



THE BROWN PELICAN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SARASOTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

December 2024



GIVING TUESDAY

Begin the Giving Season ❤️

Above: Giving Tuesday is this Tuesday, Dec. 3

Dear Members,

I hope you are having a wonderful holiday season and enjoying the beautiful weather this time of year.

First, we would like to thank everyone who wrote letters, showed up, or spoke and shared their stories at the Planning Commission meeting in regards to the rezone of the Smith Farm on Raymond Rd. The testimony was powerful, and our voices were heard. The fight is not over, but we are feeling more

confident that the board of county commissioners will take our objections seriously and see the true value of the special place that is Celery Fields. Look out for future calls to action after the New Year and be ready with your honed presentations for the county commissioners.

This Tuesday, Dec. 3rd, is "Giving Tuesday." More information will follow below, but please consider donating to the Sarasota Audubon Society this holiday season. We have many objectives we are trying to reach, from breaking ground on the re-wilding of the Quad parcels to education outreach, and none of it is possible without you!

Thank you and Happy Holidays!

Sara Reisinger
Sarasota Audubon President
On Behalf of the Board of Directors

**Donate on Giving
Tuesday**

**Thank you to all who turned out for
Smith Farms Rezone hearing in Venice!**



Above: Overflow crowd in the Planning Commission chambers on Nov. 21

Smith Properties Hearing (RZ 23-30) PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

Denied 4-3

About 125 people were present in an overflow crowd at the Sarasota Planning Commission meeting on Nov. 21 in Venice. More than 40 spoke out to save the land from development.

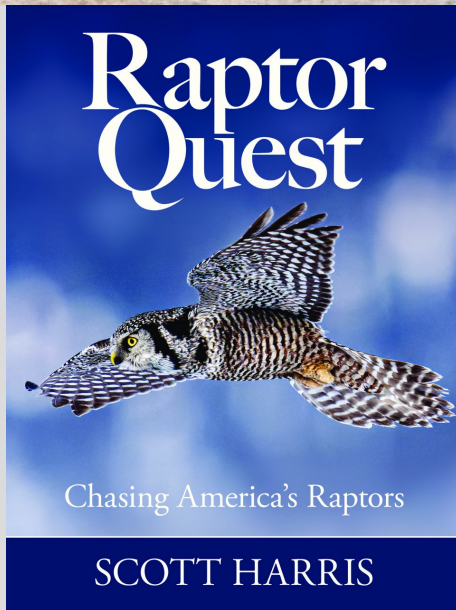
The vote against the rezone by the Planning Commission is only a recommendation and is not binding. The Sarasota Board of County Commissioners will have final say, sometime in early

2025. Stay tuned to Sarasota Audubon for updates and information. Keep those speakers' notes!

Thank you to all of you who came out in support and especially those who chose to speak: your presence made a difference!

[Read Herald-Tribune Article](#)

MONTHLY MEETING INFORMATION
Monday, Dec. 9 7:00 p.m. Zoom



Raptor Quest with Scott Harris

Scott Harris spent 17 months chasing 53 Raptors across 34 states—his version of a Raptor Big Year.

RaptorQuest is about his adventures, mis-adventures, successes and failures. From -36 degree days, to ones over 100 degrees, from getting to the bird just in time, to the frustrations of missing one by minutes. It's about the birds—of course—but it's also about the people he met, the things he learned and why he's already working on his next adventure.



Last Day to Buy Tickets Dec. 5



Special Guest Speaker Dr. Raymond Young, Professor Emeritus University of Wisconsin, will discuss his much anticipated book about the history of the Sarasota Audubon Society.

Luncheon Tickets

KIDS ART DAY! DEC. 14 9:00 a.m.



HELP BIRDS BUILD SAFE NESTS

A FREE EVENT FOR CHILDREN

WHO: KIDS AGES 3-12

WHEN: DECEMBER 14, 9:00AM-10:30AM

WHAT: TO BUILD MOBILES TO HANG OUTSIDE THAT PROVIDE PROPER NESTING MATERIAL FOR BIRDS

WHERE: SARASOTA AUDUBON NATURE CENTER - 999 CENTER RD.



Notes from the Nature Center



Above: Reenie Ram teaches young visitors at the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center

Guests at the Nature Center are finally getting to enjoy cooler temperatures and a wide variety of returning bird species. Like our migratory birds, many of our human visitors return

here year after year, and it's always a pleasure to see them. If you haven't had a chance to come to the Celery Fields yet this season, we hope you'll come see us soon. The Nature Center is open every day from Oct.1 through May 31 from 9 a.m. to noon -- including Sundays and holidays. From mid-January to mid-April, we extend our weekend hours to 3 p.m. to take advantage of our busiest birding season.

If you're a new birder or just trying to brush up on your birding skills, the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center is the perfect place to start. We have naturalists stationed on the Raymond and Palmer boardwalks most mornings from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Members Meet & Greet: We were concerned that rain might negatively impact the turnout for our first Members Meet & Greet of this season on Nov. 20. But to our relief, the skies cleared shortly before our event was to begin, and we had a solid turnout. Our guest speaker Jason Robertshaw, Program Manager at Mote Marine, told us what was new in aquarium research. With the new Mote facility being built just down the street from Celery Fields and the impacts from three hurricanes this summer, there was plenty for Jason to tell us.

Gift Shop Goodies: Have you finished your holiday shopping yet? Have you even started? No matter where you are in your gift-giving journey, the Nature Center's Gift Shop has you covered! Among many other items, we just received a big new shipment of the popular and colorful Jabebo bird-themed earrings. The birds everyone loves, like painted buntings and roseate spoonbills, are represented, of course, but we've also got others that you don't always think of when you think about the Celery Fields.

Children Visit: We recently had visits from children taking part in the Curious and Kind Education Program over two days. They spent time outside exploring the gardens and were treated to a visit on one of our boardwalks. They also had lunch on the picnic table patio and made mini-kites out of various types of paper and wooden (popsicle) sticks. They came into the Nature Center to view some of our bird photo prints and learn what birds they were seeing outdoors.

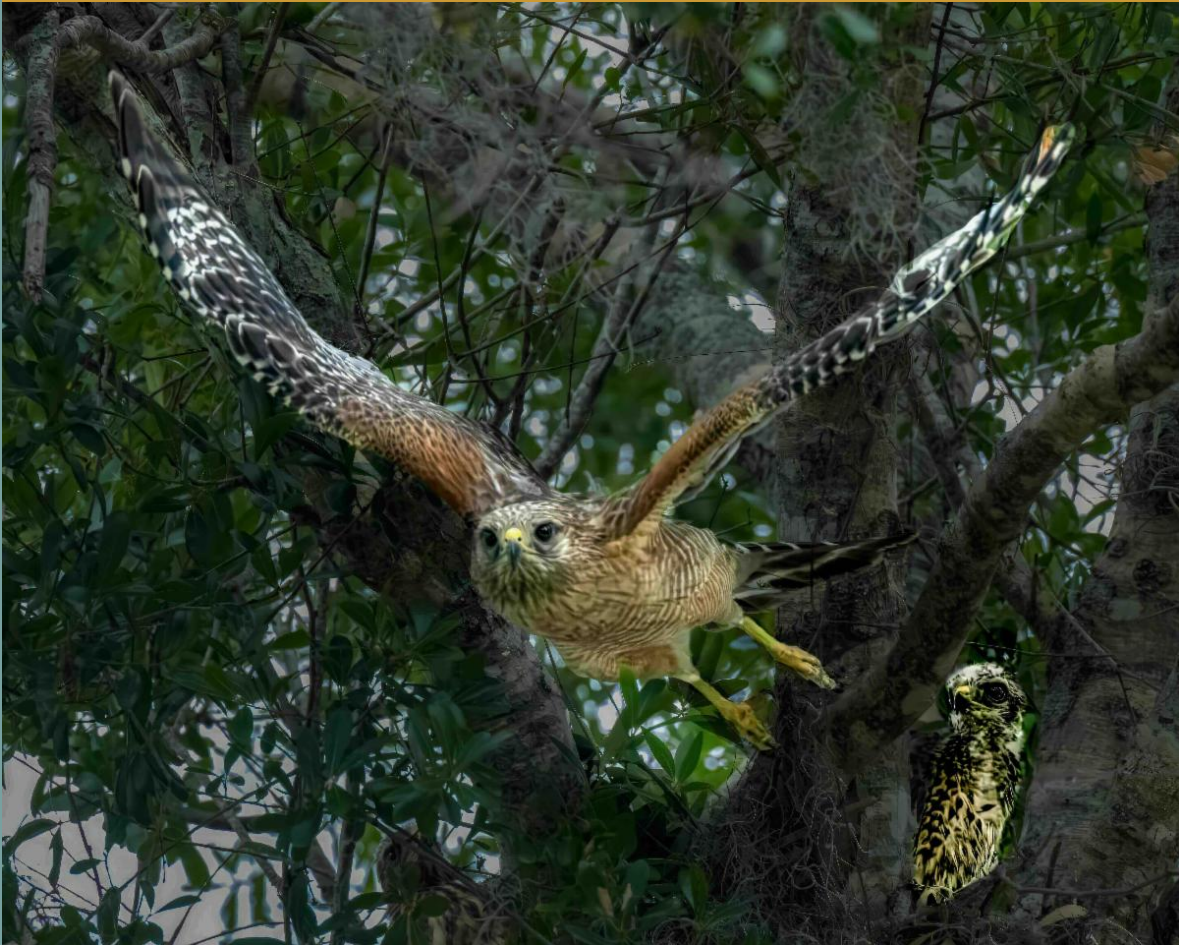
Gift a Membership to Sarasota Audubon: If you'd like to give a gift to a friend or family member but don't know the right size or color, how about giving a gift membership to Sarasota Audubon? For only \$35, you're giving your loved one access to an entire year's worth of speakers at our online member meetings, in-person Meet & Greet events (with snacks), Wingspan games, and important email updates about the Celery Fields. It's the best deal in town! [Purchase online here](#) or stop in the Nature Center from 9 a.m. to noon any day from now until the end of May.

See you outdoors!

Kim Sullivan, Building Manager

There's more: [Read Full Text of Kim's NOTES](#)

Art Update: New Photo Exhibit and Local Calendar Available



Above: Red-shouldered Hawk, on exhibit at Nature Center (*Allan Woolway*)

We are pleased to announce that Allan Woolway is exhibiting his photographs at the Nature Center during the month of December.

Allan is originally from the New Jersey/Pennsylvania area and became a snowbird four years ago. His background was in technology, and now that he's retired, he is enjoying spending time in the Florida outdoors. His focus has been Bird and Wildlife photography. Allan looks forward to meeting and learning new techniques from other photographers.



Above: Anhinga, cover of the 2025 calendar (*Reenie Ram*)

2025 PHOTO CALENDARS FOR SALE

We have the beautiful 2025 Photo Calendars made by photographer Reenie Ram available for sale at the Nature Center. The price is \$35 and each page features a wonderful photo above the month's calendar dates. SAS earns a commission on the sale of each calendar and they are selling quickly.

[See the calendar here.](#)



Blue Jay Flying, Open Wing (*Allan Woolway*)



The Garden Gate: Help Us Recover



Above: Volunteers prepare the new bird feeder area.

Many thanks to everyone who turned out for our November garden cleanup days. It's a big job, and we plan one more in December, on Saturday the 14th. Now we have feeders set up by the nature center, and we are working to get them set up in the old location at the Gazebo where the last hurricane wreaked havoc.

Upcoming Garden Cleanup Dates - 8:00 - 11:00 a.m.

- Saturday, Dec. 14th

No need to sign up for Garden Cleanup Days -- we hope to see you there!



Volunteer Spotlight: All Call!



Volunteers Needed!

As always, we're looking for volunteers to help us in our important work on behalf of the birds. We have opportunities for:

- Garden Cleanup Dec. 14 -- Tidy Gardens & Feeders 8-11 a.m.
- Eagle Tour Leader (see info below)
- Docents in the Nature Center
- Gardeners in our Native Plant Gardens
- Naturalists on our Boardwalks and in the Gardens
- Feeder Team for the Gardens Gazebo Feeders

Volunteers receive a volunteer t-shirt along with the satisfaction of being an integral part of our Celery Fields team.

Shifts are already online for current volunteers to sign up. All shifts for docents, naturalists, gardeners and bird

feeder fillers are available

No need to sign up in advance for Garden Cleanups

--> If you're a brand new volunteer, please start by filling out the application on the **Volunteer Portal** page of our website. If you have questions, email our Volunteer Coordinator at the button below.

**Volunteer
Portal**

**Contact the Volunteer
Coordinator**

VOLUNTEER NEEDED!

LOOKING FOR AN EAGLE NEST TOUR COORDINATOR

Responsibilities include

- Reserving (2) buses per season
- Tracking reservations
- Scouting nest sites with our Eagle Experts
- Fielding logistics questions
- Riding along on both tours in February

Opportunity to train this season

Contact:

EagleTours@SarasotaAudubon.org



Volunteer for Eagle Tours

Registration Open for Eagle Tours! Coming up in February

Join a Bald Eagle specialist for a bus tour to see eagles and eaglets at different nesting stages.

Tour Dates:

- Saturday, Feb. 8

- Saturday, Feb. 15

Meet at the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center at 7:45 a.m.
Tours begin promptly at 8:00 a.m.
and finish at 11:30 a.m.



Limited scopes and binoculars available.
Please bring your own if you have them.

**Register for Eagle
Tour**

Calling All Potential Wingspan Players!



Come join us for the popular board game that has everyone rolling dice and hoping for a rat. Or grain. Or maybe fruit. If you've never played, you might not understand what that means, but show up for one game and we'll teach you the ropes.

Wingspan is free to play, and we have plenty of copies of the game for everyone to participate. All Sarasota Audubon members age 18+ are welcome. If you're not a member yet, you can join at the Nature Center when we're open, or [join online at this link](#).

If you'd like to participate, please [email Lynn](#) before the next game to let us know you're going to be there. This month's play dates are Dec. 4 and 18 at 12:30 p.m. at the Nature Center.

Current Schedule for November:

- Wednesday, Dec. 4
- Wednesday, Dec. 18

All games start at 12:30 in the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center at the Celery Fields: 999 Center Road, Sarasota

If you'd like to join the fun, please [email Lynn](#) with the date you will attend so we know how many tables to set up!

Conservation: Climate Change and the Florida Scrub Jay, from Cornell and Archbold



Florida Scrub-jay in Manatee County (*Karen Willey*)

Long-term study reveals warming climates threaten Florida scrub-jay

By [Kathi Borgmann](#) [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#)

A new analysis of data from a long-term study, **published last month in Ornithology**, finds that warmer winters driven by climate change reduced the number of offspring

raised annually by the federally threatened Florida scrub-jay by 25% since 1981.

Warmer temperatures, the scientists hypothesize, make jay nests susceptible to predation by snakes for a longer period of the Florida spring than in the past.

Researchers from Archbold Biological Station and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology examined 37 years of data to assess the impacts of warming on reproductive effort. From 1981 to 2018, the average winter temperature at Archbold Biological Station increased by 2.5 degrees Fahrenheit.

“There is significantly more snake activity in warmer weather,” said Sahas Barve, lead author and director of avian ecology at Archbold, “and snakes are the primary nest predator.”

These losses are compounded by additional stresses. “We’ve spent decades managing habitat for the Florida scrub-jay, but there is one thing we can’t control and that is climate. What might be a healthy and stable population of jays now might not be in the next 10 to 20 years despite nothing changing on the ground.”

[Read Entire Article Here](#)

Donate for Ongoing Restoration Giving Tuesday Is Dec. 3rd



Sarasota Audubon is a nonprofit dedicated to protecting nature and connecting with others using the combination of science, education, and the restoration of our local wildlife habitats.

We have many priorities

including:

- **Beach Nesting Bird Program**
- **Environmental Education**
- **Re-Wilding the Quad Parcels at the Celery**

Fields

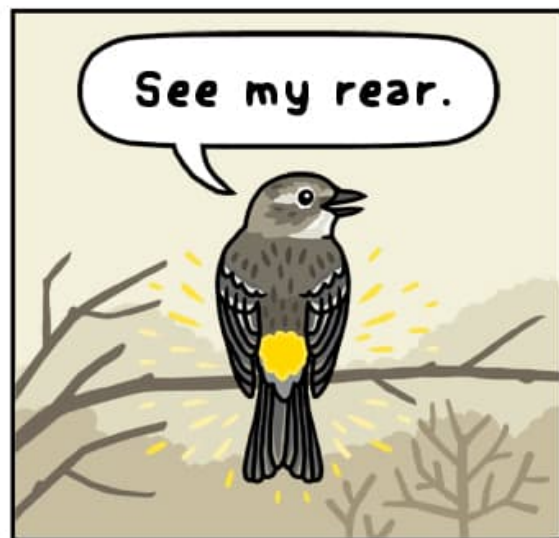
- Stopping Development next to the Celery Fields Habitat

And many more. Click below to donate to any of these programs.

[Donate to Sarasota Audubon](#)

The Last Word Is Graphic: by Rosemary Mosco

yellow-rumped warbler poem



birdandmoon.com



SARASOTA
AUDUBON SOCIETY

[Contact the Editor](#)

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Activity Schedule



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