

Pelican Island Audubon Society

Peligram

- 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. 8 November 2009

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

The Whooping Crane's Story

The Whooping Crane (scientific name *Grus Americana*) is North America's tallest bird and, in consonance with the Audubon Society's Most Endangered Species List, its third rarest avian species as well (after the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker and the California Condor).

From its first appearance in the fossil records of the Pleistocene Epoch to the present, the Whooping Crane has been neither prolific nor numerous, with maximum populations ranging from an estimated 10,000 birds at its zenith to an actual count of 21 individuals during the 1954-1955 winter season.

Under constant threat both from the actions of Man and Nature's forces, the whooping crane's hold on life, while improving of late, remains tenuous and problematical at best. Its habitat shrunk by drainage and development, its waters polluted, drought-stricken and diverted, its migratory routes threatened with power lines, wind farms, and the occasional uninformed or malevolent hunter, the crane faces a perilous present and an unknown future.

To expand public awareness of this majestic bird and its continuing struggle for survival, *Grus Americana's* tale has been encapsulated in a presentation entitled "THE WHOOPING CRANE'S STORY .. AN ENDLESS VIGIL" by John Canter.

Encompassing the three currently extant major Whooping Crane populations (Aransas/Wood Buffalo, Eastern Migratory and Florida Non-migratory flocks), their histories and evolutions, and addressing the many aspects and interrelationships of the bird's complex and endangered existence, the session provides a comprehensive, professional yet non-technical exploration of one of Nature's more remarkable creatures. As such, it is geared to individuals and organizations that either are interested in learning, for the first time, about *Grus Americana* or who already are dedicated and committed environmentalists, conservationists, birders or "craniacs."

Multimedia in technology (visual and aural) and multi-dimensional in content, the presentation is continuously reviewed and updated as changing environmental conditions, population statistics, successes, failures and initiatives are realized.

The Whooping Crane's story is presented by John Canter, author, researcher, environmentalist, resident of SW Florida, member of the National Audubon Society, International Crane Foundation, and Lifetime Member of the Whooping Crane Conservation Association.

Enjoy light refreshments following the program.

November Field Trip with Rick Lucas

November 14, 2009—Viera Wetlands. Carpoolers meet at McDonalds located at I-95 and County Road 512 (Sebastian/Fellsmere exit). We will leave McDonalds promptly at 6:30am. Directions: I-95 North to Wickam Road Exit, West to end. All vehicles must be registered at office prior to driving on dikes or visiting "click" ponds.

Please call 772-567-3520 for reservations & information.

November 16

**Vero Beach
Community Center
2266 14th Avenue**

7:30 p.m.

Protect Florida's Beaches: Fight Back Against the Oil Companies

Though temporarily blocked, Texas oil companies' plans to put oil rigs three miles from our beaches has entered a "continuing process" to bring back legislation next year to open Florida's nearshore waters to drilling. Contact Florida State Senator Mike Haridopolos and tell him "NO" to opening up Florida's waters to oil drilling.

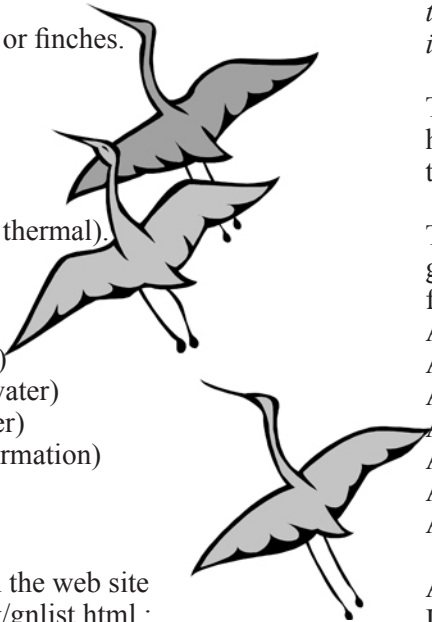
E-Mail: haridopolos.mike.web@flsenate.gov

Phone: (850) 487-5056

A Gaggle of Geese *by Linda Chancellor*

A **gaggle** of Geese, a **flock** of sheep, a **pride** of lions, a **herd** of cattle, a **pack** of wolves. There are many words referring to groups of animals. There are also many words used to describe groups of birds. Are you familiar with?

A **charm** of hummingbirds or finches.
A **band** of jays.
A **company** of parrots.
A **congress** of ravens.
A **cover** of coots.
A **dole** of doves.
A **kettle** of hawks (riding a thermal).
A **murder** of crows.
A **plump** of moorehens.
A **raft** of ducks.
A **team** of ducks. (in flight)
A **paddling** of ducks. (in water)
A **gaggle** of geese. (in water)
A **wedge** of geese. (in V formation)
A **ostentation** of peacocks.
A **parliament** of owls.



According to Terry Ross on the web site www.baltimorebirdclub.org/gnlist.html :

“Any of these group names may properly be used by birders who wish to display their erudition, although it is probably linguistically inaccurate (and it certainly is bad manners)

to upbraid someone who refers to “a bunch of ravens’ by saying, “Surely you mean ‘an unkindness of ravens,’ my good fellow.” Most of these terms date back at least 500 years. Some of them have been in continuous use since then, others have gone out of fashion and been resurrected in the last century or two, still others only exist on lists.”

Today we may not use these words as often as they may have in the past but they may be just the word you need in that next crossword puzzle.

The Baltimore Bird Club also created some whimsical group names (more on their website). A few of my favorites were:

A **snip** of Scissortail Flycatchers.
A **coronation** of Kingbirds.
A **mews** of Catbirds.
A **palette** of Painted Buntings.
An **outfield** of Flycatchers.
An **asylum** of loons.
A **hangover** of Red-eye Vireos.

A **round** of Robins. (suggested by my husband).

I am sure you can come up with a few too. Check out www.birdnature.com/groupname.html as well.
Happy Birding.



About Kayaks

Across from
St. Sebastian River
& Dale Wimbrow Park

772-589-3469
25 Airport Drive West
Sebastian, FL 32958

www.AboutKayaks.net
aboutkayaks@comcast.net

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Keep those recipes and advertisements coming in!

We want to thank all of you who have contributed, so far, to our cookbook project. We still need your help to reach our goal of 450 recipes. So please take a few minutes to share your recipes with us. Please submit them on a 5X8 sheet of paper.

Please send your recipes to:

Darlene Halliday
c/o Pelican Island Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1833
Vero Beach, FL 32961

Or e-mail piaudubon@bellsouth.net

Time is of the essence so please send them soon. The sooner we reach our goal the sooner we can get it to the publisher.

We still have advertising space so if you have a business or an organization you would like to advertise in our cookbook please contact the office. If you do not have a business but would like to contribute, you could help us by adding your name to our patrons page for \$10.00.

We appreciate your timely help in this endeavor.

Help save trees and postage! Read the Peligram online.

If you'd like to have the Peligram emailed monthly,
contact us at piaudubon@bellsouth.net

The President's Hoot

The World is Blue

This weekend, we attended the Audubon Assembly, our annual state meeting. This meeting and the annual Florida Folk Festival on the Suwannee River in White Springs, inspire me to enthusiastically support conservation via our chapter and other community efforts. The Assembly keynote speaker, Dr. Sylvia Earle, is a National Geographic Explorer-in Residence who pilots her own submarines, deep into the ocean. She, of course, showed us the beauty of our vast oceans, but like Rachel Carson in 1962 telling us about ruining our Earth with pesticides, Dr. Earle described how humans have damaged our oceans and that our future fate and the oceans are one.

While "Going Green" makes the headlines, Dr. Earle pointed out that it is the water or "The Blue" of our planet that sustains our life. Some have claimed we should have called our planet "Ocean" instead of "Earth" as we would be more likely reminded that like Mars, we would not exist without our water. Although water is common in the universe, it is from our oceans 4 billion years ago that the plants, animals, and many of our rocks and landscapes were formed, but they are now being destroyed in less than 100 years. Our oceans with the sun provide the energy for our continued stay here.

Our oceans hold 97 percent of our water and embrace 97 percent of our planet, which determines our climate and weather, our temperature, and absorbs much of our atmosphere's CO₂. The oceans cover about 75% of the globe, but that does not include freshwater, ice, or clouds. The water we drink and the food we eat all depend ultimately upon the existence of our seas, as every spoonful is full of life and there would not be enough rain without the ocean. Sometimes we forget over half of our body weight is water as are most plants and animals. Every other breath we take is a result of half of our atmosphere oxygen coming from ocean photosynthesis as aquatic blue-green bacteria and other ocean organisms produce 50% of our oxygen!

Dr. Earle pointed out that during the last 50 years our planet's human population has doubled, our ocean life has dramatically decline during this period:

- Hundreds of millions of tons of ocean wildlife have been removed from the sea and replaced with equivalent weight in waste.
- 95% of the bluefin tuna, Atlantic cod, American eel, and certain sharks have been killed. Even parrotfish, which Dr. Earle calls the songbirds of the ocean, are now even being sold in China because many of the fish we used to eat are no longer available.
- Fishing techniques- trawls, longlines, and rockhopping dredges- have destroyed habitats and killed millions of tons of animals. Industrial fishing wantonly kills hundreds of marine mammals, seabirds, and sea turtles, hundreds of millions of fish and invertebrate animals while trying to catch fish to sell.
- Half of shallow coral reefs globally are gone or in seri-

ous decline; 80% in the Caribbean are dead. (Our local reefs have declined because of beach renourishment and freshwater release from Lake Okeechobee).

- Similarly deep coral reefs are destroyed by new deep trawling technologies.
- More than 400 "dead zones" have formed recently in coastal waters due to heavy fertilizer runoff, which causes algae to consume all the oxygen, thus killing life.
- Global warming is making the oceans acidic and affecting the coral reefs and all life.

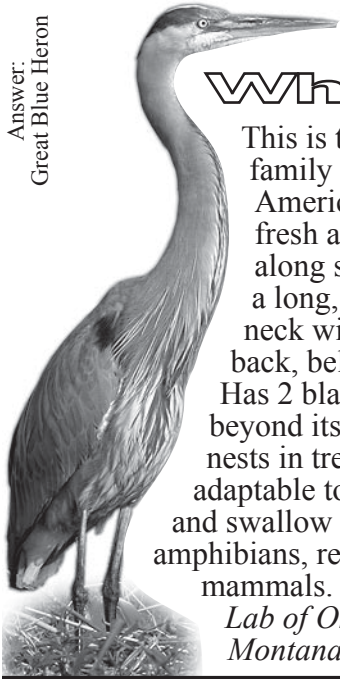
Fortunately, Dr. Earle says we have not reached the point of no return. We have the knowledge, and scientists to have a chance to recover and shape and clean our water circulation system. We should not eat the songbirds of the sea, as we do not on land. While not all of us can work at Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution or the Smithsonian Marine Station, we in Indian River County can do our part by actively participating in local and state government decisions regarding:

- Saving our seagrass fish nurseries from prop dredging and dredging channels and our mangroves and wetlands from development.
- Recycling our waste.
- Using no or little fertilizers.
- Stopping polluting our rivers, bays, and oceans (as Earle says "the ultimate Dumpster.")
- Educating others on the importance our ocean and its recycling via rainfall.
- Conserving our freshwater system/canals and keeping them clean and healthy.
- Stopping oil drilling in Florida's inshore that can harm coral and fish with spills.
- Eating less tuna, swordfish, and other top predators of our oceans. Large fish like cows consume much and live longer (thereby cost more ecologically) before getting to our tables. These fish are concentrating more mercury. According to Dr. Grant Gilmore, the best top predator to eat is mahi mahi as they mature in 3 months from the egg and have a relative short life span, reproduce and feed in the open ocean.
- Stopping overharvesting of our sea creatures and using nets, which capture and harm sea lions, turtles, and other rejected fish.
- Preserving our coral.

I recommend reading Earle's book, *The World is Blue- How our Fate and the Ocean's are one* (2009). She also wrote *Sea Change*. Her talk and book, give me second thoughts about eating tuna sushi and other wild caught seafood. She complimented Audubon on having chicken for the evening meal! I can assure you that reading Earle's book about tuna, sharks, and lobsters is more fun than eating them.

Richard Baker, President

Answer:
Great Blue Heron



Who is this?

This is the largest bird in the Heron family found throughout North America living in a variety of fresh and saltwater wetlands and along seacoasts. Has long legs, a long, thick bill, and a long "S"-neck with mainly bluish-gray back, belly, and wing feathers. Has 2 black plumes extending back beyond its head and neck. Usually nests in trees; eats primarily fish but is adaptable to eating whatever it can catch and swallow including invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and small mammals. *Species info from Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Photo by Bob Montanaro.*

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	_____
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

Plant of the Month

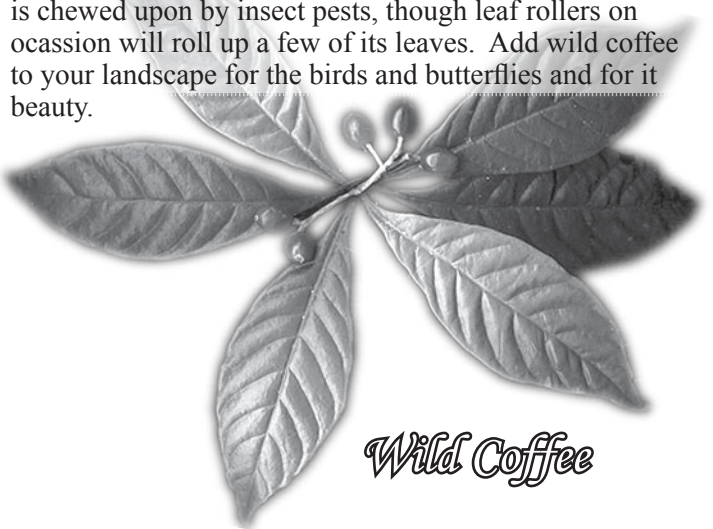
by Janice Broda

Shiny-leaved wild coffee (*Psychotria nervosa*) is a beautiful hammock plant that deserves a place in many landscapes. You can see wild coffee full of its bird-attracting maroon fruits at the Oslo Riverfront Conservation Area and in many of the natural areas purchased for preservation by Indian River County.

Its deeply-veined, glossy opposite leaves give rise to its species name, *nervosa*, and resemble the leaves of the gardenia. Both gardenia and wild coffee are members of the Rubiaceae, or madder, family, as is the coffee of commerce. Unlike gardenia flowers, wild coffee flowers are small and not especially fragrant to you and me. Nonetheless, insects, including our state butterfly, the zebra longwing, nectar upon its flowers in the spring and summer.

During the fall, birds, squirrels, and other small creatures consume its fleshy fruits. Each fruit contains a single seed, which, after roasting, can be brewed to make a vile-tasting beverage that causes bad headaches. The generic name, *Psychotria*, means 'life' and refers to the vivifying properties of some of the members of this genus.

As a landscape plant, wild coffee usually grows to about six feet tall. Found in hammocks from the backside of the beach dune and throughout our county, this tropical plants thrives best in partial shade and is an excellent choice for under live oak trees. Well-adapted, this native plant rarely is chewed upon by insect pests, though leaf rollers on occasion will roll up a few of its leaves. Add wild coffee to your landscape for the birds and butterflies and for its beauty.



Wild Coffee

Maroon berries for birds

Photo by Bob Montanaro.

Advertise in the Peligram

**Call 772-567-3520 for information
or email piaudubon@bellsouth.net**