



Audubon | FLORIDA Naturalist

Winter 2018/2019
2018 Annual Report



2018 Florida Audubon Society Leadership

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Jud Laird, Chair
Florida Audubon Society

Dear Friends,

You and I both know – it is time for Florida to do more in preparation for a changing climate. We know that sea level rise and warmer waters are already disproportionately impacting the Sunshine State. We know that our economy and livelihoods rely on pristine shorelines, freshwater abundant with fish, and clean drinking water for our 20+ million residents and 100+ million tourists. And, lastly, we know that Audubon is the best positioned organization in the state to help us take the right steps for people and birds.

Audubon scientists and policy experts are working together to advance the best strategies to address Everglades restoration, land and water conservation, and climate change. Relationships with stakeholders that transcend political differences enable Audubon's voice to be trusted and heard by our decision-makers. Your generous support and involvement with Audubon make this possible.

If 2018 was Year of the Bird, 2019 is the Year of the Climate as Audubon focuses on combatting the impacts of a changing climate, which remains the biggest threat facing birds. The US Global Change Research Program's 2018 National Climate Assessment underscores the importance of acting now. These threats are not only serious ecologically but also economically. The changing climate is contributing to increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters – from wildfires to droughts, to torrential rains and devastating hurricanes. Florida knows this all too well with the recovery from unusually strong Hurricanes Irma and Michael projected to take years. The impacts on the economy are expected to be just as dire as those to human and ecological communities.

Audubon provides tried and true leadership here in Florida, in Washington DC, and other state capitals across our country. **While our changing climate may be the greatest challenge we've ever faced, we know our staff and engaged network of Audubon advocates are prepared and ready to act. Together, Auduboners have stopped the plume trade, created and saved wildlife refuges, and protected hundreds of thousands of acres of Florida wildlands.**

From helping our coastlines adapt with innovative resiliency projects to restoring wetlands that attenuate floods and clean nutrient pollution to advancing energy conservation and green energy solutions– Audubon will be at the front of this fight.

As we embark on a new year filled with hope and vigor, I hope you enjoy this edition of the Naturalist. And please, consider a generous donation to help Audubon keep up our efforts to protect birds and the places they need.

We are so grateful.

Sincerely,

Jud Laird

Cover image: Roseate Spoonbills serve as an indicator species for the health of America's Everglades. In Florida, Roseate Spoonbills are showing promising progress in response to ecosystem restoration. Photo: Jeffrey Karnes/Audubon Photography Awards



Julie Wraithmell, Executive Director Audubon Florida

Dear Audubon members and supporters,

This December, I achieved a surprising—and dare I say impressive—accomplishment. Amidst a crowded field, I came in second to world-famous golfer Fuzzy Zoeller.

No, not on a golf course—I'm hopeless on the links. But recently, Audubon Florida board director Lois Kelley had a good idea. As the people of Naples mourned the dolphins and turtles washing up dead on their beaches, and Marco Island saw birds dying daily from the effects of red tide, Lois said, "People are desperate to understand. We have the science and the policy chops. We need to tell them." And so, she along with Naples resident Rachel Paz, organized opportunities for me to speak to the Port Royal and Royal Poinciana golf clubs, billing it as an explanation of what was happening, why, and what can be done about it. It's a depressing subject, and a frustrating one, with no smoking gun and no silver bullet.

Red tide thrives in warm water, which is only more common due to our changing climate. And both the red tide organism and blue-green algae love nutrients—nitrogen and phosphorus—and we are unintentionally driving the nutrient levels in Florida's waterbodies sky high. We do a poor job of controlling nutrient sources like human and animal waste and the overuse of agricultural or urban fertilizer, all of which ends up in our waterbodies. We also reduce the landscape's ability to cleanse waters of nutrients by draining and ditching wetlands, letting that nutrient-laden water flush to the coasts faster and dirtier than it would naturally.

Surely the only folks who would turn out to hear me preach would be the choir. The room would be an intimate gathering of me and a handful of hybrid-driving recycling devotees, right?

Wrong. Lunch at Port Royal was packed. The audience asked pointed and profound questions. Our hostess, Rachel Paz, called for people to take action, not unlike other young women like her a century ago, rallying to end the plume trade. Later that evening, at Royal Poinciana, the auditorium was a sea of chairs. And then the ushers came with more chairs. And more, as people filed in, concern etched on their faces. We walked through the issues—the science, the policy. We talked about fixes—both hard and harder (there are few at this point that are easy). And I saw in these audiences an awakening in the face of this disaster and an unwillingness to simply abide and forget.

We are at a unique moment in time, where the catastrophes of Hurricane Michael and harmful algal blooms have galvanized Floridians, and a new administration in Tallahassee pledges to meet these challenges, address water quality, wetland losses and advance Everglades restoration.

And conservation is poised to make the most of it. Audubon science, policy acumen and the earnest and eloquent voices of grassroots advocates have always been our strength. **Thank you for being part of Audubon at this important time. You're in good and growing company.**

When the event chair at Royal Poinciana welcomed me that night, his eyes were wide as he stammered, "You've blown away all our other speakers. There will be more than 250 people here tonight." But then he paused. "Except there was that time we did the event under a tent outside. So you're the second biggest we've ever had."

Second to whom, you ask? Fuzzy Zoeller. I'll take it.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie Wraithmell".

Julie Wraithmell

P.S. – The annual lawmaking session in Tallahassee is right around the corner. If you are not already, please sign up to receive our weekly email updates during the legislative session, with prompts for when we need your voice most on the issues that matter. Sign up at FL.Audubon.org/SignUp today.



Hurricane Michael: Effects and Recovery in a Time of Changing Climate

Florida's climate is already changing as evidenced by higher temperatures almost every year for the past 10 years. This year, Hurricane Michael astonished weather forecasters when it ripped through the Florida Panhandle and other southeastern US states. Unusually warm water temperatures in the Gulf of Mexico quickly strengthened Michael to nearly a Category 5 hurricane in its last 24 hours before landfall.

The unusually powerful hurricane not only devastated communities but also impacted important habitat for rare and imperiled wildlife. Tropical storms and hurricanes routinely shape Florida's beaches, salt marshes, and even inland forested habitats, but Hurricane Michael serves as an extreme example of the increasingly intense weather events impacting Florida.

The coastal areas in Florida's Panhandle are important habitat for many native and migratory shorebirds, and some coastal habitat impacts from Michael are positive. Sand dunes arose in some places and disappeared in others, peninsulas breached and became islands, and freshly deposited sand buried dense beach vegetation. Changes like these often benefit beach-nesting and migratory waterbirds, enabling them to better see predators on unobstructed beaches. Species like Black Skimmers and American Oystercatchers appreciate this natural cycle of vegetative succession and dynamic coastlines, which has worked brilliantly in favor of beach-nesting birds for eons.

But on ever-greater expanses of Florida's coastline, this natural cycle is clashing with the unyielding built environment. Coupled with rising sea levels, powerful storms erode and narrow shorelines in densely developed areas- forcing beach-nesting and migratory shorebirds to relocate and expend vital energy to search for suitable habitat elsewhere. In the future, these eroding shorelines will no longer support the built environment either, and human-built structures will likely relocate after confronting the combination of rising sea levels and powerful storms force.



American Oystercatcher.
Photo: Muhammad Faizan/Audubon Photography Awards

Audubon scientists are also concerned about Hurricane Michael's impacts to the vast mosaic of private and public forests, including the Apalachicola National Forest and Tate's Hell State Forest. The region's expanses of longleaf pine forests, pine flatwoods, and pitcher plant prairies can also benefit from renewal by cycles of growth and disruption, but the broad destruction of nearly 3 million acres of forest land is unprecedented.

The world's largest breeding population of federally endangered Red-cockaded Woodpeckers also calls this region home, in and around the Apalachicola National Forest. The impacts to their habitat and cavity trees is of great concern, as well as any barriers like fuel loads from downed trees that may make the application of essential prescribed fire more challenging. Finally, the privately owned forests of this region perform essential habitat and watershed health functions, but the economic losses to these private owners have been dire. We have grave concerns that small timber holdings with near total losses will be tempted to convert to row crops or rooftops—land uses that are poor for wildlife and water but generate financial returns faster than slow-growing trees.

The road to recovery will be long for the Florida Panhandle. While Audubon is providing priority recommendations for long-term recovery to decision-makers, you can help birds and plants recover in the aftermath of a hurricane right in your own backyard. Add variety in your native plant garden, creating habitat for a variety of insects (bird food!), bird cover, and nesting sites. Get a list of native plants for your area and local native plant nurseries by visiting Audubon.org/PlantsForBirds today. Add a water feature as simple as a bird bath with an inexpensive drip attachment, and hang a variety of bird feeders, especially this winter, in regions where Hurricane Michael stripped the tree canopy of sweetgum balls and other winter seed sources for migratory songbirds.

Red-cockaded Woodpecker. Photo: Rebecca Vasallo/Audubon Photography Awards



Audubon's Priority Actions on Hurricane Michael Recovery

Recovery efforts must focus on near- and long-term solutions that restore critical habitats impacted by the storm and make the Gulf Coast resilient to future storms.

- Encourage timber farmers with incentives to replant ecologically beneficial longleaf pine instead of row crops;
- Restore critical waterbird nesting islands and beaches to support bird habitat and protect communities;
- Restore or establish coastal barrier islands to protect communities from future storm surges and establish wildlife habitat;
- Restore shorelines and habitats suffering from storm-related erosion, using natural infrastructure techniques such as living shorelines and native plant restoration;
- Establish a voluntary buy-out program that reconnects floodplains to river systems, addresses future headwater threats, and saves taxpayer funds;
- Replace infrastructure important for erosion control, management activities, and nesting;
- Enhance stewardship capacity on islands and beaches to protect nesting habitat;
- Assess effects from the storm on the upcoming avian breeding season; and
- Using science, engineering, and stakeholder processes, work with communities to design a future more resilient to storms and storm surge while also enhancing wildlife habitat.

New Leadership in Tallahassee Means New Opportunities for Conservation in 2019

Audubon Florida's Policy Forecast for 2019

Conservation in the State Capitol

Audubon Florida is hopeful for meaningful conservation progress in the new year. Incoming Governor Ron DeSantis is vocal in support for Everglades Restoration and addressing the twin catastrophes of blue-green algae and red tide that plagued South Florida in 2018. At the same time, incoming Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried has the opportunity to address agricultural best management practices (“BMPs”) for water quality and nutrient issues that contribute to harmful algal blooms.

Legislators with proven track records on conservation are occupying key leadership roles in both legislative houses this year. Senate President Bill Galvano (R-Bradenton) appointed Sen. Ron Bradley (R-Green Cove Springs) as chair of the powerful Senate Appropriations committee, which holds the keys to land conservation programs (Florida Forever and Rural and Family Lands), Everglades and springs restoration funding, and more. On the House side, Rep. Holly Raschein (R-Key Largo) is the chair of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee and Vice Chair of the accompanying policy committee. Audubon will be working with these leaders and more to protect Florida's environment including advancing Everglades restoration, securing funds for land conservation, and combatting Florida's water crises.

Conservation in the Courts

Florida Audubon Society is also fighting in the courts. We expect a ruling soon on our challenge to block a harmful boardwalk across a state-owned lagoon and onto shorebird nesting habitat in Fort Myers Beach. The South Florida Water Management District's move in the courts to abandon important Everglades water quality standards will need our attention this year. And finally, working with our partners the Trust for Public Land, Florida Conservation Voters, and Everglades Foundation, we filed an amicus brief in a dispute between the Florida Legislature and some other environmental organizations on the Water and Land Legacy Amendment (2014's "Amendment 1"). While in mid-2018, a judge ruled that the Legislature improperly spent Amendment 1 dollars on non-conservation uses, he went further and ruled that all funds from Amendment 1 can only be used for acquisition of land or the management of land acquired after 2014. This narrow definition is in stark contrast to the Amendment's language and could gut important funding for water resource protection, springs and Everglades restoration, and land management of all public conservation lands. Audubon was a leader in the effort to pass Amendment 1 in 2014 and is committed to ensuring the voters' will for funding conservation is met. Stay tuned as these issues work their way through the judicial process.

At Audubon Florida

Audubon's capacity in Tallahassee is growing this year—recent additions to the Audubon team include Beth Alvi, Director of Policy. Beth brings a wealth of policy expertise, especially in water issues, after years of service at the Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection. Joshua Romero joins as the new Legislative Director; a Marine and law enforcement veteran, he earned acclaim as a legislative aide, a grassroots organizer, and climate advocate. At a time when Florida needs all hands on deck, Audubon is investing in the capacity needed to deliver results.



The annual lawmaking session begins in March. Be sure you get all of Audubon Florida's updates by signing up for the Audubon Advocate, our legislative update. Sign up for free at FL.Audubon.org/SignUp.

Bald Eagles Nesting Begins, Showing Promise After Hurricane Michael

The 2018-2019 Bald Eagle nesting season is well underway in Florida. This comeback species was once on the brink of extinction in the 1970s, in large part due to the use of the pesticide DDT. Now, Florida is home to one of the largest populations of Bald Eagles in the U.S. Protected and monitored by Audubon EagleWatch, this community science effort supplies researchers and policymakers with critical data on the Florida eagle population.

After Hurricane Irma destroyed several nests in 2017, Audubon EagleWatchers excitedly reported that most eagles went on to successfully rebuild and raise young. Then, right as the nesting season began this year, several nests were destroyed when Hurricane Michael devastated the Florida Panhandle. Despite significant damage to the region's forests, preliminary reports indicate that impacted eagles are beginning to rebuild. Eagle pairs mate for life and typically use the same nest year after year. One pair that lost their nest in Gulf County started from scratch after the storm and are already incubating eggs! Nests are huge structures that can weigh as much as a ton and represent a lot of effort to build. As a result, losing a nest is a big loss, and replacing one quickly is no small feat.

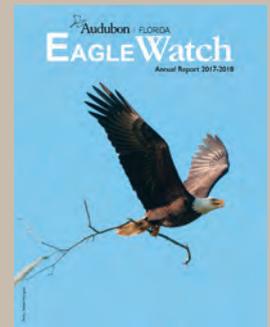
A changing climate threatens Bald Eagles with more extreme weather and warmer temperatures. With trees snapped in half after storms and Florida's rapid pace of development, Bald Eagles and other species struggle to locate suitable places to nest. Florida's eagles time their nesting to coincide with the increased availability of fish and waterfowl prey during winter. Warming temperatures may disrupt these ecological cycles, causing changes in the food chain that may reduce prey sources.

The importance of Audubon EagleWatch and other community science programs are crucial as Florida prepares for the future impacts of climate change. You can help ensure the long-term success of Bald Eagles and other birds by getting involved with Audubon. Go to FL.Audubon.org/GetInvolved to learn more!



Millions of acres of downed and snapped trees in the Florida Panhandle after Hurricane Michael. Photo: Shealah Craighead/Courtesy of the White House

Learn more about Audubon EagleWatch in the latest Audubon EagleWatch report. Download your free copy at FL.Audubon.org/EagleWatchReport online.



Did You Know? Private and Public Lands Have Roles in Combatting Climate Change?

As temperatures warm, seas rise, and precipitation changes alter habitats, Florida must use a combination of public and private lands to combat the effects of a changing climate. Both private and public land conservation provide significant benefits to human and wildlife communities by reducing urban sprawl and the negative impacts of development.

Guided by experience and science, Audubon supports incentives needed for enlisting private lands in the public service of mitigating and adapting to climate change. Proven examples of incentive-based strategies include the Florida Rural and Family Lands Protection Program, Dispersed Water Management ("water farming"), Rural Land Stewardship, Transferable Development Rights, U.S. Farm Bill Conservation Programs, and Habitat Conservation Planning under the Endangered Species Act. These kinds of programs offer big conservation at minimal public expense, while respecting the rights of private property owners.

Important Audubon-Championed Everglades Reservoir Passes State and Federal Hurdles

Full Speed Ahead Towards Implementation

Florida's recurring water crises lit a fire for lawmakers from Tallahassee to Washington, starting with the passing of Senate Bill 10 by the Florida Legislature in 2017. The historic legislation kick-started the planning of the critical Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Reservoir project, which state officials planned in record time. Thousands of Audubon members then urged federal lawmakers to approve the EAA Reservoir in this year's water infrastructure bill.

Perseverance paid off. The project is now fully approved and signed into law in the 2018 America's Water Infrastructure Act. A historic accomplishment for America's Everglades, the EAA Reservoir is a significant piece of the restoration effort and Florida's journey to bring our ecosystems back into equilibrium.

In combination with other restoration projects, the project will reduce harmful Lake Okeechobee discharges to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries by 56 percent and cut the recurrence of discharge events by 63 percent. The project will also deliver an average of 120 billion gallons of clean water to the parched Everglades National Park and Florida Bay and significantly increase the freshwater flows to Florida Bay during the dry season, when the Bay needs it the most.

This top Everglades priority will clean, store, and move water south of Lake Okeechobee and help water managers address the impacts of a changing climate. More extreme weather events and warmer temperatures require flexible and ecologically-friendly solutions to protect wildlife and people.

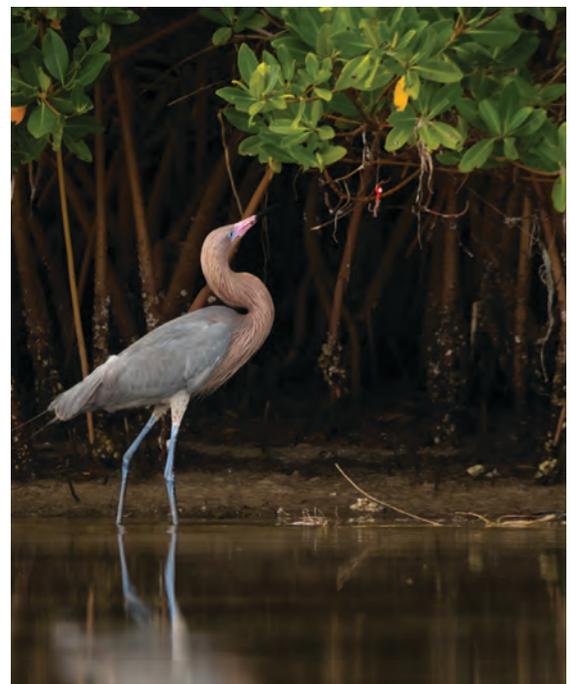
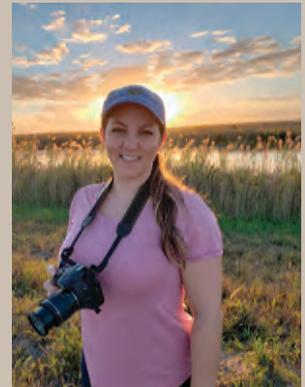
Victory in hand, Audubon remains focused on securing federal funds and making sure nothing gets in the way of this critical restoration project. But just two days after the 2018 midterm elections, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) tossed Everglades restoration a curve ball.

Despite Audubon's objections, the SFWMD Governing Board rushed to approve a secretly-negotiated deal that allows private sugar interests to use land needed for the EAA Reservoir project. This move threatens one of the most important restoration projects in America's Everglades and unnecessarily restricts the District's ability to use state-owned land to relieve pressure on our estuaries if Florida experiences significant rain before the reservoir is built. Using state-owned land in this temporary way would give water managers greater flexibility to move water across the ecosystem, benefiting people and wildlife.

Disappointingly, the secret deal locks away 16,000 acres of state-owned land for a minimum of two years. Because this site has been farmed for decades, a number of steps need to take place before the site is ready for construction. That's work that needs to take place ASAP. Adding insult to injury, the SFWMD board voted that same day to abandon a 30-year old consent decree that protects water quality in the Everglades.

Audubon is committed to the EAA Reservoir and keeping water quality protections in place. Clean water is the underpinning of what defines the Greater Everglades Ecosystem. With the support of Audubon's members, we're ready to defend it all the way.

"The recurring toxic algae blooms in South Florida and the 2015 seagrass die-off in Florida Bay tell us our watershed is sick. Implementing Everglades restoration projects like the EAA Reservoir is the antidote the ecosystem needs, and fast action to get these projects approved and funded is essential to recovery." Celeste De Palma, Director of Everglades Policy.



Reddish Egret
Photo: Tara Tanaka/Audubon Photography Awards

Restoring Hope One Acre at a Time: The Corkscrew Willow Story



Periphyton breathes new life into restored wetlands, and aquatic life is quickly returning to the restored areas of Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary.

A refreshing success story is emerging at Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary in Naples. Audubon's ongoing freshwater marsh and prairie wetlands restoration is producing regional benefits in Southwest Florida and changing the restoration conversation statewide.

Mounting wetland losses and a changing climate are being felt in communities across South Florida. Warmer water and more nitrogen and phosphorus in our fresh and coastal wetlands have made these places more hospitable for harmful algal blooms like blue-green algae in freshwater and red tide in coastal waters. In addition to cleaning nutrient pollution from water, wetlands also help absorb water in times of flood and recharge groundwater. With fewer wetlands to perform these functions and increasing water demands from South Florida communities, we are increasingly seeing human communities suffering from floods during severe weather events and catastrophic fires during time of drought.

Climate change will only amplify these impacts, but wetland restoration and better water policies can help reverse it. We need to make sure that we keep as many wetlands as possible, and that the ones that remain are functioning at their very best.

One threat to our remaining wetlands are forests of dense Carolina willow expanding across the Greater Everglades Ecosystem- swallowing diverse native marshes and wet prairies. Changes in water quantity and quality and a lack of adequate prescribed fire is creating the conditions ideal for the spread of this invasive native. This includes a 7,000-acre increase in willow extent in the Corkscrew watershed alone. Thirsty, deep-rooted willow suck more water from the aquifer in dry-season

than the sawgrass and maidencane they replaced. Willows also shade the water beneath them, reducing the extent of helpful periphyton that cleanses carbon and nutrients from the water. The science is clear: If we can push back on the willow and restore these wetlands, we can get water cleaner before it reaches the coast, while also preserving much needed water (3-4 inches) in the entire watershed during the driest period.

At Audubon, we believe change must begin with us, and so in 2018, we embarked on an ambitious campaign: To restore 1,000 acres at Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary by 2022 by removing invasive willow. In addition to Audubon's leadership in finding solutions to mitigate the impacts of climate change, Everglades restoration, and water policy, Audubon's restoration efforts at this important sanctuary are already benefitting the region—and setting an important example of one tool for addressing the region's red tide tragedy.

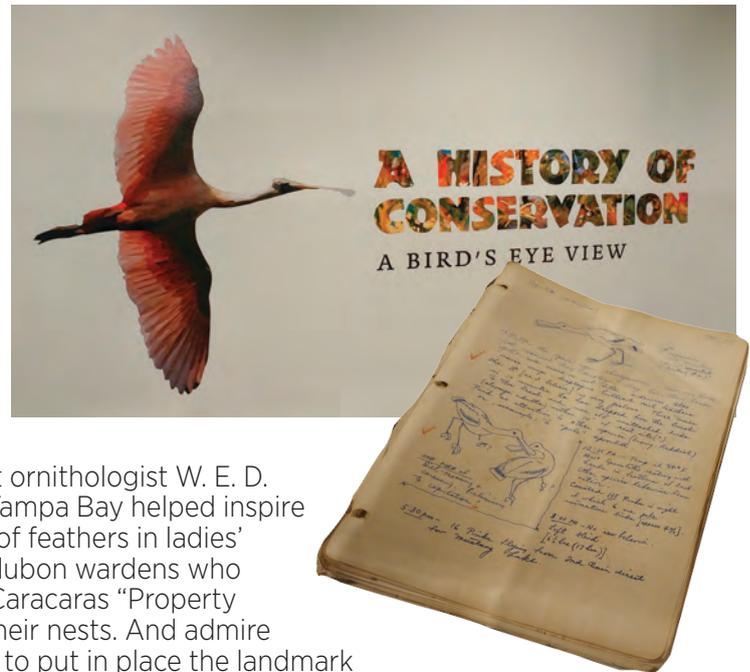
Significant support for restoration from the Rathmann Family Foundation was matched last year by Coca-Cola and SeaWorld as they increase their efforts to replenish water for the environment in America's Everglades. Along with Roseate Spoonbills, Wood Storks and Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, the success of the effort has attracted attention from land managers across the state as Audubon continues to share this best practice wherever we can.



A History of Conservation: Tampa Exhibit Highlights Audubon's Legacy in Florida's Conservation Movement

The Tampa Bay History Center and Audubon Florida curated the remarkable story of Florida conservation and Audubon's role in it in an exciting new exhibit. A History of Conservation: A Bird's Eye View shows the evolution of conservation in Florida. Visitors encounter artifacts ranging from early American bird identification studies, equipment and spoils of the plume hunters who plundered Florida's wading bird supercolonies, and inspiring stories of advocates, scientists, and elected officials who went to extraordinary lengths to protect Florida's birds and wildplaces.

Consider Guy Bradley, an Audubon warden and Florida's first wildlife officer, who was murdered while engaging poachers at an Everglades rookery. Learn about ornithologist W. E. D. Scott whose documentation of wading bird slaughter in Tampa Bay helped inspire the establishment of Audubon Societies and the boycott of feathers in ladies' hats in the late 1800s. Chuckle at the ingenuity of the Audubon wardens who thwarted egg collectors by marking the eggs of Crested Caracaras "Property of the Audubon Society" and replacing them lovingly in their nests. And admire the tenacity of early conservation legislators who worked to put in place the landmark protections for species, water, and wildplaces that we take for granted today.



Most importantly, learn from the great ingenuity of those who came before us, and in whose footsteps we follow. As we face some of the greatest threats to our natural resources Florida has ever seen, this exhibit provides inspiration and provokes pride in the proud history of Audubon's leadership. Kudos to Audubon biologists Ann Paul and Mark Rachal, volunteer Suzanne Cooper, and many partners and supporters for their efforts to share this story of Florida conservation and Audubon.

Don't miss it! Join your fellow bird nerds and Florida devotees in visiting the exhibit at the Tampa Bay History Center before it closes on February 10, 2019. Learn more at FL.Audubon.org/TampaExhibit.

A Night to Celebrate Conservation at the Tampa Bay History Center

More than 100 Audubon supporters celebrated Audubon's special place in Florida's conservation history at the Tampa Bay History Center in November. Attendees visited the exhibit and a presentation by Dr. Paul Gray, leading Audubon scientist and erstwhile historian. Audubon is so grateful to the Community Foundation of Tampa Bay for their generous sponsorship and enthusiasm for the project and celebration.

A Special Thanks to the Host Committee

Celia and Jim Ferman
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Hal and Marian Flowers
Mallory Lykes and David Belcher
Heidi and Doug McCree
Kathleen Swann Brooks and Jennifer Short Poole
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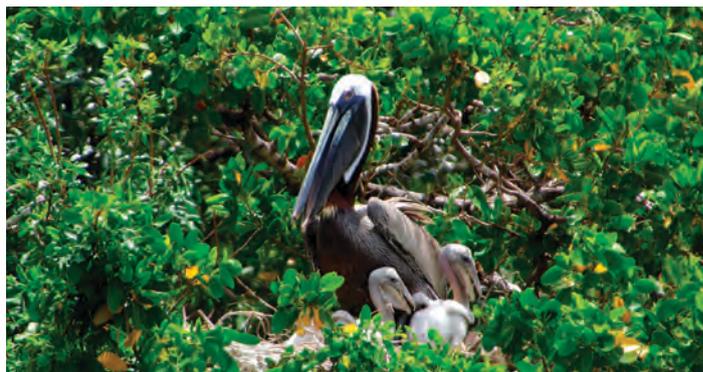


New Projects Underway to Improve Resilience of Coastal Rookeries and Demonstrate Green Coastal Engineering

The coastal islands of Florida's peninsular west coast have long been refugia for nesting waterbirds. Herons, egrets, pelicans, and spoonbills blanket the trees with nests in the thousands, and the breeze carries the clamor of begging chicks. Audubon wardens and biologists have protected these vulnerable places from persecution and disturbance for 85 years and are now mounting a defense against the next biggest threat: our changing climate.

While working in the policy sphere to address the causes of climate change, we must also work on the ground. By making sure the places upon which birds depend are as healthy and resilient as possible, we help them weather the effects of sea level rise, increased storm intensity and frequency, and more.

At the Richard T. Paul Alafia Bank Bird Sanctuary in Tampa Bay—a pair of globally important rookery islands leased from and managed in collaboration with The Mosaic Company and Port Tampa Bay—Audubon Sanctuary Manager Mark Rachal is overseeing an essential restoration. Over the last 20 years, invasive exotic Brazilian pepper and leadtree have been squeezing out the island's native trees, reducing and eliminating important nesting, foraging and roosting habitat for imperiled coastal birds. With generous support from the Hillsborough County Environmental Protection Commission, The Tampa Bay Estuary Program, Restore America's Estuaries and more than 250 individual donors, invasive trees are being removed this winter from four sanctuary islands in Hillsborough Bay to restore over 20 acres. Replanting them with native trees will maximize the island's value to birds like Roseate Spoonbills, Reddish Egrets, and Brown Pelicans. By ensuring this critically important habitat is performing at its very best, we can help buffer these



Brown Pelicans depend on Audubon's Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuary to nest.

vulnerable species from other effects of climate change that cannot be so easily controlled.

Increasingly, Alafia Bank and other rookery islands in the region are also suffering from erosion from sea level rise combined with higher storm-driven waves and larger boat wakes. Islands suffering from erosion not only shrink but suffer the overwash of ground nests and the toppling of nesting trees. With support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), Audubon is embarking on an ambitious four-year project to use offshore structures to create calm water shorelines and habitat for fish and oysters. Some of these are already in place at Alafia Bank and were proven in recent storms, with shorelines and nesting birds successfully protected by the structures. NFWF's grant enables the completion of protections at Alafia and at four other rookeries in Manatee and Pinellas counties. Not only does this work help birds, it serves as a demonstration of green infrastructure alternatives to seawalls and other harmful coastal structures.

As our climate changes and sea levels rise, Audubon science and policy are working hand in hand to help our coastal birds weather the storm.

Restoring Palm Beach's Last Wild Place

Chaired by Ms. Amanda Schumacher, a luncheon celebrating Audubon Islands Sanctuary is supporting the restoration of several Palm Beach islands leased to Audubon by three families – the Bingham, Boltons, and Blossoms. Local volunteers Katie Carpenter, Campion Platt, and Richard Moyroud are removing invasive plants and replanting with native plants. National Audubon Society Chief Conservation Officer David O'Neill keyed the event and highlighted the importance of both local and global efforts to restore critical stopover habitats for birds as they embark on long migration journeys.

Special Thanks to the Sponsors and Project Benefactors

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Audubon Florida Celebrates Local Chapters for Conservation and Leadership Achievements

What makes an award-winning Audubon chapter? Outstanding leadership and making a difference for conservation! At the Chapter Awards Ceremony of the 2018 Audubon Assembly, Audubon Florida gave awards for Best Education Project, Best Conservation Project, and Best Chapter and also recognized two extraordinary Audubon Chapter leaders.

Best Education Project



Best Education Project for a large chapter (more than 500 members) had a tie! Apalachee Audubon's Lake Elberta Habitat Enhancement project identified four college interns to develop leadership skills as organizers of this local park restoration. Chapter President Peter Kleinhenz and Intern Niles Morrow accepted the award.

Pelican Island Audubon was also recognized for their weekend extravaganza that focused on how native plants are good for both birds and the Indian River Lagoon. Chapter President Dr. Richard Baker accepted the award on behalf of the chapter's dedicated volunteers.



Best Education Project for a small chapter (less than 500 members) went to Bay County Audubon for their Plants, Birds and Berries project, which hosted a well-attended native plants seminar in their community. Chapter President Norm Capra accepted the award.

Best Conservation Project



Best Conservation Project for a large chapter went to Audubon of the Western Everglades for their Burrowing Owl survey project, complete with an operations manual. Photographer Jean Hall and Biologist Allison Smith accepted the award.



Best Conservation Project for a small chapter went to Santa Fe Audubon for their year-round commitment to survey the wading bird rookery within Vulcan Mines. Laura Berkelman, President of Santa Fe Audubon and Traci Johns, biologist with Vulcan Materials Company, received the award.

Best Chapter



Best Chapter for a large chapter went to Alachua Audubon. From the Sweetwater Wetlands to Birds and Beer and Zen Yoga, members engage in creative fun ways to educate and advocate for birds. Chapter President Debbie Segal and Vice President Felicia Lee took the award home for their team.



Best Chapter for a small chapter was awarded to Flagler Audubon. Jason and Mary Giraulo have added new energy to the chapter's activities and added a birding festival to their list of programming.

Extraordinary Chapter Leaders



Two extraordinary chapter leaders were recognized for their vision, positive attitude, and commitment to creating a culture of excellence. Join us in congratulating Peter Kleinhenz, President of Apalachee Audubon and Dr. Richard Baker, President of Pelican Island Audubon.

Conservation Leaders Recognized at 2018 Audubon Assembly in West Palm Beach

The 2018 Audubon Assembly focused on finding solutions to a changing climate with its innovative theme, *Rising Tides: Building Common Ground for Climate Change Solutions*. The jam-packed Assembly was in West Palm Beach and fired up conservation leaders from across the Sunshine State. Just miles away from the blue-green algae crisis, attendees learned in engaging sessions and heard from experts on panel discussions. Ron Magill rocked the house when he inspired the audience with his passion and photographs- reminding everyone that wildlife have their own stories to share. Thank you to everyone who joined us and made this Assembly possible. We look forward to creating even more unforgettable memories as we work to save Florida's environmental future, together.



Theodore Roosevelt Award
Clyde Butcher



Champion of the Everglades
Lt. Col. Jennifer Reynolds,
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



Volunteer of the Year
Jean McCollom



Distinguished Philanthropists
Dykes and Lisa Everett



Law Enforcement Award
Major Roger Young, FWC



Audubon Florida Board Service
Barbara Walker and Alan Keller



Staff Award of Distinction
Adam DiNuovo



Staff Person of the Year
Adrienne Ruhl

Guy Bradley
Audubon is also proud to recognize the U.S. Attorney's Office (Southern District of Florida), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission with the Guy Bradley award. Audubon is omitting their photos from publication to protect the identities of undercover officers who work to safeguard our wildlife.

Made possible by support from our sponsors:



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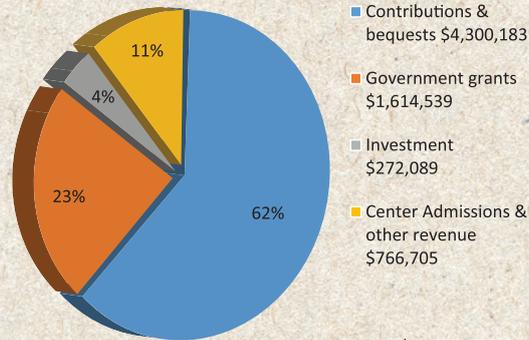
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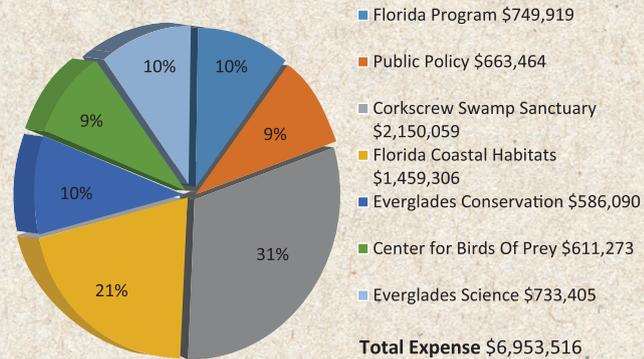
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Revenue Sources



Expenses by Program



FLORIDA AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC. Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Assets As of June 30, 2018

| ASSETS | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|------------------|
| Current Assets | | |
| Cash | | 73,781 |
| Cash - Restricted | | 19,367 |
| Charles Schwab Investment | | 4,467,766 |
| Charles Schwab Investment -Restricted | | 1,020,045 |
| Receivable - NAS | | 26,871 |
| Total Current Assets | | 5,607,830 |
| Other Assets | | |
| Land | | 3,060,010 |
| Building & Improvements | | 2,270,834 |
| Furniture & Equipment | | 44,459 |
| Accumulated Depreciation | | -1,280,975 |
| Total Other Assets | | 4,094,328 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | | 9,702,158 |
| LIABILITIES & EQUITY | | |
| Liabilities | | 46,255 |
| Equity | | |
| Land-Preservation | | 503,612 |
| Board Designated Acquisition Fund | | 3,336,177 |
| Unrestricted Net Assets | | 4,738,535 |
| Temporarily Restricted Net Assets | | 581,782 |
| Permanent Restricted Net Assets | | 300,000 |
| Net Income | | 195,797 |
| Total Equity | | 9,655,903 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY | | 9,702,158 |



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Winter 2018/2019

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Executive Director: Julie Wraithmell

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

Cover Photo: Jeffrey Karnes/Audubon Photography Awards

Contributors: Suzanne Bartlett, Shawnlei Breeding, Sean Cooley, Brad Cornell, Celeste De Palma, Vicky Johnston, Dr. Marianne Korosy, Jud Laird, Jason Lauritsen, Ann Paul, Mark Rachal, Emoy Suarez, Jacqui Sulek, Katie Warner, and Julie Wraithmell.

Photographers: Renzo M. Alvarez, Carol Cassels, Shealah Craighead (White House), Muhammad Faizan, Jayme Gershen, Jeffrey Karnes, Charles Lee, John Studwell, Tara Tanaka, Rebecca Vasallo, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Some photographs are from Adobe Stock and other Audubon staff.

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Roseate Spoonbills and Wood Storks. Photo: John Studwell/Audubon Photography Awards

