



Audubon FLORIDA

Naturalist

Summer 2017



Photo: Tallahassee Democrat

2017

Florida Audubon Society Leadership

Eric Draper
Executive Director, Audubon Florida
President, Florida Audubon Society

Julie Wraithmell
Deputy Executive Director, Audubon Florida

Julie Hill-Gabriel
Deputy Director, Audubon Florida

Board of Directors
Jud Laird, Chair
Heidi McCree, Vice Chair
Charlie Margiotta, Treasurer
Carol Colman Timmis, Secretary
Lester Abberger
Amy Albury
Carolyn Antman
Dr. David L. Cox
Dykes Everett
Paul Ferber
Ann Harwood-Nuss
Reid Hughes
Jennifer Johnson Duke
Alan Keller
Lois Kelley
José Latour
Steve Lynch
Ron Magill
Steve Nellis
Douglass Pitts Jr.
Lida Rodriguez-Taseff
Michael Sheridan
Katie Sproul
Scott Taylor
Barbara Walker
Paula Wehr
Rob Williams
Doug Young
Kristine Young

Board Members Emeritus:
Joe Ambrozy
Sandy Batchelor
John W. Elting
John Flanigan, Esq
Joyce King



Jud Laird, Chair
Florida Audubon Society

Dear Audubon Members and Supporters,

I have always believed that the strength of Audubon Florida lies within the hearts and minds of the people that make conservation in our state possible. The diverse Audubon family is made up of hardworking volunteers, local chapters, and professional staff across the state. We work every day to conserve and protect birds and the special places they need.

Without you, we can't protect our environment and accomplish our mission. I choose to focus my conservation efforts through board service while other volunteers serve in many different capacities in the field. Whether it's monitoring eagles as an EagleWatch volunteer or participating in the largest citizen science program in the country through the Christmas Bird Count, these individual actions create a significant collective impact. We are all working together to have a positive impact on the natural world, and we all have a vital role to play in protecting Florida's natural resources.

In this edition of the Naturalist, you'll see some of these stories highlighted as you flip through the pages. But for every one story you see printed here, there are dozens of untold people-powered conservation stories happening in the field. I hope you enjoy learning about the unique ways our network advances conservation, and please continue sharing about the work you're doing with your local chapter and our staff at Audubon Florida.

Our largest gathering of conservation leaders is right around the corner. In October, we will meet, celebrate, and learn in St. Augustine at the annual Audubon Assembly. With a special focus on water for Florida's future, we will come together and work to solve Florida's water crisis. This is an opportunity for all of us, at every stage of involvement in Audubon, to deepen our understanding around the challenges facing our natural resources. We all depend on water, and I know you'll enjoy getting a chance to engage with policy experts and scientists. I look forward to seeing you there, and thank you for all you do for conservation.

For the birds,



4500 Biscayne Boulevard
Suite 350
Miami, Florida 33137

(305) 371-6399
fl.audubon.org



Facebook.com/AudubonFlorida
Twitter.com/AudubonFL



Eric Draper, Executive Director
Audubon Florida

It was to say *thank you* not *goodbye* that led me to attend a celebration for longtime Sarasota Audubon President Jeanne Dubi recently. As speakers praised Jeanne's accomplishments and love of birds, the setting itself drew my attention. Hundreds were gathered in a place that had been created for the purpose of bringing people together for conservation. The Audubon Nature Center at the Celery Fields is built on former farmland repurposed to clean up stormwater before it flows into Sarasota Bay and to provide some of the best birding in the region.

During the restoration a decade ago, local Audubon leaders noticed that the project covering hundreds of acres and surrounded by development was attracting lots of birds. One day, Jeanne declared her intention to build a nature center. There we were at the nature center she imagined and enlisted others to create.



Conservation happens that way. An idea turns into a dream then turns into reality. We need more of that. And we need more now, let me tell you why.

Florida, the nation, and the world face environmental challenges like never before. Just in the past month, there have been more reports on the lasting effects of climate change, the Gulf of Mexico has the largest dead zone ever, and shore and wading birds were set back with another tough nesting year. These are big examples, but I could fill this magazine with worrisome trends seen around Florida. At the same time, the Audubon family is stepping up like never before, and you'll read about some ways our network is using the power of people for conservation in this edition.

My favorite part of being Audubon Florida's executive director is attending local events. While I get satisfaction from passing laws and securing investments in environmental projects, my real thrill is seeing people working in their communities- giving time and energy to turn ideas into results.

That is the founding spirit of Audubon, and it is contagious. I invite you to renew your conservation commitment by attending the Audubon Assembly in October. This celebration of local leadership will help you reignite your passion for the rewarding work of encouraging others to be like Jeanne, turning our dreams to reality.

See you at the Assembly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "Eric Draper".

A Community Comes Together for Seabirds Nesting on the Navarre Causeway

Across the state at many important nesting sites, Audubon biologists and volunteers steward rare coastal birds and work to protect them from harm. One of these sites is Northwest Florida's Navarre Beach causeway, a favorite annual nesting spot for a large flock of Black Skimmers and Least Terns. Each summer, bird-admirers stop alongside the road to watch or take pictures of the nesting adults and their fluffy, flightless chicks. Unlike other nesting sites, this one is in a prominent spot that cannot be missed. These terns and skimmers nest adjacent to a major road!

Roadside nesting of 150 Black Skimmers plus an additional 120 Least Terns is quite a sight! But it can also be dangerous if they get spooked and lift off to fly low across the road in front of oncoming cars. Audubon and our volunteers work before each nesting season to place signs along the shoulder of the road to keep people out of the nesting area and prevent just this sort of disturbance. It may sound like an easy job except that this nesting habitat extends more than half a mile along the busy road. This season, Audubon sent requests out throughout Navarre for volunteers, and the response was overwhelming! People throughout the community came out to help the birds, including a local Boy Scout troop, the Navarre ROTC, members of the local high school football team, military veterans, and other caring citizens.

As if thanking the volunteers at the end of a long day of sign posting this season, a pair of Black Skimmers flew right over the group vocalizing with their barking 'yip.' The pair then landed in an open spot and settled down as all their admirers finished the protective barrier around them. It was the perfect way to end a long day.

Audubon Florida and the birds thank you, Navarre!



The Navarre community is quite protective of their nesting birds. Each year, Audubon biologists are asked when the birds will be returning from their winter homes. So, it wasn't surprising when many volunteers showed up to help after Audubon put out the call for help. Photo: Maggi Diercks Roberts



If you are interested in protecting Florida's iconic coastal birds, let us know by emailing FLConservation@audubon.org today!



Black Skimmers
Photo: Reinier Munguia

Protecting Birds is as Easy as Asking the Right Questions

By Jenny Welch, Member of Kissimmee Valley Audubon Society and Volunteer with EagleWatch



My appreciation of natural Florida grew from my childhood living on Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. Using saw palmetto as swords, pokeberries as paintballs, climbing trees, listening to the wind blow through the pines, feeling the house shake when an Apollo launch went up. We played outside from dawn until the mosquitoes came out at dusk.

I never saw an alligator or Bald Eagle growing up because, at that time, they were almost extinct. Now, I never tire of seeing them today. I am fortunate that my childhood home is part of a wildlife refuge to be preserved while much of Florida is being developed. With so many special places disappearing from our state, I have made it a personal mission to curb the negative environmental impacts of development where I live.

It all started by asking developers some simple questions...

When I learned a school close to me would be rebuilt, I contacted the architect for the project. I asked a few questions. Can native plants be used? Can additional longleaf pines be planted for the resident nesting Bald Eagles? Can their roost tree be preserved? Can the new retention pond have a littoral shelf to reduce harmful nutrients in the water?

He not only said yes to all my questions, but he also planted an additional 58 longleaf pine trees and landscaped the new pond! In fact, the resident eagles now nest in that rescued roost tree.

When a college decided to build a new campus in Osceola County, I asked to meet with their president to discuss site designs. We met, and the president agreed to landscape with native plants, build bird-friendly windows, use wildlife-proof garbage cans, and not use rodenticide baited rodent boxes.

And finally, when Dollar General decided to build near my home, I reached out to them. I asked if they would use Florida native plants and preserve some of the existing plants by not clear cutting the whole lot. Just like that, they changed their landscape plans to all Florida native plants and did not clear-cut the whole lot.

I have learned to work with developers, businesses, and schools just by asking simple questions. It's really that easy. In most cases, people are willing to make simple updates to their plans that benefit birds and people. You can make the same thing happen in your community! Join your local Audubon chapter and get involved by taking on leadership roles. Praise those who are doing good things. And most importantly, don't be afraid to ask the right questions.

Paying It Forward on Florida's Beaches

By Diana Stem, Coastal Bird Steward

While stewarding Florida's beaches this summer, I had a compelling reminder of why I volunteer with Audubon. As a little girl was running through the middle of a colony one hot summer day, I had a flashback. When my family first moved to Florida four years ago, my daughter used to do the same thing. She was fascinated with birds and would race towards colonies while pretending to fly with them. She had so much fun running across the sand and waving her arms as if she was flying with the birds. Seeing so many birds in one place was a new and exciting experience for her, and I didn't know any better to stop her. I can't help but feel guilty about our past behavior.

During the last few years, we've learned a lot about the birds so when we heard about stewarding, we knew it was our chance to pay it forward. Stewarding gives us the opportunity to educate beachgoers about beach nesting birds. People come from all over to vacation on our beautiful beaches, and most have no idea that these large groups of birds are often nesting. The skimmer colony blends together so well that most people do not realize there are eggs, babies, and juveniles within the colony. Beachgoers are very respectful of the birds once they learn that the survival of the birds and their chicks depends on sharing the shores. And some people even say thanks after they know we're helping give these Threatened species a better chance.

As I watched the little girl and her family this summer, it was like looking into the past. And while I didn't want to ruin the fun, it's also important to protect the chicks and eggs. When you make people aware of what they may not notice,

it can make a real difference. For the skimmers, that help can mean the difference between them barely surviving versus a thriving colony. It's our responsibility to help these birds who have been coming to Florida to nest long before hotels lined our beaches and tourists flooded the shores.



"When I started as a coastal bird steward with Audubon Florida, I knew very little about the animals I was working to protect. Originally, I started volunteering as a way to expand my knowledge of coastal ecosystems and how birds play an impactful role. While my work as a coastal bird steward has increased what I know about coastal birds, I have also developed a stronger admiration for the imperiled species we work to protect."

- Emily Little, Honeymoon Island State Park Intern and Coastal Bird Steward



Photo: Jean Hall

A Summer with the Least Terns

By Sylvia Van Boskirk, High School Senior in NE Florida



I have always been fascinated by birds. This summer, during my vacation from high school, I have taken an active role in conservation by volunteering as a bird steward. During the warm summer mornings, I set up camp near a nesting colony of threatened Least Terns on a Northeast Florida beach and keep watch. It is crucial that these birds have a safe place to lay their eggs and raise their young since most of their historic habitat has been lost to coastal development. Even in this special area where they can nest safely, birds are still threatened by the presence of dogs and human disturbance.

Once, I saw a young boy kick his soccer ball into the colony, which is a terrible disturbance by itself. Before he ran into the colony to retrieve the ball, I informed him that his ball was lost forever. The boy was understanding after I explained to him about the bird nests, but his parents were a bigger problem. "He's going to cry!" his mother alleged dramatically. I wanted to reply that the mother bird was also going to cry if her eggs were trampled. Thankfully, the family didn't enter the colony, and the terns were spared that day.

Being a young steward can be hard, but it is also rewarding. I love educating curious people about the Least Terns and other birds on the beach. I hope that my enthusiasm for birds has left people more informed about the colony and just as excited about the comeback of the Least Tern as I am!



Least Tern with chick
Photo: Reinier Munguia

Exclusive Update on the Little Estero Island Case



Reddish Egret
Photo: Reinier Munguia



Wilson's Plover
Photo: Reinier Munguia

Earlier this year, Florida Audubon Society intervened with legal action after out-of-state developers got initial approval to build a boardwalk through public conservation lands at Little Estero Island Critical Wildlife Area. Little Estero Island (Fort Myers Beach) is critical habitat for imperiled species like Least Terns, Wilson's Plovers, and Reddish Egrets, and it remains one of the last pristine nesting sites on the Gulf Coast. The legal proceedings for this case are slow but Audubon's strategy is sound. An administrative law judge for Audubon's case has set a trial date for mid-September. Until then, we're preparing with our legal counsel and celebrating this summer's fledging of chicks from this important Critical Wildlife Area. The future of special places like this depends upon people—the people who volunteer their time as bird stewards to protect vulnerable nesting areas, the people who intervene when threats like this boardwalk emerge, and people who help to fund this important work. Audubon will be posting updates to our Facebook and Twitter as this case moves on. Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who stood up for Little Estero Island and the rare and imperiled species that depend on it.

Hearty Volunteers Down Trees to Restore Habitat for Endemic Florida Bird

Removing Sand Pines Beneficial for Florida Scrub-jays



Before Photo (Left to Right): David Gordon, Katherine Stubbe, Skip Stubbe, Paul Ahnberg, Mike Williams, and Wes Calhoun.



After Photo (Left to Right): Joe Howell, Katherine Stubbe, Skip Stubbe, David Gordon, and Paul Ahnberg.

After 10 hours in the Florida sun, volunteers were able to drop hundreds of sand pines in an effort to restore critical habitat for the endemic Florida Scrub-jay. Aptly named, the Florida Scrub-jay depends on well-managed Florida scrub habitat for long-term survival.

Audubon Jay Watch volunteers joined forces with the Southwest Florida Water Management District, Florida Trail Association's Suncoast Chapter, and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Ridge Rangers to cut down tall sand pines and leave them where they fall. In addition to reducing predator perches, cut sand pines provide safe fuel for the next prescribed fire and reduce the chances of wildfires.

Before and After Photos of Restoration Activities at Southwest Florida Water Management District's Little Manatee Southfork Property in Manatee County

Florida Scrub-jay
Photo: Reinier Munguia



Support Audubon Through Required IRA Deductions

If you are 70½ or older, you can make a tax-free distribution from your traditional IRA to Audubon Florida. You can donate up to \$100,000 each year without incurring income tax on your withdrawal. It's a smart way to stand up for wildlife and natural resources, making Florida a better place!

Join other Audubon donors by donating your IRA required minimum distribution to Audubon Florida. You will avoid the income tax penalty on your distributions, and your gift will be used immediately to support Audubon Florida's vital conservation work.

Direct your financial advisor to contribute your IRA distribution directly to Audubon Florida. For more information, contact Suzanne Bartlett at 305-371-6399 ext. 123 or sbartlett@audubon.org.

Advocates Stress Need for Land Conservation Funding with Policymakers

Rank	Critical Resource/Land Projects	County	Remaining Acres	Estimated Acres	Risk Priority
1	Alachua County	Alachua	1,200	1,200	High
2	Alachua County	Alachua	1,200	1,200	High
3	Alachua County	Alachua	1,200	1,200	High
4	Alachua County	Alachua	1,200	1,200	High
5	Alachua County	Alachua	1,200	1,200	High
6	Alachua County	Alachua	1,200	1,200	High
7	Alachua County	Alachua	1,200	1,200	High
8	Alachua County	Alachua	1,200	1,200	High
9	Alachua County	Alachua	1,200	1,200	High
10	Alachua County	Alachua	1,200	1,200	High

DEFUNDED

Audubon advocates are meeting with their state legislators to discuss the benefits of local conservation projects that are now at risk after the Florida Legislature defunded land conservation programs earlier this year. In advance of the next lawmaking session in Tallahassee, Audubon chapters and Audubon Florida are educating legislators about projects in and around their communities that are eligible to receive conservation dollars. Many legislators may not realize that there are often places in their own backyards at risk of development. Florida Forever and the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program, Florida's main land conservation programs, are critical to saving the places that make Florida special and protecting rare and imperiled wildlife.

In 2014, the Audubon network led the way in gaining support for the Water and Land Legacy Amendment, which

passed overwhelmingly with 75 percent approval from voters. This amendment to the Florida Constitution was supposed to dedicate funding for conservation. With help from Audubon advocates, Audubon Florida is working hard to secure adequate conservation funding made available through this amendment next year.

Programs like Florida Forever are often discussed in the abstract, and many decision-makers only recognize them as a budget line item to protect land. In reality, the impact of this funding is critical to the future of Florida's wildlife and water resources. The focus needs to turn to the unique benefits of places that are proposed to be preserved for future generations. From places like the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed in Southwest Florida to the Apalachicola River in the Panhandle, the Audubon network is shifting the conversation.

GET INVOLVED: Reach out to your local Audubon chapter or email FLConservation@audubon.org to find out more about how you help protect the special places in your community.

In Memory of Andrew Feinman



Andy Feinman passed away on Thursday, May 11, 2017, after battling cancer for more than four years. He was a passionate supporter of Florida Bay and the back country of America's Everglades. He cared deeply about the estuarine habitat that makes the Florida Keys so special. Every day we are reminded that we inherit the good works and walk in the footsteps of those who came before us. Andy's legacy will live on at the Audubon's Everglades Science Center thanks in part to the more than \$30,000 in gifts received in his honor. These gifts will add to Andy's impact by supporting the ongoing research and science to protect and restore Florida Bay and America's Everglades. His love and elation of the outdoors, silky waters, and fishing will carry on. Andy will be missed by many, and Audubon offers condolences to Mary, Nick and Reuben, and the rest of his family and friends.



Thank you to those that contributed in his memory:

- Mindee Block*
- Daniel Breen*
- Juvenile Rights Practice in Brooklyn*
- Amy Mesirou*
- Kelly Messier and Jeff Simon*
- Sigrid Moriece*
- Caroline Morland*
- Sue Norton*
- Antonio and Carey Ramos*
- Donna and Marvin Schwartz Foundation*
- Robert Willoughby*
- Meryl and Chuck Witmer*

State Begins Updating Burrowing Owl Protections

Volunteers' History of Monitoring the Threatened Species Guide Audubon's Advocacy

Often seen popping their heads out of the ground, the inquisitive Florida Burrowing Owl was given additional state protections last year due to dwindling numbers and habitat. Just like their name suggests, these small birds of prey nest in burrows in the ground instead of in trees like most owls. With available habitat declining statewide, action by caring people continues to help save this species.

While statewide Burrowing Owl populations have dwindled, smart conservation efforts on Marco Island in Collier County have led to dramatic increases in the population. In the 1990s, there were just a handful of owls, but today more than 230 adults fledged 200 chicks last year on Marco Island. **This all happened because volunteers cared.** Marco Island's first environmental staff member, Nancy Richie, started the first island-wide monitoring and management program in 1999. She tracked their productivity, posted nesting burrows, and trained dedicated volunteers to maintain and restore habitat.

After 15 years with the owls, Nancy entrusted leadership of the program to the Naples-based Audubon of the Western Everglades, the largest chapter in southwest Florida. The Owl Watch program is now led by well-known photographer and Audubon volunteer Jean Hall (2015 Audubon Florida Volunteer of the Year) and Karol Tenace. Jean and Karol, along with Audubon of the Western Everglades' Lori Beall, recruit and train dozens of volunteers each year, who monitor more than 200 owl burrows during nesting season from February to July. Owl Watch maintains nesting habitat; tracks the nests, chicks, and productivity; and enlists law enforcement if needed.

Recently, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission announced plans to update Burrowing Owl protections granted under state law. With citizen science data from the Owl Watch program and expertise from Audubon biologists, Audubon of the Western Everglades and Audubon Florida will be advocating for meaningful protections for this rare species. Stay tuned for more updates on Burrowing Owl protections and email Brad Cornell at bcornell@audubon.org to get involved with Owl Watch in Southwest Florida!



Fred and Nancy Adams, Karen Caster, Sharon Epple, and Ed Caster (Left to Right)



Burrowing Owls
Photo: Jean Hall

Eagle Watchers Honored for Years of Service

By Barbara Salter, Correspondent, The Daytona Beach News-Journal



Photo: The Daytona Beach News-Journal

EagleWatch volunteers Judie and Joe Dziak were honored recently by the Flagler County Parks & Recreation Department for their two decades of dedicated service at Princess Place Preserve. Frank Barbuti, parks and recreation manager, presented the couple with a plaque embellished with a bald eagle during a recent Park and Recreation Advisory Board meeting.

“They’ve been involved with Princess Place for 20 years, which is longer than Flagler County has owned the property,” said Barbuti. “During that time, they have selflessly shared their extensive knowledge about the eagles, their time, and their equipment to help educate the public on the eagles’ importance. The more the public can understand about wildlife, the more they are willing to help in its preservation.”

Every Sunday during eagle nesting season, the Dziaks set up viewing scopes in a grassy area off Loop Road directly across from one of the largest bald eagle nests in Florida. For several hours, the two hold informal forums, inviting visitors to take a closer look at the impressive birds in their own habitat while answering questions and telling stories.

The Dziaks and their Flagler Audubon team conducted spring and fall surveys of all the birds they saw but were especially intrigued by the eagles. “In 1997, we heard that Audubon of Florida was looking for EagleWatch volunteers so we signed up and took the training provided by the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey,” Joe said.

The Princess Place Loop Road nest is known as “FL002” and is visible from the road, although binoculars or viewing scopes are necessary to closely monitor the birds’ activity, behavior and mannerisms. The Dziaks believe the nest is more than 30 years old and weighs more than 2000 pounds.

“During the first few years, we noticed that park visitors were curious about the eagles. They’d come over to us and ask questions. We let them use our scopes and they were fascinated. Many came back several times,” said Judie Dziak. “That’s when we decided to host informal forums on a regular basis. We begin the Sunday after Thanksgiving and continue until the last eagle has fledged.”

Since the Dziaks began keeping attendance records in 2000, more than 22,000 people have checked out the action at the nest during the forums. Many come back often, bringing their families and friends. Since the Dziaks began monitoring the nest, 29 eaglets have successfully fledged.

This article was reprinted in parts with permission.

Did you know: EagleWatch Volunteers Around the State Do More Than Monitoring?



After being contacted by an interested citizen, volunteer Howard Gowan recently escorted a 91-year-old man out to view an active nest in Central Florida.



EagleWatch volunteer Cheryl Merz crawled through thick bushes to find an eaglet on the ground that had collided with a utility pole after being chased by another bird. Thankfully, the eaglet wasn’t hurt and flew off when Cheryl got closer to it.



Bald Eagle
Photo: Reinier Munguia

Minimizing the Inheritance of Loss

By Alan Keller, Board Director, Audubon Florida



Alan and Carolyn Keller with their grandchildren Megan and Madelyn.

On returning from a long international career to live in Naples, I quickly tired of leisure and wished to become actively involved in community service. Obviously, the Naples we returned to after my retirement had changed since my childhood there in the 1940s/50s. I fondly remembered the vast open spaces, wetlands, strands, sloughs, and tree islands all teeming with birds. But that's not what I returned to.

Thus, I decided I wanted to do my part to minimize the inheritance of environmental loss that my grandchildren will experience. The question was which organization best served my purposes. I wanted to work with people who:

- Seek to understand the interests of all parties,
- Incentivize good environmental behavior before punishing bad,
- Are committed to science-based policy, and
- Prefer political pragmatism and getting things done.

Audubon fit the bill, so I got involved.

After 14 years, I now have the perspective of serving on a local board - Audubon of the Western Everglades - and Audubon Florida's board. I've watched both organizations grow in their effectiveness and influence. In addition to conservation impact, my goal has been to balance the interests of all levels of the Audubon family.

The rewards of service have been numerous. Our chapter has grown, and our influential policy staff give us a strong role in Southwest Florida environmental policy. I'm particularly proud of the progress we have made collaborating with Audubon Florida. The Audubon Florida board has listened respectfully to my pleas to not stray from science in our policy positions and has provided our chapter influence within Florida's most influential conservation network.

For Audubon Florida to continue holding our title as the most effective conservation network, we must always work to improve relationships between the 45 Florida chapters and our state and national offices. And I heartily recommend engaging with Audubon for anyone hoping to leave a lasting legacy for their children and grandchildren.

AmeriCorps Volunteer Crew Joins Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary

Volunteers Will Help Fight Invasives & Support Education Programs

An AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps volunteer crew just joined the team at Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. These AmeriCorps volunteers will work directly with the Sanctuary's resource and maintenance team to restore habitat in the 13,000-acre swamp protected by Audubon. This crew will work on handpulling invasive popcorn sedge, treating Brazilian pepper and torpedograss, and building additional infrastructure for youth education programs. Volunteers will also shadow Audubon naturalists to learn more about the various flora and fauna found in Southwest Florida.

Welcome AmeriCorps volunteers!



Historic Mellon House Now Available

Views of the Summer Haven River from the historic Mellon House helped inspire much of the coastal conservation led by John Hankinson. Restoring the Summer Haven River in St. Johns County was one of John Hankinson's last projects before his passing. The newly created nesting habitat that John helped establish on a nearby island has seen considerable success this year with both Least Terns and Wilson's Plovers chicks fledging. This win-win restoration project will reconnect an important estuary to improve habitat and water quality.

The Mellon House is looking for a new conservation-oriented resident to enjoy the views of Summer Haven River. People interested in relocating to this unique, legendary home on the Summer Haven River should contact Melanie Dean at meldean62@gmail.com.



Audubon Assembly 2017 - Water for Florida's Future

October 20-21, 2017

Renaissance St. Augustine Resort – Marriott, 500 South Legacy Trail, St. Augustine, FL 32092



Photo: Jennifer Adler

Join us in St. Augustine for Florida's premier conservation gathering. At the annual Assembly, grassroots leaders from around the state join Audubon's professional staff and partners to grow their knowledge and skills to protect Florida's precious natural resources. This year's Audubon Assembly will focus on solving Florida's water crisis through science-based advocacy and education.

Lodging

Rooms start at \$129/night (plus taxes/fees). Call the Renaissance St. Augustine Resort – Marriott at (904) 940-8000 and ask for the Audubon Assembly rate. Be sure to book by September 22 to secure this great rate.

Registration

Register for the event online at fl.audubon.org/Assembly. Registration includes access to all events. For more details or questions, contact Audubon Florida at FLConservation@audubon.org or (305) 371-6399 ext. 134. Registration does not include lodging.

Early bird rate: \$129 (on or before Oct. 2, 2017)

Regular registration: \$149

Agenda

Friday, Oct. 20

7:30 - 11:30 a.m.

12 - 1:45 p.m.

2 - 3:30 p.m.

3:45 - 5:15 p.m.

6 - 7 p.m.

7 - 9 p.m.

Field Trips

Welcome Luncheon

Learning Sessions - Round 1

Learning Sessions - Round 2

Reception

Awards Banquet and Keynote

Presentation

Saturday, Oct. 21

7 - 8:15 a.m.

8:15 - 9:15 a.m.

9:30 - 11 a.m.

11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

1 - 4 p.m.

Networking Breakfast/Social Hour

Chapters' Celebration

Special Session on Water for

Florida's Future

Conservation Priority Setting Session

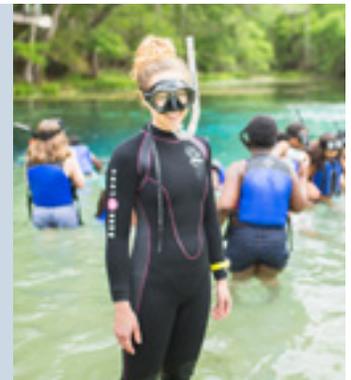
Florida Audubon Society Annual

Meeting and Audubon Florida

Board Meeting

Keynote Speaker: Jennifer Adler

This October, Jennifer Adler will deliver an inspiring keynote about Florida's liquid wealth, the Floridan Aquifer. Jennifer is a conservation photographer and National Geographic Explorer with a focus on freshwater conservation. She uses her skills at underwater photography and cave diving to connect audiences to the aquifer beneath their feet. A PhD student at the University of Florida, she has created an environmental education program called Walking on Water that immerses elementary school students in Florida's springs, cameras in hand. Jennifer is also a TEDx speaker and has exhibited her photography throughout Florida and at the Royal Geographical Society in London.



Audubon Assembly 2017 - Water for Florida's Future



Diving Cormorant
Photo: Jennifer Adler

Field Trips 2017

St. Augustine is known as a place where human and natural history intertwine. Historic forts and missions provide the backdrop for birding field trips planned at this year's Audubon Assembly. All field trips will take place on Friday morning, Oct. 20, 2017. Host chapters St. Johns County Audubon and Duval Audubon will provide birding maps and guides. Trips may depart at different times throughout Friday morning and will be rated according to ease and walking distance. This list may be updated.

- Matanzas Inlet
- Anastasia State Park
- Julington-Durbin Creek Preserve
- Hub Bailey Road St. Johns County Masters Tract Regional Stormwater Treatment Facility
- Fort Mose
- Mission Nombre de Dios
- Exploring on your own. Attendees may use this list to explore the area before and after the Assembly.

Special Session: Water for Florida's Future

This special session will focus on water for the environment and is based on the idea of public interest. People involved in water quality, water management, and ecosystem restoration efforts will discuss the future of Florida's water needs and highlight Florida's most pressing water issues. Join us at this Saturday morning session to learn more about solving Florida's water crisis.

Learning Sessions

Influencing Hearts and Minds: How to Persuade Decision-Makers Effectively

Audubon is known as America's most effective conservation network thanks to our members. Our chapter network across the state is vital to restoring critical conservation funding and safeguarding Florida's wildlife and special places this upcoming year. Join Audubon Florida and invited experts to learn how to get things done in Tallahassee and help advance conservation. This interactive, hands-on workshop will empower attendees to affect change!

Water Policy Bootcamp

The desire to protect water for Florida's future is growing throughout the state. Navigating the ins and outs of government agencies, however, can be a daunting task. This session will provide an overview of Florida's most significant water-management policies and give attendees the tools they need to effectively protect and save their local waters. Birds and wildlife depend on Florida's waters, and they depend on Audubon advocates to ensure they are protected for generations to come.

Landscaping for Water and Wildlife

Audubon recently launched an entire Water for Florida's Future program! The program encourages Floridians to take simple steps inside the home, outside the home and in the community to save water. Did you know that half of Florida's water supply goes towards watering yards? Join us to gather resources to conserve water, hear from conservation experts, and become part of this highly-effective water conservation movement.

Hurry up and register today!

Last year's event sold out!

fl.audubon.org/Assembly



4500 Biscayne Boulevard, Suite 350, Miami, Florida 33137

Tel: 305-371-6399 Fax: 305-371-6398

fl.audubon.org

Summer 2017

Florida Audubon Naturalist is published by Audubon Florida. No portion of this publication may be reproduced without written permission from Audubon Florida © 2017

The Florida Audubon Society, National Audubon Society (doing business as Audubon Florida), and the 45 chapters in Florida, work together in a strategic alliance.

Executive Director: Eric Draper

Production: NPC Printing, Inc. Editor: Sean Cooley Designer: Reinier Munguia

Cover Photo: Tallahassee Democrat

Contributors: Shawnlei Breeding, Sean Cooley, Brad Cornell, Eric Draper, Julie Hill-Gabriel, Alan Keller, Dr. Marianne Korosy, Jud Laird, Emily Little, Helen Marshall, Dr. Caroline Stahala, Jacqui Sulek, Diana Stem, Sylvia Van Boskirk, Allyson Webb, Jenny Welch, and Julie Wraithmell

Photographers: Jennifer Adler, AmeriCorps, Daytona Beach News-Journal, Jean Hall, Kristen Mauzy, Maggi Diercks Roberts, Reinier Munguia, and Tallahassee Democrat.

Please contact our Miami office at 305-371-6396 for estate planning or to make a gift of stock. For other gifts go to www.GiveToAudubonFlorida.org. Gifts specified for Audubon Florida or Florida Audubon Society will be used exclusively to support conservation in Florida.

Register now for the annual Audubon Assembly, Oct. 19-20. Details on pages 14 and 15.



Read more about what these volunteers accomplished together on page 4! Photo by: Maggi Diercks Roberts.