



# Audubon FLORIDA Naturalist

SPRING 2013



Celebrating

*Coastal Bird Conservation*

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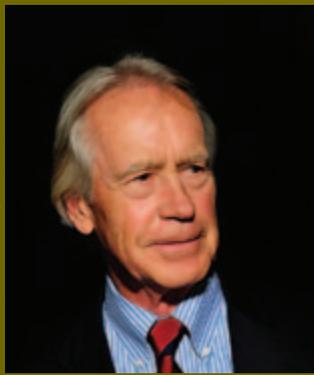
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Photo By Rod Wiley



*John Elting, Chairman,  
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## Seeing Results in the Everglades

We often talk about Audubon Florida's equation for success – Science + Policy + Advocacy = Results. After decades of using science and policy to advocate for restoration of the Everglades, Audubon Florida recently saw the completion of two top priority projects.

In January, a dedication ceremony was held for the C-111 spreader canal project, an Everglades milestone. Audubon's science center in Tavernier demonstrated the urgent need for this project to restore the salinity balances in Florida Bay. As a result of considerable advocacy by Audubon, construction of this project was accelerated and it marks the first major component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan to be completed using advanced state construction funding.

On March 19, our Everglades team, supporters and members of the board saw the completion of a one-mile bridge on Tamiami Trail. The bridge will allow water to flow under the Trail and into Everglades National Park where it will improve conditions for key species in the Park and Florida Bay. This project was authorized by Congress in 1989. Since then, Audubon has been working to make this a reality, defending the project against litigation and advocating in collaboration with local Chapters and partners like the Everglades Foundation and the Everglades Coalition.

One of the attendees at the March celebration leaned over and asked, "Who will be monitoring the water quality and ecological results once the water begins to run free under the bridge?" An Audubon staff person proudly explained, "That would be our Everglades Science Center staff at Tavernier." We have 75 years of historical data monitoring water quality, salinity, submerged aquatic vegetation, prey fish and indicator species such as the Roseate Spoonbill. This data is used to recommend real-time adjustments to water management to make sure restoration is done right.

To keep our programs strong, we need your on-going support. We are celebrating two major accomplishments; but to maintain a strong Everglades science effort in the face of reduced government funding takes money. Our goal is to build a stronger private donor base to do just that.

Learn more about how you might help by calling Margaret Spontak, Development Director, at (352) 229-2887 or [mspontak@audubon.org](mailto:mspontak@audubon.org). Help protect our Everglades investment with sound science.

Sincerely,

John Elting  
Chairman, Florida Audubon Society

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Jo-Ellen Darcy cut the ribbon to celebrate the completion of the one-mile bridge on Tamiami Trail, a major Everglades restoration project and the largest construction project in the history of the National Park Service.

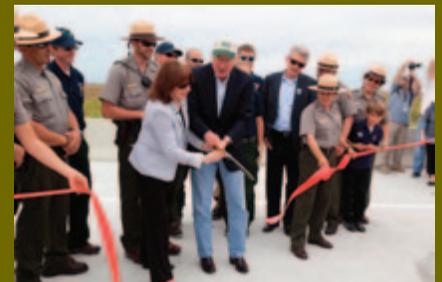


Photo by Joe Drivas



Photo by Mac Stone



## Putting Your Boots on the Ground

Over the past months our attention has been turned to Tallahassee where the annual legislative session brings great risk and a bit of hope for Florida’s environment. This year we face tough odds of achieving our major goals – legislative authorization and funding of the Everglades cleanup plan, a significant increase for Florida Forever, the state’s land conservation program and defense of Florida’s water laws.

One of my first lobbying visits this year was to an influential Senator who after warmly welcoming me to his office declared that government owns too much conservation land and that it is time to sell some off. I left his office deeply shaken. If he were alone in his views it would not matter, but an increasing number of legislators are unafraid to make such radical declarations.

What could turn this dark tide, I wondered. As a student of history I know that providence sometimes provides solutions and that one has to have faith that people will show up to do the right thing.

Then I watched as hundreds of people including scores of Audubon volunteers showed up for hearings on using the penalties from the Deepwater Horizon disaster to protect habitat, 30,000 emails and phone calls objecting to a bad Everglades bill barraged a House committee, and more than 1000 people enlisted in Audubon Florida and Audubon chapters habitat stewardship projects. Suddenly the intentions of one state senator do not seem so foreboding.

Audubon has been called the group with “mud on our boots and boots on the ground.” I like the image. It reflects an organization of doers, of people engaged in citizen science, habitat stewardship, and yes, taking a stand on the public policy decisions that affect our natural environment.

You can have sand between your toes, mud on your shoes, be waist deep in the swamp or have your feet on the desk. If you are active – even if you are just sending a letter or making a contribution – you are putting “boots on the ground.”

That my friends is what will make the difference, will help secure our special places, protect our water, restore the Everglades and conserve habitats for birds and wildlife. Get your boots on!

Sincerely,

Eric Draper  
Executive Director

### Get on your boots!

The other day I joined Dr. Jerry Lorenz and others to search for wading birds nests in Everglades National Park and found a small previously unknown colony with Roseate Spoonbill, Brown Pelican and Reddish Egret chicks. Here is a picture of the shoes I waded into Florida Bay with. That is what it means to have your boots on the ground. Over the next six months Audubon Florida is asking citizen scientists, habitat stewards, field trip leaders and even armchair activists to share their “boots on the ground” stories. Take a picture of your footwear and share your experience with others <http://www.facebook.com/AudubonFlorida>. Show that you are part of the army of volunteers with mud on your shoes. Inspire others to get outdoors and help nature and have fun!





Photo by Mac Stone

# 2013 Legislature First Do No Harm

Senator Bob Graham, when launching the Florida Conservation Coalition, urged the Legislature to first do no harm. Now after years of harm from budget cuts and weakened laws, there is just a bit of hope that lawmakers may be edging back toward helping Florida's environment.

Audubon started the 2013 session with a modest but important agenda:

- Fund Florida Forever – the state program to conserve land - at up to \$100 million.
- Fund the Everglades at up to \$100 million.
- Defend water, wildlife and growth management laws.

Here is where we are mid-way through the legislative session:

**Florida Forever:** Governor Scott requested \$75 million in his budget - \$25 million in new funds and \$50 million from the sale of unneeded state land. Audubon, working with conservation allies in the Florida Forever Coalition, endorsed the proposal because it starts pushing the ceiling for land conservation back toward the peak of \$300 million appropriated during better times. Better, we reason, to have the funds from the sale of non-conservation property go into buying conservation lands than see those funds just go back into the general fund. As we wait for the appropriations bills we remain hopeful for \$75 million.

A wrinkle in this strategy came with a bill by Senator Alan Hayes that demanded land be sold before new land could be bought. Audubon critiqued the bill as “sell a park to buy a park.” At this point that idea does not seem to be taking off.

**Everglades:** A new water quality plan to meet a strict pollution goal for water entering the Everglades requires \$880 million in new funds. Audubon, along with our key ally the Everglades Foundation, proposed that a significant portion of those funds come from the sugar industry. The Legislature had other ideas and quickly moved to pass a bill that limits the tax farmers pay to help finance Everglades cleanup. At this point we have agreed to a funding compromise that extends some level of the tax through 2035 in exchange for the promise of reliable funding for the cleanup plan.

**Wildlife Policy:** Feral cats are one of greatest threats to birds and other wildlife. Each year billions of birds are killed, many by cats in colonies maintained in urban areas. This year promoters of these bird kill zones came to the legislature to seek legal sanctions for expanding feral cat colonies. The promoters claim that neutering and releasing cats reduces feral populations despite scientific research which has debunked this claim. It is estimated that free-ranging cats kill 1.4-3.7 billion birds in the US each year, as well as 6.9-20.7 billion small mammals and more than 400 million reptiles and am-

phibians. Feral cats are a substantial threat to rare and endangered species in Florida like Lower Keys Marsh Rabbit, Key Largo Woodrat and beach-nesting birds like Black Skimmers and Snowy Plovers. We expect the feral cat bill to die even if the idea of cat colonies does not.

**Defending Environmental Laws:** This year the many special interests attempting to lower environmental regulations are back. For the third year in a row, a train of regulatory changes has formed and ranges from easing permitting for marinas and boat shows to changing Florida's water policy for agriculture. Also present are attempts to declare many, if not all, uses of coal ash as “beneficial” and to expand loss of wetlands. Audubon is opposing most of these bad proposals.

**Your Part in Advocating for Florida's Environment:** You are already a valuable member of the team and your emails and phone calls are an important component of our advocacy. We do not take this power lightly. We know, as do you, that when alerts go out, a powerful response is needed and returned. And it makes a difference! Communication with your elected representatives is crucial and you do not always have to wait for our requests to do so. Stay on top of the session action by signing up to receive the weekly “Audubon Advocate” that summarizes bill action, checking our online bill tracker and liking Audubon Florida on Facebook. To sign up, go to: [fl.audubon.org/signup](http://fl.audubon.org/signup)

# Celebrating *Coastal Bird Conservation*

Least Tern  
Photo by R. Munguia

## Audubon's Coastal Bird Conservation program has a lot to celebrate this year.

Audubon's coastal program is a living, breathing family, of staff, volunteers, supporters, partners, and the birds we are united around conserving. In the following pages, we celebrate the year's milestones—births, marriages, anniversaries, a new home purchase and acquisition, and memorials—and look to the renewal of the coming breeding bird season.

We are celebrating the marriages of our program with our multi-state partners in the Atlantic Flyway, as well as the Gulf of Mexico states, as we collaborate to conserve birds within the geographic areas that describe their life histories, rather than the limits of our political boundaries. Proud partnerships are also reflected on the list of chapters and organizations at the end of this piece. These continue to expand each year.

We are celebrating our five-year anniversary this year of Audubon Florida's work in Northeast Florida. Rayonier, Jessie Ball duPont Fund and private donors helped this work develop both roots and wings.

We are celebrating Audubon's new waterbird "home" acquisitions around the state. Thanks to contributions of land and funding, critical bird nesting areas at Lanark Reef in the panhandle and Miller Island on the Gulf coast are finally secured for the future of important coastal species.

We are remembering the losses of the last year—chick and egg mortality associated with Tropical Storm Debby, disturbance by unsuspecting beach goers, predation, and inappropriate beach driving. And, we are using this as motivation to redouble our efforts on behalf of the birds and make our tactics even more sophisticated, in anticipation of the coming season.

Finally, we are celebrating the beach-nesting bird births-hatchings at beach and coastal island nesting areas throughout Florida stewarded by our faithful volunteer bird stewards. This work began more than a decade ago with a few nesting sites and volunteers, expanding to 27 sites and 500 volunteers today.

We are still on the move. This year we are expanding in earnest to 19 sites in the Florida Panhandle, a humbling opportunity to remedy coastal bird habitat losses resulting from the tragic 2010 Deepwater Horizon incident.

Please join us in celebrating these milestones, and accept our gratitude for your part in making them possible. We are glad you are a part of our coastal team. We are proud of how far we have come and ambitious about what we can accomplish together in 2013. The birds and our coasts deserve no less.

## Playing an Important Role in America's Coastal Flyways

With coastline fronting on both the Atlantic and Gulf, Florida is at a crossroads for migrating shorebirds and seabirds, as they ebb and flow like tides across the hemisphere. This function—both as a breeding site for some species as well as a way station between here and there for others—makes Florida's work especially important, protecting the habitats that birds depend on within our state as well as working



American Oystercatcher



Long-billed Curlew

Photos by R. Munguia

with partners outside of Florida to share our model and learn from theirs, all for the benefit of the birds.

### Atlantic Flyway Bands Together for American Oystercatchers

This year Florida is launching a new conservation project with partners in Audubon North Carolina, Audubon Connecticut, Audubon New York and Audubon South Carolina and generous support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to improve the fate of the American Oystercatcher. In addition to monitoring and management to track and improve productivity of oystercatchers in Tampa's Hillsborough Bay, Audubon staff will be training volunteers to aid in band resightings, helping to explain the movements of this highly mobile shorebird.

This winter, Audubon staff and volunteers assisted with ground counts for a systematic survey of wintering oystercatchers along the entire Eastern Seaboard, in partnership with the American Oystercatcher Working Group. Among the findings? More than 120 oystercatchers on Lanark Reef, where Audubon purchased the final private inholding late in 2012—the highest count for the Panhandle!

### Spreading Florida's Stewardship Model West

With generous support from The Mosaic Company Foundation, Audubon Florida and Audubon Louisiana have been working to restore the Gulf's shorebirds and seabirds, spreading citizen science stewarding efforts to key sites on the Louisiana Coast while developing valuable educational videos for debut online later this summer here in Florida. By working to align our monitoring and management, we know that our efforts can be a powerful force for protection of the Gulf's waterbirds.

### Southeast States Align to Protect Wintering and Breeding Habitat

In the last six months, Audubon Florida's Monique Borboen has built new ties between Audubon's work in Northeast Florida and our partners to the north in Georgia and South Carolina. In January, she joined plover experts from the entire Atlantic Seaboard for a summit in South Carolina, plotting a strategy to improve winter survival for critically imperiled Piping Plovers.

These diminutive shorebirds have improved in recent years on breeding grounds, but still show daunting declines on their wintering grounds, including Florida. Thanks to funding from the Felburn Foundation, Monique attended the meeting, giving rise to an exchange with colleagues to the north. Audubon Florida is helping South Carolina develop a Bird Steward Program to address human disturbances, and hopes to host them at a partnership meeting this year. In Georgia, where the coast is less developed, our collaboration is starting with shared opportunities for management of spoil islands as much-needed coastal bird habitat.

### Spreading the Word

With support from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, Audubon Florida staff worked with National Audubon's *Audubon Adventures* team to feature coastal bird conservation in the *Audubon Adventures* national curriculum this spring. Students across Florida and the country will be learning about coastal bird issues as a result of this work and about Florida's young stewards in particular. In partnership with Francis M. Weston Audubon in Pensacola, we will also be using this curriculum and other resources to provide coastal experiences for minority youth, helping to craft the next generation of coastal conservationists.

### Audubon Selected to Lead Restoration of Coastal Birds in Panhandle After Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

This January, Audubon was awarded a much anticipated state contract to manage coastal bird habitat in the Panhandle affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. For the next five years, Audubon will be responsible for posting, surveying, monitoring and stewarding coastal bird habitat at nineteen sites from Franklin to Escambia counties. The Panhandle's new stewardship coordinator, Bonnie Samuelsen started work this March, along with talented field techs Beth Wright, Julie Bullock and John Murphy. The scope of the project is daunting, but its potential is inspiring: boosting productivity for the region's nesting shorebirds and seabirds through intense monitoring and management. It is Audubon's hope that success in this project will demonstrate the viability of this model to boost coastal bird populations Gulf-wide, if implemented at scale. Audubon's success here will be due in large part to the hard work and dedication of volunteers and our four Panhandle chapters, Apalachee, Bay County, Choctawhatchee and Francis M. Weston. If you would like to get involved, email Bonnie Samuelsen at [bsamuelsen@audubon.org](mailto:bsamuelsen@audubon.org).



Kevin Christman, St. Pete Audubon bird steward coordinator, educates beach visitors about Black Skimmers nesting at Indian Shores. Photo by Dave Kandz

Steve Santangelo at the Fort Desoto Park bird sanctuary. Photo by Lorraine Margeson

## Shorebird Stewards in Action in Southwest Florida

Shorebird-nesting signs and posts? Check! Steward vests and beach umbrellas? Check! Audubon bird stewards in Florida's southwest Gulf Coast counties are dusting off gear and searching coastal beaches for the first Snowy Plover and American Oystercatcher nests of the 2013 season. Eager anticipation marks time passing in the month of March while volunteers and coastal park managers await the melodious chatter of Least Terns returning from their South American wintering grounds. Seabird courtship is a sure sign of spring on Florida's beaches and one that holds the promise of new life emerging from eggs laid in countless, sandy nest scrapes.

From Collier County's Sand Dollar Beach to Manatee County's Anna Maria Island to Pinellas County's Anclote Key Preserve, bird stewards survey coastal beaches monthly

from March through August to locate nests, monitor the chicks' growth and to help safeguard the nesting birds from errant volleyballs and a host of naive beach visitors. Volunteers install symbolic fencing and signage around each nest and colony to let people know why they should tread lightly around the perimeters and "keep out" for the duration of the nesting cycle.

April and early May will see the kickoff of efforts by many dozens of sand-between-the-toes bird stewards who spend hours of their weekends and holidays stationed at nesting colonies with signs reading "Ask me about the birds!" Audubon joins hands during the season with so many partners – sea turtle aficionados, local, state, and federal government biologists, and public and private land managers – that our coastal bird "family" has grown legendary and is

known across the country as a role model for bird stewardship. Join us this year on the beach so we can share our passion for the birds with you! Email Marianne Korosy at [mkorosy@audubon.org](mailto:mkorosy@audubon.org) to connect with a stewardship group near you.



Least Tern  
Photo by Reinier Munguia

## Audubon Marks Five Years of Coastal Leadership in Northeast Florida

Reflections from Northeast Florida Conservation Association, Monique Borboen



Royal Terns  
Photo by David Macri

This summer marks the five year anniversary of Audubon's Northeast Florida work. Time flies!

One major reward is to drive over the Matanzas Inlet and peek at the beautiful beach of Fort Matanzas National Monument. Five years ago, the beach was deeply scarred, covered in tire ruts that destroyed wildlife habitat and scenery. Now that beach driving has been stopped, the beach shows off a beautiful pattern of orange coquina sand marbled with powdery white sand. Now Least Terns and Wilson's Plovers can nest in peace, and wintering Piping Plovers, Black Skimmers and many other species, as well as the National Park's human visitors

can enjoy the beach safely.

At Huguenot Memorial Park where the City of Jacksonville has reduced vehicle intrusion into areas used by nesting and migratory shorebirds, it is gratifying to look at people who visit the bird protection area for the first time, in late June, when all the chicks are on the beach. They stare in awe at the spectacle of thousands of Royal Terns and Laughing Gulls. Adult terns fly in carrying a fish, chased by gulls; Royal Tern chicks, packed in a crèche, move all as one; finally the tern locates its own chick which runs to get its dinner surrounded by several noisy adults: Royal Terns make quite a big affair of a chick's meal!

But the main reward is to see the constituency that we have built together for beach-dependent birds. Volunteers started with surveys, became bird stewards, then faced daunting crowds as advocate for the birds, supporting sound conservation practices. Because of these successes, our Bird Steward Program is now inspiring other states in the Atlantic Flyway.

Our stewards' engagement reaches beyond the birds into land and water conservation, and, with seven Audubon chapters, Northeast Florida can count on dedicated stewards to keep the region's nature healthy and vibrant.

# Saving Florida's



Howard Miller at the Miller Family Bird Sanctuary Island his family donated to Florida Audubon to protect nesting wading birds and pelicans in fall 2012. Photo by Barbara Howard, Project Colony Watch volunteer and member of St. Petersburg Audubon Society.

## Miller Family Bird Sanctuary

Last September, the Miller Family of St. Pete Beach donated an island sanctuary to the Florida Audubon Society. "All of us have a personal relationship with this part of Florida," stated Howard Miller, who coordinated the donation by eleven family members, who all supported the gift, adding, "We all remember the birds. This is what Florida is all about." The island will be managed by the Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries with assistance by Project Colony Watch volunteer monitors Barbara and Dave Howard. At press time, the island's mangroves are already hosting the beginnings of this season's breeding birds, which will peak at about 200 nesting pairs, including pelicans, cormorants, Anhingas, herons, and Roseate Spoonbills.

## Lanark Reef Stewardship Begins in Earnest

After acquiring the last private inholding on the Panhandle's Lanark Reef last fall, this important bird area is finally safe from the threat of development. After a vital winter season where the Reef sheltered oystercatchers and Red Knots, Piping Plovers and Marbled Godwits, it is now giving way to the raucous breeding season. Brown Pelicans will soon be staking out their colony and oystercatchers, Willets, Laughing Gulls and Black Skimmers will all take their places to raise young of their own. Lanark is one of the sites monitored and stewarded under Audubon's new program in the Panhandle, with the support of dedicated volunteers on the adjacent mainland.

## Saving Alafia Bank from the Bay

In 2012, Audubon Florida installed a 930-foot breakwater using massive pH-balanced concrete pyramids off the shore of the Richard T. Paul Alafia Bank Bird Sanctuary. The breakwater lies parallel to the shore and intercepts high velocity wakes from commercial ships and storm waves. It provides structure for oysters and marine invertebrates, protects bird nesting habitat, improves water quality by reducing turbulence, and creates essential fish habitat. This spring, as the 7,000 pairs of birds that nest on the islands set up shop, Audubon staffers Ann Paul and Mark Rachal are working feverishly on the permitting for the next phase of installation. At the same time, our policy team is actively lobbying for funding for the remainder of the erosion control project from RESTORE monies resulting from the Deepwater Horizon disaster.

# Coastal Islands



Alafia Banks Sunken Island  
Photo by Bill Fehring

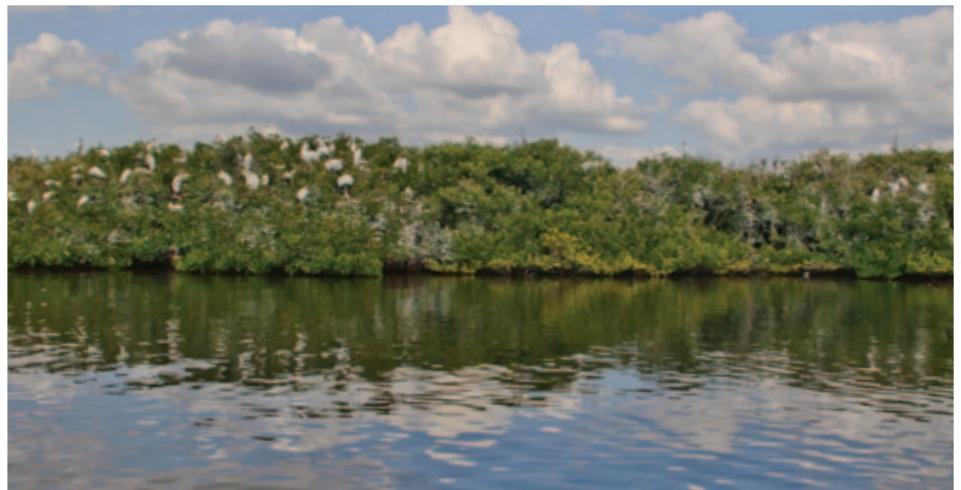
A breakwater installed on the west side of Sunken Island of the Richard T. Paul Alafia Bank Bird Sanctuary curbs erosion and protects nesting birds. Aerial photo by Bill Fehring taken in April 2012 shows pelican nests. Herons and ibis nest under the tree foliage.

## Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries

In addition to those on the previous page, Audubon protects 25 island sanctuaries through ownership and long-term management agreements and partnerships with private owners and government agencies. These islands provide protected habitat for over 11,500 nesting pairs of waterbirds, approximately 20% of the birds that nest along peninsular Florida's west coast. Islands owned by Audubon include Green Key in Hillsborough Bay, Miller Family Bird Sanctuary in Little McPherson Bayou, and Washburn Sanctuary in Terra Ceia Bay. Green Key is important for foraging, migrating and roosting birds. Washburn Sanctuary (donated to Audubon by generous supporters) is home to many species of colonial waders including Roseate Spoonbills and Reddish Egrets. We post, patrol and manage colonies on natural and man-made mangrove islands including Marker 26 Colony, Dunedin Sand Key West, Ozona Island East, Clearwater Harbor I-25, Dogleg Key, Cortez Key, Dot Dash Colony and the

Bingham Islands in Lake Worth Lagoon. The Tampa Port Authority's islands 2D and 3D, Fantasy and Fishhook islands are part of Hillsborough Bay's Globally Significant Important Bird Area. Audubon's protection and active management extend south along the Gulf coast to Port Manatee's Manbirtee Key, Little Bird Key in Terra Ceia Bay,

Bowlees Creek, Town islands and Whale Key in northern Sarasota Bay, the Roberts Bay Islands, Blackburn Bay islands and White Pelican Island in Charlotte County. This collection of special places makes for a busy breeding season for Audubon's biologists, in service of the birds.



The Dot Dash Bird Islands Sanctuary at the mouth of the Braden River, owned by the State of Florida and managed by Audubon's Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries. Photo by Jim Gray.

**While many chapters statewide support our coastal work, the following fifteen have stepped forward to coordinate and lend their talents to beach stewarding:**

Audubon of Southwest Florida  
Clearwater Audubon  
Collier Audubon  
Duval Audubon  
Flagler Audubon  
Halifax River Audubon  
Manatee County Audubon  
St. Johns County Audubon

St. Petersburg Audubon  
Santa Fe Audubon  
Sarasota Audubon  
Southeast Volusia Audubon  
Space Coast Audubon  
Tampa Audubon  
Venice Area Audubon

**The following 27 beaches were the sites of Audubon nesting season bird stewarding in 2012:**

#### **Panhandle Coast**

Deer Lake State Park  
Grayton Beach State Park  
Gulf Islands National Seashore  
St. George Island State Park  
St. Joe Peninsula State Park  
Navarre Beach County Park  
Tyndall Air Force Base

#### **Atlantic Coast**

Anastasia State Park  
Ft. Matanzas National Monument  
Huguenot Memorial Park  
Porpoise Point public beach  
Summer Haven public beach

#### **Southwest Gulf Coast**

Anclote Key Preserve State Park  
Anna Maria Island  
Clearwater Beach  
Egmont Key National Wildlife  
Refuge  
Fort Desoto Park  
Fort Myers Beach and Little Estero  
Critical Wildlife Area  
Gasparilla Island  
Indian Shores  
Knight Island  
Lido Key  
Longboat Key  
Siesta Key  
Second Chance Sandbar  
Shell Key Preserve  
Tigertail Beach and Big Marco Pass  
Critical Wildlife Area

**The following is a sampling of the many partners without whom our coastal conservation work would not be possible. Our heartfelt thanks to all our partners and supporters.**

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
Florida Shorebird Alliance  
Florida Park Service (including the staff of 18 state parks)  
Office of Greenways and Trails, Florida DEP  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
National Wildlife Refuge System  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of Defense

#### **Florida Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas**

St. Johns County  
Sarasota Estuary Program  
Volusia County  
Tampa Bay Estuary Program  
Santa Rosa County  
Save Our Seabirds  
Charlotte County  
Sarasota Bay Buddies  
Collier County  
Brevard Zoo  
Hillsborough County Friends of  
Ulumay  
Lee County  
Disney World  
Pinellas County  
Eckerd College  
Pasco County  
Tampa Port Authority  
Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve  
Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve  
Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve  
Florida Oceanographic Society  
University of West Florida  
Northwest Florida State College  
University of South Florida  
Florida State University  
University of Florida  
Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences  
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation  
Florida Master Naturalist Program  
Tallahassee Community College Green Guide Program  
Florida Sea Grant Program  
Department of Transportation  
Southwest Florida Water Management District  
Amelia Island Plantation  
St. Augustine Eco Tours  
Anna Maria Turtlewatch and Shorebird Patrol Inc.  
Turtle Time Inc.  
Tampa Bay Conservancy  
Tampa Bay Watch  
Sarasota Bay Watch  
Friends of Tigertail Beach  
Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens  
St. Augustine Alligator Farm  
Sea Turtle Preservation Society and Florida Wildlife Hospital  
Patrick Air Force Base

Brown Pelicans  
Photo by Reinier Munguia





Wintering Short-billed Dowitchers in Tampa Bay.  
Photo by Reinier Munguia

## Sally Thompson: Leaving a Legacy of Blue and Green

Fanatical sports fans often say they bleed orange and blue or garnet and gold or whatever colors represent their team. With Sally Thompson, one might say she bleeds blue and green. Her two environmental passions are conservation land acquisition with an emphasis on corridors or greenways and protection of water, particularly the Tampa Bay system.

Sally jokes that her first foray into conservation was attending the original Earth Day parade in 1970 when she lived in New York City after college. But it was not until she returned to Tampa that she became an active conservation leader and supporter of Audubon. She started with a local group, Save Our Bay, which merged into the Hillsborough Environmental Coalition with her as president. Board member Jim Rodgers, manager of Audubon's Tampa Bay Sanctuaries, later introduced Sally to Rich Paul, who succeeded him as manager of what is now Audubon's Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries. With dredging being initiated for the Tampa Harbor Deepening Project, they worked with the Tampa Port Authority's environmental committees to ensure that nesting birds on the islands created by the deepening of the shipping channels would be protected.

Rich Paul and Sally had a lot in common including a love of birds, nature and Tampa Bay. He took her out to visit the nesting colony islands managed by Audubon. Seeing how this work was making a difference increased her interest in Tampa Bay and Audubon. It also resulted in Sally deciding to leave a legacy gift to Audubon in support of the Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries.

Both served on the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council's Tampa Bay Study Commission, which produced a report, "The Future of Tampa Bay," and led to the creation of the Agency on Bay Management. ABM played an active part in working to designate Tampa Bay as a priority water body under the Surface Water and Improvement (SWIM) program (1987), and designating Tampa Bay as a part of the National Estuary Program (1990) coinciding with the twentieth anniversary of Earth Day. It is still active today.

In the 1980's, as land acquisition was evolving as a tool to protect

Florida's natural areas, Sally and Rich worked with former Audubon leaders Clay Henderson, Charles Lee and John Hankinson, as well as Eric Draper (then with The Nature Conservancy). Counties began establishing local programs, with then Hillsborough County Commissioner Jan Platt initiating the effort to pass a referendum to establish Hillsborough County's Environmental Lands Acquisition and Protection Program. ELAPP will be celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary later this year, and Sally continues her active committee participation.

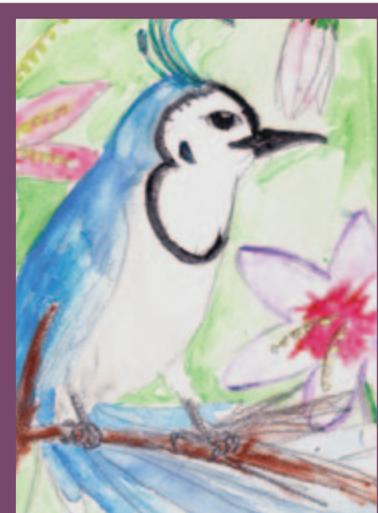
In 1990, Sally was appointed to the Governing Board of the Southwest Florida Water Management District where she was involved with the District's land resources programs over her eleven year tenure. She participated in statewide greenways discussions and was appointed to several statewide committees, ultimately becoming the first chair of the Florida Greenways and Trails Council. In addition to local greenways efforts, she is currently on the Board of the Florida Greenways & Trails Foundation

When asked what legacy she wants to leave, Sally said, "A healthier Tampa Bay." She made her decision to handle her personal will early after seeing a friend's husband die without one in place and dealing with her parents' estate. Sally explained, "I thought it would be best to make my plans early and designate my funds to those projects I really care about." For Sally, one of those projects is Audubon's Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries.

If you would like to learn more about leaving a legacy gift for Audubon Florida or one of the state's centers or programs, please contact Margaret Spontak at (352) 229-2887 or email [mbspontak@audubon.org](mailto:mbspontak@audubon.org).

# The Intersection of

# Art and Conservation



Artwork by Olivia Boulter

One of Olivia Boulter's drawings created to raise money for wildlife recovery related to the Gulf Oil Crisis.

What better example of the intersection of art and conservation than the works of John James Audubon. During his artistic career, Audubon painted more than 700 species of birds as he traveled to France, England, Labrador, the United States and other parts of the world. Although one shudders today to think that he actually shot his bird subjects in order to capture their detail, colors and splendor; his work provided inspiration for the conservation movement and a foundation for ornithology.

This year, in keeping with John James Audubon's legacy, Audubon Florida engaged people by telling Florida's conservation story through a variety of mediums and talented artists. Hopefully this will be the beginning of a lasting marriage which mutually benefits the arts while effectively telling sometimes complex or challenging stories.

The Audubon Assembly featured Artists Lucy Tobias, Joan Lyon, and Audubon Wildlife Photographer of the Year Carlton Ward. Ward celebrated conservation this year as he led a troupe of people through the center of the state, documenting the natural wonders along the way through vivid imagery. And, one cannot forget, Jim Urbach, who lent his heart stopping photo of a Sandhill Crane mother and chick for the Assembly program and the Naturalist.

On November 10, Jennifer Johnson Duke, one of our newer board members, held a remarkable exhibit at J. Johnson Gallery featuring new paintings and sculpture by Marc Petrovic, James Prosek, and Mark Messersmith. Each artist conveyed their

unique perspective on the natural world and the birds and other wildlife that reside therein. Proceeds from the event were generously donated to Audubon Florida.

The Center for Birds of Prey used art and birds representing Florida's special places as the focus for their annual Wind beneath Our Wings event. The Feb. 17 event featured six artists including Paul Schulz, Floyd Scholz, Larry Moore, Reinier Munguia, Greg Stephens, and Lea Gallardo.

At Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, Center Director Rebecca Beck and her team had a stunning line-up of photography and art during the winter season. Photographers Rod Wiley, Mac Stone, and John Johnson graced the walls of the Blair Audubon Center with individual exhibits highlighting birds, nature and the wonders of the Everglades system. One of last year's featured artists, Leighton Siegel, won National Audubon Magazine's 2012 Top 100 Photograph Awards.

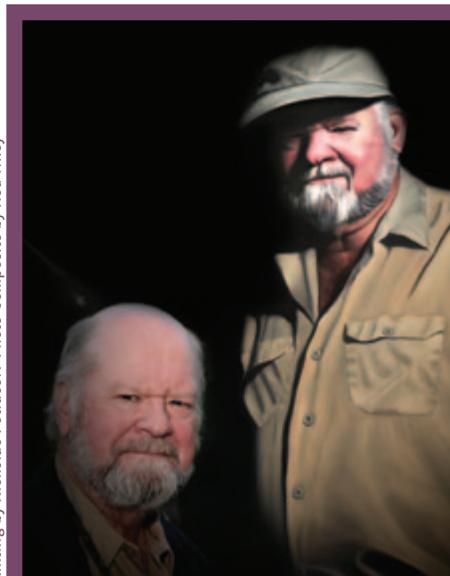
This spring, the Corkscrew Blair Audubon Center has two art exhibits running simultaneously – The Guardians of the Everglades and Olivia Boulter.

The Guardians of the Everglades is a multi-media art and conservation exhibition celebrating the lives of the Guardians of the Everglades, the heroes that are protecting the Everglades in so many different ways. Artist Nicholas Petrucci has captured the essence of the Guardians' lives through life-size paintings done in the style of the Old Masters.

Guardians include Corkscrew's Director Emeritus Ed Carlson along with heroes such as Statesman Nathaniel Reed, Miccosukee Chairman Buffalo Tiger, the Honorable Bob Graham and Panther Biologist Deb Jansen. Portraits are intertwined with landscape portraits of Photographer Clyde Butcher and banners of native orchids and other threatened species by Photographer Connie Bransilver.

Olivia Boulter, at age 11, raised \$200,000 for Gulf recovery by drawing and donating 500 original pictures. Her works are on display at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary near Naples through the end of April.

Let us not forget the photographers who



Painting by Nicholas Petrucci / Photo-composite by Rod Wiley

Ed Carlson, Director Emeritus at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, is one of the featured Guardians of the Everglades. Ed poses in front of his portrait done by Nicholas Petrucci.

have shared their art and photography with us all year long for this publication, online stories and other marketing and fundraising materials. There are too many to list, but some of those used many times this year include Rod Wiley, Mac Stone, Christina Evans, John Johnson, David Macri, Charles Lee, Susie Warren, and Greg Stephens. A featured photographer in the State of the Everglades Report, Kevin Boldenow was recently invited to display his work during 2014 at Congressman Bill Nelson's office. Artist Peter Gerbert once again shared an eye-catching painting for our Audubon Florida Naturalist Annual Report, contributing a share of each painting sale back to Audubon.

At least two favorite photographers, Mac Stone and Brian Hampton, have taken their Everglades photography to the next level through coffee table books that every conservationist would want in their home. Hampton's book is on display at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary and Stone's book is in production through University Press of Florida.

As you visit some of the web sites of the photographers and artists mentioned make sure you thank them for donating their talent to Audubon and to conservation. Stories, through art and the word, tug at



Photo by Kevin Boldenow

This photo of Riverbend Park on the Wild and Scenic Loxahatchee River is one of the photos that Kevin Boldenow will be featuring in his exhibit at Senator Bill Nelson's office.

people's hearts and conservation minds. Audubon Florida is fortunate to have so many gracious, talented artists supporting our mission and programs.

For those seeking to personally discover the intersection of art and conservation, creative walks and nature trips may be the way to begin. Author Julia Cameron of *The*

*Sound of Paper* promoted creative walks in her book and shared, "Nothing invites creative breakthroughs so successfully as walking. Walking puts us in touch." So take your camera, journal or sketch book and head to a park or natural area and discover another great reason to connect with nature.

## Floyd Scholz



Floyd Scholz, one of the preeminent woodcarvers and painters in the world today and author of five award-winning books on raptors, recently donated this exquisite wood carving of an American Kestrel to the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey.

A professional carver since 1983 and with well over 40 years of carving, Floyd Scholz is universally recognized as a top carver of birds in the world. His portrayal of eagles, hawks, owls and many other large birds has won him a large international following and many top awards at major shows throughout the country. Scholz's sculptures are in great demand, and his larger works routinely command prices of 80 to 200 thousand dollars. Scholz's studio is located in Bennington, Vermont at the Bennington Center for the Arts.

Collectors or art lovers interested in bidding for this one-of-a-kind piece of work should email [suarez@audubon.org](mailto:suarez@audubon.org) or call (407) 644-0190, ext. 102.



## CALL FOR ENTRIES ORANGE AUDUBON SOCIETY'S 25TH ANNUAL KIT AND SIDNEY CHERTOK FLORIDA NATIVE NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST



Photo by Marina Scarr

Orange Audubon Society invites your participation in its silver anniversary native nature photography competition. The theme, Florida's Creatures and Features, allows entrants to photograph the amazing native animals (i.e., creatures), plants, landscapes and habitats (i.e., features) of Florida. To win, shutterbugs in three categories—Novice, Advanced and Youth—must show their photography skills and their knowledge of Florida's native species because images may not include exotic (non-native) 'creatures' or 'features'.

To enhance knowledge of Florida's native species, the chapter will pre-screen early entries received by April 18, 2013, notify entrants if an image(s) does not meet Florida native or other contest criteria and allow FREE replacement(s). All entries must be received by the final deadline of May 16, 2013.

For complete contest rules and entry forms, please call 407-644-0796 or visit our website at [www.orangeaudubonfl.org](http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org), where you can also view winning images from previous contests. Florida native nature exists for us to treasure, protect and preserve and, yes, to photograph! The contest was created with those objectives in mind.

# AUDUBON CHAPTERS TAKE THE LEAD IN PROMOTING FLORIDA'S WATER AND LAND LEGACY CAMPAIGN

Forty-two of Audubon's chapters in Florida have endorsed the Florida Water and Land Legacy Campaign. This initiative led by former Mayor of Gainesville Pagen Hanrahan is an effort to place an amendment on the 2014 ballot that would allocate funds for land and water conservation and management. The goal is to gather petitions from 10% of the voting public, somewhere in the range of 650,000 by November 2014. Many organizations have taken on the challenge, but up until now Audubon has taken the lead.

First place among Chapters goes to Alachua Audubon. "Petition gathering has brought together and energized our chapter," expressed President Helen Warren. "Our city and county are committed to conservation. It is part of our culture. It is no wonder there is broad acceptance of the value of conservation and management on a statewide level. It has truly been a team effort including Debra Segal, Kathy Fanning, Emily Schwartz, Ron Robinson, Carol Lippincott, Sue Hartman and others. Debra and Emily have been amazing organizers. They had 20 volunteers lined up for a weekend event at Kanapaha gardens. The key is to make it fun. Our most successful venues have been football games (tailgate parties), the library and public places where people are enjoying nature. We are pleased but puzzled that we are at the top of the list. It seems that all Audubon Chapters should be doing what we are."

The latest report from campaign headquarters shows these chapters and individuals next in line. Clearwater (led by John Hood), Duval County (driven by Carolyn Antman, Pete Johnson), Collier County (starring Brad Cornell and Sally Woliver) and West Volusia (Lynn Peterson, Janet Marks, Anthony Ehrlich). But by the time

the Naturalist arrives in your mailbox this lineup will probably have changed as each week more volunteers get the petition gathering bug.

At a time when the future of our public lands and resources is increasingly threatened it is extremely satisfying to mail another stack of signed petitions to the Florida Water and Land Legacy Campaign headquarters. State funds historically allocated to critical conservation and restoration efforts will run dry unless voters pass the Water and Land Conservation Amendment. Without those funds, we could lose much of what makes Florida special.

So challenge yourself, your chapter, and your partner organizations to take action. Gather 1,000 signatures and find 10 more volunteers. Whether you hunt, fish, birdwatch, paddle, walk in the woods or just picnic at your local park, the future of your public lands is in your hands. Visit <http://floridawaterlandlegacy.org/> and become a volunteer. We must double our efforts in order to achieve our collective goal. Florida needs you!

Disclaimer: Petition gatherers are identified when the packets arrive in Tallahassee at the Campaign headquarters. Make sure you put your name and/or chapter affiliation that you want to receive credit. Top signature gatherers can change on a weekly basis. Let's make sure Audubon holds the lead. A little competition never hurt anyone!



Doug Maple of Alachua Audubon explains the campaign. Photo by Jacqui Sulek.



Florida Water and Land Legacy Campaign: Audubon chapters continue to get petitions signed statewide. Forty-two chapters have endorsed the program. Steinhatchee Fiddler Crab Festival Queen puts her fiddle down to sign a petition. Photo by George Baldwin



## TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER VISIT:

[www.floridawaterlandlegacy.org](http://www.floridawaterlandlegacy.org)

Bay County Audubon gathered 215 signatures at two events at St. George Island and St. Andrews. Jean Huffman (right) was joined by husband Neil, Diane Houser and Ron Houser, and Ron Peterson. Photo by Ron Houser.

# VOLUNTEERS SPEAK OUT FOR GULF RESTORATION

As people all across the Gulf Coast struggle to understand the complex process by which Gulf Coast states will receive their respective shares of the Clean Water Act fines levied against BP for the Deepwater Horizon disaster, leaders are moving forward, creating consortiums, planning projects and lobbying for both economic and environmental restoration. One of the sources, pots, buckets (call it what you choose) of money will be allocated by the RESTORE Council. The council consists of five representatives from the Federal Government and a Governor's representative for Florida Mimi Drew.

As part of the process the council held two listening sessions, one in Panama City on Feb. 28 and another on March 13 in St. Petersburg. Armed with the "Florida Gulf Ecosystem Priorities for the Restore Act" document (prepared by Audubon staff), Audubon's chapter leaders rallied for the cause.

The message delivered at both meetings was loud and clear - environmental restoration equals economic restoration. Over 200 people attended the Panama City meeting. The interest and energy were extremely high as these significantly impacted counties of the Panhandle seized the opportunity to express their visions of how the Gulf Coast could be restored to the benefit of all. At least a dozen Audubon voices joined the cheer.

Audubon Florida Executive Director was the first to share a list of priorities with the council. Bay County Audubon leaders Ron Houser, Neil Lamb and Alan Jelks spoke in favor of the outright purchase of conservation lands such as the West Bay Preservation Area. Others encouraged purchase of already cabinet approved Florida Forever identified projects such as Shell Island and complements to federal lands such as the St. Vincent and St. Marks National Wildlife Refuges. Francis M. Weston Audubon leaders Carole Tebay and Barbara Albrecht stressed the importance of extensive long term water quality

monitoring and protection for beach nesting birds, turtles, and fisheries. An often repeated theme was the need to pursue a regional approach to restoration including uplands that feed the coastal habitats and estuaries and ultimately provide clean water for a healthy Gulf system.

Though the meeting in St. Petersburg was not quite as well attended, Audubon was there in even greater numbers. St. Petersburg Audubon President Judi Hopkins moved their board meeting (scheduled for the same time) to the hearing. Audubon Florida Board Member Bob Keim spoke on behalf of Citrus, Hernando and

West Pasco chapters. President and AF Board Member John Hood challenged the council to purchase the Hunter property. Brad Cornell and Pete Quasius spoke up for Collier County Audubon encouraging purchase of lands and construction of the C-43 reservoir and the bridging of the Tamiami Trail. Sarasota Audubon President Jeanne Dubi and St. Pete Conservation Chair Dave Kandz stressed the importance of a long term coastal resource management endowment fund. AF

Board Member George Willson talked about the importance of uplands, watersheds and springs.

The efforts were great, the evenings were long, the speeches many, and the results powerful. The council was listening and taking notes.

Mimi Drew categorized the comments she had heard in her parting remarks. These included habitat protection and restoration, an endowment for long term monitoring, stewardship and protection efforts, estuaries protection/restoration, environmental education and sustainability of the "natural Florida" brand. She thanked everyone for making these hearings both valuable and enjoyable.

What's next? We look forward to seeing Audubon's finger prints in the draft comprehensive plan to be released this spring. Follow the process at: <http://www.restorefloridagulf.org>



Four of the Audubon Florida leaders delivering the message at the Restore Council meeting in Panama City. From top left to right, going clockwise: Carole Tebay – Francis M. Weston Audubon, Ron Houser – Bay County Audubon, Barbara Albrecht – Francis M. Weston Audubon, Neil Lamb – Bay County Audubon. Photos by Jonathan Webber

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Full a full directory of staff and locations go to <http://fl.audubon.org/audubon-locations>



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# Save the Date!

## Audubon FLORIDA Assembly 2013

October 25-26, 2013 · Innisbrook Resort and Golf Club Palm Harbor, Florida

Innisbrook Resort and Golf Club in Palm Harbor, located near Tampa Bay and the Greek Village of Tarpon Springs, has been selected as our host hotel.

### Join us for Audubon Florida's 2013 Assembly.

- Participate in workshops on Audubon's citizen science and stewardship work.
- Visit nearby natural areas such as Honeymoon Island State Park, Starkey Wilderness Area, Anclote Key Preserve State Park, Wall Springs County Park, and Brooker Creek Preserve.
- Play a part in setting Audubon's annual conservation priorities.
- Network with chapter leaders, staff, and donors from throughout the state.
- Hear inspiring speakers share their "Boots on the Ground" stories.



Three Rooker Bar at Anclote Key, located near Innisbrook, hosts the 5th largest mixed seabird, shorebird, wading bird nesting population in Florida. (Sandwich Terns on the left and Royal Terns to the right).

Photo by Walt Spina