



Sun City Center Audubon Club

January 2024

Prez Ponderings January 2024

2023 was a good year for us in many ways; first & foremost, we celebrated our 50th Wedding Anniversary with 50+ family & friends in August in Louisville, Ky. Then in the fall, the Nominating Committee asked us to consider being nominated for the position of Co-Presidents, which we accepted after due consideration. We have enjoyed our past six years with the club, forging new friendships, learning about birds, nature, & the environment. The field trips have always been enjoyable & educational for us. Accepting this position is our way of giving back to the club that has given us so much already. We hope to help maintain & expand membership in our community.

The exciting announcement at the Dec. 2nd meeting was the resumption of overnight trips in 2024! The field trip committee has developed a two-day/one-night trip to Wakulla Springs on March 4th, staying overnight in the lodge, then traveling to the Butterfly Rain Forest in Gainesville on our return trip to home on March 5th. See Ray Webb at the Field Trips table to leave a deposit for this outing.

A tip of the hat to Dennis Morris for his dedication to the Audubon Club, first as Membership Chair, then as President for the past two years. He has been an immense help to us as we get our feet under us in our new role. We have seen our numbers rise above pre-Covid levels under his leadership, while expanding our participation in local birding events, and establishing a trust through the Community Foundation Tampa Bay with help from Melanie Higgins, now in charge of Programs.

We would like to give a shout-out to Patsie Ginley for her outstanding work as Vice-President—Programs, bringing speakers to our monthly meetings for the past several years. We have always been impressed with the quality of the speakers and the interesting topics they have discussed. Patsie has agreed to stay on the board as a Member at Large.

Don't miss our January 6th meeting, where George Heinrich, Field Biologist, will give his presentation about Suwannee Cooters at the SCC Community Hall, 1910 S. Pebble Beach Blvd, at 10:00 a.m.

Audubon Club member & author John Lampkin will regale us with his "Bugs In Your Bloomers" program on February 3rd, back at the Florida Room in the Atrium Building.

Be sure to sign up for the January 16th field trip to nearby Wild Florida Sanctuary in Riverview, and the February 23rd trip to The Celery Fields in Sarasota.

Make sure you visit our Marketing table and field trip table when you attend next month.

And don't forget—if you have not already paid your 2024 Dues (only \$10 annually), you can remedy that when you check in at the front desk at the January 6th meeting.

Nancy & Alan Renfrow, Co-Presidents

Email: ac.coprez@gmail.com

Phone: 847 989 9310

Happy New Year

Don't forget to VOLUNTEER!

Greetings!

January Club Meeting

Bird & Nature Art Festival

Saturday, January 6, 2024

COMMUNITY HALL

S. Pebble Beach Blvd.

If you have signed up to display your art work, please bring in your art work on Saturday at 8:15 to 8:30. There will be several volunteers to help set up the display.

When you arrive, you'll receive:

A personalized printed display card

A display location

Along with a mention in the Festival brochure

Please call Pam Viner at 518-322-9590



Outgoing Sun City Center Audubon Club President Dennis Morris congratulates 2024's newly elected club co-presidents Alan and Nancy Renfrow at the December 2nd meeting in the South Campus Community Hall. The membership in attendance also elected Melanie Higgins as the Programs Chairperson. She replaces Patsie Ginley. Board Members Pam and George Viner, co-treasurers, were re-elected for next year.

Happy New Year....and HELP!

Hello Audubon peeps! You may have heard that I am Programs Chair for the 2024/2025 Audubon Club Season. We will be researching and scheduling programs for October 2024 through April 2025. Planning will begin soon after the holidays and I would like YOUR ideas.

New to Florida? What would you like to learn about – seasonal birds, local wildlife, bird observation tips, local environmental issues, specific preserves, plants, marine life; those are just a few ideas.

Been here for a while? Are there memorable speakers you would like to see return? Or topics we haven't covered but should? Let us know and be specific!

The goal is to let the membership drive the programs.

There will be a survey on your table at the next membership meeting asking for program and field trip suggestions, please take the time to complete it. But also feel free to contact me directly at melaniephiggins@gmail.com and if you're interested in a one-time meeting to plan programming for 2024/2025 be sure to let me know!

Thanks!

Peace.

Melanie P. Higgins

813-625-1271



Alan & Nancy Renfrow, Betty Giles, Pam & George Viner

SCC Audubon Board 2024

We're on the road again!

Thanks to our many energetic and dedicated members we have an overnight field trip planned for 2024. This two-day/one-night trip will be to Wakulla Springs on March 4th, we will be staying overnight at the Wakulla Lodge in Crawfordville, FL

There will be a limited number of rooms available, so please see Ray Webb at the Field Trip table at our Saturday meeting on January 6 to leave a deposit for your room. Don't miss out on the fun. Sign up NOW.



PROGRAMS 2024

- 01/06/24 **Suwanee Cooters**
George Heinrich
Field Biologist
(*Community Hall)
- 02/03/24 **Bugs in your Bloomers**
John Lampkin
- 03/02/24 **The Importance of Urban Forests**
Edward Meucke
COT Forester
- 04/06/24 **Florida Wildlife Corridor**
Marley Fuller
Wildlife Corridor

News from our Master Birder

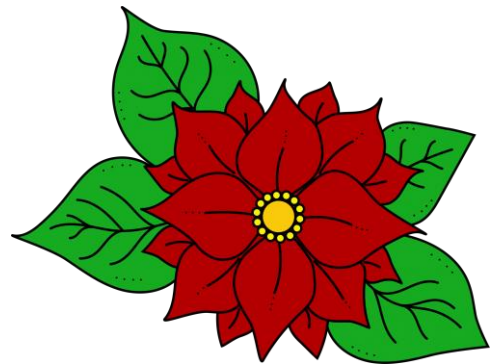
Ray Webb

2024 will kick off with a local field trip on January 16. Wild Florida Sanctuary, located in Riverview, was recommended at one of our field trip meetings. There are many species of birds and animals here to see. We will meet at 10 AM for this trip; bring your own lunch.

In February we will visit The Celery Fields in Sarasota, and in March we will go to the Venice Rookery. Also in March is our overnight trip to Wakulla Lodge, up near Tallahassee. You can sign up for any of these trips at our meetings, or online.

Field Trips 2024

- 01/16/24 **Wild Florida Sanctuary**
Riverview, FL
- 02/23/24 **The Celery Fields**
Sarasota, FL
- 03/28/24 **Venice Rookery**
Venice FL
- 04/17/24 **Fort Desoto County Park**
Pinellas County, FL



For information on Programs & Field Trips please visit our website at www.sccaudubonclub.com

Boyd Hill Birds of Prey Presentation SCC Audubon December Meeting

Attention Members!

If you enjoyed the Dec. 2nd Birds of Prey presentation by **Friends of Boyd Hill Nature Preserve**, you can show your support for their work by either donating to their fund and/or buying merchandise such as t-shirts, hats, etc. directly from their website. The website is <https://ecojoia.com/collections/friends-of-boyd-hill>

Photos by J. N. Perian, Jr.



Helen Taylor holding an adult red tail hawk with its wings spread wide.



This North American Kestrel once called a "Sparrow Hawk," because of its small size, about as big as a Blue Jay. But it's an excellent hunter and can hover like a helicopter over its prey, without the assistance of the wind.



Gray Morph Screech Owl looks like a miniature sized Great Horned Owl. It's not much bigger than a Starling and weighs in at a whopping 4 ounces. The word "Morph" refers to a birds' color phase. With the Eastern Screech Owl, there are typically the red and gray plumage varieties.



Raptor volunteer Donna Conroy holds "Sal", a Florida Crested Caracara. This bird of prey is featured on Mexico's National Flag and is misrepresented as an Eagle. It's really a Falcon, though it doesn't exhibit the usual Falcon-like appearance or behavior. It's got extremely long legs and stubby wings. And, instead of swooping down on its prey, it prefers to run after it like Africa's Secretary Bird.



Florida Barred Owl, also traditionally known as a "Hoot Owl," from its song, "Hoo-Hoo-Too-Hoo." The Barred Owl is almost as large as a Great Horned Owl but doesn't have tufted (ear) feathers. It usually feeds on small mammals, it will also eat frogs, toads and salamanders.



The skull photos are of a great horned owl. It was shown to the audience to get a perspective of how large the eyes are. Typically, an owl's eyes are a third of the size of its head.

Entertainment by John Lampkin



Members Corner



Congratulations to John Lampkin for submitting the runner-up in the 2023 Texas Butterfly Festival North American Butterfly photo contest. While John's photo of a Henry's Elfin came in a very close second to the Grande Prix winner, it is still a winner. Way to go, John!

Natural Butterfly@NatButterflies
<https://twitter.com/NatButterflies>

RAPTOR FEST

The **Boyd Hill Nature Preserve** in Southeastern St. Petersburg will host its annual "Raptor Fest" on **Saturday, February 3, 2024** at its facility and grounds at 1101 Country Club Way South, St. Petersburg, FL, from 10am-4pm.

Trained Birds of Prey and their handlers will present a Free Flight Show of the raptors' talents. There will also be lectures about Florida's native predatory birds and photo opportunities with live hawks, owls and falcons. Food and drinks will be available for purchase, environmental exhibits, bird walks and other activities for children and families.

Parking at the main entrance to the preserve will be reserved for Handicap Permit Parking only. For everyone else, free parking will be provided at Lakewood High School at 1400 - 54th Ave. South and at Lake Vista Recreation Center at 1401 - 62nd Ave. South. **NO PETS PLEASE.** Only trained Service Dogs and Seeing Eye Dogs will be permitted at the festival. For more information, contact the Boyd Hill Nature Preserve at 727-893-7326. Additional information can be found at its website at RaptorFest.org

Officers & Committee Chairs 2024

<i>Co-Presidents</i>	<i>Nancy & Alan Renfrow</i>
<i>Programs Chairperson</i>	<i>Melanie Higgins</i>
<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Betty Giles</i>
<i>Co-Treasurers</i>	<i>Pam & George Viner</i>
<i>Immediate Past Pres.</i>	<i>Dennis Morris</i>
<i>Greeter</i>	<i>Linda Floyd</i>
<i>Refreshments</i>	<i>Pat Dean</i>
<i>Membership</i>	<i>Merial Graff</i>
<i>Name Tags</i>	<i>Jo Ann Wilkinson</i>
<i>Co-Chair</i>	<i>Laura Butler</i>
<i>Conservation</i>	<i>Melanie Higgins</i>
<i>Historian</i>	<i>Clara Clancy</i>
<i>Newsletter</i>	<i>Denise Rosen</i>
<i>Publicity</i>	<i>John Perian</i>
<i>Master Birder & Field Trips</i>	<i>Ray Webb</i>
<i>At Large</i>	<i>Patsie Ginley</i>



Kate and Dr. Bob Lochte have gifted our Club with three high quality framed Audubon prints. These pieces were from the estate of their Aunt Jane Davis Doggett, 11/04/1929 – 4/10/23, in her memory. These three framed prints will be raffled off individually, with the first being “Painted Finches.” The overall size of the framed print is 30”x43”. Sales will be limited to 50 tickets total at \$10.00/per ticket.

Melanie Higgins

Have you heard about the

SCC Audubon Club Fund

This fund supports the continued mission of the Sun City Center Audubon Club to promote an understanding of and interest in all wildlife and the environment that supports it; to maintain and improve the Sun City Center Nature Trails, and to further the cause of conservation of natural resources for the benefit of posterity.

Questions, or need assistance with an asset donation to our SCC Audubon Club Fund please contact the Audubon Club Fund advisor at:

Denyve Boyle, CFRE
Senior Director, Philanthropy
Community Foundation Tampa Bay
813.609.4868
dboyle@CFTampaBay.org

SCC Audubon Board Meetings

Board meetings are held in the heritage room at 7:00pm on the third Monday of every month.

All Members are invited.

Meetings

1st Saturday of the Month
Florida Room in Atrium

9:15am Coffee Social

10:00am Business Meeting followed by
Scheduled Program and
Adjournment

★ **HAPPY** ★
BIRTHDAY!

January 2024

Kathy Ambs

Mary Buccilli

Kimball Cleveland

Patsie Ginley

H. Frankie Greise

John Lampkin

Donna Machmer

Phillip Price

Nancy Renfrow

Robin Weber

Joann Wilkinson



BYOM

In an endeavor to support our conservation beliefs, please bring your own mug to our Saturday morning meetings. We appreciate your cooperation.

For those of you who use the recycle water bottles, the CA has installed water fountains in the atrium to conveniently refill your water bottles.

So, you say, you forgot your coffee mug, no worries, you can purchase one of our brand-new SCC Audubon Travel Mugs at our next meeting. Available for \$5 each.



www.sccaudubonclub.com