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# SUN CITY CENTER AUDUBON CLUB

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June/July 2020

## *Ponderings from your prez*

*Mary Duncan*

We have been making plans for a safe return to our meetings as we hope that circumstances will allow us to meet in October. An excellent speaker is ready, so let's hope there is no second spike of the corona virus.

I have been sitting outside each morning with a cup of tea and enjoying both watching and hearing the birds....and alligators. Between the mating "call" of the alligator and the squawks of the herons, I sometimes feel that the island across the lake from me is actually an entrance to Jurassic Park.

They say that air pollution has really decreased since people are staying home but I am afraid that benefit will not last. Ever since moving here ten years ago, I have looked into going solar to do my bit. It did not seem financially practical but now that interest rates are down, it has become feasible. Like many of you, I hate to owe money but decided that making a payment to the solar company instead of to TECO each month was an easy switch and I was inspired by the speaker we had on climate change and sea rise to finally do it.



I got the solar panels a couple of months ago and, along with a report on how many kilowatt hours the panels generate each day (even on cloudy days), it also reports on carbon offset. By using solar, one does not use power created by burning coal. They can calculate how many trees it would take to absorb each pound of CO<sub>2</sub> created by the burning of fuel. From a carbon offset standpoint, the solar array is a big win.

So, I was very excited to get my first full report. My Carbon Offset for one month was 1,736 pounds. And **"You have offset the equivalent of: 20 Trees so far"**. That is so cool. One of the first things we did when we moved here was to plant a tree. And now it's as if I planted 20 more! Yes, I know they are only virtual trees but it's still exciting. It hasn't cost me anymore and I did it without leaving the house! Please think about it for yourself.

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

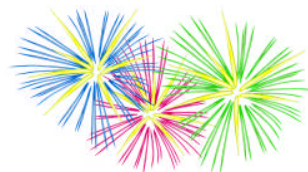


### CELEBRATIONS

June 21 –Father's Day

July 1 –Canada Day

July 4 –Independence Day



## News from our Master Birder

Ray Webb

It is June, and spring migration is long gone. I assume it happened (it always does), but I never saw it this year! Nesting season is in full swing, and there are things to report.

First, the great horned owl that moved its nest over to Valley Forge Blvd. and Danbury Dr. has completed her duties. This year, the owlet stayed in the nest much longer than the one did last year. I heard that mother and child left the nest recently and flew away. And some more new good news: the ospreys, who reclaimed their nest at La Jolla Ave. and N. Pebble Beach Blvd., have at least two little chicks! I watched one of the adults bring them a nice big fish today.

The common grackles are actively entering and leaving the traffic signals at both CR 674 and Pebble Beach Blvd., and CR 674 and Valley Forge Blvd. This marks the fourth year they have nested there.

My latest walks on the West Campus Nature Trail have yielded sightings of great crested flycatchers and swallow-tailed kites. Both species nest in the area. While some species are singing much less now (no need to, since they have by now gotten mates), northern cardinals and Carolina wrens continue their early morning songs. To hear them, arrive by 8 AM.



## STAY COOL

Looks like we have a hot Summer coming!



### Officers & Committee Chairs 2019-2020

President	Mary Duncan
Vice-Presidents/ Programs	Patsie Ginley Ann Fenimore
Secretary	Betty Giles
Treasurer	Rod Rodrigues
At Large	Dennis Morris Linda Floyd
Refreshments	Pat Dean
Membership	Loni Baxter
Name Tags	Jo Ann Wilkinson
Conservation	Joe Mustion Melanie Higgins
Historians	Ed & Clara Clancy
Newsletter	Denise Rosen
Publicity	Susan Shuttleworth
Field Trips/ Master Birder	Ray Webb
Three Day Trip	Kathy Eckhart



## ***Audubon Bluebird Project***

*Melanie Higgins*

This is the fifth year of the Bluebird Project in Sun City Center, and we've come a long way since that first year when we thought the resident could monitor their own nest box! I've been the project manager (with my assistant) all this time, and I'd like to find a protege to take over in a year or two. Here is an idea of qualifications needed and the tasks necessary. BTW, it's good to have an assistant.

### **Qualifications**

1. Interest in bluebirds, their habitat, and breeding cycle
2. Ability to work outside in the heat.
3. Ability to remove snakes, frogs, wasps, etc. from bluebird boxes.
4. Ability to identify, remove, and destroy house sparrow nests, with eggs and/or babies.
5. Ability to erect new boxes, move, and repair bluebird boxes.
6. Golf cart is helpful, if not necessary.

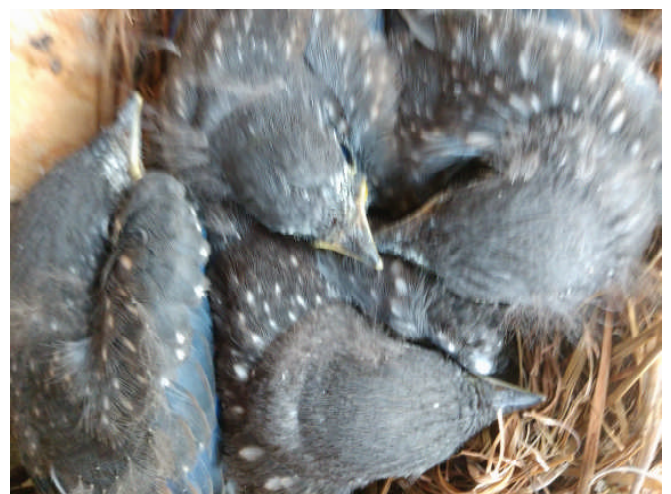
### **Duties**

1. Maintain SCC bluebird trail - this includes replacing and/or repairing bluebird boxes and predator guards. Checking all boxes on the trail should be done just before and after the breeding season.
2. Manage 5 teams of 2 monitors who check nest boxes weekly during nesting season.
3. Be on call to monitors if they encounter a problem (i.e., sparrow invading a box).
4. Collect data sheets from monitors at the end of the season and consolidate data.
5. Give periodic reports to the club on the status of bluebirds.
6. Update website with project information.

I think that's it. My good friend and Audubon member, Ken Fletcher, has helped me with the carpentry part of the position (and he has a golf cart), so the PM doesn't necessarily need to have those skills, just be able to find someone to assist.

Looking for someone who is willing to make a sincere commitment to this awesome project.

## **Bluebird Nests**



## *Migrant Workers for the Garden*

*John Lampkin*

Seminole Pumpkins are actually squash and taste like butternut or acorn, but more flavorful and less fibrous. They were grown by Floridian aborigines long before the Europeans arrived, so they have evolved to survive and even enjoy the summer heat that spells death for other veggies.

They also survive but not thrive when attacked by Melonworm Moth caterpillars who methodically devour the leaves to the vein. As a quasi-organic Tiller & Toiler, I eschew chemical treatments and have always just pinched the munchers as a daily routine. This year though I had daily help from nearby nesting Northern Parulas. They find and glean caterpillars more efficiently than humans do, harvesting enough to nurture at least one fledgeling who joined them in the plot.

The moth itself is maddeningly elusive and camera shy but spectacular when finally shot. The posteriorly-protruding “feather duster” wafts pheromones to the breeze to attract a mate. Do not try this at home!

For more about the Northern Parula: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern\\_parula](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_parula)

For more about the Melonworm Moth: <http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/veg/leaf/melonworm.htm>





## West Campus Nature Trails

The trails were recently groomed and are in excellent shape. Even though it's summer, the Outer Loop is mostly shaded and was pleasant on a recent visit at 10:00 am. Skeeter repellent IS necessary. Take a hike!

*Melanie Higgin*

