

## The Pelican Flyer



**Pelican Island**  
PRESERVATION SOCIETY

January 2018

[www.firstrefuge.org](http://www.firstrefuge.org)

Compiled and written by Carol Lynn Peterson and Tim Glover  
This newsletter is available on our website at [www.firstrefuge.org/about/librarynewsletters](http://www.firstrefuge.org/about/librarynewsletters)

### From the President's Desk

Happy New Year to all of you from our PIPS Board and from Deby and me. Here's hoping that 2018 is a prosperous and healthy one for us all. Our next meeting open to the public will be on January 22nd and will feature Bob Montanaro, who will share with us his extensive knowledge of Ospreys and their habits. Please join us at the library in Sebastian at 6:00 p.m.

We are also eagerly anticipating our annual Pelican Island Wildlife Festival, which will be held on Saturday, March 3rd. We are very much in need of volunteers, both leading up to and on the day of, the festival. Please contact Eileen Fretz at 772-321-0848 to sign up to help. More information about volunteering can also be found on our website under the "Events" menu.

At our general meeting in April, we will be electing new officers. Please contact us at 772-202-0697 or send an email if you wish to be of service. We are always looking for new ideas and input from interested readers and members like yourselves! Please step up and help us out.

Thanks again for your support of PIPS and of the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge!

Don't forget to visit the Refuge and bring your cameras--there is a good deal of wildlife to be seen and photographed at this time of year. See the article on eBird below.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the passing of Juliet Dykstra, a long-time supporter of PIPS and several other organizations in our area. We offer our sincere condolences to the Dykstra family.

*Steve Massey*

### Ospreys at Pelican Island: An Exploration into the Life of the Fish Hawk

Photographer Bob Montanaro will give a presentation of his photo documentary he created on Ospreys nesting at the Pelican Island NWR, at our January meeting. Three years in the making, this program follows a pair of Ospreys throughout their nesting season at the nation's first national wildlife refuge - Pelican Island.

The PIPS meeting is Monday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 6pm at the North Indian River County Library in Sebastian, at 1001 Sebastian Blvd. and all are welcome to attend, so please join us!

## Refuge Update

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New Staff member – Todd Giager joined the Everglades Headwaters NWR Complex team this past August and has had his stay extended yet another six months. Currently a student at Oklahoma State University, Todd is nearing completion of his bachelor of science in Natural Resource and Ecology Management. He recently worked with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Natl. Key Deer Refuge as a biological science technician, assisting with the screwworm outbreak. A U.S. Navy veteran, he worked with the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture in helping veterans make the transition into farming and ranching careers. He has also worked with the public in environmental education as a Park Ranger in Council Grove, Kansas. He has a strong medical response, equipment, and training background. Presently, he is involved in outdoor education and visitor services opportunities within the NWR Refuge complex.

Recent Hires – Patrice Betz, Wildlife Management Intern – The Refuge has recently added Student Conservation Association intern Patrice Betz to our staff! Patrice possesses a Master's Degree in Conservation Biology from Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kansas. Patrice has previously worked as an intern with the Forest Service in Alaska, served as an Avian Ecologist with Florida Atlantic University (where her field studies included monitoring efforts at Everglades National Park), and as an intern with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the Florida Keys Refuges where she monitored threatened and imperiled reptile species and assisted with the screwworm epidemic.

Patrice earned a year-long internship at the Everglades Headwaters Complex of Refuges and will be assisting with an array of programs, including biology, outreach and environmental education, and refuge maintenance support.



New Facility – The new phased-use building is almost complete and we are in the process of checking off a 'punch list' of items before we can occupy the new building; target is end of January 2018. The building will house our interns, and others as needed, who are with us on temporary duty.

Pelican Island NWR Volunteer Tours – Our popular Volunteer-led tours of Pelican Island started in December, 2017. Sign-ups are ongoing but please hurry, as space is limited. For information about the tours, please call the Refuge at 772-581-5557 and select Option 2.

Outreach Efforts – The Refuge staffed a booth at the Vero Beach Farmers' Market to provide information about the Refuge, and will be participating in offsite outreach presentations scheduled for Homeowners Associations for the months of January and February. The Refuge also plans to have a booth at two additional outreach events to help guide pre-teen children interested in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education.

Biology Program – The Pelican Island Volunteers set up our maintenance shop in preparation for a possible sea turtle cold stun event in the Indian River Lagoon around Pelican Island during the most recent cold weather event. The Refuge deployed a boat to patrol the waters on Friday, and we had a transfer station set up in the shop to temporarily house and evaluate any sea turtles located. One cold-stunned adolescent turtle was found by our volunteers; it was processed and transferred to Brevard Zoo due to entanglement of fishing line and other injuries found during the assessment.



### **Pelican Island Wildlife Festival Photography Contest**

The Photography Contest will be part of our annual Pelican Island Wildlife Festival again this year, so get out into nature and take some of your best shots at winning in one of the three categories for which prizes will be awarded. Entry deadline for the contest is February 18<sup>th</sup> and all the details, as well as entry fee payment, are available on the PIPS website at [www.firstrefuge.org/photo-contest](http://www.firstrefuge.org/photo-contest).

### **2017 Indian River Birding Festival & Nature Art Show**

We hope that you all had the chance to participate in one of the many activities as part of our Birding Festival this past fall. There were challenges, though, due to the tremendous amount of rain received in our area prior to the event, and some activities had to be moved, rescheduled or canceled. But one of the highlights of the event was the sunset wine and cheese cruise to Pelican Island. The launching was a bit rough due to the windy conditions, but the birds were numerous, the lagoon peaceful, and the sunset gorgeous.

The art show itself is, of course, a major part of the event, and many beautiful works were entered and displayed at the Pelican Island Audubon house. You may view a list of winning entries on the Festival page of our website, as well as a slideshow of photos from the sunset cruise, taken by PIPS board member Sandy Peterson. All proceeds from the event were split between PIPS and the Pelican Island Audubon Society.

### **eBird**

eBird is an online resource started by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. The eBird website provides a real-time, online checklist of bird species, providing information on abundance and distribution. The observations of each participant join those of others in an international network of eBird users. eBird then shares these observations with a global community of educators, land managers, ornithologists, and conservation biologists. In time, these data will become the foundation for a better understanding of bird distribution across the western hemisphere and beyond.

Anyone can sign up on the eBird website to be able to enter your own observations and keep track of species observed. Visitors to the eBird website can then search for birds being observed at locations all around the world. Be sure to check out the entries for what is currently being observed at the Pelican Island NWR here - <http://ebird.org/ebird/hotspot/L508481>.



Photo: Wood Stork, by Sandy Peterson

### **Latest Update on Jungle Trail**

By Ruth Standbridge

In August, four big brown signs were unveiled at the main entrances to Jungle Trail. These simple signs read Historic Jungle Trail, "a quiet drive" with icons for a car, a hiker, and a bicycle. These signs had been the result of yet another struggle with just a few people who wanted a significant portion of this historic and scenic road closed to vehicular traffic. In early summer (June) the County Commissioners had said NO, this road would be shared.

In December, these proponents of closing the road tried one more time at the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meeting, and the HOA of Old Orchid requested, too, that a portion of Jungle Trail be closed adjacent to their development because of noise, dirt, and safety issues. In essence, the closing of that portion of the Trail would provide a private park for them and a private bike path for the few!

Hopefully, that is the last time we will need to rally the citizens to SAVE JUNGLE TRAIL, but just in case, the Indian River County Historical Society has produced a mini-documentary to tell the history of this almost 100-year-old road. This video was released January 1st on the Society's Facebook page and website – [irchistorical.org](http://irchistorical.org). Enjoy!

**Pelican Island Preservation Society**  
**P.O. Box 781903**  
**Sebastian, Florida 32978-1903**

**Florida Winter Shorebird Survey**

Florida's Annual Winter Shorebird Survey starts on Friday, February 2nd, and continues through Thursday, February 8th. This week-long survey serves as the official statewide snapshot of coastal wintering shorebirds and seabirds in Florida. For the 2018 survey, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and partners updated the protocol and streamlined the sign-up process to make it easier to participate! Please check the Florida Shorebird Alliance website at [www.flshorebirdalliance.org](http://www.flshorebirdalliance.org) and Facebook group in mid-January for more details and how to participate.

Additionally, the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count was just completed on January 5<sup>th</sup>, National Bird Day. For details on count numbers, you may visit the Audubon website at [www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count](http://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count).

**Great Florida Birding & Wildlife Trail Guides**

The Great Florida Birding & Wildlife Trail guides are now available on Amazon.com as downloadable ebooks. The ebooks can be downloaded for a few dollars each, or free with a Kindle Unlimited account. Check them out at <https://goo.gl/wMG7i3>.

The PIPS newsletter is published in the months of January, April, June and October. Subscription is included with membership and delivered by e-mail only, unless requested otherwise, or no useable e-mail. Please contact us to notify of change of address or e-mail.

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772-202-0697

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The date above your name is the month/year that your membership renewal is/was due.

Thank you!

**Pelican Island Preservation Society**  
**Membership Application**

Please check one:

- ☐ Student (under 18) - \$5/year
- ☐ Individual - \$10/year
- ☐ Family (joint) - \$15/year
- ☐ Contributing - \$50/year
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*Send completed application and dues to:*  
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**P.O. Box 781903, Sebastian, FL 32978-1903**

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