovery Center, the Babe James Center, the City of New Smyrna Beach, and Chisholm Elementary School to promote our mission. We need to develop and deliver our story, through educational projects that explain why birds and their native habitats are important to all.



Recently, the Marine Discovery Center invited us to take part in educational events for children and adults. We may include bird walks, garden tours, and instructional talks on topics such as bird friendly native habitats and the Purple Martin condos located at the MDC. The staff at the Marine Discovery Center tells our story when they host visitors on site, and we certainly appreciate it. But who can tell our story better than we can?

We already inspire people to make changes in their yards and communities. Through new educational events and activities, we can do even more.

Please contact us if you have an interest in becoming part of this educational initiative.

We seek leaders and followers, experts and novices who have an interest, a passion even, for education and telling a very important story.

Welcomes & Thank You's

HELLO NEW MEMBERS, Cathryne Loos, Debra Bourdeau, Darlene Schaffer, and Linda Santo. Thank you for joining us to give our birds a fighting chance in a changing world. We are delighted to have you and hope to see you at a meeting or field trip soon.

THANK YOU EVERYONE, for stepping up and adding your support. It's going to be a great season.



Here are some changes for the 2024 season:

Susan Dayer is now heading up our Plants for Birds P4B, as Joyce Riddel has shifted to join our Education Committee. Robert Merideth has become our Chair of Communications, and Trish Wheeler has taken on Programs. Ed Carlson is our Shore Bird Advocate, Traci Hershberger will be posting on Social Media, Gail Rogers is our Tabling Events coordinator, and John Kendall has started the new Rare Bird Alert text group.

We still have openings for Vice President and President-Elect.

New Logo Hot Off the Press



Our new logo stickers are here!

Get yours and show your SEVAS pride! We can't wait to see more vehicles and buckets with our beautiful skimmer.

Piggy-backing on our updated newsletter, we've streamlined our logo for printing and merch. We'll soon have mugs, water bottles, and tee shirts available. **Huzzah!**

See page 9 for more details about embroidery, and stop by the Farmer's Market on December 9. Stay tuned - more details about SEVAS gear will be in the January *Skimmer*.



1888 Bride in NYC

Champions of Conservation (from page 1)

plume "hunters" to raid nests for the adults and leave the nestlings to starve.

Thankfully, conservationists came to the rescue, and leading the flock were many prominent women in Europe and America, and our December Champions of Conservation are two cousins from New England.

An article written in the New York Ornithological Society about feathers and fashion caught the attention of Boston socialite Harriet Hemenway and her cousin Minna B. Hall.

After discovering what was happening, the women took action to stop this bird carnage by enlisting the help of the wealthy women in Massachusetts who were actually wearing these hats. They organized tea parties where they told the story of the plumage trade and its effect on the bird population. They told the bird's story. They put a face on it! These tea parties eventually led to over 900 women joining this fledgling environmental cause, all vowing to stop wearing plumage and pressure the fashion industry to stop using birds for bonnets.

To keep this momentum going our two "champions" organized a society that brought the problem to the national stage. It became the Massachusetts Audubon Society and included many of the male conservationists of the day. It is the forerunner of our National Audubon Society. Harriet and Minna continued their pressure by encouraging state and local laws prohibiting hunting and transporting of plumage which led to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. This legislation protects all migratory birds. And these gracious women used the power of the tea party to continue with education and persuasion. Wow!



Harriet Hemenway

So, the next time you see a Snowy Egret with its golden slippers and beautiful plumage strutting along the water's edge looking for small fish, say a "thank you" to Harriet, Minna, and their cups of tea.

Indian River Lagoon Restoration (from page 1)

The project aims to restore one mile of shoreline and eight acres of clams in the northern IRL through strategic propagation and installation, utilizing staff and citizen-science volunteers to achieve specific objectives to strengthen the restoration of aquatic habitat within the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program boundary.

During the last several years, the lagoon has lost more than 90 percent of its seagrass, which served as habitat for many species and a food source for manatees. As a result of this loss, nearly 2,000 manatees have died of starvation since 2021.



Mercenaria mercenaria
photo: @riversideconservancyorg

RC's project promotes healthy habitats to help manatees survive, while creating a model for estuary restoration efforts. The project includes planting three restoration sites with submerged marsh grasses to help recover the lagoon's food chain, as well as to reintroduce clams into an area where water-quality issues have eliminated much of the mollusk's population.

"Clams have been found to assist with seagrass resilience, so we hope that planting clams and marsh grasses this year in targeted areas will lead to seagrass restoration next year," McGee added. "Together, the CEK and Litowitz Foundations will help bring back submerged vegetation, which provides food for manatees, green sea turtles, and other species."

Riverside Conservancy will seek state and federal permits over the next three months to plant *Spartina alterniflora* (cord grass) in Oak Hill and on 3.75 acres in Ponce Inlet. Find out more at [The Riverside Conservancy](https://www.riversideconservancy.org).

Sign up for Our Monthly Skimmer!

News cycle making you dizzy? Keep calm and subscribe to *The Skimmer*, our SEVAS digital newsletter! You'll discover what we're up to and how you can join us. Published Oct-Apr, you'll discover actions you can take to stand up for birds and the wild places they need. Visit sevolusiaudubon.org to sign up, and share copy with a friend.



The BirdWord Puzzle

Robert Merideth

Animal, Vegetable, Mineral?

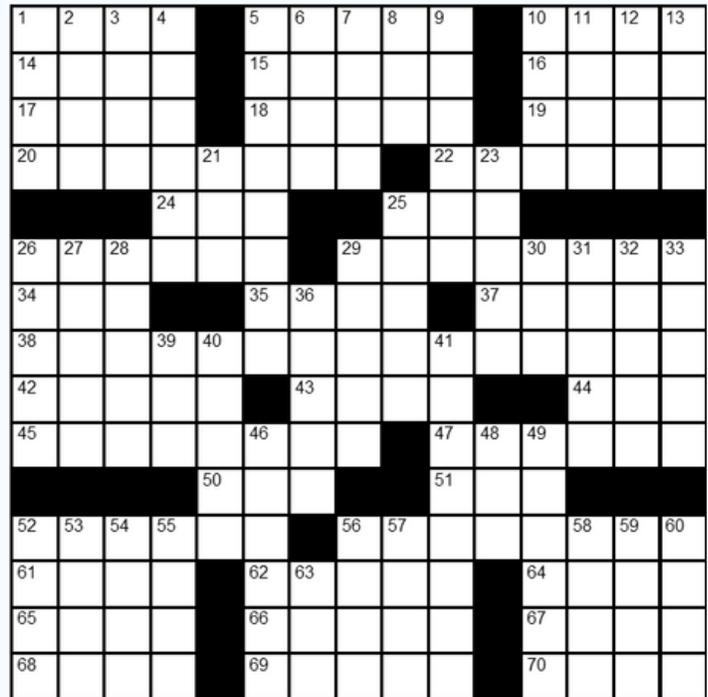
**theme word clues
answers can be found [online here](#)

Across

1. Surveyor's map
5. Histories
10. Red-headed Woodpecker (code)
14. Rock Pigeon (code)
15. Near southern entrance of Point Reyes National Seashore
16. Physicist Niels
17. Wash. neighbor
18. Smells
19. Smooth-tongued
- **20. Corvid with nasal "uh-uh" caw
22. Young pigeons
24. Haul
25. Caribbean, e.g.
26. Swiss breakfast cereal
29. Case
34. Law that protects threatened and endangered species (abbr.)
35. Laughing my socks off, in short
37. Hilo hello
- **38. MAWA (decode)
42. Atlantic ____
43. Harvard zoologist Ernst ____, author of *Birds of the Southwest Pacific*
44. Big ____ Conference
45. Grave and didactic
47. Large sea ducks
50. Doze (off)
51. Type of beer
52. Riparian habitat ____
- **56. Small pale and grayish-brown bird of Western rocky & arid habitats
61. Alaskan island with possible sightings of Kittlitz's Murrelet and Evermann's Rock Ptarmigan
62. Prefix with sphere
64. Chips ____!
65. Bundle of hay
66. International Bird Rescue targets these seabirds for assistance
67. Part of a spotting scope
68. Yellow-headed Blackbird (code)
69. Everybody's opposite
70. Use a stun gun on

"November. It was already getting cold in the Panhandle. I'm talking bone cold. Temperatures were sinking all the way to sixty-two degrees in some places."

Sean of the South



Robert Merideth

Down

1. College biol. teacher
2. ____ Greiner of *Shark Tank*
3. Simians
4. Ballet attire
5. Common ____ (a nightjar)
6. ____ Leopold, author of *A Sand County Almanac*
7. Short-eared Owl (code)
8. Tomorrow, in text or online comments
9. Back-talks
10. Ring-billed Gull (code)
11. Greeting in Havana
12. White Ibis (code)
13. Globes
21. Mil. officer
23. A falcon is this country's national bird
25. Type of owl
26. Office papers
27. Federal constructor of military and civil works (abbr.)
28. Avid
29. Asimov or Newton
30. Balkan country (abbr.)
31. Actor Nick ____
32. Tide alternative
33. Makes
36. Mockingbird or thrasher, e.g.
39. National Acad. of Medicine
40. Playing one ____
41. When calling, three before seven
46. AntiVirus company
48. Sort
49. Tool brand
52. Newborn
53. California Gull is this state's revered bird
54. Energy unit (abbr.)
55. Wood when burned
56. Caramel candy brand
57. Doing business
58. South American ostrich relative
59. Geologic periods
60. Wall St. letters
63. Grande or Bravo



Magnolia Warbler
photo: andy reago & chrissy mcclarren

How is nature impacting you? Put your thoughts in the next newsletter.
sevasnewsletter@gmail.com

Signs of Nature

The Flock *anonymous*

It calls to mind, birds of a feather,
 the way you choose to flock together,
 Not of the exact same families,
 Gathered for breakfast ramblings
 From brush to tree you flit and fly,
 When all together you catch my eye,
 Oh stay a while I beg you stay,
 Before you up and fly away,
 Who's in this wonderful gathering of bird,
 While eating, no one says a word,
 With luck I can spy one or two,
 But off you fly before I'm through
 Your progressive feast is on its way,
 If I had wings I would not stay,
 I'd join the excitement from tree to vine,
 For it's a most exquisite way to dine!

Royal Terns
 photo: debivort.



New Logo Wear

Our New Skimmer logo is on file with **Beach Embroidery & Screen**. Bring in a favorite hat, or any piece of apparel, and they'll add our logo for just \$10.

They look great, so start sporting yours!

Bonus for us - free advertising for our SEVAS chapter here, and when you wear them on trips out of town.



Call Kylene at 386 478 3931.

Bird of the Month

Bill Cox



Cedar Waxwing
photo: ron knight

WHO WAS THAT MASKED FLYER?! Not the Lone Ranger but definitely one handsome passerine. Don't you just love the mask? I do! The Cedar Waxwing is high on my favorite bird list so a little research (who says AI is all bad?) will help us spot and enjoy this beauty.

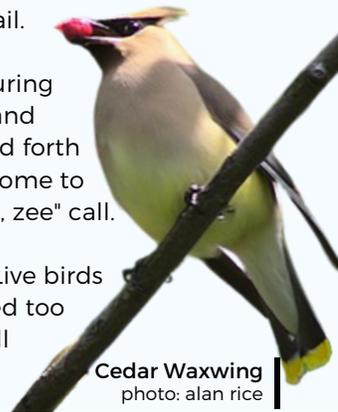
Waxwings are a starling-sized bird with a large, softly-crested head, a wide beak and neck. The muted brown-grey body is washed with yellow, and how about that brilliant red stripe on their wingtips? This is the waxwing part- their wings are tipped with red carotenoid pigment. Is that to blend in with the berries they love to eat or to attract a sweetheart?

The red secondary tips are as outstanding as the mask, and interestingly, the tips appear to be status signals for mate selection, and increase in number with maturity. Note too, the band of yellow across the tail.

It's rare to see just one waxwing. In Florida, especially during our winter months, social flocks frequent fruiting trees and bushes. Watch closely. Birds might pass a berry back and forth

so that each individual gets a share! They can be spotted eating insects while flying over ponds, and come to backyard feeders too. Flocks are often heard before they are seen; listen for the high-pitched "zee, zee, zee" call.

Deemed crop pests in 1908, the Vermont Assembly passed a bill allowing farmers to shoot the birds. Live birds were brought to the senate chamber and opponents defeated the bill when the birds were considered too pretty to kill. Enjoy, protect and provide! *And you thought I only cared about golf course birdies. :) Bill*



Cedar Waxwing
photo: alan rice

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.

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