

Spreading Our Wings

# Wingspan

St. Petersburg Audubon Society

Fall 2018



**Power in Our Mission**  
**Photo-essay, Birds Being Birds**  
**Take Action - Make a Difference**  
**in Pinellas**  
**Road Trip! A Birdy Twist to an**  
**American Classic**

# Give Thanks

WE LIVE IN A WONDERFUL PLACE, WE HAVE A PASSION FOR BIRDS AND ALL THINGS WILD. WE HAVE TALENT AND ABILITIES TO PROTECT THEM. BE GRATEFUL FOR THIS!



FOR THE  
RAPTORS



FOR THE  
SONGBIRDS



FOR THE  
SHOREBIRDS



FOR FLORIDA

# Wingspan

The St. Petersburg Audubon Society  
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- *Become the 'Recycler' of the Group* courtesy Nancy Ogden
- *Teach a Class* courtesy of Sensing Nature
- *Petitions, Letters, Phone Calls* courtesy Audubon Florida
- *Participate in Conservation Actions* courtesy League of Conservation Voters
- *Learn About Conservation and Ecosystems* courtesy of Florida Master Naturalist Program (IFAS)

## Annual Membership

Student.....	\$10
Individual.....	\$20
Family.....	\$25
Patron.....	\$75



# Contents

Fall 2018



<b>We're Migrating.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Power in Our Mission.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Photo-essay, Birds Being Birds.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Take Action – Make a Difference in Pinellas.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Road Trip! A Birdy Twist to an American Classic.....</b>	<b>14</b>

# From the Editor



Like the birds we adore, it's time to migrate. Away from our long-time 'traditional' newsletter format into a new direction you'll see throughout this inaugural issue. **Welcome to the new format and new journey!**

Before we get into what you can look forward to in this and coming issues, allow me a moment to...

- Give you a few reasons behind our migration
- Say 'Thank You' to my predecessors

## Why Migrate?

Newsletters have become nearly the worst way to convey news and events. Today, we have an active website where we can get news and information to you faster than any letter. We have blogs to report initiatives and activities, Social Media for event news and pictures, downloads for meeting, trip and other schedules. In every case, newsletters for 'news' have become like buggy whips and black and white TV's.

We're  
Migrating!



Picture provided by the Macaulay Library

Not to say print media is dead – go to any newsstand or book store, you'll see it alive with new names and new formats. This next generation is focused on features, stories and you – the reader. Time to join the migration.

## A Big Thanks to Those Who Came Before Us

Everything you'll see is new. New doesn't mean disrespect or derision towards the past or those who worked hard creating what we hope to work equally hard to take forward. We stand on the shoulders of those who came before us and look to them with nothing but gratitude.

**Thank You!**

## What's in Store?

Hopefully, you 'got' the breaking the mold thing about traditional newsletters. (Though if you're skeptical, it's okay by me.) We're an Audubon Society, our message will match Audubon's mission – love birds, love where they live. (A paraphrase I'll admit, but still fits.) Birding is fun – birds add joy to your life; I want to be all over that one. Taking action – follows the Audubon mission, follows being a responsible citizen of our planet. There are lots of ways to contribute; we'll showcase as many as possible. The publication should be as friendly to non-members and non-birders as SPAS members. Last but not least – **it should be something you look forward to read.**

Taking on the above is a big enough undertaking...we'll see where it goes.

Enjoy our migration!



# OUR MISSION

## DEFINING WHAT WE DO

THE MISSION OF ST. PETERSBURG AUDUBON SOCIETY IS TO ADVOCATE FOR ECOSYSTEMS IMPORTANT TO BIRDS AND OTHER WILDLIFE THROUGH EDUCATION AND CONSERVATION.



Wetlands are the 'cradle of life' for so much of Florida Wildlife – air, land and water

Our mission defines us – the core of what we are. Missions shape strategies, actions and provide a yardstick for how well we are doing.

If you're in the 'over 40' set, you probably remember 'Mission Statements' littering walls from corporations to doctor's offices; even movie theaters had them. Long-winded, too general, lacking urgency. Go back further, a 'Man on a Mission', had purpose, focus and you'd best help or get outta the way.

Serious as the Black Crowned Night Heron above. No question he's on a mission.

We're people on a mission, and it's not passive.

Missions are essential, especially to groups. They are also conceptual, and need a bit more explaining than our typical 'See bird, smile; see bird with binoculars, smile more.' This article relates the concepts of the mission to strategies, programs and activities you read about at St. Pete Audubon. (Details on specific programs are on our website.) It's an explanation and a fair one, not self-congratulatory, nor is it an appeal.

We'll touch on habitats (or ecosystems in the mission statement) – they're critical to wildlife and human life. **Habitats need people on a mission.**

# HABITATS AND MISSION



Florida has four habitats

- Coastal Shoreline
- Wetlands
- Scrub
- ~~Uplands~~ *Developed in Pinellas*

*our mission calls for us to protect and restore these habitats*

Coastal shoreline is vital to nesting shorebirds like these Skimmers

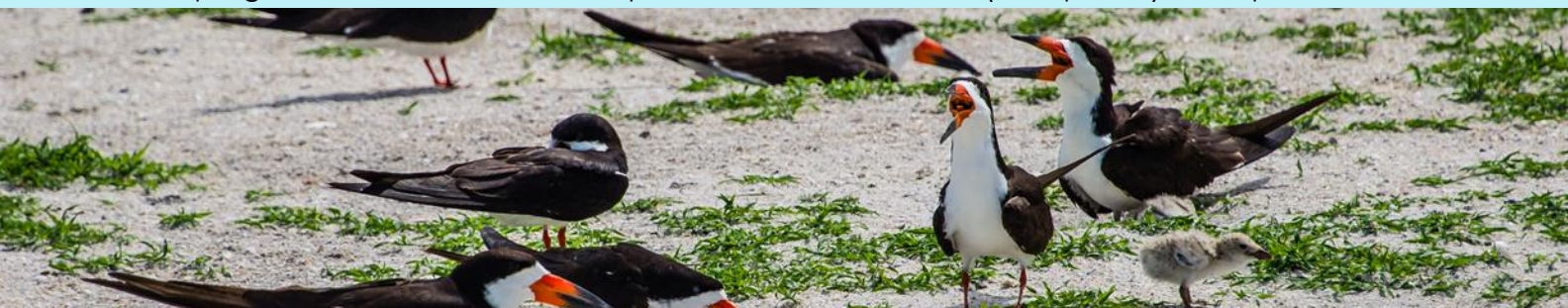
A good visualization for the mission, strategies, programs relationship is a tree...the mission being the leaves and branches, strategies being the trunk and programs being the roots.

*The mission of St. Petersburg Audubon Society is to advocate for ecosystems important to birds and other wildlife through education and conservation*



## QUICK OBSERVATIONS

1. Strategies and programs align with the mission.
2. We have programs targeted toward new birders – children, college-age and 'newbies'.
3. Programs are diverse and flexible giving participants lots of ways to make a difference.
4. The programs are efficient, and require little or no overhead (or expense) to be productive.



Healthy Skimmer colonies are a joyous cacophony – parents coming and going, hatchlings squawking, life everywhere



## MISSIONS ARE YARDSTICKS

If you read the Quick Observations on the last page, you may think we crossed over into 'self-congratulatory'. The mission pulls us back. Advocating for ecosystems – we have work to do here, and we can do more around conservation. We have education well covered. To be fair, if every single member worked 120+ hours a week, 52-weeks a year, more would need to be done. The task is monumental. We are moving in the right direction.

With a task so monumental, is this a 'fool's errand'?

NO – we've had a lot of success and we're committed to do more. We won't win every battle, but we won't lose every battle either.

Where we have the resources to do more – we will. The mission gives us a framework for reaching farther.

## 'FUN' IS ALLOWED

Reading about missions, it's easy to conjure up images of grim-faced people trudging along 'doing their mission' looking like fleeing refugees in a war movie. Nothing could be farther from the truth – bird and wildlife watching is growing! The US Department of the Interior reports 86-million 'wildlife watchers' in 2016, up 20% from 2011. 86-million people aren't committed to being grim.

Being one of them and making sure there's enough wildlife worth watching, and there's a 'nature' to be out in, is rewarding. Watching is delightful.

## MISSIONS ARE MAGNETS

Done well, missions are truly amazing in their power to define and structure a group. There's one last aspect to cover...their power to attract.

When you read a mission statement, it resonates deep in your gut. Or it doesn't. Better than average chance you already know if our mission resonates. If it does, come closer. If you're already one of the 86-million and growing wildlife watchers – come see ours. If you're not, see why we've grown over 20%. If you want to help out – the Take Action article will get you started.

If nothing else, you've hung in to the end of the most 'word heavy' article on a serious topic.

**Thank you for that!**

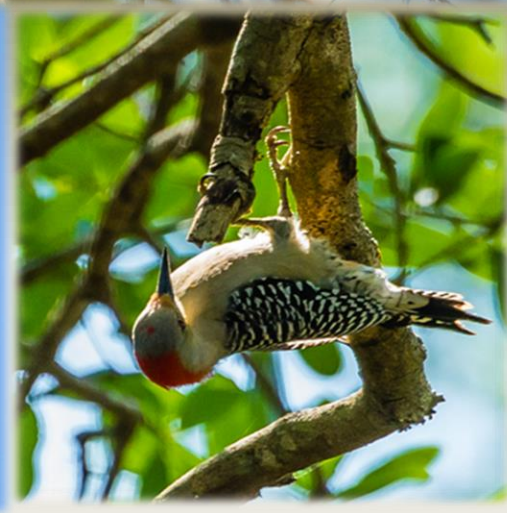
*"A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of human history."*

*Mahatma Gandhi*



Remaining scrub in Pinellas is precious

# A JOY ALL YEAR LONG



## Seeing Birds Be Birds...

Is the purest of joys. No matter if it's purposeful – binoculars around neck or a glimpse when you're out and about. Hearing Red Bellies calling from close-by oaks transports you to a happier world.

Birds being birds is the biggest 'why' behind missions, action and so much of what we're about.

If you see one, stop a second, if you can and let the joy soak through you.





**ENJOYING BIRDS BE  
BIRDS IS WHAT  
WE'RE ABOUT**



***I wondered why Maureen took  
a million pictures of birds we  
'already had'.***

***Not so much now.***



# TAKE ACTION



There's no escaping – though many times we'd like to. We're all 'citizens of the planet' and as citizens, we should have a *give and take* relationship with Earth, our home. Even more so if we care about birds and all things wild.

This won't be a sermon or a soapbox, if the above doesn't resonate, chances are an article won't motivate you. *If it resonates even a little, and you'd like to know more about why, what or how to give back – read on.*

## ***WHY***

Let's start with why. Taking action and participating in 'pro bird' and 'pro habitat' issues are part of the Audubon mission. If it's part of our mission, we should clearly communicate how you can help and how the actions you take help. In short, we speak on behalf of birds. We're certainly not their only voice, but we are an important one.

**Without doubt – the birds and other wildlife need our help. Right here in Pinellas County...Right Now.** Habitat destruction and climate change are the biggest issues.

The last 'reason why' is personal satisfaction and joy. Taking action and giving back feel good. Though it's not always easy, always satisfying.

## ***WILL IT REALLY MATTER?***

**YES** – your actions count in a big way! We are very aware the two big issues mentioned are serious and consequences seem grim. This is not an attempt to 'sugar coat' or gloss over their seriousness. Consider this – while it's difficult to put a percentage on how much your action (and the collective action of everyone) helps. **Doing nothing has a 100% guarantee nothing changes.**

On the bright side, there are success stories too. Ospreys and Eagles are easy to find in Pinellas County because people like you and me acted. They once were rarities. Parks, wetlands and lighthouses have been saved by 'regular people' at every age and all walks of life. Often times spearheaded by a single person, who grew to two, to a movement to a triumph.

## ***MANY WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE***

**Don't believe for a second there's nothing you can do. No matter who you are, no matter how much time, skill or money you do or don't have – you can contribute.**

The next 2-pages are 'idea pages' where we showcase easy-to-get-started ways you can contribute. Some big, some small. THEY ALL MATTER. In coming issues we'll look deeper at what you can do, how it helps and hopefully give you insight and maybe inspiration.

**THANK YOU!**

# TAKE ACTION

## WITH YOUR TIME

## WITH YOUR BIRDING

Current Courses

eBird

Participate in Citizen Science



Learn About Conservation and Ecosystems



Respect the Birds (not like this)

Respect Where You Bird

LEAVE NOTHING BUT FOOTPRINTS.  
TAKE NOTHING BUT PICTURES.  
KILL NOTHING BUT TIME.



Beach Cleanup



Plant Seagrasses

## WITH YOUR FRIENDS

## WITH YOUR MONEY



Let the World Know Your 'Birdiness'



Adopt a Bird



Forward Action Alerts to friends



Become the 'Recycler' of the Group



Be the 'Bird Advocate' with Your Friends



Donate

# TAKE ACTION

## WITH YOUR TALENT

## WITH YOUR VOICE

Audubon FLORIDA

ACTION CENTER

Sign Petition to  
Restoration P

Let People Know Where You Stand

2018  
YEAR OF THE BIRD  
birdyourworld.org

Write a Book

Petitions, Letters,  
Phone Calls

Manage a Website

THE BIRDS of PINELLAS COUNTY  
An extensive update to  
A Birder's Guide to  
Pinellas County (Florida)

RON SMITH



Teach a Class



Participate in Conservation Actions



Spreading Wings  
St. Petersburg Audubon Society

Create a Magazine

## WITH YOUR CONSUMPTION

## WITH YOUR VOTE



Recycle All You Can

Use NO Styrofoam

Use LESS Plastic

Skip the Straw - Save a Sea Turtle

Support Pro-Environment Candidates

VOTE THIS ELECTION!

I Voted

Know Your Candidate's Stance on Conservation and Environmental Issues



# GET INTO THE GAME

## SUGGESTED RESOURCE LIST

The list below is a 'starting place' and is nowhere near complete. Where it makes sense, we provided local, followed by state, followed by national organizations. Get into the game. You don't have to do everything... **but do something!** Start big, start small, your choice.

### IDEA PAGE 1

Organization	Website	Supports
<b>WITH YOUR TIME</b>		
Boyd Hill	<a href="http://www.stpeteparksrec.org/boyd-hill-nature-preserve.html">http://www.stpeteparksrec.org/boyd-hill-nature-preserve.html</a>	Volunteer and Citizen Science opportunities
Fl Master Naturalist Program	<a href="http://www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu/">http://www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu/</a>	Education
<b>WITH YOUR BIRDING</b>		
St. Pete Audubon	<a href="http://www.stpeteaudubon.org/">http://www.stpeteaudubon.org/</a>	Christmas Bird Count
American Birding Association	<a href="http://listing.aba.org/ethics/">http://listing.aba.org/ethics/</a>	Ethical birding guidelines
Audubon Society	<a href="https://www.audubon.org/get-outside/audubons-guide-ethical-bird-photography">https://www.audubon.org/get-outside/audubons-guide-ethical-bird-photography</a>	Ethical photography guidelines
Cornell Lab of Ornithology	<a href="http://www.birds.cornell.edu">http://www.birds.cornell.edu</a>	e-Bird, Merlin and other Citizen Science tools
<b>WITH YOUR FRIENDS</b>		
	<a href="https://greenamerica.org/sharing-building-community">https://greenamerica.org/sharing-building-community</a>	Has a 'Sharing & Building Community' section
<b>WITH YOUR MONEY</b>		
St. Pete Audubon	<a href="http://www.stpeteaudubon.org/">http://www.stpeteaudubon.org/</a>	Give where you live
Boyd Hill	<a href="http://www.stpeteparksrec.org/boyd-hill-nature-preserve.html">http://www.stpeteparksrec.org/boyd-hill-nature-preserve.html</a>	Has a great 'Adopt a Raptor' program
Other Organizations	All of the resources mentioned are wholly or partially funded through donations	

### IDEA PAGE 2

Organization	Website	Supports
<b>WITH YOUR TALENT</b>		
St. Pete Audubon	Contact Andrea directly at <a href="mailto:andrea.anderson@stpete.org">andrea.anderson@stpete.org</a>	Potential St. Pete Audubon opportunities
Audubon Florida	<a href="http://fl.audubon.org/">http://fl.audubon.org/</a>	Has a 'Get Involved' menu on their website
<b>WITH YOUR VOICE</b>		
Audubon Florida	<a href="http://fl.audubon.org/">http://fl.audubon.org/</a>	Multiple ways to be heard on Florida issues
League of Conservation Voters	<a href="http://origin.lcv.org/">http://origin.lcv.org/</a>	Has a 'Take Action' menu on their website
<b>WITH YOUR CONSUMPTION</b>		
	<a href="http://www.globalstewards.org/">http://www.globalstewards.org/</a>	Sustainable living
<b>WITH YOUR VOTE</b>		
League of Conservation Voters	<a href="http://origin.lcv.org/">http://origin.lcv.org/</a>	Voting records for national candidates and governors
Sierra Club	<a href="https://www.sierraclub.org/">https://www.sierraclub.org/</a>	

Welcome to a Better Planet

# ROAD TRIP!

## A Birdy Twist on an American Classic

The phrase 'Road Trip' ignites excitement in the American psyche like few other. Road Trips captivate us, erasing day-to-day divides like age and economic status, spinning their webs of anticipation. **Road Trips** demands capitalization, bolding or exclamation marks.

Combine Road Trip excitement with a 'Nat Geo' cover story destination and the Road Trip skyrocketed to Bucket List Trip.

And there's more! Timed correctly, you'll see Prothonotary Warblers court, hatch and fledge their next generation – many times less than 20' away!

### Where and When to Go

The destination is Francis Beidler Forest operated by South Carolina Audubon close to I-95 and I-26 near Charleston, South Carolina. The trip is an easy 7-hour drive from most of Pinellas County.

The 'Warbler Window' is late April to Mid to Late May, depending on the weather. Prothonotaries must find mates, build nests, incubate, hatch and fledge young in about a month. Think early May for parents to be tending hatchlings (the busiest period and great for viewing).



### Where to Stay

Recommended hotels close to Beidler Forest are in St. George, SC, Exit 77 off I-95. (Harleyville hotels are closer but locals told us to avoid them. We did.) Our favorite is the Quality Inn with a Days Inn at the same exit as a second choice. Both are 'I-95 hotels' – clean, safe have in-room fridges, breakfast along with decent TV and Internet. Both of our trips prices ran below \$100/night. Birding all day means dinner out and falling asleep to the TV – an 'I-95 hotel' and price point works.

If you're looking for something different than an 'Interstate Hotel, Charleston is about an hour from Beidler and one of the greatest 'food cities' in the US. You can find accommodations from frugal to historic to lavish.

### Where to Eat

We avoid chains, except small ones like Sticky Fingers. The list below are all long-time favorites and cover multiple destinations and price ranges.

Road Stops	Sticky Fingers BBQ	Jacksonville and Charleston	\$-\$\$
	Mudcat Charlie's	Exit 42 in South Georgia	\$-\$\$
	Pie Society	Exit 104 in North Georgia	\$-\$\$
Near Beidler	Just Desserts	Harleyville	\$
	Shugs	St. George	\$
Charleston	Martha Lou's	Fried Chicken	\$
	Hayman's Seafood	Long lines	\$-\$\$
	Cypress	Upscale Low Country	\$\$\$
	Fulton Five	World Class Italian	\$\$\$
	Planter's Inn	World Class Coconut Cake	\$\$\$
	Fish	Seafood	\$\$-\$\$\$





Here, you figure out why an old growth forest is so special in about 30 seconds

### Beidler is More Than Prothonotaries

Enough cannot be said about the forest itself. You're enveloped the minute you step off the Visitors' Center back deck. EXPERIENCE IT! It's far more than 'the place to see the birds'.

Boardwalks and trails are well-maintained and easy to walk. The Visitors' Center 'loaner' map is excellent.

Birds beyond Prothonotaries include flycatchers, warblers, tanagers, cuckoos, owls, and woodpeckers. With a mix of wading birds – especially night herons.

Beyond birds, there's no shortage of snakes and turtles. You are comfortably safe above our reptile friends on the boardwalk. If you like snakes – look down; if you don't, look up.



"Have a good winter Howie?"  
"Yeah Fred, you?"

### Great Birding Beyond Beidler

Beidler and the Prothonotaries make an ideal centerpiece for your trip. Bird-wise, there's plenty more to see. Here's three more favorites...

**Caw-Caw** – Charleston County Park off US 17 in Ravenel. Great Visitors' Center, diverse habitats, well-marked trails. Warblers, raptors, woodpeckers, marsh birds. 4-hours.

**Savannah Nat'l Wildlife Refuge** – off US 17 at the Ga – SC border. Primarily a wildlife drive. Mississippi Kites in early May. 4-hours for the drive.

**Santee Nat'l Wildlife Refuge** – off Exit 102 of I-95 (30-min. north of St. George). The most 'rustic' – good birds, needs thorough preparation to fully enjoy.

### Additional Notes – Final Thoughts

Give yourself time enjoy Beidler, plan a full day or more if it's your first visit.

For beginning birders – Beidler and Caw-Caw are the best choices. Savannah NWR has an easy drive. Santee is spread out, has the least signage information on e-Bird or access to rangers etc.

Charleston has multiple graduations in early May that may affect area hotels. I-95 hotels have been okay.

Both Charleston and Savannah are great destinations by themselves. They easily combine with birding on multi-day trips.

ENJOY A CLASSIC TRIP



# DISCOVER MORE AT OUR <sup>NEW</sup> WEBSITE!



SHOW YOUR BIRDINESS WITH SPAS WEAR

EXPERIENCE BIRDS – LATEST UPDATES ON FIELD TRIPS AND MONTHLY PROGRAMS

RAPTORS ON THE MOVE – WHAT HAVE SAWGRASS AND DARK ARROW BEEN UP TO?

GO BIRDING – BIRD PINELLAS TELLS YOU WHERE

BIRD-VANGELIST BLOG FOR THE LIGHTER SIDE OF BIRDING

[WWW.STPETEAUDUBON.ORG](http://WWW.STPETEAUDUBON.ORG)

