



## MARION AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

April, 2021

Marion Audubon Society is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

Tax deductible donations and will bequests welcome.

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Marion Audubon Members:

Covid-19 Virus: Finally!!! Progress is finally being made with the number of vaccinations. When we reconvene in September, we should be able to schedule walks again. Look forward to our future announcements.

Hey, the parks are still out there for everyone to enjoy and are worth visiting. We recently went to an Owls and Bats presentation at the Heritage Nature Conservancy that featured "calling" the owls WHOO arrived quickly. American Crows took exception and mobbed the owls relentlessly. This park has been modernized for increased accessibility and expanded parking.

Barbara and I received a reward for our efforts monitoring "our" eagle nest in southwest Ocala for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Last week we observed two nestlings of terrific size and we were treated to more nestling sightings this week and views of them stretching their exceptionally large wings. One eagle parent watched from a snag across the street.

Members of our board have been doing an incredible job holding things together. We have been working with Rachel Slocumb promoting the Ocala Wetlands Recharge Park and hope to be able to have programs and walks there in the future. It has become a birding hot spot that enjoys visitors of ethnic diversity and attracts visitor from around Ocala.

Please stay healthy and safe and enjoy the summer break. We look forward to seeing you all in the fall.

Martin Schwartz  
President  
Marion Audubon Society



Young Bald Eagle "branching" in nest tree.

Photo by Bonnie Halsell of BHB Images

## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

This will be the last newsletter until the September edition. Many of our members will be migrating north soon. Those remaining behind in the heat will not be going outdoors much while our snowbirds are gone. It is not much fun wildlife viewing while slapping at mosquitoes, dodging pop-up rain showers and perspiring.

If you are migrating please, please be careful while traveling. Observe all Covid prevention rules. We want you back in the Fall.

## CONSERVATION CHAIR REPORT by Barbara Schwartz

### CITIZEN TESTIMONIAL FOR THE OCALA WETLAND RECHARGE PARK

The Park is full of native and wild plants and trees. Seasonal wildflowers bloom everywhere. Dead trees are left in place to become snags and then habitat. In addition to birds, there are bugs, lizards, squirrels, turtles, and lots of native wildlife. On the ground, in the trees, and in the water. No bird will go hungry there!

In addition to becoming a birding "Hot Spot" with over 140 documented species of birds, the Park is what I call a "diversity hot spot". Since opening to the public last September, there have been eight thousand recorded visitors. All ages. All stages. All ethnicities. All abilities. The wide paved trails and boardwalks invite them all.

The Park is cleaning wastewater, providing a diverse habitat for birds, flora, and fauna, and providing a safe, interesting, and healthy outdoor exercise opportunity for our community. There are benches for taking breaks, viewing platforms, and educational signage throughout the Park.

What I consider the most valuable function of the Park is the bird habitat. Over the past fifty years, we have lost one third of the bird population in the North American continent. That is three billion birds! Three hundred and eighty- nine species of birds are currently on the edge of extinction. This is due to climate change, habitat loss and destruction, outdoor cats, bird-window collisions and chemical contamination by pesticides and herbicides.

The Wetland Park provides a safe and nourishing habitat, free from chemicals, cats, and windows. Its' an important step towards a community that understands the threats and takes steps to correct them. One Park at a time. One community at a time. One city at a time. We can grow this. We can save our birds.

## PROGRAMS/EDUCATION REPORT by Josie Muncy

Hope all are doing fine during this crazy time.

A few of us took a trip to Merritt Island to get a lifer bird, the Reddish Egret. What an amazing and funny bird, especially when they are searching for food. It is a must-see bird, that will put a smile on your face.

Mike Paczolt and I took a trip to Sarasota Audubon Nature Center Sat March 20<sup>th</sup>, to get sighting of the rare bird Bronzed Cowbird.

Also getting ready to work with FWC and Park and Recreation to start monitoring American Kestrel boxes at the following parks, for the month of April, May and possibly June. FWC replaced the old American Kestrel box at Tusawilla Park and might be added to the list to monitor.

Legacy Park has 1 box.

Ocala Wetland Recharge Park has 1 box.

Ocala Regional Sportsplex has 2 boxes.

Big Sun Youth Soccer field has 2 boxes.

Went to Ocala Wetland Recharge Park Monday 15<sup>th</sup> to check the Eastern Bluebird nest boxes and they are active. The North (far end) nest box has a female sitting on eggs, and the South (near Parking lot) nest box the male and female are in process of making the nest.

Things are looking up we are in the process of getting approval to have our annual membership get together at the Ocala Wetland Recharge Park. It will be a meet and greet function to talk about our fall events. Then we will do (in groups) a bird walk around the park. Date is April 17<sup>th</sup> from 9 am-11 am. There will be a flyer send to you with details soon.

Hope to see you soon!

Josie Muncy



Occupied Bluebird nest box near the entrance to Ocala Wetlands.



Occupied Bluebird nest box in the North end of Ocala Wetlands.

## WANDERING BIRDER by Carolyn Retey

Longleaf Flatwoods Reserve is managed by Alachua County Forever and the St. John's River Water Management District. The Reserve's 1,274 acres are mostly longleaf pine flatwoods, sandhills and marsh. This reserve is the nearest habitat to Ocala where Bachman's Sparrow may be found. The best time to see this species is during the spring season (April to June). A tape of Bachman's sparrow will almost certainly bring a male out to sing. This site floods seasonally so if you go wear appropriate footwear. As usual when birding in Florida, you should take a hat, a bottle of water and some insect repellent.

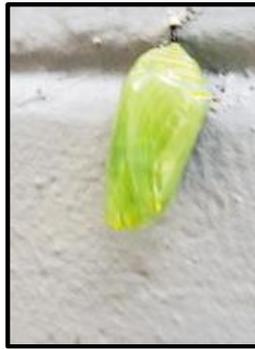
This site is an eBird hotspot. A list of the birds that have been seen here can be found at [Longleaf Flatwoods Reserve, Alachua County, FL, US - eBird Hotspot](#). For a trail map and directions to the site go to [Longleaf Flatwoods Reserve - SJRWMD](#)





## MORE THAN BIRDS . . .

Carol Yarnell, who lives in Dunnellon, sent us these photos of a Monarch's metamorphosis. If you have any interesting photos (not just birds), send them to [fernyfarms@aol.com](mailto:fernyfarms@aol.com). Include your name and information about the subject.



## SNOWBIRDS WEST?

While most of our members are migrating North, two decided to travel West. Larry Sutton, who writes our Backyard Birds article, went to visit relatives in Tucson. I guess it is just a coincidence that it is hummingbird migration season in Southeastern Arizona.

Leroy Simon also went to Arizona as well as South Texas. Below are two photos Leroy sent us of his visit.



Green Jay and a bee.



A prickly meeting between a Northern Cardinal and a Pyrrhuloxia.



## Birds Brought the World Together

The 2021 Great Backyard Bird Count was an incredible success. Congratulations! Look at what we accomplished:

- **6,436** species of birds identified
- **190** participating countries
- **379,726** eBird checklists submitted
- **479,842** Merlin Bird IDs submitted
- **151,393** photo submissions to Macaulay Library
- **+ 300,000** estimated global participants

Thank you for your contributions to this important effort to celebrate, watch, and count birds around the world so we can better protect them. No matter where your literal backyard was, our *global backyard* connected us to each other and the birds. To see a more in-depth summary of the 4-day event and engage with interactive world maps, [check out our final results](#). Or, watch our [Thank You Video](#) showcasing people and birds from around the world.

### *Certificate of Participation*

Reminder that if you would like to print a certificate of participation for the Great Backyard Bird Count, you can do so [here on our website!](#)

Josie Muncy  
Director Programs/Education  
Marion Audubon Society  
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## FROM OUR VICE PRESIDENT

This month I had two student birding tours at Silver Springs State Park. I met with three students and a parent for a glass bottom boat tour followed by their first ever birding walk where we identified 19 species of birds, had great looks at an Anhinga and spotted a Black Racer (snake). The students had a great time becoming citizen scientists by reporting their birds thru eBird and are looking forward to our next walk.

A week later I took another student birding by kayak where we saw a manatee, countless turtles and 24 species of birds including a black-crowned night-heron that flew right over us! We also witnessed a Double-Crested Cormorant diving to retrieve nesting material from the riverbed and flying it back to the nest. Another great birding experience!



Marion Audubon is excited to introduce our newly selected board members, Jinez and Sanyia. They are dual-enrolled students attending high school and college concurrently. They will be contributing on our EDI committee, helping with social media, and helping us work towards creating a Young Birders club. From left: Michele Reyes, Jinez, Sanyia, Sydney.

Michele Reyes  
Vice-president  
Marion Audubon Society



## ROAD TRIP!

Four Marion Audubon birders (Josie Muncy, Mike Paczolt, Carolyn Retey and Carol Yarnell) went to Cedar Kay on Monday March 29. The result was a list of over 45 birds and a great time was had by all. The weather was perfect and we arrived at low tide so there were lots of shorebirds. Here are some photos taken by Josie Munch that show the diversity of shorebirds that were seen.



If you have been out wildlife watching, tell us about it.

Send us a couple paragraphs and photos to [fernyfarms@aol.com](mailto:fernyfarms@aol.com)