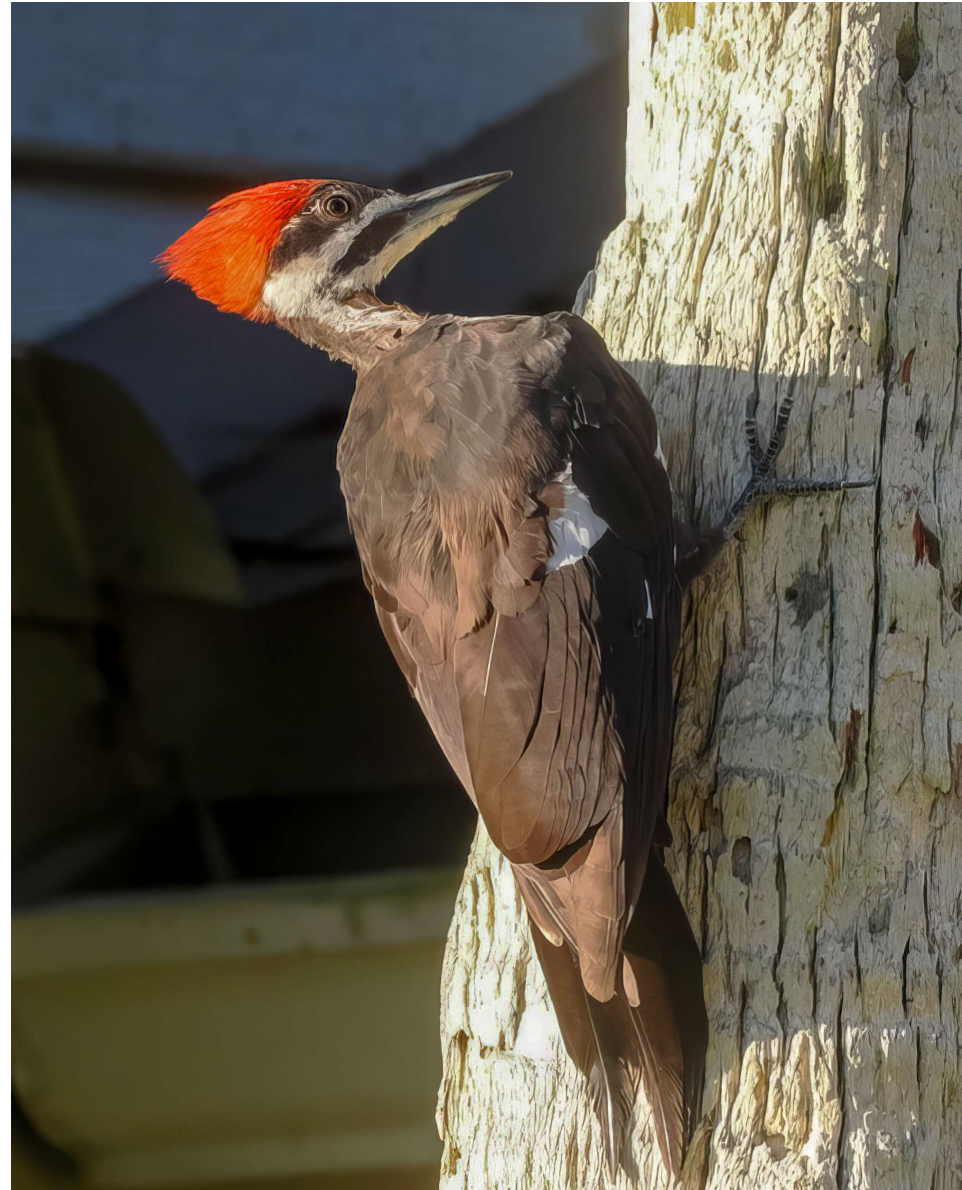




Annual Meeting of
the Members

April 19, 2025



Today's Agenda

Introduction and Volunteers: Presented by
President Amy Koch

Director and Officer Elections: Presented
by Nominating Committee Chair James Hill

Treasurer's Report: Presented by SJRA
Treasurer Jan Lucas

Events and Administrative Report:
Presented by Amy Koch

Education Committee Report: Presented
by Education Chair: Kate Teafor

Native Plants Committee Report:
Presented by Amy Koch in absence of
Plants for Birds Chair Laurie Gilmore

Our Bluebird Box trail monitoring by
Elizabeth Cernik

A look at our collaborations and 2025-26
Season Plans: Presented by Amy Koch

Let's chat: Moderated by Amy Koch

Photo by Mary Conte





About Us

- All volunteer organization
- About 800 members and growing
- 97 events/tables/talks this season
- Nearly 40 active member volunteers
- One of the most active chapters in NE Florida



**We couldn't do
anything without you!**

Eva Askew-Houser

Spencer Baba

Josh and Brenda Barea

Bill Bowen

Jorge Buening

Linda Burek

Debrah Carlson

Photo by Eva Askew-Houser



**We couldn't do
anything without you!**

Debrah Carlson

Elizabeth Cernick

Blair Clark

Mary Conte

Peggy Cook

Jodi Copeland

Kailey DiMonda

Photo by Mary Conte



**We couldn't do
anything without you!**

Dan Dodge

Reesa Fassett

Tamara Galbraith

Laurie Gilmore

Mindy Hellman

James Hill

Mandy Hume

Photo by James Hill



**We couldn't do
anything without you!**

Kevin Jordan

Sue Killeen

Pam Kleinsasser

Pat Kleinsasser

Tasha Kline

Amy Koch

Photo by Amy Koch

**We couldn't do
anything without you!**

Amy Logan

Rhonda Lovett

Jan Lucas

Bill McNee

Will Misner

Stacey Roesch

**Peregrine
Falcon
Southern (juvenile)**

Rhonda K. Lovett
RHONDA K. LOVETT IMAGES

Photo by Rhonda K. Lovett



**We couldn't do
anything without you!**

Kate Teaford

Craig Van Boskirk

Zila Wapinski

Ryan Wheeler

Dave Wiinikainen

Laura Winston

Photo by Rebecca Thomas

Director Elections

Led by
Nominating
Committee
Chair
James Hill

- We have four Director nominations from the Nominating Committee.
- The Nominating Committee has one candidate each for the four Officer positions.
- A voice vote will be taken on the each of Nominating Committee's slates if there are no floor nominations.
- A show of hands for each candidate will be done if there are floor nominations.
- A simply majority is needed to elect a Director and Officer.



Photo by James Hill



The Director Candidates

- Nominating Committee candidates:
 - Eva Askew-Houser
 - Jorge Buening
 - Dan Dodge
 - Jan (Hix) Lucas

Director Candidate

Eva Askew- Houser

- Eva is has been a Director for 4 years.
- She leads our Owl Prowl walks.
- Eva also works tirelessly on the Education Team, acts as an Assistant Bird Walk Leader, and helps with many of our tabling events.



Director Candidate

Jorge Buening

- Jorge has been a Board member for 2 years.
- He is senior biologist with the Welaka National Fish Hatchery and is our liaison with the Hatchery.
- Jorge is part of our new Conservation Advocacy team.
- He has also been instrumental in helping us build relationships in eastern Putnam County.



Director Candidate

Dan Dodge

- Dan has been on the Board and our Vice President for 2 years.
- He is from Putnam County and has helped us expand our contacts and services in eastern Putnam County.



Director Candidate

Jan (Hix) Lucas

- Jan has been on the Board and been our Treasurer for 4 years.
- She also works on the Education Committee and acts as an Assistant Bird Walk Leader.
- Jan has been one of our most stalwart tabling volunteers.





The Director Candidates

Any Director
Candidate
nominations
from the Floor?

Photo by Eva Askew-Houser

Director Member Elections

- **Vote on Eva Askew-Houser**

- Is there a second?
- All in favor?
- Any opposed?

- **Vote on Jorge Buening**

- Is there a second?
- All in favor?
- Any opposed?

- **Vote on Dan Dodge**

- Is there a second?
- All in favor?
- Any opposed?

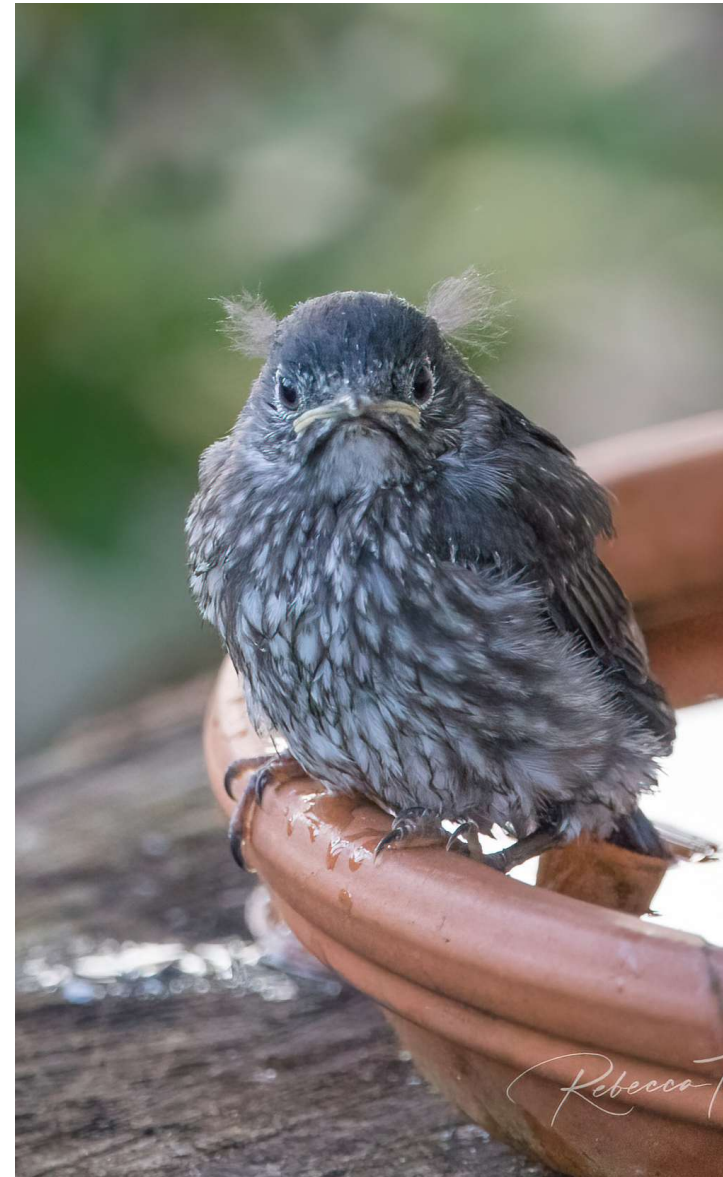
- **Vote on Jan Lucas**

- Is there a second?
- All in favor?
- Any opposed

- **Vote on a Floor-nominated
Candidate**

- Is there a second?
- All in favor?
- Any opposed?

Photo by Rebecca Thomas





Officer Elections

- **President – Amy Koch**
- **Treasurer – Jan Lucas**
- **Vice President – Dan Dodge**
- **Secretary – Mindy Hellman**
- Any floor nominations for one of these positions?

Photo by Mary Conte

Director and
Officer
Election
Results





Treasurer's Report – Financial Overview 1

- Fiscal Year August 1, 2023 thru July 31, 2024
- Income Sources
 - Membership Dues
 - Donations
 - Fundraising
- Expenditures
 - Administrative
 - Contributions
 - Grants/Scholarships
 - Promotions/Projects

Photo by Rebecca Thomas

Treasurer's Report – Financial Overview 2

- Fiscal Year 8/1/2023 – 7/31/2024
 - Revenue = \$16,969 (\$10,576 donations; \$6,393 membership fees)
 - Expenditures = \$47,138 (\$3,150 donations/grants; \$9,272 admin cost; \$34,716 project)
- Fiscal Year to Date 8/1/2024 – 3/31/2025
 - Revenue = \$7,815 (\$3,190 donations/grants; \$4,625 membership fees)
 - Expenditures = \$8,573 (\$417 donations/grants; \$7,740 admin cost; \$416 project)

Photo by Rebecca Thomas



Treasurer's Report – Financial Overview 3

Audit results (thanks to **Reesa Fawcett**)

- 2023 audit recommendation to adopt a balance sheet & fiscal controls for unplanned expenditure have been implemented
- The 2024 audit was completed 4/6/2025 with no issues
- Recommendation: Establish a minimum cash balance year-over-year to ensure continued operation

Photo by Mary Conte





2024-25 Events

This Season (September 2024 – May 2025): **97 Events**

- **All done by nearly 40 volunteers!**
- **59** Bird Walks and Field Trips
- **31** Educational and Tabling Events
 - Educational events for kids
 - eBird trainings
 - Talks to other groups
 - Flagler College classes
- **2** social events
- **5** Litter Gitter Trips

Also **2** Monthly Bird Counts at local golf courses

Note: We did a total of 70 events last season.



Upcoming Events

Apr. 24: Litter Gitter with Dave Wiinikainen (could use some volunteers!)

Apr. 30: Explore Florida: Olustee State Historic Battleground Park with Sue Killeen

May 1: St. Augustine Audubon Native Plant Garden tour from 9 -11:00 AM (stop by!)

May 3: GTMNERR with Linda Burek



Upcoming Events

May 8: Matanzas Inlet with Peggy Cook

May 10: Explore Florida: Fort George Island and Kingsley Plantation with Sue Killeen

May 15: Litter Gitter with Dave Wiinikainen

May 17: Anastasia State Park with Sue Killeen



Education Programs Overview led by Kate Teaford

- Partnership with St. Johns County Parks and Recreation for children
- Young Birder Grants and Scholarships
- High School Independent Study Program
- Sponsor of the Florida Young Birders Club
- Grants for Teachers
- Educational programs for home schoolers and elementary school programs
- Adult Education
- Public Outreach

Photo by Eva Askew-Houser



Young Birders

- We now have a second young Bird Walk Leader (in addition to **Blair Clark**): **Will Misner** (at the left)
 - **Blair** is off to the University of Florida, but only after being named a **Junior Instructor for Field Ornithology at Hog Island** this summer.
 - **Will** is our newest Bird Walk Leader! He attends lives in Jacksonville, but has ties to St. Johns County. Not only is this high school sophomore at terrific birder, but he is also a wonderful photographer and is **co-instructing at the Florida Birding and Photography Festival**.

Kids Education Team

Kate Teaford
Eva Askew-Houser
Jan Lucas
Blair Clark



Education Programs for Kids



- We are a sponsor of the Florida Young Birders Club and hosted a walk led by **Blair Clark**.
- We held educational lessons and follow-up bird walks for home school groups, including the Wholesome Homeschool Co-op and the Washington Classical Christian School.
- We partner with St. Johns County Parks and Recreation for family bird walks, as well as sessions with homeschool groups.



Education Programs for all ages

The Library Backpack Program

Thanks to **Kate Teaford:**

- In an effort to make birding available to all, we have donated 3 birding backpacks to the St. Johns County Public Library system.
- The public can check out a backpack that contains an adult AND child's binoculars. Also included is a Sibley's field guide and a map of local hotspots.
- One more backpack is reserved and to be delivered to the Crescent City library in Putnam County.

Education Programs for all ages

Public Outreach – Tabling Events

- We participated in several tabling events in the community thanks mainly to **Kate Teaford, Jan Lucas, and Eva Askew-Houser**:
 - St. Augustine Alligator Farm Zoological Park
 - St. Augustine Shores
 - Trailmark Feet on the Ground
 - Bartram Frolic in Palatka
 - GTM NERR Estuary Festival
 - Crescent City Arbor Day





Adult Education

- Participated in Flagler College's Lifelong Learning Program with four classes led by **Jorge Buening, Sue Killeen, and Amy Koch.**
- Held eBird classes for St. Johns County Parks and Recreation and a St. Augustine HOA group thanks to **Sue Killeen.**
- Developed a presentation on 'what birds need' and presented it to the Switzerland Garden Club and Annual Florida Garden Clubs Convention.

LIFELONG LEARNING



BIRDS AND BIRDING

October 22: Birding 101 (ornithology and biology) with Jorge Buening

October 29: Why birds matter and what they need with Amy Koch

November 5: Birding 102 (eBird) with Sue Killeen

November 9: Bird walk at Vail Point with Sue Killeen (9:00 AM)

Native Plant Committee

- Plants for Birds Chair **Laurie Gilmore** leads this Committee.
- The St. Augustine Audubon Native Plant Garden was installed in April 2024.



Please consider donating to the
St. Augustine Audubon Native
Plant Garden Maintenance Fund!





Garden Facts

- It took two years to design and permit the garden - including archeological and architectural review before final City Commission approval.
- Installation cost: Approximately \$35,000.
- Construction required new topsoil to ensure that no plantings disturbed more than 3 inches (depth) of the pre-existing topsoil to avoid site-specific archeological review.

Post-Milton photos by Mary Conte

Garden Facts

- We developed a wide, shallow mound surrounded by a native coquina rock retaining wall to hold the new soil in place.
- The mound and coquina retaining wall allowed us to plant over 25 native species without breaking more than 3 inches of ground.
- Outside the coquina retaining wall, Sunshine Mimosa was installed as ground cover for its durability because the garden is located in a much-visited area.
- We also installed an interpretative sign for the garden and installed individual plant identification signs with QR codes for the specific species we installed.





Native Plant Committee

- 9 volunteers maintain the garden (including Bill Bowden, who mows) and the list keeps growing!
- City officials are delighted at how well the Garden Team is maintaining the garden.
- This team also holds public events at the garden for the SJRA.



Native Plant Committee

- Held our first open house for the garden in March.
- A second open house is scheduled for May 1 from 9-11:00 AM.



Our CLI Student Elizabeth Cernik

- Elizabeth (Liz) Cernik is a graduating senior at Flagler College (biology major).
- Several months ago, she approached us about volunteering.
- We were able to get her enrolled in Audubon Florida's "Conservation Leadership Initiative" program.
- Liz's project was monitoring and maintaining the 20 Bluebird Boxes we installed at the Welaka Hatchery.
- **Liz is the new Shorebird Steward Monitor for St. Johns County this summer!**

Nale, M. (2021, March 24). Nature's ways: One of everyone's favorites - The eastern bluebird. StateCollege.com.
<https://www.statecollege.com/articles/community/natures-ways-one-of-everyones-favorites-the-eastern-bluebird/>
Photo by: Darla Shank



Monitoring Eastern Bluebirds

Creation of Bluebird trails

- - Eastern bluebird populations decreased 90% between the 1920's and 1990's
- - Introduced, invasive house sparrows outcompete Bluebirds
- - Use of pesticide DDT was outright killing eastern bluebirds
- Solution?
- - Blue bird trails were created, and successfully restored bluebird populations



Kaufman, K. and K. (2023, March 15). How to keep sparrows out of bluebird houses. Birds and Blooms. <https://www.birdsandblooms.com/birding/attracting-birds/bird-nesting/keeping-house-sparrows-bluebird-boxes/>
Photo by: Ralph Kiertianis

Blue bird nesting

- - Nest building starts in February
- - Females build a majority of the nests
- - One week after nest building is complete, the female lays eggs
- - One clutch contains on average 5 eggs
- - 13-16 days after the female lays eggs, they hatch
- - Chicks fledge after about 17-21 days after hatching



Welaka National Fish hatchery

20 Nest boxes







Report

- 48 eggs laid
- 45 hatched
- 45 fledged



Reference

- History. Florida Bluebird Society. (n.d.). <https://floridabluebirdsociety.org/history/>
- Ask IFAS - Powered by EDIS. (n.d.). WEC442/UW487: Wildlife of florida fact sheet: Eastern bluebird. <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/UW487>



Partnerships and Collaborations 1

- Litter Gitter partnership with the Matanzas Riverkeeper thanks to **Dave Wiinikainen**
- Friends of Dunns Creek State Park (second year)
- EagleWatch/Center for Birds of Prey



Partnerships and Collaborations 2

- St. Johns County Parks and Recreation programs led by **Kate Milutin Teaford** and **Amy Koch**
- Welaka National Fish Hatchery thanks to **Jorge Buening**
- The Alligator Farm Zoological Park
- Shorebird Stewarding program



Partnerships and Collaborations 3

- City of St. Augustine:
 - The Native Plant Garden thanks to **Laurie Gilmore**
 - Dr. Robert B. Hayling Freedom Park thanks to **James Hill**
 - Fish Island Preserve
- Flagler College
- Audubon Florida's Conservation Leadership Initiative





2025-26 Season Plans (so far)

- Maintain the Garden
- Continue to build on our education programs
- Continue the large number of bird walks and field trips
- Continue to formalize our volunteer processes with **Mindy Hellman** as our Volunteer Coordinator
- **More happy hours** and fewer on-line presentations



2025-26 Season Plans (some specifics)

- Continue to build out a “try birding” for adults program in conjunction with the St. Johns County Parks and Recreation.
- Build out a better HOA and homeowners’ program with the St. Johns County Master Gardeners, to include Merlin Bird ID and eBird, and native plant advocacy.

Photo by Rebecca Thomas

Let's Chat!



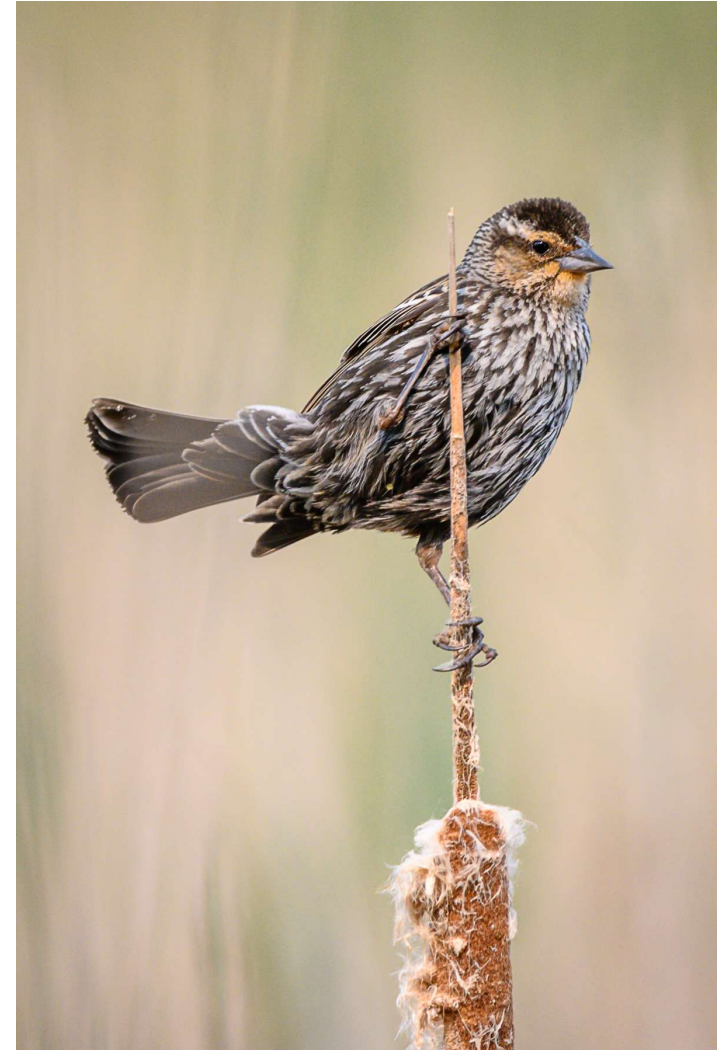
Photo by Eva Askew-Houser

Planning for our Future

Our Events

1. What do you like about our bird walks? What don't you like?
2. Should we do more evening walks?
3. What about Sunday walks?
4. In an effort to reach people of a varied age ranges, should we offer different times during the day?
“Birding for late sleepers” for example, even though we may see fewer birds?

Photo by Mary Conte



Planning for our Future

Our Events

1. Should we hold more social events? Weekend mornings? Afternoons? Evening?
2. Should we do more overnight trips? If so, to where?
3. Should we hold specific walks for beginners?
4. Would you come to any of these?



Photo by Mary Conte

Planning for our Future

What should our priorities be?

How do we grow?

1. What should our priorities be?
 - Bird walks
 - Education
 - The native plant garden
 - Conservation advocacy
 - What else?
2. Would you want to be part of a local advocacy team?
3. How can we bring more people – particularly young people - into the Chapter?
4. Should we focus more on native plant gardening to attract more members?



Planning for our
Future

Further thoughts?

Contact us!

