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# SUN CITY CENTER AUDUBON CLUB

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August/September 2020

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## *Ponderings from your prez*

*Mary Duncan*

“Why are you sending more articles about being outdoors when it is so hot, humid and buggy?” you may ask. I went camping and hiking at Hillsborough River State Park some time ago and it did me a world of good. I later managed to fall and break my arm and went into a funk again (and that doesn’t even count the “covid funk” we are all in). But I find that walking on the old golf course – just walking outside – either early morning or late evening really does boost my mood. It is safe to do and gets me out of the house. Go ahead and try it. Here’s why:

### **Seniors Can Reap Benefits from Spending Time Outdoors**

Few pastimes restore the body and soul like spending time in nature. Research has confirmed that being outside does more than just lift your spirits; it also provides a boost for your physical and mental well-being. What are some of the benefits for seniors who take time to enjoy the great outdoors?

#### **Improvements in Mental Health**

Seniors who spend time outdoors may experience less depression and anxiety. Individuals who run, bike or walk in natural settings have a reduced risk of mental health problems compared to people who do their exercise inside.

Participating in nature walks with others is linked to more positive feelings and better mental health, along with lower levels of depression and stress. Seniors who are unable to exercise can benefit from getting outdoors by enjoying the change of scenery, smelling freshly cut grass and seeing beautiful, natural vistas.

Experts advise that seniors should try to spend time in natural areas like parks on a regular basis. The relaxation that nature provides can improve mood and increase overall feelings of happiness.

### **Abundant Energy**

Being outside in nature makes you feel more alive and provides a greater sense of energy and vitality, which can help make you more resilient to illness.

Spending time outdoors may boost your memory. One study found a 20-percent improvement in attention span and memory after spending just one hour in a natural environment. More time spent outdoors resulted in even greater gains in memory, and it may improve creativity as well.

### **Better Overall Health**

Being outside can help increase levels of Vitamin D, which often is low among seniors. Low levels of this important nutrient are linked to pain in muscles and bones, inflammation, higher risk of Type 1 diabetes and several types of cancer.

Getting sufficient Vitamin D can help reduce your risk of a number of physical ailments, including rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis and heart attack. By spending just 15 minutes outside in the sunshine each day, you help your body receive the recommended dose of Vitamin D.

Being outside may also improve your overall immunity by boosting your count of white blood cells, and the improvements may last for a week or more. In addition, time in nature may help you recover more quickly from an injury or illness.

---- Elder Care

Alliance – February, 2017

## ***Ponderings continued:***

We have a wonderful club – and it is all due to the many volunteer hours put in and is further helped by financial donations. I would like to give special thanks to one individual and to two clubs who have made large donations for the upkeep and improvement of the Nature Trail in the past year.

(Our Audubon Club “year” goes from October to April usually.) Phil Price donated \$2000; The Women’s Club donated \$500 and the Men’s Club donated \$500!

The Nature Trail is a little gem that the whole community can be proud of – and which we can continue to be proud of because of their help. While thank you cards were sent to them at the time, I wanted to give this official thank you in the Newsletter so you would know what they’ve done and can thank them yourselves as well.



## ***Officers & Committee Chairs***

***2020-2021***

<b>President</b>	<b>Mary Duncan</b>
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<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Betty Giles</b>
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<b>Membership</b>	<b>Loni Baxter</b>
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<b>Newsletter</b>	<b>Denise Rosen</b>
<b>Publicity Shuttleworth</b>	<b>Susan</b>
<b>Field Trips/ Master Birder</b>	<b>Ray Webb</b>
<b>Three Day Trip</b>	<b>Kathy Eckhart</b>

## **SAFER STREETS**

Road traffic dropped by an estimated 60 to 90 percent in many places across the United States because of people staying home – likely translating to less roadkill. Nationally, scientists have found that vehicles kill between 89 and 340 million birds a year.

*Audubon Magazine Summer 2020*

## ***News from our Master Birder***

***Ray Webb***

We are now mid-summer. Breeding season is over. This is the quietest time of the year for Florida birding. Sporadic reports of early migrants heading south, otherwise status quo until birds start to move in August.

July 4 is of course Independence Day; however, it also was the same for the ospreys at the corner of La Jolla Ave. and N. Pebble Beach Blvd! I went to breakfast that morning, and there were three ospreys in the nest. When I came home, the nest was empty. Since then, there has been an occupant here and there; the youngsters do return once in a while. But I was happy to see that the ospreys had successfully raised two young, after having been evicted earlier by the owl.

Our earliest arrivals, the purple martins, great crested flycatchers and northern parulas, are among the first to depart as well. By now, most are gone. However, Saturday on the West Campus Nature Trail, I did see one flycatcher and a group of three parulas. These were likely from further north, passing through on their way south. Also, a week ago I heard a yellow-billed cuckoo near the entrance. They do nest in Florida, but not in the habitat around SCC. This one was also a transient.

So, it will continue for a while. Very quiet. Soon, some early warblers will pass through. Shorebirds will move along the sod farms, mudflats and coast. Belted kingfishers, one of the earliest fall migrants, will show up and some will stay for the winter.

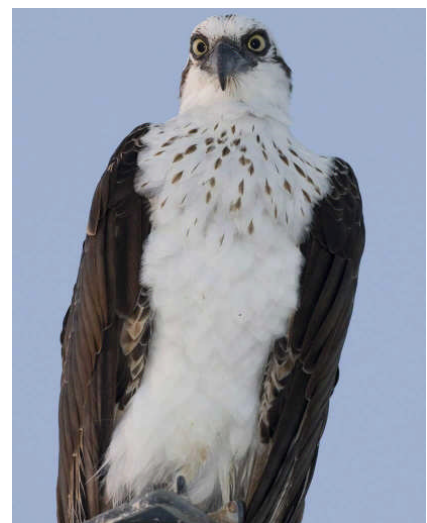
**Be sure to visit our new website at  
[www.sccaudubonclub.com](http://www.sccaudubonclub.com)**



***Northern Parula***



***Great Crested Flycatcher***



***Osprey***



*Photo by Melanie Higgins  
Take at Middle Lake Colonies*

Now that we are starting to venture outside, you may be in the mood for a road trip. Visit this website for:

### **9 ways to find the real Florida 15 minutes off I-75**

<https://www.floridarambler.com/scenic-drives/florida-road-trip/>



### **101 Family Day Trips from Tampa**

These adventures are not just for children. Recommendations include, hiking, museums, beaches, restaurants and even places to shop.

<https://tampa.kidsoutandabout.com/content/101-family-day-trips-tampa>

Most of these destinations are within one hour of downtown Tampa.



## COMETS, METEORS, & TREES

*Photos by Melanie Higgins*

From July 11 through 19th I searched for Comet Neowise before dawn without success. On July 20th I started looking for a break in the clouds to get a glimpse and was rewarded on Sunday the 19th standing in the driveway in front of my house. The next evening my friend and I made a trip to Cockroach Bay and walked up to the top of the mound shortly after sunset. The clouds parted and we were able to get a really good look at the comet. Success!

The remainder of July and the first half of August, we are treated to overlapping meteor showers. The Delta Aquarids have been visible for the past week and will continue until early August. The beginning of August marks the most familiar meteor shower to most, the Persiids which peak on August 14, 15. You must be a night owl, or a very early riser to see these meteors as the best viewing time is between midnight and dawn.

But the most remarkable thing I observed in July was not meteors or comets, but a tree.

Many times, I've been approached by a resident or Audubon member and asked the question, "Why don't we see as many songbirds in Sun City Center as we see up north?" To this I say – do you see many trees? Especially NATIVE trees? The intrinsic value of a tree can never be underestimated.

At the beginning of July, while walking a dog, I observed a couple planting a young live oak in their front yard. I stopped to thank them and to express my joy that they were planting a nice size tree (4" caliper) that would surely provide habitat for native species. We had a brief conversation and I continued on.

I did not pass by that tree on my walk for another two weeks. When I did, there was a nest in the tree! I suspected mockingbirds, and yes, when I walked by a couple of days later, I saw them flying around. About a week later, I remembered to bring my camera and there were now chicks! All of this within a month of planting that tree.



You've heard the expression "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago....and the second best time is NOW." Consider planting a tree now! There are plenty of species native to Florida to choose from and while you may not find a nest in it a couple of weeks later, you will be providing habitat for all manner of animals.



*Bird Nest perched on tree branch with babies waiting for food*