



# Sun City Center Audubon Club

August/September 2023



## *Trail Blazing*

*John Lampkin*

For their tunnel excavation skills, let's give the mole a big hand. Wait...Mother Nature gave moles a big hand already! Since moles spend nearly all their time underground, one seldom gets a good look at their anatomy. However, an Eastern Mole showed up dead of unknown causes on the SCC Nature Trails during our Earth Day celebration and gave us a rare opportunity to explore how moles can tunnel beneath our toes at a rate of 18 feet per hour. I grabbed my camera, held my nose, and clicked away. The photo shows the mole's left fore-palm with the thumb on the left side of the image. On the palm's right side is a swollen growth that looks like a second thumb starting to develop. But an X-ray would show that the bone is not a digit at all, but rather a long extension of a wrist bone. Together with the impressive claws, the result is a paddle-like paw that can move a lot of terra firma in a hurry. It's all in the wrist, so we say then that single-handedly, the digging mole gives fresh meaning to the term "carpal tunnel." Hah.



Two thumbs up for the mole! Well, almost...

There is a "rule" that mammal species are allowed only a total of ten fingers so despite the mole's apparent infraction, the rule does hold at a skeletal level. The growth of extra digits does occur in mammals as a genetic aberration and is known as "polydactyly" (sounds like something a parrot would have). As a professional pianist I often wished for an extra pinky or thumb for particularly tricky virtuosic passages, but I quickly realized that it would then be difficult to find gloves that fit. When they do occur in humans, superfluous digits are excised soon after birth. But wow, I'll bet that a mole would give its right arm for an extra thumb or two!

The Nature Trails trailhead is located opposite North Lake on Del Webb West between Vincennes and Seton Hall. John Lampkin leads walks on the first Tuesday of each month at 9 am. Join us as we give a big thumbs up to the wonders of Nature.

John Lampkin  
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## *News from our Master Birder*

*Ray Webb*

Our September field trip has been set up; we will visit **Boyd Hill Nature Preserve** in Pinellas County on Thursday, September 21. We will return to birding here, as the fall migration will be in full swing.

You can sign up for this trip on our website, [scccaudubonclub.com](http://scccaudubonclub.com)

You can also still sign up for our August field trip, to **Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium**, which is on August 17, which requires prepayment. Full trip details for both of these trips are available on the website.

## *It's Bluebird Season*



*Box #10 June 22, 2022*



*They are ready to fledge*



*Box 10 June 29, 2023  
This is the box near the Atrium*



[www.sccaudubonclub.com](http://www.sccaudubonclub.com)

### **“Yes, Birding does change your brain”**

Neuroscientists puzzling over how human memory and learning function often turn to birdwatchers to connect the dots. Check out this website for more details.

[Yes, Birding Does Change Your Brain | Audubon](#)



## *More Bluebirds moving in!*

On Thursday, June 22nd, Melanie Higgins, Carl Zajac and Larry Walsh met with Carolyn Deming, club member and resident of Freedom Plaza, to install five (5) bluebird nest boxes located around the main tower.

The Sun City Center Audubon Club's Larry Walsh has agreed to monitor the five boxes during breeding season. Thank you, Larry!



## **Ft De Soto Park Fledges First American Oystercatchers in More than 20 Years!**

[Fort De Soto Park Fledges First American Oystercatchers in More than 20 Years | Audubon Florida](#)



## Tampa History Museum

*On July 11, Linda Floyd led ten of us to the Tampa History Museum in the Channelside district. Here we all enjoyed John Costin's exhibit entitled "Etched Feathers." Mr. Costin used special techniques to give his bird drawings a dramatic three-dimensional effect. Following this, we had a luncheon at the Columbia Cafe within the Museum.*



*Welcome to the Trail*



*Stroll by & check out the new signs!*

