

Pelican Island Audubon Society

Peligrum



- founded in 1964 to serve Indian River County -

P.O. Box 1833, VERO BEACH, FL 32961 772-567-3520 www.pelicanislandaudubon.org

Our 45th Year Vol. 45 No. 3 March 2009

Our Mission: To preserve and protect the animals, plants, and natural communities in Indian River County through advocacy, education, and public awareness.

Bird Conservation in Florida New Challenges for the Future

March 16, 2009 • 7:30 p.m. • Vero Beach Community Center

John Ogden, Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon of Florida and an outstanding ornithologist, will be the guest speaker at the March 16 general meeting of the Pelican Island Audubon Society starting at 7:30 p.m. in the Vero Beach Community Center, 2266 14th Avenue. Pelican Island Audubon invites the public to hear his presentation *Bird Conservation in Florida: New Challenges for the Future*. Mr. Ogden will describe the evolving bird conservation issues across the state, along with the growing list of species that merit special concern for their population status. He invites opinions and ideas about how Audubon of Florida and its chapters can be most effective in establishing an overall bird conservation strategy for Florida.

John C. Ogden currently (2009) is Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon of Florida. Previously, he was a research scientist at Everglades National Park for 16 years, Director of the Ornithological Research Unit and co-Director of the California Condor recovery program during his 14 years with the National Audubon Society's Research Department, and served 10 years as Chief Scientist, South Florida Water Management District, on the Everglades Restoration Program. John was the first President of the Colonial Waterbird Society, and was a member of the recovery teams for the American Crocodile, Wood Stork and California Condor. He is a Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union. His professional experiences and knowledge have primarily been in Everglades wetland ecology and restoration, the biology and conservation of raptors and colonial waterbirds, and the status and population trends of the birds of Florida. In addition to his extensive field and conservation work in Florida, John has participated in surveys and studies in Mexico, Cuba, Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Light refreshments to be served following the program.

Election of Officers & Directors

Pelican Island Audubon Society will hold its annual elections during the March 16 general meeting. Please plan to attend to cast your vote.

Annual Awards

The Society will present its annual awards to those who have made a difference for the environment over the past year during the March 16 general meeting. Join us in honoring those who have had a positive impact on the community.

Crested Caracara at Treasure Hammock Ranch
(www.floridacattleranch.org) by Bob Montanaro.



Tax Abatement Proposal

A Tax Abatement Program is used to provide incentives for existing businesses to expand or new businesses to relocate to Indian River County. The programs are allowed under Florida Statutes (Chap. 196.1995) and require a voter referendum for approval. Many counties and municipalities in Florida have adopted Tax Abatement programs and those that have not are at a competitive disadvantage when relocation consultants inquire about the county.

Businesses that apply for the abatement must meet specific job creation criteria, the abatement can be revoked if the company falls below the eligibility criteria, and the abatement applies only to county taxes, does not apply to schools, cities, special districts, etc.

The easiest way to picture the Tax Abatement program is to consider it a tax "freeze" program. Whatever the business is currently paying as its property tax it will continue to pay that tax amount. The abatement applies only to improvements to existing real property and new tangible personal property that result in the creation of new jobs. So the 'increase' in taxes is "frozen" during the abatement period as an incentive for the company to invest in capital and equipment. The abatement can be structured to gradually reduce (think thaw) during the abatement period, so that at the end of the 10 year period the full amount of taxes is collected.

A Tax Abatement program does not: give away tax dollars; waive or eliminate payment of impact fees; waive or eliminate infrastructure requirements under the county's land development regulations; or reduce the current taxes on real property.

Please note that the Tax Abatement program has not been approved by, or voted upon, by the Board of County Commissioners at this time. For additional information, please contact County Commissioner Peter O'Bryan at 226-1440, or at pobryan@ircgov.com.



Treasure Hammock Ranch field trip - February 7, 2009

The trip was led by ranch manager Sean Sexton and Jens & Melissa Tripson to view a working cattle ranch and its wildlife. View color images and a list of birds seen at

www.pelicanislandaudubon.org



Painted Bunting & Northern Cardinal



Loggerhead Shrike

February & March Field Trips *with Rick Lucas*

Call 772-567-3520 for reservations and information.

March 5, 2009—T.M. Goodwin in Fellsmere. Please note that this is a Thursday trip as that is the day the gate is open for the public. Meet at Stick Marsh parking lot at 7:30am. Directions: I-95 to CR 512, West to Broadway (in Fellsmere), North (to end), West to Babcock, North to C-54 Canal. Take dirt road on south side of canal west several miles to Stick Marsh.

March 21, 2009—West County Wastewater Treatment Facility, 8405 85th St., Vero Beach. Meet at visitor's parking lot at 7:30am. Leaders: Rick Lucas, Jens & Melissa Tripson

April 11, 2009—Turkey Creek Sanctuary in Palm Bay. Carpoolers meet at Wal-Mart on US 1 in Sebastian. Park next to US 1 west of the gas pumps. We will leave promptly at 7am. Directions: US 1 north to Port Malabar Blvd, West to Turkey Creek.

Advertise with Pelican Island Audubon Society



The Peligram, our newsletter, reaches over 900 people. Take advantage of this unique opportunity to reach a whole new audience at the rates quoted below.

Advertising Rates per issue

Business card size (3.5"x2") - \$30
 1/4 page (3.75"x2.5") - \$85
 Half page (7.5"x5") - \$165
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Special discount: Less 5% for nine issues.

Contact information

Office: 772-567-3520 • Email: piaudubon@bellsouth.net
 Website: www.pelicanislandaudubon.org
 Mail: P.O. Box 1833, Vero Beach, FL 32961

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David Cox '09	Vacant
Debby Ecker '11	Susan Richardson '10

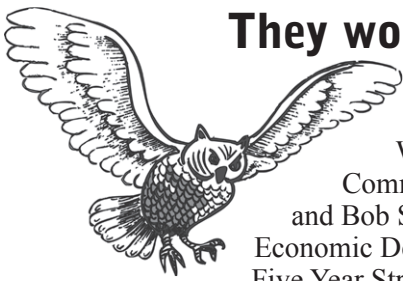
Appointed Board Members

Joel Day	Neil Stalter
Bill Halliday	Melissa Tripson
Tina Marchese	Craig Weyandt

Advisory Board Members

Janice Broda	Bob Smith
Kevin Doty	Billi Wagner
Lynne Larkin	

Pelican Island Audubon Society, Inc. is registered with the Florida Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Div. of Consumer Services by calling toll-free within Florida 1-800-435-7352. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the State.



The President's Hoot **They won't let up, constant vigilance is needed**

Stimulating speakers at the February 5th Public Workshops organized by Commissioners Peter O'Bryan and Bob Solari, entitled, "the Economic Development Summit and Five Year Strategic Vision," described innovative projects like turning our landfills into energy and improving our economy, bringing quality jobs through tourism, manufacturing businesses, and a "Tax Abatement Program" (see page 2).

Unfortunately, some old disturbing suggestions also surfaced on how to get the economy moving again by reducing recent environmental progress. An example given by Commissioner Wesley Davis concerned the plight of a contractor installing a 5.5 foot tree instead of the required 6 foot tree. The contractor either did not specify the size nor measured the tree and was therefore denied a county certificate of occupancy. Commissioner Davis suggested a "variance committee" to "over look" some of our regulations that he claims are inhibiting our economy. Other speakers suggested the fastest way to get our economy going is to approve the proposed concrete plant in a residential area, remove new tree, landscaping, and mining requirements, and impact fees that our commissioners are continuing to debate now.

At the state level, Senator Mike Bennett (Bradenton) is also sponsoring Senate Bill 630, a 3-year moratorium on impact fees by cities and counties. Unfortunately, the current economic crisis is being used as a smokescreen for removing impact fees, and providing other incentives or rollbacks to home builders under the guise of stimulating the economy. Even without residential impact fees and with incentives and rollbacks to our environmental ordinances, there is still no market for new houses for some time to come. This archaic thinking is part of what got us into our current mess and is not going to help us get out of it.

A must read is Carl Hiaasen's February 15th *Miami Herald* column entitled "Reaping the fruit planted by greed" <http://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/other-views/v-print/story/903185.html>, in which he points out that "our employment base depends fatally on double-digit population growth and to a lesser extent, tourism." He further says: "There is no Plan B... The history of Florida is that of greed run amok, and old habits die hard... the mechanism of your (Florida) economy is modeled on that of a cancer cell."

Many thanks to Gov. Crist (850-488-4481, Charlie.Crist@MyFlorida.com) for vetoing the elimination of the Florida Forever Program. This program has been very helpful to obtaining conservation land in our county. **But**

rollbacks get even worse at the state level. Senators in our Florida Senate Community Affairs Committee, including Indian River's own Senators Haridopolos and Pruitt, are busy drafting sweeping legislation to make major changes to Florida's growth management process. For example, Senate Bill 360 would stimulate sprawl in suburban and rural areas as well. In 270 municipalities with more than 1,000 people per square mile, including **Sebastian** (1,816.5/square mile) and **Vero Beach** (1,616/square mile) with Fellsmere (963/square mile) and Indian River Shores (740.6/square mile) not far behind, SB360 would:

- Eliminate Development of Regional Impact (DRI) review.
- Eliminate Transportation Concurrency requirements.
- Eliminate Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Plan Amendment review.
- Provide for only one local public hearing for new development projects.

Some aspects of SB360 do provide for incentivizing and stimulating growth by promoting infill development within the urban service area, which is desperately needed in Vero Beach and unincorporated IRC. Much better ways to really stimulate the economy are to promote sustainable businesses that do not use county nonrenewable resources (land, sand, energy) but instead use restorable wealth (sun, surf, brains, and culture). We must support efforts to maintain and tighten (not reverse) regulations protecting wetlands and other natural resources. We must push hard now to make in-fill development rather than sprawl a more attractive option.

Unfortunately, some of our "leaders" are taking us 180 degrees in the wrong direction for short term profit for a few with the true costs of development put on the backs of the taxpayer. Call to express your concern 567-8000 ext 1490 to our County Commissioners or email them: Peter O'Bryan pobryan@ircgov.com, Wesley Davis wdavis@ircgov.com, Joe Flescher jflescher@ircgov.com, Bob Solari bsolari@ircgov.com, Gary Wheeler gwheeler@ircgov.com. Tell them you like the Tax Abatement Program, but loud and clear not to weaken environmental protections, reduce better planning, or remove impact fees on residential development. Urge Senators Haridopolos (850-487-5056; haridopolos.mike.web@flsenate.gov) and Pruitt (850-487-5088; pruitt.ken.web@flsenate.gov) not to support SB 360 on Growth Management until the above important issues are addressed! For more information please see <http://www.floridatoday.com/article/20090220/OPINION/90219021/> and <http://www.1000friendsofflorida.org/reform/09session.asp>

Richard Baker, President

Who is this?



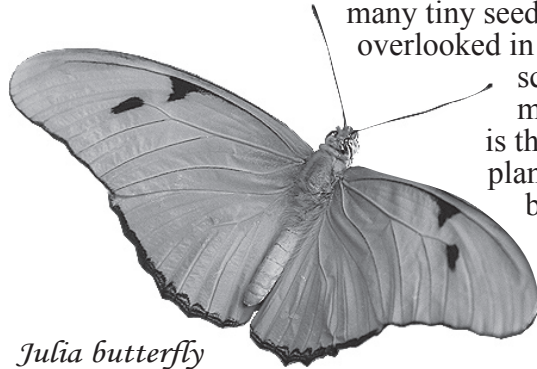
Answer: Palm Warbler

Despite its tropical sounding name, this warbler lives farther north than most other warblers. It breeds far to the north in Canada southward to Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, New York, and Maine and winters primarily in the southern United States and northern Caribbean. Found in migration and winter in a variety of woodland, second growth and thicket habitats, on the ground in savanna and open fields, and in mangroves. Their energetic tail-wagging and yellow undertails are distinctive traits for recognizing the species in the field along with its brownish back, faint streaking on sides, chestnut cap and a dark stripe through eyes. This small songbird eats mostly insects with some seeds and fruits in fall and winter. Cornell Lab of Ornithology believes the population is stable. *Species info from Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Photo by Bob Montanaro.*

Plant of the Month

by Janice Broda

The corky stemmed passion vine (*Passiflora suberosa*) is often spread by birds who consume its dime-sized dark purple fruits filled with many tiny seeds. Often overlooked in the land-



Julia butterfly

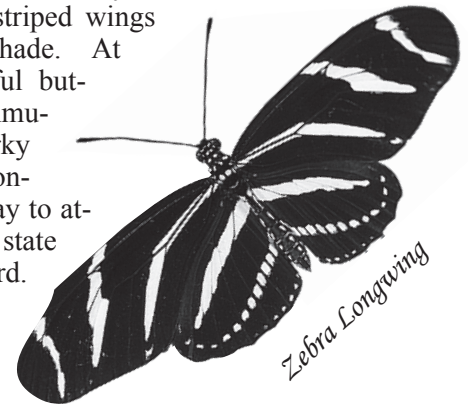
scape, this diminutive vine is the larval host plant for three butterfly species – zebra longwing, gulf fritillary, and julia.

This plant is uniquely co-evolved with these butterflies: Its leaves are very variable in shape and size in an effort to prevent the butterflies from ovipositing (egg-laying), and extra-floral nectaries attract ants which poach upon butterfly eggs. Its flowers, like its fruits, are dime-sized, and, as with all members of the Passifloraceae family, its flowers depict the passion of Christ. Older vines have light colored corky stems giving rise to the common name for this plant.



Corky stemmed passion vine

The zebra longwing is the Florida state butterfly. This long-lived butterfly with broad yellow and black “zebra” striped wings prefers hammock shade. At night, these beautiful butterflies roost communally. Planting corky stemmed passion-flower is the best way to attract our beautiful state butterfly to your yard.



Zebra Longwing

Photos by Janice Broda.

Pelican Island Audubon Society 2009 Membership

Because each Audubon chapter is expected to support its operations without retention of members' dues -- which are sent to and retained by National Audubon -- **WE NEED YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT** for our many educational programs, field trips and environmental advocacy projects; for our handling of public questions; and the ten issues of our newsletter the *Peligram* we send to each member.

National Audubon*	\$20	_____
Pelican Island Audubon**		
Individual	\$20	_____
Family	\$30	_____
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Contribution	\$	_____
Total	\$	_____

*National Audubon membership

This includes subscriptions to *Audubon Magazine* and *The Florida Naturalist*.

**Pelican Island Audubon membership

Dues which PIAS will use for environmental education and advocacy and subscription to the *Peligram*

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Please email us if there is a local environmental issue which concerns you at piaudubon@bellsouth.net

Outreach Center and Operating Fund donors for February

Jim & Pam Cooper, Andy Liu & Brenda Baker, Joel Day and Jane Olsen