



# THE BROWN PELICAN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SARASOTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

## January 2025



Above: A group of Sarasota Auduboners birding last May in Myakka River State Park

Dear Members,

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season. We have been busy, busy, busy at Sarasota Audubon! We have a few exciting announcements.

First, we are launching a new membership platform. All existing members will be sent an invitation from Memberplanet to register and renew their membership if it is due. Your memberships will now run a full calendar year from your signup

date.

With this new system, we can offer some really amazing new benefits including: 10% discount in the gift shop (exclusions may apply), opportunities for early signup for events, and members-only events. These will be added to all of the existing benefits you have always enjoyed!

Second, we completed our annual Christmas Bird Count on Dec. 28th. We documented 168 species in all of Sarasota, with 116 species at the Celery Fields (same as 2023 for CF).

Scroll to bottom of this newsletter for the full report!

It was an amazing day birding with lovely weather. Some exciting rare birds were spotted at Celery Fields -- a White Crowned Sparrow, Baltimore Oriole, Ash-Throated Flycatcher, Ruby-Crowned Kinglet, and the Tropical Kingbird. Come and see if you can spot them too!

Last of all, we anticipate that the Smith Farm development on Raymond Road will go before the Board of County Commissioners this month. No date has been set. Please look out for future communications. We will need everyone to send emails, just like we did with the Planning Commission. More importantly, we will need people to show up at the public hearing and tell the Commissioners why this place is so important and why it concerns you that it might be developed.

Thank you all so much for your continued support in all of our activities. You all are responsible for the vibrant place the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center at Celery Fields is!

**Sara Reisinger**

Sarasota Audubon President

On Behalf of the Board of Directors

## Working Toward a New Membership Platform



— S A R A S O T A —  
A U D U B O N S O C I E T Y

Membership

## Please Wait to Renew for 2025

The Sarasota Audubon Society Board has been diligently working behind the scenes to upload and update our membership lists. We are almost online with a new membership platform.

When the system is fully uploaded we will send an email for you to renew and update the information you would like us to have in order to serve you better. This is just the first step in helping us to provide our members with enhanced benefits, more members-only events and opportunities.

Thank you for your patience, and look out for an email to join our member platform soon!

### MONTHLY MEETING INFORMATION

Monday, Jan. 13, 7 p.m. on Zoom



Sophie Osborn, Wildlife  
Biologist, Author

### Feather Trails with Sophie Osborn Monday, Jan. 13

Birds are visible, vocal sentinels that alert us to environmental harms through their declining numbers or their failure to thrive.

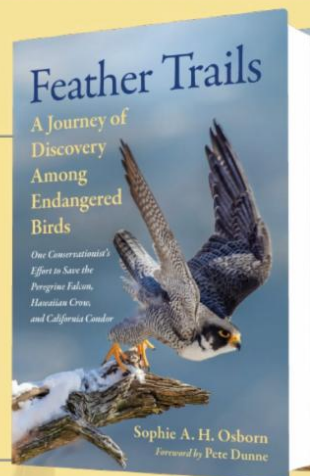
In her new book *Feather Trails —A Journey of Discovery Among Endangered Birds*, Sophie Osborn shares her personal experiences reintroducing endangered Peregrine Falcons, Hawaiian Crows and California Condors to the wild.

On Monday, Jan. 13, Sophie will discuss what led to the endangerment of these three captivating species, recount the efforts of biologists to recover their populations and read a few excerpts from her book that describe what it was like to work with these magnificent birds.



# Feather Trails

**With humor and suspense, wildlife biologist and award-winning writer Sophie A. H. Osborn shows us what it takes to save endangered Peregrine Falcons, Hawaiian Crows, and California Condors—and reveals how our harmful environmental choices decimated these birds' populations.**



## Notes from the Nature Center



Above: Wildlife Center of SW Florida presentation at the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center on Dec. 7

Happy New Year from your friends at the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center! The weather has been beautiful so far this winter, which almost makes up for the Season of Eternal Hurricanes that we endured last year. Our favorite bird species have been returning to Celery Fields, much to the delight of our visitors and volunteers. So far, 2025 is shaping up to be a terrific year!

Patio Sale: Who doesn't love a bargain? Mark your calendars for Jan. 18 & 19 for our Patio Sale at the Celery Fields Nature Center. Comb through tables of bird-related items. Don't be late, the early bird gets the bargain!

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:** Presentation from wildlife photographer Shawn Carey of Migration Productions, winter resident from Mass Audubon. Come meet fellow Sarasota Audubon members on Wednesday, Jan. 15, at the Nature Center. Doors open at 2 o'clock for snacks; Sarasota Audubon Society membership required.

**Gift Shop Update:** Back in stock! If you want one, come in soon before we sell out again. We are not holding shirts, so even if we called you to get one, they could sell out again! The most popular gift shop item this holiday season turned out to be our new "I Climbed Mt. Celery" t-shirts. After a picture was posted on Facebook in December, they practically flew off the shelves, and a new order had to be rushed to our printer. Now we're developing a bumper sticker using the same image

Great place for a picnic! When you visit, maybe bring a bagel and coffee to take advantage of this beautiful weather and enjoy breakfast on our patio, or pack a sandwich for a relaxing lunch surrounded by nature.

See you outdoors!

**Kim Sullivan, Building Manager**

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

[Art Update: Woolway Photo Exhibit Extended](#)



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

We are pleased to announce that the Allan Woolway photography exhibit at the Nature Center continues during the month of January.

One of Allan's passions is bird photography, a pursuit that allows him to explore the beauty of nature while capturing the intricate details and vibrant colors of various bird species. Through this hobby, he not only develops his skills in photography but also gains a deeper appreciation for wildlife and the environment.



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



## The Garden Gate: Native Landscape Talks Patio Sale



Above: Pam Callender teaching her popular Native Landscaping Class, 2024

**Pamela Callender returns with her Landscape Design with Natives class!**

**2nd Saturday, beginning Jan. 11: 9am - 11am**

**Each month builds on the previous class. This year's class will focus on**

- **The myths of Florida gardening**
- **How to find the right plant for any garden**

**Donations accepted.**

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## PATIO SALE JAN 18 & 19



January 18 & 19, 2025

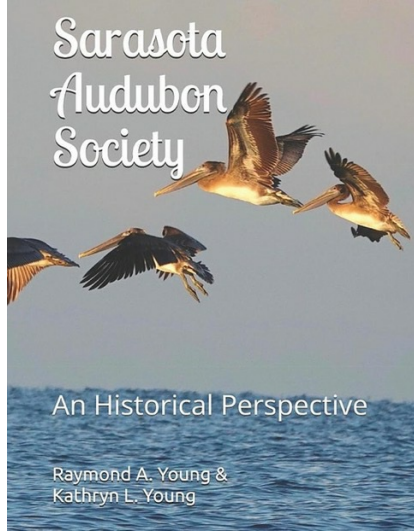
9am - 3pm at the Nature Center

Books and bird-related art and items -- don't miss it!

### Sarasota Audubon Society: An Historical Perspective

Speaking of books: check out the Historical Perspective written by our own Raymond and Kathryn Young. The book is now available in our Gift Shop or on [Amazon!](#)

This book was composed to not only



document the significant history of SAS but also to recognize the many volunteers who have dedicated a substantial amount of their time and effort in service to SAS. Their persistent efforts to preserve the Celery Fields as a prime birding location have resulted in the area designated as part of the extensive "Great Florida Birding Trail." The SAS Nature Center and the Celery Fields are now a national and international destination for thousands of birders.

Covered are the extensive historical "Timelines" of SAS, starting with the original Sarasota Bird Club in the 1950s through incorporation of SAS in the 1960s and through to the present. The emphasis is on issues and events that members of SAS had both direct and indirect involvement in, especially on preservation and conservation of the natural environment.

Purchase at the Sarasota Audubon Nature Center Gift Shop so that more of the proceeds benefit our Society!

## Members Meet & Greet: Jan. 15, 2 p.m., Shawn Carey Wildlife Photographer



Come out and meet Shawn Carey, Wildlife Photographer from Migration Productions.

Shawn is a passionate photographer and conservationist. He has been teaching for the Massachusetts Audubon Society for over 25 years and sits on the Mass Audubon Advisory Board. Shawn is currently Vice President for Eastern Mass Hawk Watch, for which he's been a member for over 30 years. He's also the current

President of the Massachusetts Camera Naturalists club.

**Note: Meet & Greet is for members only.**

**No Registration Necessary**



## 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:

- Patio Sale Prep -- Jan. 14-17: Move, dust, sort [Price and Prep](#)
- Patio Sale Assist -- Jan. 18 & 19 [Day of Assist](#)
- Docents in the [Nature Center](#)
- Gardeners in our [Native Plant Gardens](#)
- Bird Naturalists on our [Boardwalks](#)
- Bluebird Team for the [Bluebird Data](#)
- Purple Martin Team for [Nest Monitoring](#)

### [More information on Purple Martin Team](#)

Click the blue link to email team lead for more information.

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, and gardeners are available.

--> 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](#)

## Celery Fields Cleanup – Jan. 13, 9 a.m.



The next cleanup opportunity is Monday, Jan. 13, 2025, at 9 a.m. at the Nature Center

Please find the county release form at the link below. Please fill it out and submit before coming to the cleanup.

**Information for the form:**

Affiliation: Sarasota Audubon Society

Location: Palmer Road between Bell Road and Tatum School

Please let us know if you are planning to volunteer. Thanks!

[RSVP to Shelley](#)

[County Release Form](#)

## Eagle Nest Tours in February

# EAGLE NEST TOURS

REGISTER NOW BEFORE THEY FILL UP!

Join a Bald Eagle specialist for a bus tour & see eaglets at different stages.

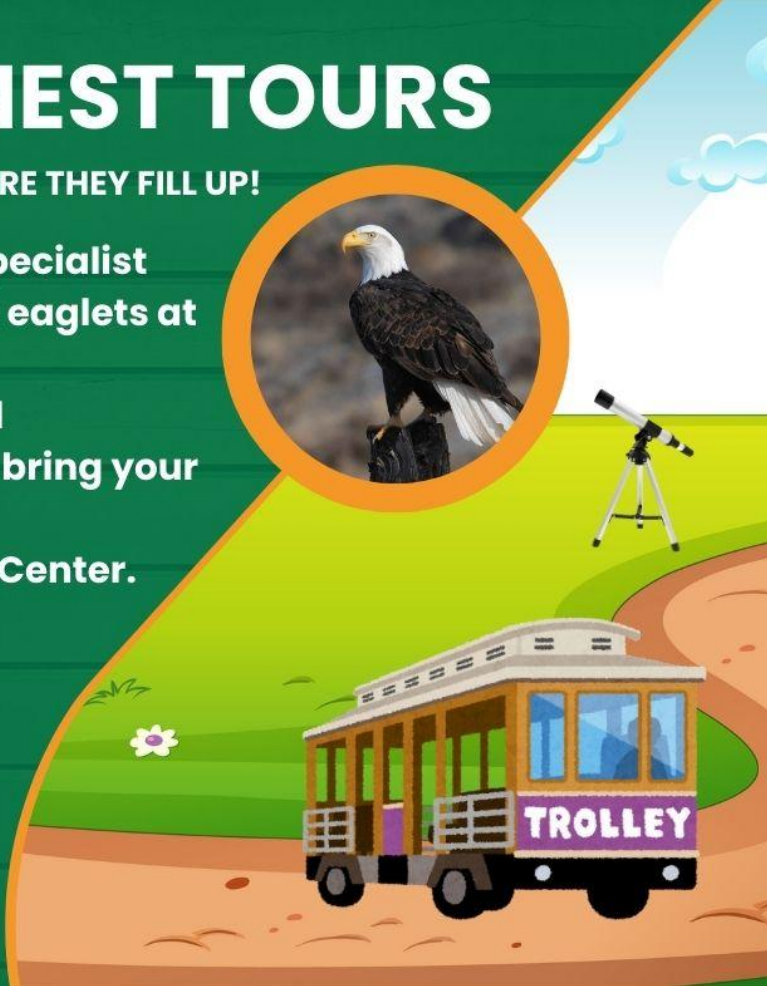
Limited scopes and binoculars (please bring your own if available).

Meet at the Nature Center.

Seats remaining:

- Feb. 8 - 3 seats
- Feb. 15 - 11 seats

Cost \$50



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.

[Feb. 8 Tickets](#)

[Feb. 15 Tickets](#)

**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.

### **Current Schedule for January:**

- **Wednesday, Jan. 22 (note date change)**

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

**Opportunity: Looking for a Trip Leader**

travel to

# PERU

Sarasota Audubon Society trip  
with Holbrook Travel to PERU  
May 8th - 20th, 2025



Looking for a Trip Leader  
to represent Sarasota Audubon

Destinations on this active 13 day birding excursion, led by local guides, include Lima, Tambopata, Yucay, Machu Picchu, and the Ballestas Islands.

#### Highlights

- Spot some of the 400-plus species found in Machu Picchu & surrounding areas.
- Explore the Amazonian lowlands by boat and on foot to look for colorful macaws, tanagers, and the enigmatic Hoatzin.
- Discover the mist-fed ecosystem of Lomas de Lachay, home to an oasis of dwarf forest in the Peruvian desert.
- Visit Pantanos de Villa, a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance that provides critical habitat for waterfowl and migratory shorebirds.
- Travel by boat to witness the seabirds of Ballestas Islands, including the Humboldt Penguin, Peruvian Booby, Inca Tern, and the near-threatened Peruvian Diving-Petrel.

If you are interested in leading this trip, contact Kylie at  
[khwilson1994@gmail.com](mailto:khwilson1994@gmail.com)

Tell me More about Leading

Note: Trip Leader travels for free, just pay for international flight.

Space Available: Peru Trip Details

Christmas Bird Count Reports  
Myakka River State Park Dec. 16  
Sarasota County Dec. 28



Above: A raft of White Pelicans at Myakka River State Park ( *Chris Oliver* )

## Myakka River State Park CBC

By Belinda Perry

We tallied 120 species, only four less than last year's count. Forty-four participants covered almost 160 miles in 72 hours, on foot and by vehicle. Smaller flocks of Tree Swallows, American Robins and ducks resulted in the lowest number of those species in the last five years.

We added a new record: A Clay-colored Sparrow in the company of Savannah Sparrows in the east prairie.

A rarely seen male Northern Harrier hunted over the upper lake (Stu Wilson's team). Known as the "gray ghost", the male harrier has a gray back, white below and a gray owl-like face.

Read the full report for notes on hurricanes and habitats.

[Read Full Myakka CBC  
Report](#)

[Myakka Bird Count  
List](#)





Above: Short-tailed Hawk (*Margaret Lanier*)

## Sarasota County CBC

By Aaron Virgin

The 74th Annual Sarasota Christmas Bird Count was held on Dec. 28, 2024, and involved 127 volunteer birders in 17 sectors. The 15-mile diameter count circle, covering 177 square miles, is centered at the intersection of Beneva and Bee Ridge roads. This year's count **tallied 168 different species featuring 32,538 individual birds.**

Compared to last year, we had five fewer species and nearly 5,000 fewer individual birds, which may be attributed to our summer and fall storms, increased development or low counts for specific species.

Highlights included a likely first county Red Phalarope off Siesta Key Public Beach, an Eastern Whip-poor-will in The Meadows, a White-winged Scoter off of Pelican Cove, and a Clay-colored Sparrow out east in Saddle Creek.

Per usual, Celery Fields, led by Kathwren Young, tallied the most species (119, same as 2023) and featured many notable birds: a lingering Tropical Kingbird, an Ash-throated Flycatcher on Mt. Celery, a pair of very late or possibly overwintering Yellow Warblers, and at the Nature Center feeders, a female Shiny Cowbird and White-crowned Sparrow.

The 2025 count is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 27.

Note: Full report will appear in the February Brown Pelican.

# PREPARING FOR WINTER

Choose your Strategy



Get a new coat



Flee south by night



Stockpile food



Temporarily suspend development

[birdandmoon.com](http://birdandmoon.com)

[Donate to Sarasota Audubon](#)



SARASOTA  
AUDUBON SOCIETY

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