

# 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](http://www.pelicanislandaudubon.org)

Our 47th Year Vol. 47 No. 5 May 2011

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

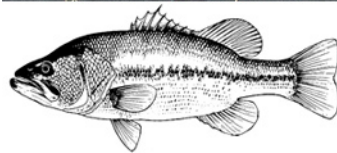
May 9, 2011 ★ 6:00 p.m.

## Critical fish habitat in the Indian River Lagoon with Dr. Grant Gilmore

North County Library ★ 1001 Sebastian Blvd (CR512)

The May 9, 2011 meeting of the Pelican Island Audubon Society at the North County Library, 1001 Sebastian Blvd. (CR512),

starting at 6:00 p.m. will feature a presentation on critical fish habitat in the Indian River Lagoon. Dr. Grant Gilmore, Fish Ecologist and Senior Research Scientist with Estuarine Coastal & Ocean Sciences, Inc., will be addressing the direct value of larval and juvenile fish habitat to regional fisheries. The public is invited to attend. *Light refreshments will be served following the program.*

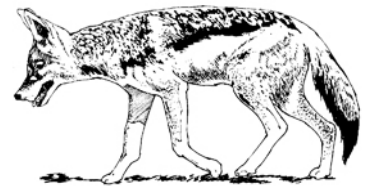


May 16, 2011 ★ 7:30 p.m.

## The Coyote in Florida with Dr. Martin Main

Vero Beach Community Center ★ 2266 14th Avenue

The University of Florida's Institute of Food & Agricultural Sciences reports, "The coyote (*Canis latrans*) is becoming a common occurrence on Florida's landscape. Traditionally associated with the American West, the coyote has become an established species in the eastern U.S., including Florida. Range expansion can be attributed to the coyote's nonspecific needs in habitat and food; large litter size and short generation time; decreased competition across its range from other predators; and the coyote's ability to adapt to and benefit from human activities." Don't miss the May 16 general meeting at the Vero Beach Community Center, 2266 14th Avenue, starting at 7:30pm to hear Dr. Martin Main from the University of Florida talk about his research into the growing presence of coyotes in Florida. The public is invited to attend. *Enjoy light refreshments following the program.*



## Cookbook for Sale!

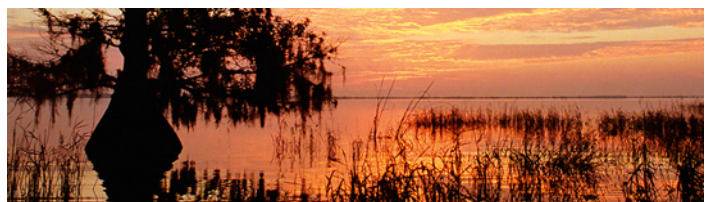
### Pelican Bites



The PIAS cookbooks are here! The cost of the book is \$14.95 plus \$1.05 tax. We are very pleased with the way the cookbook turned out. We received a nice variety of recipes and the photos that Bob Montanaro provided for the book are outstanding. It will surely make a wonderful addition to your cookbook collection or make a special gift. So buy your copies today! Call 772-567-3520 for info.

## Guided Pontoon Boat Trip on Blue Cypress Lake

As a fundraiser, PIAS is offering guided sunrise (6:45-10:15 am) or sunset (4:00-7:30 pm) pontoon boat rides with refreshments at Blue Cypress Lake to view the many Ospreys nesting, birds, and other wildlife. Space is limited to 7 persons only each day. Put a party of your friends together. Please call 772-567-3520 for reservations and instructions. Richard & Juanita Baker, Tour Leaders.



# 2011 Awards

We appreciate the many people working together giving their time accomplishing great things. Pelican Island Audubon's philosophy on giving awards is that it is so important to thank and recognize those who have contributed to our chapter and our community. We believe it will encourage theirs and others' further involvement. It documents the history and let's everyone know about our activities. It is also an opportunity to make everyone aware of these unsung heroes as well as PIAS's many initiatives. Finally, it makes all of us feel good that we are honoring others. They make this a better place to live and improve our quality of life.



Board Member of the Year: **John Orcutt** for his fundraising efforts for the Audubon House and for carrying out the programs and advocacy efforts.

Special Service Award: **Darlene Halliday** for her idea, organization and editing efforts, and selling of Pelican Bites our chapter's great cook book to raise funds for our chapters operations.

Environmental Citizen: **Steve Goff** set a great example for others in the community to volunteer in removing exotics on our County's conservation lands. Steve, nearly every Sunday morning, has removed air potato from the Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area for many years, usually alone.

Maggy Bowman/Conservationist of the Year: **Keith McCully**, Indian River County Stormwater Engineer, & **Alan Stewart**, Vice President of HydroMentia, Inc., Ocala, Florida who designed a biological method to clean up canal water using algae system to remove nitrogen and phosphorus before it gets to the Indian River Lagoon.

Environmental Landscaping: **Suzanne Valencia** for lots of volunteer time designing and leading other volunteers to develop the beautiful Butterfly Garden at the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge.

President's Award: **Dr. Grant Gilmore**, President, Senior Scientist, Estuarine, Coastal and Ocean Science, Inc., Vero Beach, for his careful years of many hours of research essential to saving fish populations in Indian River and its tributaries.

Environmental Youth Award: **George Katilus**, a 7th grader student at Gifford Middle School for getting many volunteers and over 7,200 oyster shells, each drilled with a hole, to make over 200 oyster Mats for the Indian River Lagoon-a record for the Nature Conservancy, sponsor of the event.

Special Recognition Awards were given to: **Rosalind James** for her work taking over the Scrub Jay Counts in Indian River County and to **Linda Chancellor** for monthly Peligram columns and **Janice Broda** for the Plant of the Month articles in our Peligram.

*Due to Alan Stewart's unavailability, he is not pictured in the collage.*

## What Can We Do about Global Warming in Indian River County? Start by asking: What could our county look like in 50 years?

Global warming brings some dire predictions -- sea level rising, frequent and stronger hurricanes and major beach erosion are just some of them. Our ultimate human survival and all life on this planet as we know it today requires us in Indian River County use our ingenuity to immediately work together to solve our problems and achieve global sustainability. There is much we can do in our county to reduce pollution from greenhouse gas emissions, find some new carbon neutral energy resources, and thus curb global warming. We must mitigate and adapt so we can create an environment where we all thrive.

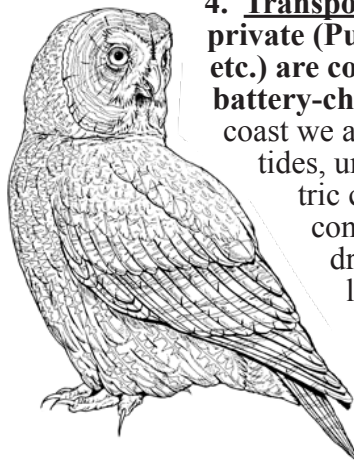
If we have a vision for our future, we can see a path through the next 50 years in Indian River County. These 50 years may be the most important time period in the history of life on Earth. What I envision seeing in 2061:

**1. Water: All water is recycled** so that everyone has sufficient water to survive well. All houses and businesses have cisterns to capture the 50 inches of rain for drinking, bathing, and cooking. Native plants requiring no irrigation become standard landscaping. All buildings have composting and/or waterless toilets.

**2. Education: People are aware that they are an integral part of the living ecosystems and can affect the earth, air and water around them.** Our planet is on the road to recovery as we've changed many factors humans did to induce climate change. All students are educated to understand the world challenges and direct their talents for the benefit of all humanity. Students learn basic nutritious cooking, building energy efficient homes and temporary shelters with solar heated swimming pools, and basic nature and survival skills. College students spend a year abroad as Global Citizens to get a greater appreciation of others' concerns and situations. Compassion trumps consumption, justice triumphs greed, community values prevail over narrower self-interest, and cooperation prevails over competition. Still everyone strives to achieve excellence and recognition utilizing their full potential. Since all the world's women are educated, the population has stabilized and we've learned to have a thriving economy by better utilizing everyone's talents and the world's resources fairly.

**3. Energy producing & efficient homes: Houses and vehicles are highly efficient, lightweight, and inexpensive with nanoengineered (the redesign of matter at the atomic level) solar panels** collecting our sunlight that will store the energy in tiny, mas-

sively distributed nanoengineered fuel cells. Windows have a transparent liquid to block heat when sunlight comes in avoiding the need for more air conditioning. Advanced battery storage systems save energy for rainy days. Efficient light bulbs that turn off without motion and turn on when one walks into a room or drives down a private or public road or street. Key breakthroughs in food production have just occurred where scientists have learned how to mimic the energy-chemistry of green plants, which converts carbon dioxide and water in the presence of sunlight to oxygen and sugar (energy).



**4. Transportation: All parking lots, public and private (Publix, Wal-Mart, Indian River mall, etc.) are covered with solar panels and have battery-charging outlets for vehicles.** On our coast we also harvest energy from waves and tides, unseen to us. Hybrid hydrogen/electric cars have greatly changed the energy consumption landscape. The concept of driving to work is past and thus there is less traffic on the roads. Many folks work only 5 hours a day and much of it will be done at home. Efficient public transportation takes us to restaurants, libraries, schools, shopping; a system based on the use of magnetic levitation tracks. New housing built from recycled

gas guzzling vehicles are clustered around existing schools eliminating most student busing. Commuters and students use their cell phones to request a reroute of mass transportation to pick them up if needed. School buses are relics of the past.

**5. Health: The genomes of most species of plants and animals including humans are known as well as their diseases** and so we can preserve many extinct species and improve our food and fiber productions. Cloning our ancestors, and even ourselves, was originally popular, but they really will not be us, as even identical twins are not the same person. It is more popular to be a unique person in terms of looks and personality.

**6. Agriculture: The larger agricultural areas are producing energy crops.** Unproductive lands have been returned to wetlands and woodlands for our wildlife, for water storage and for carbon storage or sequestration. Farmers reduce water consumption by irrigating more efficiently and planting crops suited to our climate. Computers provide more precise real-time data on rainfall and evapotranspiration and other factors in their management decisions. Scientific advances

*Hoot continued on next page >*

> *Hoot continued from previous page*

to increase organic crops and livestock farming keep our agriculture flourishing and our children healthy. Many crops, even rice production, are engineered to grow under drought conditions. Hydroponic gardening will be common on farms and households. Single crop farming of only one major crop like citrus is discouraged. Most of our meat comes from locally produced, humanely treated livestock.

**7. Community Gardens: Our former citrus groves within our urban service areas are now private and public community gardens** where citizens are now producing locally available, less expensive and more diverse fresh foods for our consumption just a walk or bicycle ride away. Much more fun than a treadmill.

**8. A Plan: Ecological economics provides the major accounting system to guide our progress towards sustainable development, to assess our progress in meeting environmental and energy challenges.**

Satellite-based land-use studies provide an effective Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) protecting our beaches, lagoon and other key conservation areas. The HCP provides corridors for wildlife as well as agriculture lands. All backyards are interconnected and managed to insure corridors to our conservation areas for our wildlife, connecting the Indian River Lagoon out to Blue Cypress Lake area. It will be nice to be amongst nature, now found to be essential to our health and wellbeing. Our city and yards are green with carbon-absorbing trees, plants and grasses that can be turned into a biofuel to turn us into a true garden city reducing the temperature. All beach and lagoon homes took advantage of federal coastal insurance and have been set back from the water's edge, thereby lessening the danger of raising sea levels and hurricanes to remaining dwellings. All "garbage" is recycled including past garbage dumps.

**9. Environment: Our ocean is blue again and the lagoon clear.** There is no trash on the beach as boaters and ships are recycling all garbage. Folks can again swim and bathe in the lagoon and ocean. We have protected our fish nurseries in the Indian River Lagoon by greatly reducing dredge and fill projects and pollution from drainage canals, agriculture, residential, and roads and street runoff to the west all the way to the Blue Cypress Marsh. In the lagoon, there is a come back of snook, spotted seatrout, red drum, tarpon, and other fish species both for sport fishing and food. Healthy fish, like tuna and swordfish, are easily caught and safe to eat. Our manatees, dolphins, and turtles are disease free. Eatable fish are also grown in our ponds.

Paradise maintained... a very rosy and hopeful vision. We don't have to wait for government or someone else. Change begins with each one of us. Let's begin!

*Richard Baker, President*

## Hawk Flight Video *by Linda Chancellor*

Some people dream of flying and soaring above the earth. Some even try to make the experience real by pursuing sky diving, hang gliding, piloting small aircraft or an ultralite. But none of these give you the true experience of flying like a bird on the wing. Through the advances of technology you can now experience flight without leaving the comfort of your computer chair. Last month I received an email from a friend that directed me to a website with a video produced and played by the BBC (British Broadcasting Company). In this video a camera had been attached to the neck of a Peregrine Falcon. This provided the viewpoint and speed with which this incredible bird climbs and dives as it attempts to capture prey.

Interesting FACT: These beautiful birds of prey can fly at speeds of up to 150 miles an hour when in a nose dive.

The second portion of the video places you on the back of a Goshawk flying through his native forest habitat composed of very closely spaced trees.

Interesting FACT: These birds have developed incredible control of being able to tuck in their wings as they bank and turn to maneuver through these trees.

It's more exciting than a rollercoaster ride in a theme park.

Log on to <http://www.wimp.com/hawkssee>  
Buckle up and take flight.

## Bird Photo of the Month



### Welcoming Spring by Yvonne Lee Tso

Yvonne Lee Tso photographed this Brown Thrasher near her home using a Canon Powershot SX20IS. She said, "This bird has a repertoire of songs to rival the mockingbird!" Read more about this photo, including viewing a large color image along with how to enter your own photographs at [www.pelicanislandaudubon.org](http://www.pelicanislandaudubon.org).



Bob Montanaro

## Use eBird, become a citizen scientist!

<http://eBird.org/>

Do you watch birds, keep a list of birds you see? Are you identifying and counting birds simply for your own information and entertainment? Whether you are amateur, child, or professional, you can contribute to citizen science and help build a mountain of birding data that is helping conservation science track trends, migration and nature's response to climate change.

Just how this is happening was brilliantly described and illustrated with computer graphics by Dr. John Fitzpatrick, director of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology in Ithaca, New York. He explained the contribution citizen science can make to understanding bird science on a global, scale when he talked to the Pelican Island Audubon Society April 18, 2011. His presentation, "Birds Can Save The World," forcefully explained that by identifying where birds are, where they migrate and when, and how this is changing with changing climate conditions leads to identifying Important Bird Areas essential to bird species survival. Thus, doing this across the continent and the length of the western hemisphere—we can find the crucial balance between maintaining intact ecosystems and thriving human cultures over the long term. Birds are the best indicators for these natural systems, Dr. Fitzpatrick said, because birds migrate and depend upon healthy ecosystems providing food (nuts, berries, insects, fish, and other animals) and we have been watching, describing and tracking the birds for decades and will continue to do so.

Where does citizen science come in? Audubon chapter members are collecting birding data daily—at bird feeders, in our backyards, on Birdathons and Christmas bird counts, for example. For a long time professional conservation biologists noted these data sources but did not regard these efforts as 'pure' science. The picture is very different today, with the help of the internet, computer graphics and sophisticated statistical techniques. With the masses of data we all can input, the major trends can be noted, with errors accounted for statistically. Probably the most important tool we have is eBird, begun in 2002 jointly by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society.

eBird has revolutionized the way we can report and access information about birds, allowing all birders as well as ornithologists to share their bird observations. One of the

*by Juanita N. Baker and Graham Cox*

largest data resources in existence is being collected so that we'll know where birds are found, what numbers are being observed and during what seasons, especially useful regarding migratory birds. Maps pinpointing observations from area and county to Northern Hemisphere can be seen online by anyone for free. Accumulating these data over years is resulting in a better understanding of bird distribution across the western hemisphere.

Although anyone can almost immediately start using eBird after signing up, you can take an eBird tutorial on how to best use it at: <http://ebird.org/content/ebird/about/tutorial>. You will find a list of birds where all you do is go down entering the number of each species seen. So far 244 different bird species have been recorded for Indian River County. You can use the internet tools on eBird to maintain your personal bird records and visualize your and other's data with interactive maps, graphs, and bar charts using English, Spanish, or French. Automatically all entries are checked before they are added to the database. If unusual records are identified, local experts review them. If we all begin to help record the birds in our county, eBird states that your contribution, "increases our understanding of the distribution, richness, and uniqueness of the biodiversity of our planet."

Have you ever wondered when the purple martins come in the spring and leave? Or whether your neighbors are seeing the same birds you do? Or whether you have identified a rare bird? Or whether there are fewer blue jays this year? Or whether wood storks are found here all year around? To answer questions like these, join birders across Florida and in our county to enter birds you see or hear. eBird has "become a vast source of bird and environmental information useful not only to bird watchers but to scientists and conservationists the world over." You also will benefit, too. You can see your own bird records anytime you want, in new ways and to answer your own questions about what, when and where you saw birds.

Get your friends, family members, youth, and colleagues to use eBird as well—everyone can find answers to bird questions in the eBird database now and for generations to come.

Call your local Audubon office with your questions: 772-567-3520

## Thank you to

- Robert & Ruth Inhoff for cookies at March general meeting
- Lynn Walsh for cookies at North County Library April meeting
- Lorraine & Peter Sutherland for refreshments at the April general meeting

## ELECTRONIC DELIVERY ENCOURAGED!

Receiving the Peligram via e-mail rather than by snail mail has the advantage of earlier receipt, living color, and it is easier on our budget and the environment. To receive the Peligram electronically, please email [piaudubon@bellsouth.net](mailto:piaudubon@bellsouth.net) to initiate delivery to your e-mail address. PIAS will not release your e-mail address to any third party.

### Pelican Island Audubon Society Officers & Directors

**Officers:** President **Richard H. Baker, Ph.D.**, 1st Vice President **Bob Bruce**, 2nd Vice President **Susan Boyd**, Recording Secretary **Darlene Halliday**, Corresponding Secretary **Peter Sutherland**, Treasurer **Steve Goff** — **Elected Directors:** **Joe Carroll '14**, **Deborah Ecker '14**, **Nancy Irvin '13**, **Bill Loftus, Ph.D. '12**, **John Orcutt, Ph.D. '12**, **Toni Robinson '13** — **Appointed Board Members:** **Leah Blythe**, **Bill Halliday**, **Tina Marchese**, **Neil Stalter**

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.

## Pelican Island Audubon Society 2011 Membership

|                          |      |
|--------------------------|------|
| National Audubon*        | \$20 |
| Pelican Island Audubon** |      |
| Individual               | \$20 |
| Family                   | \$30 |
| Supporting               | \$50 |
| Contribution             | \$   |
| Student***               | \$5  |
| 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*

\*\*\***Student Membership** receive electronic copy of Peligram only - requires e-mail address

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

### E-Mail

Please send your name and address along with a check payable to the "Pelican Island Audubon Society" to:

**Pelican Island Audubon Society**  
**P.O. Box 1833, Vero Beach, FL 32961**

Credit card payments call (772) 567-3520 M - F 9AM-1PM  
Please email us if there is a local environmental issue which concerns you at [piaudubon@bellsouth.net](mailto:piaudubon@bellsouth.net)

## Plant of the Month

Creamy white flowers now bloom atop the aptly named Spanish bayonet (*Yucca aloifolia*). Its dark green bayonet-like leaves are stiff and very sharp tipped. *by Janice Broda*

Spanish bayonets can be found growing very near to the beach, and this suckering plant often forms extensive colonies. These distinctive plants can grow to be more than ten feet tall.

Its dramatic terminal clusters of 3-petaled pendulous flowers can be up to two feet tall. Individual flowers are about two inches in size and sometimes tinged with a tiny bit of dark purple when viewed up close. The flowers are edible and can be used to adorn salads or deep-fried into 'potato chips'.

Its green fruits also are edible, and wildlife including deer, squirrels, and birds spreads the fruits. Mockingbirds reportedly especially relish its fruits.

This plant is in the Agavaceae (Agave) family. Its genus name *Yucca* is the native Haitian name that Linnaeus used for this group of plants. Its species name *aloifolia* references the its resemblance the related aloe plant.



## Spanish Bayonet

*Yucca aloifolia*

Photos by Janice Broda.