



Audubon FLORIDA Naturalist

Annual Report Fiscal Year 2012-2013

A Great Year for Audubon

Working Together for Water and Wildlife



Photo by Nancy Elwood

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President, Florida Audubon Society

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John Flanigan
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Cover Photo by Nancy Elwood

The Crested Caracara can be seen in the Northern Everglades or up close at our Audubon Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland. Photo by Nancy Elwood. Find her work at <http://www.naturesportal.net>

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Photo By Ralph Atwood



John and Jason Lauritsen survey the old growth trees at Corkscrew.

*John Elting, Chairman,
Florida Audubon Society*

Dear Audubon Members and Supporters:

I want to thank those of you who recently attended the Audubon Assembly.

It was a joyful celebration and gave all of us a chance to get to know each other just a little bit better. The presentations were timely and informative. Our conservation priorities - climate change, coastal conservation, Everglades, Florida's special places, and water for the environment - were presented and approved by your board of directors.

Two themes - "boots on the ground" and "Florida's special places" - resounded throughout the meeting. The two themes come together as Audubon Florida tends to the business of advocating for, protecting and restoring what remains of Florida's natural history.

On a personal note, these special places represent my chapel, my refuge, my place of comfort and inspiration; thus, they are sacred to me as I'm sure they are to many of you. Together, we have worked to protect these refuges.

As I write this, I want to report that the effort to gather signatures for the Water and Land Legacy Campaign is exceeding expectations. We are getting very close to the 910,000 required signatures to place the amendment on the ballot in 2014. I am hopeful that we will reach our goal by the Nov. 30 deadline, and one of the most important pieces of legislation in the environmental history of Florida will become a reality.

Thank you for all you do with your boots on the ground and your hands in the heart of Florida's special places.

Sincerely,

John Elting
Chairman, Florida Audubon Society

Thank You for service on the Audubon Florida Board.

We are grateful to the following directors who have completed terms of service on the Audubon Florida Board, and we owe special thanks to the commitment of those who will continue their service as Emeritus Directors.

Joseph T. Ambrozy, Emeritus Director
John F. Flanigan, Emeritus Director
Doug Santoni, Emeritus Director
John S. Hood
Dave Kandz
Sheri Ford Lewin
Allen Milledge
Andy Stamper

New Directors Elected to the Audubon Florida Board During FY 2013

Lisa Boyce, Miami
Stephen A. Lynch III, Coral Gables
Charles Margiotta, Ponte Vedra
Lida Rodriguez-Taseff, Miami
Bill Warren, Orlando
Doug Young, Miami

Learn more at www.GivetoAudubonFlorida.org



Thank You for a Great Year!

Last month I had the privilege of standing before the Audubon Assembly and sharing stories about the past year's successes. We really had a great year – our staff, leaders and volunteers produced remarkable results. This edition of Audubon's Florida's Naturalist magazine gives us the chance to report the year's accomplishments. Your support – as an Audubon member, volunteer or donor – helped produce these results.

Our annual report is grouped around four of what I think of as Audubon Florida's strengths. The stories reflect what Audubon does well. Science, collaboration, engaging people, and hands on conservation are the foundation for much of our shared success. I hope you enjoy this report and that we can count on you to stay involved in whatever way you make a difference for Florida's water and wildlife.

The stories that follow are just part of the work conducted by Audubon's amazing volunteers and staff this year. From engagement of grassroots advocacy networks to stopping bad legislation to guarding nesting sites, it is results that count and we are glad to count our results and share them with you.

I hope we can rely on you to continue your support for Audubon's work. Go to www.GivetoAudubonFlorida.org or use the envelope on page 8 to make a tax deductible contribution and help Florida's most effective conservation organization have another great year.

With gratitude,

Eric Draper
Executive Director

The Four Strengths of Audubon Florida

The Science of Hope – At Audubon birds count, so we count birds. Our staff and citizen scientists have gathered decades worth of data that helps provide agencies with information to make good decisions about habitat management. There is good news: increased spoonbill nesting in response to Everglades restoration projects; Wood Storks gathering at Corkscrew as a result of more water in the swamps; Bald Eagle populations flourishing; and coastal bird species establishing new nesting areas.

See
pages
4-5

The Art of Working Together – Audubon Florida is known for bringing people together to solve Florida's conservation challenges. This year Audubon took a leadership role in the Florida Land and Water campaign to amend the Florida Constitution. As the tragedy in Florida's estuaries unfolded, Audubon worked with legislators and citizens to respond to the huge releases of polluted water to the coastal estuaries. To protect Florida's special places, thousands of Audubon members stood in the way of proposals by state agencies to sell off conservation lands.

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The Power of Engagement – Audubon has a history of connecting people with nature through our own centers and sanctuaries and by encouraging the use of public lands. Audubon's centers at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary and the Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland educate, inspire and motivate people to take conservation actions. See how one donor's legacy gift made a big difference.

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The Results of Hands-on Conservation – You've heard many stories of our boots-on-the-ground volunteers and staff. Real, hands-on conservation work is a trademark for Audubon. More than a thousand volunteers are involved in managing habitat, protecting Bald Eagles and Scrub-Jays, and stewarding coastal bird colonies.

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American Oystercatchers roosting at Corrigan's Reef. Photo by Pat Leary



THE SCIENCE OF HOPE

“Audubon scientists act as critical eyes and ears for Everglades restoration. Their reliable, peer-reviewed scientific data forms the basis for helping the policy and law makers of the State of Florida make transformational, conservation decisions. Recent reports give us hope that restoration efforts, based on sound science, are making a difference.”

Sandy Batchelor,
SFWMD Governing Board member



Bald Eagle Nesting Success

During 2012-2013 nesting season, Audubon EagleWatch volunteers monitored 196 active Bald Eagle nests and observed the fledging of 189 eaglets. EagleWatch volunteers and staff also identified 18 nests previously unknown to state and federal wildlife authorities. This is vital to protecting them from disturbance and development.

In Pinellas County, about half of the eagle nests failed; reasons for these high failure rates are unknown. In this highly urban area many eagles rely on artificial structures rather than tall pines for nesting sites. More study is needed to determine the relationship between artificial structures and nesting success. Audubon is working with communications and power companies and the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to address this trend and make towers raptor safe.

Coastal Bird Surprises

This summer, staff and volunteers helped to survey, steward or manage more than 100 coastal bird sites and another 13 water bird rookeries statewide. Nesting birds didn't have to contend with the same catastrophic overwash in 2013 that they suffered in 2012 during Tropical Storm Debby, so numbers were improved. However, predation by coyotes in the Panhandle was epidemic; stewards were helpful in diminishing disturbance in many locations. (cont. next page)

Birds Count - Count Birds

Audubon believes that birds count, so we count birds, and not just during the Christmas and Great Backyard Bird counts. Bird surveys provide a sound way to measure the success of Audubon's conservation work including the protection of coastal bird nesting areas, restoration of the Everglades and its shallow wetlands, implementation of management plans for listed bird species, and management of endangered habitat such as the Florida scrub.

Staff, partners and citizen scientists survey and monitor important species - from Bald Eagles to Florida Scrub-Jays to American Oystercatchers. The data supports both agency decisions and Audubon's unique science-based advocacy. This year, Audubon Florida's bird counts are giving us hope that good habitat management is making a difference throughout Florida.



Above, right: For the first time since 2006, Jacksonville's Huguenot Memorial Park fledged an American Oystercatcher! The chick was fitted with bands to help track the bird as it strikes out on its own! Bottom: This summer in Ft. Lauderdale, Least Terns returned to nest on the beach for the first time in 26 years. This high-disturbance area could have been tragic for the beach-nesters, but South Florida Audubon Society sprang into action to coordinate a stewardship program. With help from Tropical Audubon, volunteers (including Audubon Florida Board director Doug Santoni) were trained and scheduled in time for the busy July 4th weekend.

Photo by Doug Young



Volunteers celebrated key successes such as the first American Oystercatcher fledged since 2006 at Jacksonville's Huguenot Memorial Park, the first Least Tern Colony on Fort Lauderdale Beach in 26 years, terrific Wood Stork productivity at Lakeland's Lake Somerset colony, 100 fledged Least Terns from the colony at Anclote Key State Park in Pinellas County, and hundreds of Black Skimmer fledges at Big Marco Pass Critical Wildlife Area in Collier County.

Spoonbill Counts and Other Data Indicate Everglades Restoration Progress



Photo by Reinier Munguia

As Everglades restoration got underway 15 years ago, Audubon's Everglades Science Center was poised to conduct scientific data collection needed to guide and measure the success of restoration and its impact on water and wildlife. Building on 75 years of experience, a research plan was implemented to collect and interpret data on hydrology, aquatic vegetation, prey base fishes and Roseate Spoonbills in Florida Bay and the Southern Everglades. This data is linked because diversion of freshwater flow leads to a decrease in aquatic vegetation and loss of small fishes, which are an important food base for many higher-level predators including game fish, endangered crocodiles, Roseate Spoonbills and other wading birds.

Scientists and decision makers use this data to interpret the results that new restoration projects have on the Everglades and Florida Bay. One such project, the C-111 Spreader Canal in the Southern Everglades, came online in May 2012. By increasing freshwater levels to Florida Bay, the project was expected to have positive impacts on

the ecosystem. Preliminary data indicates the project may be exceeding expectations. Comparing similar rainfall patterns reveals improvements in freshwater flow, submerged vegetation, fish counts and spoonbill nesting after the project began operating.

The flow rates through Taylor Slough toward Florida Bay were the highest on record for the past 23 years resulting in salinity dropping by 20 percent in the spoonbills' foraging grounds. Because of this, submerged plant growth and overall plant cover were almost five times greater than 2008-09, a year most similar in rainfall. The high flow in the wet season and low flow in the dry season also created ideal conditions for spoonbill nesting.

Photo by R. Munguia

Everglades' Taylor Slough Salinity Reduced 20%

Swamp, making the Sanctuary the largest breeding site in the United States. Losses of shallow wetland habitat from development and farming eventually resulted in sharp declines in Wood Storks.

This was a wet year in the Western Everglades. Heavy rains in early June caused water levels to rise quickly and stay elevated.

This year's peak was nearly six inches above the 50 year average high for Corkscrew creating favorable conditions for fish productivity. Flooded wet prairies and hydric pine flatwoods served as fish nurseries setting the stage for what staff hopes will result in early and strong nesting for this iconic wading bird widely regarded as an indicator for wetland health. The jury is still out, but the storks have already exhibited some courtship behavior and continue to forage near Corkscrew. We are hopeful they will nest.

Will Wood Storks Nest at Corkscrew?

Every fall after the rainy months of summer have passed and water levels have begun to drop, Wood Storks return from their northern haunts to descend on Southwest Florida to forage in the shallow short hydroperiod wetlands prior to nesting season. Historically, thousands of storks would stay to nest within the old-growth bald cypress forest of Corkscrew



Photo by R. J. Wiley

Scrub-Jay Data Reinforce Habitat Management Needs

Photo by Greg Stephens

69 Sites Surveyed

Although Jay Watch counts were not all positive, the data provides valuable information for habitat management. In 2013, Jay Watch volunteers mapped jay family territories on 54 sites and an additional 15 partner-monitored sites contributed data.

For 58 sites surveyed in 2012 and 2013, the number of Scrub-Jay family groups decreased at 17 sites, increased at 18 sites, and showed no change at 23 sites. Jay Watch data shows an increased number of Scrub-Jay groups over the short-term 2-year period, but a declining trend over a 5-year period ending in 2013. The longer-term declining trend mirrors findings by Archbold Biological Station that Scrub-Jays declined statewide by 26% comparing 1992-1993 and 2009-2010 survey periods.

Trend data is essential in urging land managers to keep up with the prescribed fire needs of Scrub-Jay habitat.

THE ART OF WORKING TOGETHER

No challenge is insurmountable when you have an organization like Audubon Florida on your side. A good example is the thousands of hours Audubon staff and volunteers have poured into the petition drive to put the Water and Land Conservation Amendment on the 2014 ballot.

“Because of Audubon’s skillful organizing and creative encouragement of volunteers, Florida is waking up to a new vision of what we can accomplish when we work together towards our shared values: protecting our waters and lands for future generations of Floridians!”

Aliki Moncrief, Field Director
Water and Land Legacy Campaign

Photo by Mac Stone

30,000 Activists
1200+ Volunteers
65 Dedicated Staff
44 Chapters

Working Together Reaps Big Wins

With an online conservation network of more than 30,000, 1200 field volunteers, 65 skilled and dedicated staff, 44 Audubon chapters and the ability to bring nonprofit, governmental and corporate partners to the table; Audubon Florida has seen big wins this year.

Collaboration May Put Water and Land Legacy Amendment on Ballot

Although still underway as this is written, the Water and Land Legacy petition drive is swiftly headed for the 910,000 signatures needed to put the measure on the 2014 ballot. Audubon’s statewide leadership, chapter participation, and recent Audubon state (\$35,000) and national funding (\$100,000) may have meant the difference in getting the final signatures. When Audubon’s Executive Director Eric Draper joined the Florida Water and Land Legacy Campaign steering Committee, he said, “This will really be a

test of our chapters’ ability to engage and make a difference.”

With more than 36,000 Audubon-gathered petitions turned in to date, the collective effort of the Florida chapters has far surpassed that of any other group of volunteers. Chapter leaders Sue Meharg, Seminole Audubon (over 4900), and Carl Veaux of Audubon of Southwest Florida, (over 5100), are in the top four gatherers with five more chapter leaders in the top 20 including Debra Segal, Emily Schwartz and Kathy Fanning (all from Alachua Audubon) and Ron Houser from Bay County Audubon. Alachua Audubon can claim the best team with 6800 signatures.



Sue Megarg (shown above) and Carl Veaux were top petition gatherers for Audubon. Just as this publication went to press, Carl had surged ahead of Sue.

Photo by Lee Patrizzi

Ninety-two Conservation Parcels Blocked from Sale

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) was ordered this year to sell some of Florida’s conservation lands. In August, the agency launched an assessment process listing conservation lands for surplus and sale. Included on the list were important tracts with high ecological and water resource value.

Audubon analyzed the list, provided comments to DEP opposing many surplus parcels, and galvanized members and leaders of other environmental organizations through a web-based campaign to do the same. Outcry across the state led DEP to reduce the surplus land list from 169 parcels comprising 5,300 acres to only 77 parcels involving 3,300 acres. Audubon’s efforts removed important acres in John and Marianna Jones Wildlife Management area, mangrove wetlands on Biscayne Bay, and a hardwood hammock in the Florida Keys.

Defending the Everglades and Florida Water Policy

Audubon, with tremendous support from chapters and partners, fought off the sugar industry’s attempt to weaken the Everglades Forever Act. After a raucous debate, agreement was reached to pass an \$880 million water quality restoration plan. In other action, Audubon drew the line on changes to Florida Water Policy which would have removed shoreline protections and allow some preemptions for local fertilizer rules.

Groundwork Insures BP Penalty Funds Will Be Used for Environmental Restoration

The 2010 BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill was a disaster for the Gulf Coast. Audubon members were some of the first to volunteer to help and will be following the restoration and cleanup of the Gulf until the job is done.

When the RESTORE Act was passed in June 2012, Audubon members and supporters helped ensure 80 percent of Clean Water Act penalties from the BP Deepwater Horizon disaster would go to the Gulf Coast for restoration.

Funding has started to arrive with Audubon members advocating for restoration projects that will revive the Gulf Coast. In meeting after meeting, from Pensacola to Key Largo, Audubon members and staff made the case for conservation. Our message - environmental restoration is economic restoration. The RESTORE Act is an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to restore and protect the watersheds, wetlands, and wildlife that make our region so special.

Just a few weeks ago, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) awarded a \$3.2M three-year grant to Audubon Florida under NFWF's new Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund (GEBF). These funds will complement our existing coastal bird management efforts in Florida's Panhandle supported by National Resource Damage Assessment funding. The project will demonstrate the benefits of coastal bird management to support Gulf-wide restoration and lay the foundation for sustainable funding.

Photo courtesy Oceanographic Society.



Thousands of Audubon members and advocates signed a petition drafted by Audubon Executive Director Eric Draper laying out nine important recommendations to help Florida's damaged estuaries and Lake Okeechobee. The blue-green algae seen on the photo left resulted in swimming areas being closed and impacts to seagrass, fish and wildlife.

\$220 Million Secured to Recover Damaged Estuaries and Lake Okeechobee

When longtime Audubon member Jonnie Swann described conditions in the Indian River Lagoon this summer to Audubon Florida's Executive Director Eric Draper, she said, "The seagrass is gone; the fish are gone; the birds are gone." Billions of gallons of polluted water had been flushed from Lake Okeechobee into the fragile St. Lucie estuary and into Jonnie's back yard. The lagoon was dying from too much fresh water. Audubon Florida responded to the crisis with nine solutions to help the estuaries and the Greater Everglades ecosystem. Then Audubon enlisted thousands of members and advocates to sign the petition which Eric Draper delivered to Florida's Senate Select Committee on Indian River Lagoon

and Lake Okeechobee Basin in August. Audubon worked with chapters and allies in the environmental and business communities to advance these solutions from the banks of the St. Lucie Estuary to the halls of Congress.

Thanks largely to pressure from concerned citizens there has been progress. In November, the Senate Select Committee unveiled a \$220 million package of projects and programs to help our troubled but treasured waters. Recommendations include many solutions that Audubon supported. The plan recommends increasing funds for Everglades restoration.

"The seagrass is gone; the fish are gone; the birds are gone."

**Jonnie Swann,
Audubon Member**

Hundreds of Brown Pelicans flying over the beach at St. Vincent Island.



Photo by David Moynahan

Photo by Jane Graham

THE POWER OF ENGAGEMENT

“Audubon is our closest ally in the effort to improve conservation for shorebirds in Florida and serves as a key partner in the Florida Shorebird Alliance. Not only did Audubon pioneer the practice of Bird Stewarding but continues to lead Bird Steward Programs in many of our coastal communities. This innovative, non-regulatory approach to shorebird conservation has helped Florida to realize conservation successes we could only dream of in years past.”

Nancy Douglass
Regional Biologist
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)

People Connected through Centers

Corkscrew
100,000

Center for Birds of Prey
30,000

Connecting People with Nature

Audubon nature centers have been a key strategy in engaging people with birds and other wildlife in Florida and across the United States. In Florida, the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey, Maitland, and Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, Naples, are the organization's two signature centers. Other centers are operated by chapters throughout Florida (For details go to www.audubon.org/locations).

Audubon's centers are going much deeper than entertainment and environmental education. Center directors are bringing in new programming and volunteer training to take

the visitor's experiences from education and awareness to inspiration and conservation action. Center exhibits, signage and programming are being designed to support Audubon's mission to conserve birds and other wildlife and the habitats on which they depend.

Citizen Scientists: Engagement at Its Best

Centers are not the organization's only engagement tool; enlisting volunteers as coastal bird stewards, Eagle Watchers, Jay Watchers, and Colony Watchers has become an effective strategy for building loyal supporters and advocates. These citizen scientists learn while doing and become just-in-time educators to beachgoers, boaters and public land visitors.

Through a generous grant from the Jessie Ball duPont Foundation, Audubon's coastal team, chapter leaders and volunteers had the opportunity to take over 300 children out into nature's classroom. Students from underserved communities from Jacksonville to Pensacola and all along the Gulf Coast learned about our coastal birds and their habitats and how they can help.

Corkscrew: Building Towards a 60th Anniversary Celebration

On the advent of Corkscrew's 60th Anniversary as a world-renowned Audubon preserve, a powerful paradigm shift is planned to focus on Corkscrew's roots, its history and its importance as the largest virgin old-growth bald cypress forest in the world. New visitor programs will introduce guests to the 700-year old trees' beauty and mystery, and their impact on the health of the ecosystem. Foremost of the programs is a "Landmark Cypress" initiative that began in 2013 with identification of the most distinguished trees in the forest, an effort that will be fully launched this year. Understanding the forest's importance to the Corkscrew watershed and the Western Everglades inspires conservation action.

This year, daily guided walks, enhanced monthly walks, rotating art exhibits, and special programming were added, all revolving around the importance of the health of the land to the environment and human beings. At the monthly Corkscrew After Hours, the Sanctuary remains open until 9 p.m. with independent and self-guided boardwalk excursions, seminars and discussions, live music and art exhibits. The events attract a new, passionate audience and repeat attendance. One loyal After Hours' customer closed the boardwalk down twice, wandering out as the very last guest, as she could not pull herself away from the melodic night sounds and starlit skies.

This new programming reaped results. Membership and repeat visits rose this year, and new visitors from other areas are making Corkscrew a destination visit, driving up to six hours round trip. The year-long Anniversary programming in 2014 aims to build on this excitement and celebrate the roots of Corkscrew.



A New Education Legacy at the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey



Chuck Geanangel

The Center for Birds of Prey received a generous legacy gift this year from the late Chuck Geanangel. As a school teacher, world traveler and bird lover, Chuck Geanangel appreciated the wonder and importance of birds and special places. Chuck was the committed leader of Lake Region Audubon (Polk County) for over 30 years and served as a dedicated Florida Audubon Society Board Member.

Because of his love of children and the natural world, he became a major force behind the Florida Audubon Society Street Nature Center. It was not a surprise to those that knew him that he left his bequest to benefit the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland when he passed away on Friday November 9th, 2012. Chuck's gift will be set up as a permanent endowment, managed by Florida Audubon Society, to support education at the Center into perpetuity.

For more than 30 years, Audubon Center for Birds of Prey has connected both children, adults, families and friends with a small piece of nature in Maitland, Florida. Visitors learn about majestic birds of prey, their role in Florida's environment, the challenges they face and what individuals can do to help. On just three acres, the Audubon Center reaches more than 30,000 individuals annually through visits and programs onsite and out in the community. With this gift, the Center will expand efforts to spread the conservation message through education, sparking excitement and wonder.

"Our hope is that this initial gift will inspire others to add to Audubon Center for Birds of Prey's education endowment, leaving a legacy for future generations. It is great to speak with adults who visit with their children and share their story of coming to the Center as a child.

Chuck's legacy will touch the lives of thousands of students a year as they explore the beauty and importance of raptors and the need to conserve their valuable habitat. His love of birds and conservation will never be forgotten."

Katie Gill Warner
Center for Birds of Prey
Program Manager



Photo by Susie Warren

Creating Your Own Legacy

Bequests, Wills and Living Trusts

With thoughtful planning, Chuck Geanangel decided who would receive his assets after his lifetime. Show you care about protecting Florida's water, wildlife and special places. Take time now to designate a planned gift to support Audubon's conservation mission in Florida and make a difference in the lives of future generations.

Whether you are interested in creating a living trust or naming Audubon as a beneficiary in a will, retirement plan or insurance policy, you can turn your passion for conserving Florida's vital natural resources into a legacy – just like Chuck did.

Who to Contact

To discuss your particular wishes and obtain a copy of the most appropriate language to meet your goals, contact:
Margaret Spontak, Development Director
mspontak@audubon.org or (352) 229-2887

RESULTS OF HANDS-ON CONSERVATION

“Being allowed to participate as a volunteer in the hands on land management of the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary is one of the most meaningful endeavors of my life, and high on the most important list. The old growth cypress are majestic, the water is life saving to all living creatures, what else can be said.”

Steve Nellis
Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary Volunteer

Photo by Alyson Webb



Protecting Many of Florida's Special Places

Audubon helped protect many of Florida's special places this year, including its own 13,000 acre Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary.

Helping manage public lands in light of government staff reductions is becoming more critical. Here are ways Audubon worked this year to maintain and restore some of the state's most precious habitat.

Restoring Corkscrew for Birds and Other Wildlife

As visitors meander along Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary's boardwalk, few realize the efforts needed to manage and safeguard the diverse mosaic of native habitats found within the 20 square mile sanctuary. These efforts protect scarce wet prairies, pine flatwoods, grassy marshes and tree islands, as well as the largest remaining stand of virgin old-growth bald cypress forest anywhere in the world, boasting massive trees over 500 years old with circumferences exceeding 20 feet. They are treasures that cannot be forgotten or mismanaged. Audubon staff manages the habitats at Corkscrew with carefully executed prescribed burning, invasive plant removal and restoration of shallow wetlands for wading birds and other wildlife.

After a string of drought and shortened burn seasons we implemented some alternative management techniques to supplement and serve as surrogates of prescribed fire,

including manual and mechanical removal of invasive woody vegetation in marshes and wet prairies totaling roughly 120 acres. Staff, volunteers and contract labor combined to devote over 3500 hours treating invasive plants to maintain quality habitat throughout the Sanctuary. A long-term restoration project to shallow wetlands on 340 acres of fallow farm fields within Corkscrew began this year in an expansion of the Panther Island Mitigation Bank. Another offsite project started this past year in Lee County will restore an additional 240 acres. These will provide foraging opportunity for Corkscrew's endangered wood storks at a critical time in their breeding season.

Managing natural resources is a never ending and labor intensive task, but the rewards are tangible and powerful. These lands, though out of sight of our famed boardwalk, support the very storks, panthers, painted buntings and barred owls that our visitors hope to glimpse when they visit Corkscrew.



Protecting Wading Bird Rookeries on the West Coast

This fall, captains and their crews volunteering for the 20th Annual Audubon and Tampa Bay Watch Fishing Line Cleanup reached 50 islands, and the 5th Annual Audubon and Sarasota Bay Watch Fishing Line Cleanup targeted 15 islands. Snared live birds were rescued and line was removed from nesting islands and bird habitats. This cleanup effort is conducted in the fall when birds are not nesting in order to remove dangerous line from colony islands before nesting begins in the early spring.

Volunteers with Colony Watch monitored 13 colonies of wading birds this year, conducting counts, monitoring nesting success, and assisting with management activities, including posting signs, removing fishing line, and working with the landowners to increase protection and raise awareness about their adopted nesting islands. Working with Audubon staff biologists, they became experts on the birds nesting in their neighborhoods, reporting survey results that will add to regional population status and trend reports.



Keeping Scrub Habitat Healthy

Audubon's Jay Watch program trains volunteers and coordinates Florida Scrub-Jay surveys on 25 priority sites across the state. Why is this important? Trends in Scrub-Jay populations on each site inform land managers where prescribed fire and mechanical treatments are needed to reduce overgrown scrub habitat and leave sand gaps for new plant growth and bare sand in which Jays can cache their acorns. At urban parks like Lyonia Preserve in Volusia County, where houses and schools crowd the preserve's boundary, the opportunity to burn the scrub rarely dawns. Mowing swaths of scrub with tractors helps, but in some areas, targeted removal of individual sand pine saplings is necessary.

One of Audubon's newest grant benefactors, Wells Fargo, organized a group of its employees in the Orlando area to come to the rescue of sand pine "infested" scrub habitat in early April. Twenty members of Wells Fargo's Green Team put their boots on the ground for Florida Scrub-Jays and lopped off 3,509 individual sand pine saplings in a couple of hours of hot, hard work at Lyonia Preserve. Why sand pines, you may ask? Pine trees provide perches for hawks, owls, and crows - and even lounging limbs for raccoons - all of which like to make lunch



of Florida Scrub-Jays and their naive young offspring. Like all pine trees, sand pines drop needle duff which covers the bare sand patches in which Jays bury their acorns making it difficult for the birds to relocate their buried cache. Pine needle duff also mulches new scrub plant growth, and sand pines shade out scrub oaks that need full sun to thrive. So - removing those 3,509 saplings at the ground gave new life a chance to survive - birds and plants alike - in the urban scrub paradise that is Lyonia Preserve.



Audubon Jay Watch volunteers gathered for appreciation event at Bok Tower on November 16th. Jay Watch was funded in part by grants from Wells Fargo and Disney. Photo by Steffanie Munguia

Audubon Assembly 2013

Boots on the Ground for Conservation

The 2013 Audubon Assembly, themed “boots on the ground for conservation,” celebrated the work of volunteers and staff involved in citizen science, habitat stewardship, and grassroots advocacy. Attendees enjoyed field trips, learning sessions and outstanding speakers such as a keynote speaker, Dr. Reed Bowman, Director of Avian Ecology at Archbold Biological Station. Audubon was pleased to host 25 college students at the Assembly for the organization’s Third Annual Conservation Leadership Initiative sponsored by Disney.



Photo by John Moran

The Assembly is one of the special times Audubon recognizes outstanding contributions to conservation. Congratulations to this year’s award winners.

Award Winners



Champion of the Everglades
Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart
For standing up for America’s Everglades



Teddy Roosevelt Award
Senator Charlie Dean
For resilience, resolve and courage on behalf of Florida’s environment



Florida’s Special Places Award
John H. Hankinson, Jr.
For protecting Florida’s Special Places from America’s Gulf to the Atlantic



Guy Bradley Award
Ted Below
A lifetime guardian of Florida’s birds and special places



Women in Conservation Award
Pegeen Hanrahan
A leading voice for the environment and for inspiring generations of conservationists



Steve C. Nellis accepting the Volunteer of the Year Award from Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary Director Jason Lauritsen.

Thanks to the Audubon Assembly Sponsors

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John Hood receiving the William Dutcher award from Audubon’s Florida Executive Director Eric Draper.

Pelican Island Team recognized as 2013 Chapter of the Year



From left: Jacqui Sulek, Pelican Island Audubon's Bob Bruce, President Richard H. Baker, Peter & Lorraine Sutherland, Judy & John Orcutt, David Peabody, Juanita Baker, and Audubon Florida Executive Director Eric Draper.

The chapter has been involved in Square-Foot Gardening, building a coalition for the Indian River Lagoon, designing QR Interpretive Signs at Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge, and implementing their Quality of Life Indicator Project, while continuing to display creativity and excellence in their service to the community. The Audubon Community Center & Conservation Land Volunteer Training Center is well on its way to becoming a reality with over \$360,000 raised over that past five years. Please visit the Pelican Island Audubon website <http://www.pelicanislandaudubon.org/> to read more about the extraordinary accomplishments of this model chapter.

Best Chapter Conservation Project Award



Brad Cornell joins Julie Ausbon and Jean Hall (new stewards in Collier County) modeling their Bird Steward t-shirts to accept the Best Conservation Project Award.

Supported by chapter and Audubon Florida staff Brad Cornell and Marianne Korosy, a model partnership has evolved including both local and state government and non-profit organizations. Dozens of bird stewards spent busy weekends sharing the beach-nesting bird story with beachgoers.

Best Chapter Exhibit Award



John Hood, President of Clearwater Audubon receiving the Best Chapter Exhibit Award from Jacqui Sulek and Eric Draper.

In years past John's chapter display included photos and captions telling the story of its shorebird program, a spinning toy Least Tern complete with a recording. . But this year he hit the grand slam when he captured the theme of the Assembly by adding a pile of beach sand and a pair of well-worn "Keens on the ground."

Philanthropy Award

Philanthropist of the Year Award
Charles "Chuck" Geanangel (Posthumously)
Forever Providing the Wind Beneath Our Wings
at the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey
See details about Chuck's outstanding legacy gift on page 9.

Best Chapter Education Program Award



Lake Region Audubon's President Reinier Munguia, Steffanie Munguia & Nyleen Rodriguez receiving the award.

In just two years President Reinier Munguia and his team have engaged more than 12,000 students and 3,000 adults. Outreach to local schools incorporates live animals and materials specifically designed for subject and age group.

Audubon Florida Employees of the Year



Margaret Spontak and Jonathan Webber were recognized for their dedication in making Audubon Florida a leading conservation organization.



Conservation Initiative Leadership students participated in several workshops and activities to learn more about conservation and the work of Audubon Florida.

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BIRDS AND COASTAL STEWARDSHIP

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Coastal Islands Sanctuaries

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813-623-6826

FLORIDA SPECIAL PLACES

Center for Birds of Prey

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1101 Audubon Way
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407-644-0190

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

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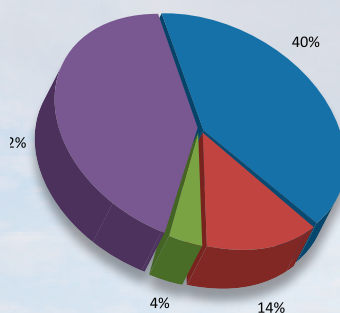
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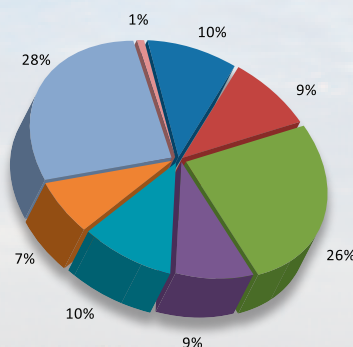
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REVENUE SOURCES



Contributions & bequests	\$2,321,648
Government grants	\$792,963
Investment	\$197,945
Center Admissions & other revenue	\$2,421,870
Total Revenue	\$5,734,426

EXPENSES By PROGRAM



Florida Program	\$596,459
Public Policy	\$494,101
Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary	\$1,489,469
Florida Coastal Habitats	\$519,848
Everglades Conservation	\$587,591
Center for Birds Of Prey	\$409,320
Everglades Science	\$1,610,907
Other	\$27,148
Total Expense	\$5,734,843

FLORIDA AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC. Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Assets As of June 30, 2013

ASSETS

Current Assets	
Cash	42,993.84
Cash - Restricted	423,163.95
Account Receivable	171,352.85
Naples Capital Investment Trust	3,110,947.09
Total Current Assets	3,748,457.73
Other Assets	
Land	3,034,379.00
Building & Improvements	2,247,386.97
Furniture & Equipment	154,971.83
Accumulated Depreciation	-830,260.05
Total Other Assets	4,606,477.75

TOTAL ASSETS 8,354,935.48

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities	
6,754.84	
Equity	
Land-Preservation	503,612.00
Aquisition Fund	2,307,155.00
Unrestricted Net Assets	738,107.57
Retained Earnings	4,498,821.63
Net Income	300,484.44
Total Equity	8,348,180.64

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY 8,354,935.48



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