



# June 2026 Newsletter

## PASCO AUDUBON

### Upcoming Events

**Saturday, June 6th**

**7:30am Bird walk** in Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park. Meet in the Education Center parking lot

**Saturday, June 13th**

**Birding-by-Bike** on the Pinellas Trail p.2

Our web address is:

**[www.pascoaudubon.com](http://www.pascoaudubon.com)**

Our Facebook Page is:

**Pasco Audubon**

Share interesting sightings via Facebook on

**Pasco Bird Board**

And our mailing address is:

**Pasco Audubon**

**PO Box 1456**

**Elfers, FL 34680**



**Wood Duck by Christine Rowland**

### Summer Schedule

Please join us on Saturday, June 6th for our monthly walk in Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park. Please note that we'll be meeting up at the earlier summer start time of 7:30am, but in the usual location - the Education Center parking lot. We'll certainly be stopping by the newly restored bird blind (read more about the project on p.10). Recent rains have ensured that the water levels in Grassy Lake support many of our species, and we hope to see a good selection of waders, along with Wood Ducks and Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks. Please bring water with you - we'll plan for a two-hour walk across 1-2 miles.

As always, we are taking a summer break for June - September, although we will continue with our first Saturday of the month walks in Starkey Park (except July, when it falls on the 4th). Bob Burkard is also offering Birding-by-Bike outings during the summer with the exception of July (see p.2 for details). Also look for Photography Club events.

We hope that you enjoy this month's newsletter with a roundup of recent events, conservation reports (EagleWatch and the Bluebird Project) and the restoration of the bird blind in Starkey Park.

## Scheduling for Birding-by-Bike by Bob Burkard

Our Saturday outing in June will be on June 13<sup>th</sup>. We will meet at the Brooker Creek Preserve parking lot and bike north on the Pinellas Trail. I love this location which is a great place to see Southeastern American Kestrels, Eastern Kingbirds, Purple Martins and Eastern Meadowlarks. Remember to bring plenty of water and sunscreen.

Link to ebird for Brooker Creek Preserve and Surrounding areas: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L502704>.

	Date	Location	Time
June	Saturday, June 13, 2026	Pinellas Trail - Meet at Brooker Creek Preserve Parking lot	8:00 AM
July		No Outing	8:00 AM
August	Saturday, August 15, 2026	Chassahowitzka Wildlife Area	8:00 AM
September	Saturday, September 12, 2026	Jay B Starkey Wilderness Park - Meet at Education Center at the Park	8:00 AM
October	Saturday, October 10, 2026	Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area	8:00 AM
November	Saturday, November 14, 2026	Pinellas Trail - Meet at Brooker Creek Preserve Parking lot	8:00 AM
December	Sunday, December 13, 2026	Good Neighbor Trail, Brooksville - Carpool to area	8:00 AM



**Eastern Kingbird on the Pinellas Trail**



**Southeastern American Kestrel on the Pinellas Trail**

## May 16th Field Trip: Pasco's Rural Birds

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We were a small crew indeed for this particular trip. But the four of us had some good fortune. We set out from the McDonald's on Cortez Blvd at 8am and made our way south. Our scouting report indicated that our best luck with our target species would actually be later on our trail, so we planned to move swiftly through the early locations.

Indeed, Kettering Road (Hernando) is dotted with new construction and 'For Sale' signs - a sad omen. But we did make one stop at what appeared to be the one hold out farm, and were lucky enough to pick up Northern Bobwhite, Eastern Meadowlark and Eastern Bluebirds. Staying true to plan, we drove on to Power Line Road, where we began at the east end with the Purple Martin house (we saw maybe 3) and some Swallow-tailed Kites, before moving west along the road to a point beyond the top of the hill. Here we got luckier. As we pulled over we had a Red-headed Woodpecker on a fence post just across the street from us, an excellent if brief photo op. And then Anthony spotted a Blue Grosbeak foraging on the south side of the street. A closer look revealed a female also - a good catch! Eastern Meadowlarks sang loudly, and we also saw a distant Red-tailed Hawk here, but silhouetted against the sun it did not make for great photographs. The south side of Power Line looks to be going the way of Kettering, with 'For Sale' signs up.

We made another stop further down Power Line, but without too much success we decided to head straight for Myers Road, which has proved productive for us over the past few years. It didn't disappoint this time either. We had a pair of Red-headed Woodpeckers giving very good looks and then had a male Summer Tanager pose for a shot from the fence. We felt quite honored. Moving a little further down the road we stopped to view a Red-headed Woodpecker nest I'd located the prior weekend, and then Pamela spotted a Sherman's Fox Squirrel - always a treat to see!

Our final stop for the morning was on Clay Hill Road, where we were lucky enough to find another male Blue Grosbeak, a pair of Summer Tanagers, and brief views of a Great Crested Flycatcher and Eastern Towhee. This trip would more accurately have been titled a rural trip along the border of Pasco and Hernando counties. The area is changing, but through this annual trip we bear witness to that change. A striking absence from our list was the non-migratory Southeastern American Kestrel - common here in springs past.



**Red-headed Woodpecker by Christine Rowland**



**Blue Grosbeak by Christine Rowland**

## Photography Club Updates by Noriko Buckles

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The May outing by the Pasco Audubon Photography club was to the St. Leo University's Grotto. Our assignment was to photograph "texture". We started by talking about what and how to photograph texture in nature. We didn't have to look too long as texture in nature was everywhere. The bark of the tree, gravel trail with roots of the trees, budding flowers, backlight palm leaf, stone walls of the grotto, etc etc.

We will be looking at members' photos from the outing at our next meeting on Saturday June 20th at New Port Richey Library at 10am. We will continue the discussion on photography competition and if time allows we will be talking about different post processings. **UPDATE: This event has been canceled.**

Both photographs are examples of "texture", taken by Noriko Buckles.



## Birding Southern Costa Rica April 16-26 by Christine Rowland



**Baird's Trogon by Christine Rowland**



**Band-tailed Barbthroat by Christine Rowland**

In April, eleven of us set off for Southern Costa Rica on another birding adventure. Our eleven day odyssey began at the Buena Vista Chic Hotel, with a beautiful view over San Jose and surrounding mountains, where we met our guide, David Mora.

Having an excellent guide makes a huge difference to a trip. Once again, Holbrook came through for us. David, at a youthful 26, knows the calls of hundreds of species, but can also imitate the calls - a skill he put to use frequently across the trip to draw birds into the open for us. He was also able to add some stops to help us see birds that would not otherwise have been seen, such as the Black-and-white Owl, the baby Common Potoo (where David had learned that it was located in a private yard a little off our route and arranged for us to visit), a Pearl Kite nest with three youngsters ready to fledge and nocturnal outings for owls and nightjars along with frogs and other creatures.

We began by heading to the coast, where we had a wonderful boat ride along the Tarcoles River. We had a dedicated boat that took us up and down river through a range of habitats, and we were able to move freely around the boat as we saw birds on one side or another. It was a relaxing yet exciting experience that we were all able to enjoy. Some of the avian highlights of the ride included Collared Plover, Northern Jacana, Bare-throated Tiger-Heron, Common Black Hawk, Gray Hawk, Black-headed Trogon, Turquoise-browed Motmot, Scarlet Macaw, Mangrove Swallow and Mangrove Yellow Warblers. But we saw more than birds, with American Crocodiles and Capuchin Monkeys also making an appearance.



**Baby Three-toed Sloth by Joe Colantonio**



### Resplendent Quetzal by Christine Rowland

Our trip took us along the coast to the south, giving us walks in the rain forest, a chance to enjoy the sunset over the Pacific, to look for birds in agricultural fields, in the cloud forest, and high up in the paramo. We went south almost to the border with Panama, and then north again and into the mountains for the iconic Resplendent Quetzal. The variety of geographic locations and elevations from sea level to 10,000 feet helped to produce a list of about 335 species across the trip, with Pat and Jeff adding a day at each end for a number of additional species and opportunities.

Our accommodations varied from hotels, a rainforest lodge, student accommodations at Las Cruces Organization for Tropical Studies and cabins in the mountains in San Gerardo de Dota. We also went from heat and humidity along the coast to cabin heaters and hot water bottles in the mountains, so variety was definitely on the agenda as well. In all of our stops we were served wonderful food and met kind and helpful locals along the way.

While there is not enough space here to go through even a fraction of our adventures in Costa Rica, you can read a more detailed narrative account that accompanies our trip report at <https://ebird.org/tripreport/50188>, and a large number of photographs of the species we saw can also be viewed there. Also, our travelers from both Costa Rica and Colombia trips will be sharing some of our wonderful experiences and photography at our opening event of the 2026-7 season on Saturday, October 3rd. We hope that you'll join us whether to travel vicariously or as you consider future travel plans yourself - more details to come soon..



Jeff and Pat Goldberg with Joe Colantonio at Hacienda Baru NWR

## Report: Eagle Watch Pasco Roundup 2025-26 by Kimberly Rexroat

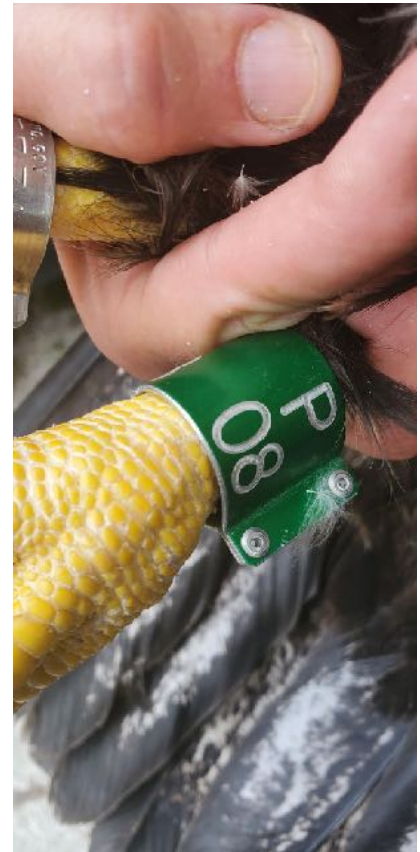
Pasco County had a great Eagle Season! Of the 21 active nests that we are able to monitor, 17 nests produced eaglets. We had 34 eaglets hatch and 32 survived to fledge. PS006 (Werner Boyce North) successfully fledged 3 eaglets. PS014 (Anclote) had a mate change and the young female successfully raised her first eaglet to fledge! PS024 (Gulf Harbors) lost both their 8 1/2 week old eaglets when their nest fell. Both eaglets were rescued but later passed from their injuries. Both eaglets from PS003 fledged a little too early and ended up on the ground. They were both rescued and taken to the Raptor Center of Tampa Bay for assessment and then transferred to the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey to complete flight training. One of the eaglets has been released and is wearing a green auxiliary band with the number P08. The second eaglet is still at CBOP and will be released soon.

*\*Kimberly Rexroat is our Pasco County Eagle Watch Coordinator*

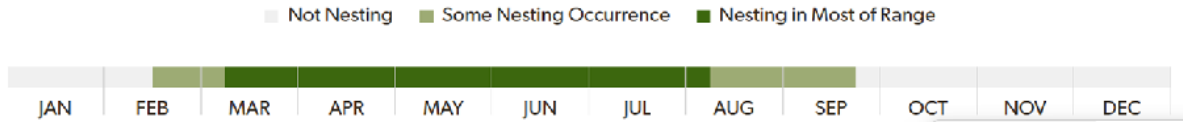


**PS006 Triplets by Jean Kwasniewski**

PS003 Legband by Kimberly Rexroat



## Pasco Audubon Bluebird Project Update by Bob Burkard



What a difference the last few weeks have made for our nesting Eastern Bluebirds. While the recent rains have not been substantial enough to erase our drought conditions, they seemed to have jump-started our bluebirds to produce second broods across the locations where we have our nesting boxes. We currently have 22 active Eastern Bluebird nests, with 15 of these nests having second broods.

The female Eastern Bluebird at W.H. Jack Mitchell Jr. Park box #2 laid a second brood of white eggs. Laying white eggs is a recessive genetic trait for Eastern Bluebirds and a female must inherit the recessive gene from both parents to lay white eggs. Only 3% of Eastern Bluebird females lay white eggs.



**Eastern Bluebird Fledge at Starkey Park**



**Eggs in Heartwood Box 2**

Monitor	Location	Box ID	Status	2026 Total Fledged	2025 Total Fledged	Num of Broods YTD in 2026	Num of Broods in 2025
Judith Leslie Zollo	Airpeka Road Weeki Wachi Preserve	AR01	Empty		4		1
		AR02	Empty		4 CC		1
		AR03	4 EBB Babies	3		2	
Christine Rowland	Heartwood Preserve off Starkey Blvd	HW01	EBB Eggs		5	2	1
		HW02	5 EBB Eggs	3	9	2	2
		HW03	Empty		5 CC		1
Judith Leslie Zollo	Hudson Sugar Creek	HU01	2 EBB Eggs	5	4	2	1
Robert Burkard	Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park Bike Trail	BT-01	5 EBB Babies	4		2	
		BT-02	Empty				
		BT-03	Empty				
		BT-04	Empty				
Robert Burkard	Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park South of Entrance road	SP01	4 EBB Eggs	4	11	2	2
		SP01A	Empty	5 CC		1	
		SP02	Empty				
		SP03	Empty	3	7	1	2
		SP04	Empty		2		1
		SP05	Empty				
		SP06	4 EBB Eggs			1	
		SP07	Empty	5 CC	7 TTM	1	1
		SP07A	Empty				
		SP08	New EBB Nest - no eggs yet	4	10	1	2
		SP09	New EBB Nest - no eggs yet	4	9	1	2
Robert Burkard	Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park Edge of Timber Greens	TG01	5 EBB Babis	4	9	2	2
		TG02	Empty				
Odalys Capote	Phillips Road, Odessa	PH01	4 Fledged	4			
J Mike Kell	Seven Springs Golf Club	SSO1	Empty				
		SSO2	Empty				
Dave Waltz	Sunlake Blvd Community on Hwy 54 west of Hwy 41, Land O' Lakes FL	DW01	EBB Nest	4			
		DW01	EBB Nest				
JoAnn Sinatra	Timber Oaks	TO01	New EBB Nest - no eggs yet	5		2	
Sara Peters & Jeff Gruber	Trinity College	TR01	5 EBB Eggs	1	8	2	2
		TR02	Empty	5 CC		1	
Judith Leslie Zollo	Veterans Memorial Park Hudson, FL	VP01	5 Newly hatched EBB Babies	4	10	2	
		VP02	4 EBB Eggs	3	2	2	1
		VP03	5 EBB Eggs	3	8	2	2
Robert Burkard Mike Teixeira	W.H. Jack Mitchell Jr. Park	JM01	5 EBB Eggs	4	9	2	2
		JM02	5 EBB Eggs	4	7	2	2
		JM03	4 EBB Eggs	3	9	2	2
		JM04	3 EBB Eggs			1	

EBB Eastern Blue Bird  
 CC Carolina Chickadee  
 TTM Tufted Titmouse  
 Nesting Active in Current Year  
 Currently Active Nesting

## Starkey Bird Blind Renovation Project by Joanne Chamberlain

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When Rick Chamberlain and Joe Colantonio went out to evaluate the blind, they found that after only six years most of the wood on the outside, (the 1 x 12s), was rotted on the bottom; on some pieces the rot came up as high as a foot. They could see that the plywood underneath was also at least partially rotten. So they decided it would be best to replace the outer wood with pressure-treated plywood, which will last much longer against the elements.

Pasco County Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Department agreed to buy the supplies for us, so we put together a list for Tim Perkins from J B Starkey Wilderness Park. Once the supplies were purchased, it was time to tear down the old wood, Rick and Joe working together. They discovered that the top 2/3 of the inner plywood was fine, so Tim purchased the plywood to replace the bottom, and tar paper for in between. On one of the longest workdays, Rick, Joe, Bob Burkard and Jarrett Chamberlain brought in all the supplies from the Starkey maintenance building, cut off and replaced the bottom inner plywood section and started putting up the outer plywood. It was at this point that sadly, the team suffered an injury – Bob’s leg - a piece of heavy plywood fell on it; his leg got very swollen and developed what Bob called an “extremely cool bruise”. Healing has been slow, but he’s been a real trooper through it all!

Rick, Joe and Jarrett continued. . . when the outer plywood was installed, they framed out the windows, beveling the bottom sills so rain will be diverted away. They added “battens” to cover the plywood edges, and some for trim between, then stained all the new wood, and it was finished! This version should last well for some time to come.

Rick also took home the bench he previously built, gave it a light sanding and recoated it with a nice varnish - prolonging its life as well!

The whole project took about 8 days and 55 hours, 4 men, a lot of laughs and quite a few groans. Thank you Pasco County, Tim, Rick, Joe, Bob and Jarrett!!!



Exterior Work in Progress



**Completed Exterior with Rick**



**Interior Work with Rick and Joe**



**Completed Interior**

## Looking Ahead Through the Summer...

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August 1st - 7:30 am - Monthly walk in Starkey Park

August 15th - Birding-by-Bike trip - Chassahowitzka

## Pasco Audubon Board of Directors

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Christine Rowland, President - [president@pascoaudubon.com](mailto:president@pascoaudubon.com)

Don Fraser, Vice President and Conservation Chair - [dmfraser31@gmail.com](mailto:dmfraser31@gmail.com)

Joanne Chamberlain, Treasurer - [treasurer@pascoaudubon.com](mailto:treasurer@pascoaudubon.com)

Phil Duncan, Secretary - [pascoaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:pascoaudubon@gmail.com)

Mike Kell, Web Master - [jmike65@gmail.com](mailto:jmike65@gmail.com)

Patricia Goldberg, Special Projects - [projects@westpascoaudubon.com](mailto:projects@westpascoaudubon.com)

Bob Burkard - Birding-by-Bike, The Bluebird Project - [robertburkard9@gmail.com](mailto:robertburkard9@gmail.com)

JoAnn Sinatra, At-Large

Ken Landry, At-Large

### Other Important Contacts:

Fran Sigurdsson, Membership Chair - [fsigurds@gmail.com](mailto:fsigurds@gmail.com)

Hal Sigurdsson, Photography Competition Coordinator - [PascoAudubonPhotos@gmail.com](mailto:PascoAudubonPhotos@gmail.com)

Noriko Buckles, Photography Club Coordinator - [nbucklesphoto@gmail.com](mailto:nbucklesphoto@gmail.com)