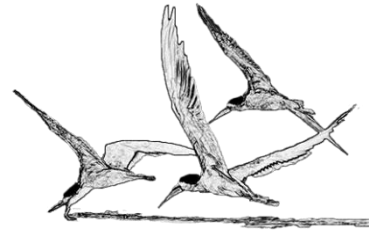


**West Pasco Audubon**  
**Conservation Notes**  
January 2019



**Upcoming area events:**

Now through February 10 - Audubon Florida and the Tampa Bay History Center present "A History of Conservation - A Bird's Eye View", on exhibit at the History Center, 801 Old Water Street, Tampa.

January 18 - Florida Arbor Day. Keep Pasco Beautiful will host free workshops and redbud seedling give-aways from 10-12 at 15029 14<sup>th</sup> Street in Dade City.

January 19 - Friends of the Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuges present "National Wildlife Refuges: America's Best Kept Secret", a one-hour program on the history of and wildlife in our local refuges with a focus on Egmont Key, one of Florida's largest nesting bird sanctuaries. From 10-11 am at Heartwood Preserve, 4100 Starkey Blvd. Trinity. Bring a lawn chair or blanket.

**Monthly Challenge - How Reforestation Helps Reduce Greenhouse Gases**

The Paris Climate Agreement raised awareness about the causes and consequences of global warming and proposed many ways in which climate change might be mitigated across the world. Here in the US the focus has been an uphill battle in reducing carbon emissions through reduction of fossil fuels, expansion of mass transit, and increasing efficiencies, all of which are critical to long term success in reducing greenhouse gases, slowing climate change, and reducing its effects. However, there is already a large CO<sub>2</sub> load in the atmosphere from over a century of burning fossil fuels at an ever-increasing rate. Within the ecological carbon cycle, CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere is absorbed by algae in the sea and plants on land. These photosynthesizers take CO<sub>2</sub> and convert it to sugars, cellulose, proteins, and other biomolecules used to grow and reproduce (forming leaves and branches and flowers and seeds). This reverts back to CO<sub>2</sub> when plants or plant parts die and decay, but in trees a large amount of carbon remains in the woody tissues for the duration of the life of the plant. As young trees grow and forests expand, they absorb and sequester carbon. Once forests mature, seedlings replace old trees and the carbon released by decay is balanced by new growth - carbon is held in the forest. Some countries are

instituting programs to restore forests and plant trees in public lands to help reduce impacts of gas emissions by sequestering carbon. Trees and other plants also produce oxygen, provide habitat for wildlife, reduce erosion, help filter and clean the air, filter and clean the water, and reduce local temperatures. Strategic placement of trees around buildings can also help conserve energy and reduce cooling costs in the summer by providing shade.

Though National Arbor Day is the last Friday in April, it is celebrated at different times in different areas, depending on when tree planting is ideal. In Florida, Arbor Day is celebrated the third Friday in January. Native plants provide better habitat and support a wider diversity of wildlife than non-native ornamentals. Here in Pasco county native trees include Eastern Red Cedar (Virginia Juniper), Live Oak, and Long-Leaf Pine, which provide rich food resources and attract a variety of birds. So, please, find a spot in your yard or neighborhood to grow a tree and support community efforts for revegetation. You can check Audubon's website to find more wildlife friendly native plants for our area at <https://www.audubon.org/plantsforbirds>.