



# EVERGLADE KITE

## NEWSLETTER

Monthly Newsletter for Audubon Everglades

VOL 59 | Issue 11 | July 2019



Photo: Eurasian Collared Dove © Doreen LePage

## Bird of the Month: Eurasian Collared Dove

### *(Streptopelia decaocto)*

by Clive & Celecia Pinnock

Eurasian Collared Doves are slightly larger than the more familiar Mourning dove. They have chunky bodies, small heads and long square-tipped tails. These birds get their name from the black half collar at the nape of the neck. Their colors are a chalky light brown to grey-buff with broad white patches on the tail and slightly rounded wings which are most noticeable in flight.

A few Eurasian Collared doves were introduced to the Bahamas in the 1970s and managed to expand their range to Florida by the 1980s. They then rapidly spread throughout most of North America, including the north western states however, they have not been particularly evident in north eastern states.

They are found throughout much of North America in urban and suburban settings with access to bird feeders and other seed sources. In agricultural areas they seek open sites where grain is available, including farmyards, fields, wood edges, and open areas as around silos. They tend to avoid areas with heavy forested cover and extremely cold temperatures, which might explain their scarcity in north eastern states.

Eurasian Collared Doves eat mainly seeds and cereal grain such as millet, sunflower, milo, wheat and corn. They are also attracted to backyard bird feeders where many of their preferred seed mixes are provided. They also eat some berries and green

parts of plants as well as invertebrates. They do most of their foraging while walking on the ground. Due to the large amount of seeds consumed, the birds will also swallow small sand grains to assist in digesting the seeds. Outside of the breeding season, they can be seen foraging in flocks.

During courtship the male advertises to a perspective female with “koo-koo-koo” calls from a high perch. These calls are repeated dozens of times and quite often are followed by a flight display in which the male flies steeply upward, clapping his wings, then descends with his tail spread, often spiraling down to the same or nearby perch. Once a pair-bond is formed, the male shows the female potential nest

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## UPCOMING TRIPS

### JULY 2019

There are no trips scheduled for July.  
Enjoy the summer!

## CURRENT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

by Susan McKemy

### YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE VOLUNTEER WITH AUDUBON EVERGLADES

Do you have some free time to share? Would you like to get more involved with Audubon Everglades? We have plenty of volunteer opportunities and are sure to have a place where you can make a difference. Remember, YOU are what hope looks like to a bird - get involved!

If you have a special interest or talent or simply want to give back to Audubon Everglades as a volunteer, please check the list of volunteer opportunities. If your interest area is not listed but you would like to volunteer, get in touch with us and let us know your interest. There are new ways to get involved all the time.

If you would like more information or are ready to get involved, please send an email to [President@AudubonEverglades.org](mailto:President@AudubonEverglades.org). We look forward to having you on our team!

### CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES

#### Citizen Science Projects

(bird surveys, habitat projects, etc.)

#### Community Events

#### Conservation Advocacy Team

#### Education and Outreach

#### Monthly meeting set-up and closing

#### Social Media

#### Volunteer Organizer

# Native Plants & Wildlife: The Case for Local Stewardship of the Planet

Susan Lerner | Director of Horticulture at the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach

JULY

09

Tuesday, July 9 at 7PM

Meeting and program are free and open to the public. Doors open at 6:30PM for light refreshments, in rooms 101 and 102 at [FAU Pine Jog Environmental Education Center](#), 6301 Summit Blvd (near Jog Road) in West Palm Beach. We look forward to seeing you there!



Photo: Susan Lerner

Susan Lerner is the Director of Horticulture at the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach and is responsible for the management of Pan's Garden, the grounds around the Preservation Foundation building, and Earl E.T. Smith Park, located directly west of Palm Beach Town Hall. Also, she teaches garden education programs to children and arranges education programs for adults. She tells us that "the design of Pan's Garden incorporates wetlands and uplands which shelter hundreds of species of native plants. Visitors to the garden can get a sense of what Palm Beach might have looked like before settlers of European descent arrived."

She is a Florida Master Gardener, Secretary of the Backyard Beekeepers Association, and Past President

of the Palm Beach County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society and the Palm Beach Chapter of the Rare Fruit Council International. Her half-acre West Palm Beach yard is planted with hundreds of Florida native plants, over two dozen trees and other edibles - enough to keep her, the bees, birds, and butterflies fed year-round.

Susan will talk about the relationship between native plants and the food webs they support and how landscaping with native plants is the key to sustainability. Almost every food web begins with a plant and something that depends upon it as a food source. Most often that something is an insect. Native insects eat native plants. Unfortunately, most plants used in Florida for landscaping are from other countries, and they are not edible to most native insects.

Susan says, "Native plants have been sidelined to sometimes-protected patches of land scattered across the state to make way for a growing population of humans in Florida. Landscaping our homes, businesses, highways and schools with native plants can help rebuild and protect fragile food webs."

August's Monthly meeting - Annual Ice Cream Social and Photo Sharing will be held  
Tuesday, August 6 at 7PM at FAU Pine Jog Environmental Education Center.



# Profile: Melanie and Steve Garcia

by Kristen Murtaugh



Photo: Melanie and Steve Garcia

Melanie grew up in Palm Beach Gardens. She went to college in Missouri for a degree in Special Education and returned to Florida for a degree in Environmental Horticulture at the University of Florida. She has been the Patient Care Coordinator for a West Palm Beach concierge physician's office since 1989. On the side she does landscaping jobs. Steve grew up in St. Louis and moved here in 1977. He has a degree in Geography from Florida Atlantic University with a concentration in environmental resource analysis. That, he explained to me, is the study of different ecosystems and man's impact on them. He has worked for the Palm Beach County Department of Health since 2006 and is currently an Environmental Specialist and manager in the Division of Environmental Public Health. One of his areas of oversight is water quality. I am happy to report that Steve says that Florida's drinking water is clean and safe. He and Melanie met on a blind date in Florida and have been married for 37 years.

The Garcias live in Palm Beach Gardens on a three-quarter acre lot which they've developed over almost 40 years. Past members of the Rare Fruit & Nut Society, they grow unusual palm trees, tropical fruit trees, and native plants. Melanie's mother, who lives with them, shares their love of gardening, and Steve built an orchid house for her many orchids. They also grow several varieties of ferns and bromeliads. Their garden is a magnet for butterflies and for migrating and endemic species of birds. Painted Buntings winter there every year.

Melanie has been interested in birds all her life. Her parents are from Indiana, and they moved here when she was three years old. On their many family trips they always stopped to look at birds and unusual flowering trees. She remembers passing their one pair of binoculars back and forth. The family were members of Fairchild Gardens. They traveled to the Keys and the Everglades and camped in a pop-up. As a kid Steve loved hiking and fishing in the outdoors, but he got started birding because of Melanie. Those of us who have lived in Florida for a quarter century or more have memories of large populations of special birds in different places. When Melanie and Steve first started picnicking in Carlin Park in Jupiter, the park was alive with Florida-Scrub Jays. Now it's hard to find them anywhere in Jupiter. The Garcias bird wherever they travel. A good tip from Melanie: when in urban settings, head for the botanical gardens. They have birded in the Los Angeles area in parks and on mountain trails, where they have seen many Western species. They went to Ramsey Canyon in Arizona to celebrate their 25th anniversary, got 69 new species on the trip, and experienced being chased by a Hutton's Vireo! Here in Florida they bird almost every weekend, especially during migration. They live five minutes from Frenchman's Forest. They go to Merritt Island every February, and they take trips to the Everglades and Central Florida. One of their favorite spots is Highlands Hammock off U.S. 27, 4 miles west of Sebring, a state park with a boardwalk and swamp. A special tip from Steve: the concession in the park is famous for its wild orange shakes. Another place they like to walk is Turkey Hammock, a South Florida Water Management District area between Okeechobee and Sebring.

Melanie and Steve have been longtime members of the Nature Conservancy and the National Audubon Society. They have been active in Audubon Everglades for over 10 years now, since they were invited to go on a bird walk at Frenchman's Forest. There they met Marvin Greenberg and Chuck Weber and became participants in the Palm Beach County Christmas Bird Count.

The Garcias do the Heritage Farms Area for the Christmas Count, and the next day they do the Jupiter Circle. They lead four walks a year for Audubon Everglades at Frenchman's Forest on Prosperity

Road in Palm Beach Gardens – two in the spring and two in the fall. They say that Frenchman's is an ideal place for interesting walks. It is on the intracoastal and includes several different Florida habitats – mangrove, pine flatwood, hardwood hammock, and cypress dome – and there are always unexpected sightings. Melanie and Steve enjoy leading the walks. Frenchman's Forest is a beautiful part of Florida to share, and they always meet new people. Check out the 2019-2020 AE Field Trips schedule and put their fall walks on your calendar!

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sites until she selects one (10 ft or more above ground), usually in tall trees but occasionally on buildings. Another behavior that becomes obvious as the birds solidify their pair-bond is the amount of time spent preening each other.

Once the nest site is selected by the female, the male begins bringing her nesting material which is comprised of sticks, twigs, grasses and roots. She uses the material to build a flimsy platform nest where 1 or 2 white eggs are laid. During this time, the male vigorously drives off other collared-doves as well as predators from the nest area.

Incubation is done by both parents for 14 to 18 days. The young are also cared for and fed "pigeon milk" by both parents. This "pigeon milk" is a fat and protein rich whitish fluid which comes from liquid-filled cells which slough off the lining of the crop. After 5 – 10 days the young switch to a diet of regurgitated seeds. The young leave the nest in about 15 to 20 days and are attended to by both parents for about another week.

# LOCAL GOOD SAMARITAN SAVES INJURED BALD EAGLE

by Kristen Murtaugh



Photo: Release of PB983 eaglet band K28 with Lou Ulrey and Cameron Ugan. © Paul Murray

One March morning when Linda McCandless, a Florida Audubon EagleWatch volunteer, was monitoring her Bald Eagle nest, she came upon a man who was photographing the eagle pair. A conversation with this individual revealed an interesting story. Lou Ulrey, a semi-retired real estate broker, lives in Boynton Beach near Green Cay and Wakodahatchee, where he walks on a regular basis. Lou became interested in photography and that led to an interest in birds, specifically raptors. Last year a friend told him about an eagle's nest in Boynton Beach near I-95.

He visited the nest many times last year and watched two young eaglets learn to fly. Lou's curiosity drove him to conduct a Google search on "Eagle Nests," and he found a link to Florida Audubon's EagleWatch program. He contacted the manager of the program, Shawnlei Breeding, and discovered that the Boynton Beach nest was not registered as part of their program. Shawnlei provided Lou with information and he signed up to monitor that nest as an official EagleWatch volunteer.

This year, Lou visited the Boynton Beach nest every few days and, in mid-January, he observed the fuzzy little head of an eagle chick in the nest.

In early March, Lou was on one of his regular nest visits when he discovered the young eagle was missing

from the nest. The area around the nest tree is heavily vegetated and not easily approachable. There was no sign of the young bird. Lou went back daily and, finally, four days later saw the eaglet on the ground. He immediately contacted Busch Wildlife Sanctuary in Jupiter and they sent volunteers Ed and Karen Abaira to rescue the young bird.

Busch hospital director Stephanie Franczak determined that the young eagle, a female which Lou had named Liesel, was severely malnourished with several infected lacerations under her wings. Liesel stayed in the Busch hospital ICU for a week and a half and was nursed back to health. She eventually transitioned from the hospital to a bird mews, a birdhouse designed to house one or more birds of prey in separate partitions, and then to the large flight barn. A flight barn is designed to aid in the rehabilitation of large birds who, when they sufficiently build up their flight strength and stamina, will be released back into the wild.

As Shawnlei says "Whenever possible, we prefer to release fledglings back with their family. Fledglings aren't self-sufficient and need training and supplemental feeding from their parents for a few weeks before they strike out on their own. But often in cases where the rescued eaglet was the only offspring (as is the case with Liesel), the parents will

eventually leave the area before the fledgling is ready for release. In those cases, we look for a suitable foster family. Adults will take in an extra juvenile and feed it along with their own young."

Using the [EagleWatch nest locator map](#), it's easy to see there are many more eagle nests in central Florida than there are in south Florida, and therefore there are more opportunities to find potential foster families in the center of the state.



Photo: Lou Ulrey with K28 Eagle

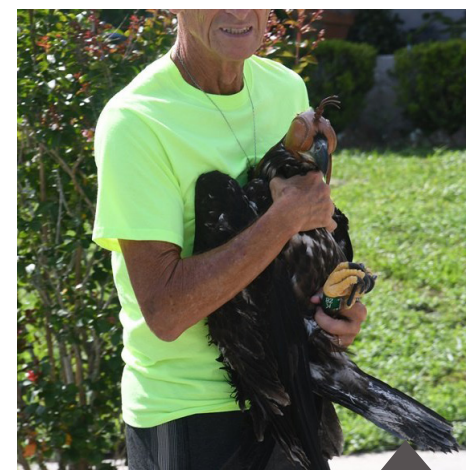


Photo: Lou Ulrey before release of PB983 eaglet band K28 © Paul Murray



# THE BIRD NERD: HERE COME THE LANDLUBBERS

by Bob Dieterich



Two-toed foot of the Ostrich © [Wikipedia](#)

We've seen in previous issues of the Kite how birds have evolved variations in the structure of their feet to accommodate their ways of living. Not to be overlooked are those birds that are truly land-based.

The current evolutionary thinking is that birds originated from an off-shoot of the theropod dinosaurs: light-framed, agile members of the group that also gave rise to one of the most fearsome terrestrial predators of all time – *Tyrannosaurus rex*. Flight is one of the distinguishing features that separate birds from all other members of its evolutionary line. And yet, even as flight has defined birds as a vertebrate group, some members of this class have definitively returned to terrestrial living.

Entire orders of birds are marked by their relatively sedentary living habits. The most extreme are the ratites – heavy-bodied, flightless birds with massive legs and feet. Their wings are vestigial and used for auxiliary purposes, such as heat regulation and sexual display. Living members of this group include ostriches, emus, cassowaries, and kiwis. Ostriches are unique in having only two toes, massively constructed, nearly in the form of hooves. The other ratites have three toes, also quite stout. Two ratites

that have gone extinct in relatively recent times were among the largest birds that have ever lived: the moas of New Zealand, the largest of which stood over 10 feet tall, and the elephant bird of Madagascar, the heaviest bird of all at more than 1,200 lbs.

A related order of birds, which, however, retains the power of flight, is the tinamous. They are secretive denizens of tropical rainforests. Heavy-bodied and small-headed, chicken-sized, they are quite vocal, which is how birders usually encounter them, since the birds remain out of sight within the dense vegetated understory.

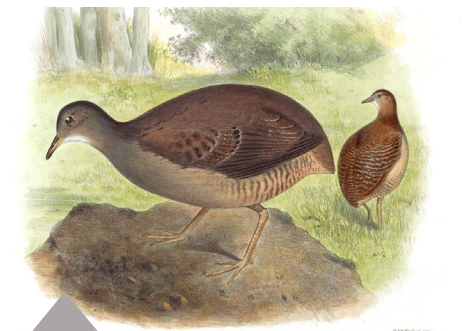
Another order of land-based birds may be the most familiar of all to us, the Galliformes. The archetype of this group is our own domestic chicken, whose wild progenitor is the Red Junglefowl of India. Other familiar types are turkeys, quail, pheasants, and grouse. They forage on the ground and prefer running for cover to flight as their escape strategy. Their feet vary from three-toed in the quails to the typical four-toed anisodactyl, the perching foot. A number of species have an added back-pointing spur on their tarsus that is used as defense and a means of aggression among competing males.



Three-toed foot of the Emu © [Wikipedia](#)



Ocellated Turkey © [Wikipedia](#)



Slaty-breasted Tinamou © [Wikipedia](#)

After reviewing all the diversity in the structure of bird feet in this series, we return to the familiar norm of the perching bird, the anisodactyl foot. From herons and egrets, shorebirds, raptors, and doves to the passerines that make up more than half of all bird species, perching on tree limbs is the typical avian stance. In this most common foot structure, one toe faces backward, giving the bird support, while the other three digits point forward. The next time you are out in the field, take the time to observe the varying structures of birds' feet and how they support their various lifestyles. This will enhance your enjoyment of the remarkable avian creatures.



# PLASTIC DEBRIS THREATENS OUR BIRDS

by Scott Zucker



Photo: A Laysan Albatross chick rests on a small derelict fishing net © [NOAA CREP](#)

We're killing our sea birds and sea mammals with plastic debris. Sick or dead sea birds and mammals washing ashore with plastic in their bellies or entangled in plastic bags or discarded fishing gear has become an all too common sight along our coastlines. An estimated 1 million sea birds and 100,000 marine mammals worldwide currently are killed each year from our discarded plastics. And that number is projected to increase as the amount of plastic debris in our ocean continues to increase. Currently, scientists estimate that 60 percent of all seabirds have ingested plastic, and by 2050 they project that 99 percent of all pelagic birds will have consumed plastic in their life when there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish. Additionally, researchers have found microplastics in the digestive systems of American Oystercatchers, Kelp Gulls, Red Phalaropes and Common Eiders.

Worldwide, our factories produce approximately 400 million tons of plastic per year, of which an estimated 8 million tons enters the ocean. That's the equivalent of dumping one garbage truck of plastic into the ocean every minute. And by 2050 the oceans are projected to receive the equivalent of one truckload of plastic every 15 seconds.

Researchers estimate that there is at least 150 million tons of plastic in the ocean today. And that plastic is found not only in the five giant gyres around the world, (To get a sense of their size, the largest gyre, Great Pacific Garbage patch between Hawaii and

California, is around twice the size of Texas.) but has been documented at ocean depths up to seven miles deep. It is estimated that the vast majority of the 150 million tons of plastic in the ocean is beneath the surface as 70 to 90 percent of all plastic debris dumped eventually makes its way to the bottom. Once in the ocean, plastics will break down and persist for hundreds of years in the form of ever shrinking particles.

We Americans discard more than 30 million tons of plastic a year; only 30% of it gets recycled. The rest ends up in landfills or becomes land or sea litter, and a small portion is incinerated. None of these end results is ideal as plastic takes 500-1000 years to decompose. So every piece of plastic ever made remains in our environment, both on land and in the ocean. Even if incinerated, we are breathing the toxic dioxins released into the air and eating them when they settle into our crops and get bioaccumulated into animals and humans, as it is found in mother's breast milk and stored in human and animal fat cells.

One of Audubon Everglades' goals for this upcoming year is to continue to reduce our single plastic use footprint as much as possible at our monthly meetings and events. As individuals, each one of us can also make a difference by following these four "R's": Refuse, Reuse, Reduce and Recycle. The most important action you can take is to simply refuse to use single use plastic bags, straws, water bottles and coffee pods at home, when shopping, or when dining

out. Instead, use and carry reusable bags, a reusable drinking container, reusable bamboo utensils and, if you must use a straw, reusable metal and bamboo straws are readily available. Then try to find ways to reuse plastic take out containers, zipper bags and grocery store bags. Also, reduce the amount of plastic you use by buying in bulk when you can to reduce plastic packaging, and use powder verses liquid dishwasher and laundry detergent. And don't forget to use your SWA bins for everything that is recyclable.

Finally, support legislation like Palm Beach State Senator Doug Rader's failed 2019 bill that would have banned the use of single use plastic bags and straws. We can make a difference and have a positive impact in creating a more plastic free and healthier environment, which our beloved birds need for their survival.



Photo: A deceased Laysan Albatross lies on the ground in Midway Atoll, with an exposed stomach filled with debris it consumed around its coastal habitat. Marine animals cannot digest debris and often die due to starvation. © [NOAA CREP](#)



# 2019 PHOTOGRAPHY SEASON CONCLUDES BY HONORING THE BEST OF THE BEST MEMBER PHOTOS

by Scott Zucker



Photo: Salon Image of the Year: Osprey with Bloody Fish © Lora Lekos

The final meeting of the 2018-19 season Audubon Everglades Photography Club was a visual celebration for club members and guests who gathered to view the Best of the Best End of Year Competition. The competition featured the ribbon winners from our previous four Open Nature and Assigned Nature Subjects (Botany, Zoology, Macro, and Black & White), Novice, Advanced, and Salon members. In addition, members were able to add a limited number of outstanding previously entered non-winning competition images to the mix.

Club President Dr. Peter Lekos opened the festivities by reflecting on this year's Club accomplishments, describing what the Club has planned for next year and introducing the triumphant of Judges, Joe Marshall, Alan Lectner, and Lance Warley, who graciously offered to serve as our guest judges for the evening's main event. Each was armed with keypad, which they used to score the photos from 6 to 9 points. The first task was the Assigned Subject

Novice group images, which would be followed by the Assigned Subject Advanced group images and then the Salon group images. Then came the Open Nature Novice, Advanced and Salon group images. Through the course of the evening, the three judges viewed, scored and provided insightful feedback for approximately 140 wonderful images, which were shown anonymously.

As the images were projected on the large screen, and it was obvious by the quality of the pictures to all in attendance how close the scores would be and difficult it would be to pick the winning photos.

The Assigned Nature Subject Image of the Year Award winners were Barbara Miller (Novice), Alan Chin Lee (Advanced), and Tom Rasmussen (Salon), while the Open Nature Image of the Year Award winners were CJ McCartney (Novice) Nancy Freeman (Advanced), and Lora Lekos (Salon). [To see the complete competition results, please visit the Audubon Everglades website.](#)

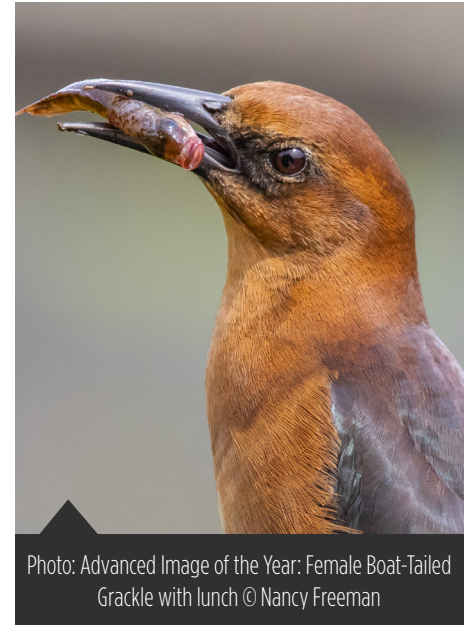


Photo: Advanced Image of the Year: Female Boat-Tailed Grackle with lunch © Nancy Freeman



Photo: Novice Image of the Year: Royal Terns with Fish © CJ McCartney

It was apparent from the superior photographic quality of the work of the Novice and Advanced members, which has improved so much over the year, that some would be graduating to the next level in the 2019-20 season.

Please join the Audubon Everglades Photography Club 2019-20 season starting in September for more exciting new speakers, informative workshops, engaging field trips and thrilling competitions.

The 2019 Membership year runs from June 1, 2019 to May 31, 2020. Join Friends of Audubon Everglades today.

# JOIN AUDUBON

# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

There are two ways to join Audubon Everglades:

## **FRIENDS OF AUDUBON EVERGLADES MEMBERSHIP:**

All your membership dues and contributions are put to use supporting local conservation projects and educational programs in Palm Beach County. You will receive 12 issues of the Kite newsletter, priority for some special trips and discounted rates at some events and vendors. Join using the PayPal link off our website or by mailing the attached membership application. The Audubon Everglades Kite newsletter is available by email only.

## **NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP:**

includes membership in Florida Audubon and Audubon Everglades plus one year of the Audubon magazine. [Join online here.](#)

Your NAS membership does not grant you the special privileges and discounts afforded to those who are local Friends of Audubon Everglades members. If you choose to join us through National Audubon Society, please also consider becoming a Friend of Audubon Everglades to support local conservation and education initiatives.

## **Yes, I want to become a member of FRIENDS OF AUDUBON EVERGLADES**

**Join now using PayPal. Go to [AudubonEverglades.org/membership](https://AudubonEverglades.org/membership) to complete the application.**

Or, complete this form and mail your check to: Audubon Society of the Everglades, PO Box 16914, West Palm Beach, Florida 33416-6914

Please check one: ☐ \$25 (Single) ☐ \$20 (Student) ☐ \$20 (Senior) ☐ \$35 (Household\*) ☐ \$75 (Patron\*)

Please feel free to give above the membership amount with a contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

\*If you selected Household or Patron Membership, please provide the names of all members living at the same address.  
(2 adults and children under age 18)

Household/Patron Additional Names \_\_\_\_\_