



# Audubon

FLORIDA *Naturalist*

Do Something Extraordinary  
for Water and Wildlife

Annual Report 2014



## 2014 Florida Audubon Society Leadership

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President, Florida Audubon Society

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Photo By Ralph Arwood



**Steve Lynch, Chairman**  
*Florida Audubon Society*

Dear Audubon Members and Supporters,

Last month I was part of the rally in support of Amendment 1 at the Audubon Assembly. It was so exciting to see so many Audubon members express themselves so passionately for this great cause. Two weeks later the Water and Land Conservation amendment took 75% of the vote, more than anything or anyone on the ballot. It is so exciting to be part of something so extraordinary.

I want to take this opportunity to express heartfelt gratitude to everyone in the Audubon family who helped gather petitions, contribute money, and get out the vote to pass Amendment 1. Audubon chapters got credit for being the source of the largest number of volunteer collected petitions. National and Audubon Florida contributed and raised nearly \$400,000 to support the campaign. Great job and hats off to all the other organizations that also did their part to win Amendment 1!

Passage of Amendment 1 is just the beginning. Our water, wildlife, and special places need you to stay engaged to make sure that legislators use this conservation funding in an appropriate and wise manner. You can keep an eye on Tallahassee and Washington D.C. by getting the Audubon Advocate eNewsletter. Timely alerts about breaking conservation news and ways to participate will make your conservation actions more efficient. Sign up here: [fl.audubon.org/signup](http://fl.audubon.org/signup).

I follow as chair of the Audubon Florida Board of Directors a man I hold in great regard. John Elting took on the job of chairing Audubon Florida at a rough spot in our history. He helped recruit and run a great board and has been a terrific mentor to our leadership staff. My first act as chair was to appoint John Elting Chairman Emeritus of Florida Audubon Society.

Audubon is an organization built on the good work of volunteers. Whether board members, citizen scientists, bird stewards, or conservation activists, it is the good work of the many that makes us successful. I hope to continue Audubon Florida's tradition of harnessing the good work of volunteer leaders and expanding our pools of supporters so we can continue to do good conservation work.

I was fortunate enough to meet many of you at the annual Audubon Assembly. If you have thoughts or recommendations, feel free to send me a note at [flconservation@audubon.org](mailto:flconservation@audubon.org).

Sincerely,

Steve Lynch  
Chairman, Audubon Florida

## Thank You

Audubon Florida is grateful to the following directors who have completed their service.

Joyce King  
Stuart Langton  
Ann Moore

Mark Morton  
John Orcutt  
Bill Warren

Learn more at [www.GivetoAudubonFlorida.org](http://www.GivetoAudubonFlorida.org)



## Thank You for an Extraordinary Year

*Eric Draper, Executive Director  
Audubon Florida*



Dear Friends,

As I write, four members of Apalachee Audubon (Tallahassee area chapter) and two college students are on their way to a public hearing at St. George Island. The Department of Environmental Protection just announced plans to put a marina and lodges in an undeveloped area of the beautiful state park. I have full faith that those volunteers will effectively defend the place that songbirds first land during spring migration.

As I continue to write, I'm interrupted by a call from volunteer in Central Florida who is visiting his state legislator to discuss how Amendment 1 funds should be spent. My phone rings again-- an Audubon board member tells me about his day making wildlife videos.

These volunteer acts move me deeply. They are part of the history of this organization and the legacy of Florida conservation: Ordinary people doing extraordinary things for wildlife.”

As President of Florida Audubon, I challenge people to get out of their comfort zone and do things. I know people want to be asked, want to be challenged and that when asked, most will deliver.

Amendment 1 is one of those results that proved ordinary people do extraordinary things. When launched as a volunteer petition drive two years ago, the Water and Land Legacy Amendment was a long shot. But local Audubon leaders and others had faith and made things happen. The amendment made the ballot, where it won with 75% of vote.

The list of extraordinary goes on and on. Audubon volunteers got a pipeline routed away from endangered Florida Scrub-Jays, stopped the surplus of state owned lands, kept a county from repealing local wetlands laws. Great results because people decided not to be ordinary when it comes to defending Florida's natural areas.

Florida, with all its special places and amazing birds and wildlife, deserves extraordinary acts. The people in charge in Tallahassee seem to think that an island park is just another place for a marina, that Scrub-Jays are just another bird, that wetlands are just soggy ground. They have it wrong. Their view of Florida will not stand if you commit to doing something extraordinary for Florida's water and wildlife over the next year.

Bird stewards, citizen scientists, chapter leaders, educators, columnists, boardwalk docents, grassroots advocates. Read the stories in this edition of the Naturalist about extraordinary people, places, and results. Then get engaged at <http://fl.audubon.org/> sign up and you and Florida will not be the same.

Eric Draper, Executive Director  
Audubon Florida

PS – Our budget depends on your gifts. Use the envelope and make an extra gift to Audubon Florida this year.



# Extraordinary People

“Florida Audubon was founded in 1900 to stop the slaughter of birds for their feathers. The organization has grown since that time, but our mission remains the same – to protect birds and their habitats. This incredible 115-year legacy is owed to the generations of donors, volunteers, and staff that have given so much to make Florida a better place. This extraordinary effort is what makes Audubon Florida so special.”

– Michael Sheridan, Audubon Florida Board of Directors

## The “Wow” Moment – Amendment 1 Overwhelmingly Approved

By Pam Meharg, Seminole Audubon

Wow! That was the feeling on election eve when it became apparent that Amendment 1 was not only going to win, but win big. A wonderful finish to a 2 year adventure to help protect the natural Florida that I so love and a time for reflection on what was accomplished and how we did it.

Audubon members in Florida are lucky to have many wonderful natural areas in our back yard to hike, bike and bird. But, of course, it is not luck that has provided us the legacy of protected land we enjoy here. It is the direct result of the vision, dedication, and hard work of many individuals and groups over many decades. It has been disheartening to watch the funding and programs that support that legacy of protected land be

dismantled over the last few years. It also made the decision to volunteer for the Amendment 1 campaign easy when I was asked by the President of Seminole Audubon Society to participate. People have many motivations for joining an endeavor but as I worked with my fellow volunteers it became evident that we shared a common motivation. It was out of a sense of both gratitude and obligation that we volunteered: gratitude for what has been done to protect our natural lands and obligation to both protect that work and continue it.

This is why members of Audubon and other organizations persevered even when it seemed that success was impossible.

The weekend after the election, I hit the trail at the Lake Apopka Restoration Area and said a thank you to those that worked so hard to protect that land. I also smiled, as I knew I had contributed to that legacy. Wow!



## Birders and Researchers Working Together to Unlock the Mysteries of Our Hemisphere’s Shorebirds

By Julie Wraithmell, Audubon Florida Director of Wildlife Conservation

Florida Park Service (FPS) District Biologist Raya Pruner, Audubon Florida biologist Marvin Friel, and their hybrid Audubon-FPS field crew, know the majority of the Panhandle’s Snowy Plovers by sight. That’s because of the long-term color-banding effort they’ve undertaken on the Panhandle’s coastal state parks. Together, they have helped to track the lives and travels of some of Florida’s rarest birds.

In order to save declining species of migratory birds, conservationists have to understand where they go, how they get there, what habitats they depend upon, how long they live and the careful timing of their artful migrations. Yet following an individual bird thousands of miles, across oceans, and often under cover of darkness, is no small order!



Like tossing a message in a bottle into the sea of migration, young birds like this Snowy Plover have colored bands placed on their legs to monitor their movements.



Piping Plover

## Get Involved!

Join Audubon's Florida Banded Bird Resightings Facebook group and learn what all the fuss is about:  
<http://bit.ly/bandedbirdsgroup>

Watch Raya and Marvin banding Snowy Plovers in Audubon's Coastal Bird Banding Video:  
<http://www.YouTube.com/AudubonFL>

Learn more about where to report bands you see and/or photograph:  
 • <http://fl.audubon.org/banded-birds>  
 • <http://flshorebirdalliance.org/resources/banded-birds.aspx>

Accordingly, ornithologists have had to craft some pretty inventive techniques—including the banding of birds. Like tossing a message in a bottle into the sea of migration, biologists place unique bands on the legs of birds, knowing that every time that bird is resighted elsewhere in its life and travels, another piece in the puzzle of its life history and migration falls into place.

Audubon citizen scientists in Florida have a growing reputation as hot shot band resighters, helping reveal the mysteries of migration and life histories for species including Snowy, Piping and Wilson's plovers, Red Knot, American Oystercatcher, Roseate Spoonbill, Least Tern and more.

Through our new Facebook page, Florida Banded Bird Resightings, Audubon observers from around the state are sharing their sightings and interacting with the researchers who originally banded the birds, learning each bird's unique story.

## Audubon Florida and Kissimmee Valley Audubon Society Working Together to Protect Osceola County's Wilderness

By Charles Lee, Audubon Florida Director of Advocacy

In 2007, Kissimmee Valley Audubon and Audubon Florida succeeded in a lengthy effort to secure good conservation policies in the county's Comprehensive Plan. Osceola County is home to the "Headwaters of the Everglades." It is here that the Kissimmee River forms in a chain of lakes and begins flowing south toward Lake Okeechobee, the Everglades, and the estuaries of the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Rivers. The wetlands and abundant native wildlife habitat in Osceola County are vital to all of these ecosystems.

In a quiet maneuver during the spring of 2014, some new county staff and commissioners began to repeal key environmental provisions of the Comprehensive Plan. Jenny Welch, a board member of the Kissimmee Valley Audubon Society, was first to notice the changes and sounded the alarm to her chapter and to Audubon Florida officials.

Audubon Florida filed a legal petition to challenge the plan amendments and built a campaign in the news media critical of Osceola County's actions. Ultimately, Kissimmee Valley Audubon and Audubon Florida were victorious in their defense of this important habitat. In August, Osceola County agreed to a settlement restoring the plan policies.

Jenny Welch's astute leadership and willingness to put personal time and effort on the line to defend Osceola County's wetlands and wildlife habitat is an outstanding example of what Audubon chapter volunteers can do to save Florida's Special Places.



Jenny Welch





# Extraordinary Places

"I can feel it the moment I step into a natural place. The trees whisper in the breeze, birds chirp with excitement, the calming hum of life surrounds you. These are the places we must protect. They are part of who we are."

– Heidi McCree, Audubon Florida Board of Directors

## Audubon Jay Watchers Lead Fight to Protect Hálpata Tasthanaki Preserve

By Dr. Marianne Korosy, Audubon Florida Important Bird Areas Coordinator

Sandra Marraffino, seasoned Jay Watch volunteer and Marion County Audubon advocate, received a startling email in December 2013: the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) was considering approval of a pipeline that would cross miles of the Hálpata Tasthanaki Preserve. Locals and Jay Watchers know this important habitat is home to the largest Florida Scrub-Jay population in Marion County. It is also well-known as a Globally Important Bird Area.

Learning that FERC and Sabal Trail pipeline officials intended to tour the Preserve, Sandra and her husband Paul jumped into action. Sandra wrote a detailed 55-page report on the wildlife, habitats, and history of Hálpata. And together, they mapped alternative routes for the pipeline.

"I don't sleep well during these fights," said Sandra. "If you lose a place like Hálpata, you lose it forever. I built a strong case showing how pipeline construction would negatively impact the Scrub-Jays and other species at the Preserve."

Eric Draper, Audubon Florida Executive Director, wrote a letter to FERC and met with state officials to voice dismay over the proposed plan. Charles Lee, Audubon Florida Director of Advocacy, joined Sandra, a team of local environmentalists, FERC, and Sabal Trail pipeline staff on a tour of Hálpata to emphasize Audubon's opposition to the route through this prime Scrub-Jay habitat.

Audubon Jay Watchers are devoted to protecting Florida's only endemic bird species and the ancient scrub habitat that they depend on for survival. That's



Hálpata Tasthanaki Preserve is home to the largest Florida Scrub-Jay population in Marion County.

why I wasn't surprised to learn that Sandra and her husband were successful. In October of 2014 it was announced that the pipeline would be rerouted around Hálpata Tasthanaki.

The victory at Hálpata is a great example of how engaged citizens can protect an extraordinary natural area.

Congratulations to all involved.



Sandra Marraffino and Fred Hileman

## Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary: A Picture of Hope

By Allyson Webb, Panther Island Mitigation Bank Resource Manager

*Audubon's Allyson Webb manages the restoration of Panther Island - a former agricultural site located in southwest Florida. Now part of Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, Panther Island constitutes 2,778 acres of mitigated pine flatwoods, wet prairies, marshes, and cypress forests.*

Panther Island remains a work in progress. The sunrise silence is shattered occasionally by the cry of a mourning dove. The horizon of the drab fallow agricultural fields is broken by the sporadic flash of brilliant red or blue as Northern Cardinals and Blue Jays search for cover and forage elsewhere. The few native

grasses here struggle to find purchase in a sea of invasive plants. The earth breathes discontent and fatigue here. But there is always hope.

A mere quarter-mile away, a different scene unfolds in a place that a few short years ago was also a worn out pasture.



A picture of hope as Wood Storks and other wading birds return to the wetlands of southwest Florida.

At dawn, the restored marsh, ripe with plant and animal diversity, awakens slowly and steps gingerly into the light. Now the heart soars as two graceful sandhill cranes take flight. A bobcat meanders down to the edge to get a much needed drink. Wood Storks spiral overhead and eventually float down to begin their unique foraging dance.

The “clack clack” of their lightning fast bills rocketing shut is unique sound amongst the calls of warblers and other passerines now bustling about. This is a picture of hope; it is a marvel of human ingenuity working in concert with nature, constantly striving for sustainable watershed health to the benefit of all: man, plant, and beast. This story of hope has been, and continues, to be achieved through

intensive planning and execution of a sound restoration plan that was informed by science.

Audubon is now the steward of this restored wetland. Continued success depends on dedicated volunteers and staff who pour blood, sweat, and tears into the land to maintain its health. I’m so proud to be part of this important project.

## Volunteers Make the Extraordinary Happen at the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey

By Katie Warner, Audubon Center for Birds of Prey Program Manager

The Audubon Center for Birds of Prey admitted over 700 injured or orphaned birds at our Center over the past year. This is a record number of patients needing our care. Each patient requires examinations, feeding, medicine, lab work, cleaning, and monitoring. A staff of five cannot meet this enormous need. The Center relies on volunteers who donate their time and energy to help daily operations.

I first met Robert Veal when he was a volunteer with our EagleWatch citizen science program back in 2004. That experience led to Robert volunteering at the Center for an afternoon each week, which has now grown to two full days plus more when needed. Robert helps with much more than clinic volunteering; he assists with special events, education projects, volunteer training and orientation, electrical issues, and bird rescue and release, clocking in over 1,000 volunteer hours per year.

Robert is a perfect example of how our volunteers’ extraordinary efforts lead to inspiring conservation results. It’s not easy work by any means. And some

volunteers – like Robert – travel up to 35 miles or more in their commute to the Center.

In a recent conversation with Robert, he told me: “Working with the birds in the clinic is my true love, to be able to help an injured raptor through the entire rehabilitation process to release has been

one of the most rewarding parts of my life. I encourage anyone interested in helping to do so. The experience is so rewarding it cannot be put into words.”

You can help Florida’s raptors too! Email Katie Warner, [kwarner@audubon.org](mailto:kwarner@audubon.org) for more information.



Robert Veal releases a rehabilitated juvenile Bald Eagle back to the wild.

Photo by Jenny Alvarado



# Extraordinary Results

“Since Audubon Florida’s founding 115 years ago, our organization has achieved real conservation results. Audubon members stopped plume hunting, saved the Bald Eagle, protected the Everglades, and have led in countless other victories protecting the many special places across our great state. I’m proud to be part of this extraordinary legacy of results.”

– West McCann, Audubon Florida Board of Directors

## Audubon Scientists See Progress for Birds in Critical Habitat

By Jerry Lorenz, State Director of Research



Photos by Mac Stone

Roseate Spoonbill

The ecological health of the Everglades system is best measured by the abundance of wading birds. That is why as director of Audubon’s Everglades Science Center, I get out with our staff into the back county to collect fish samples, measure water quality, and – most importantly - count nesting birds.

The information we collect is used in a comprehensive annual report produced by Mark Cook of the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). This Wading Bird Report is used to guide restoration strategies for Florida Bay and the Everglades.

Counting chicks in nests is not an easy task. My team spends the nesting season boating from one remote colony island to the next. We slog through thick mud, mangroves, and 100% humidity. Sometimes we wear beekeeping gear to stop biting insects from eating us alive.

But just when the difficult nature of this ecosystem seem most unbearable, we’ll find another nest with chicks. It’s an extraordinary sight. The delicate, whitish-pink of a baby Roseate Spoonbill hidden amongst the dark, green mangroves. I am pleased to report to you that the

2014 SFWMD Wading Bird Report had some good news for the birds of the Everglades. The previous nesting season is estimated to be 57% higher than the average for the last two years. Mark Cook reported a total of 48,291 wading bird nests recorded across the Greater Everglades.

Audubon has been collecting data on wading birds in the Everglades since 1938. We’ve done it in good years and in bad. And, thanks to you, will continue to complete this important science well into the future.

To get the latest on nesting news in the Everglades, please sign up for our Restore eNewsletter:

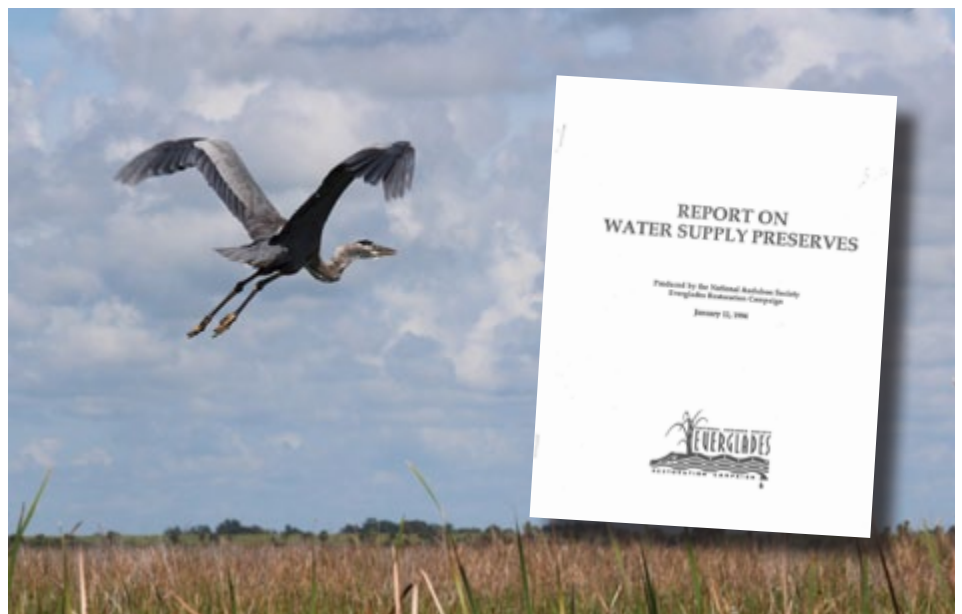
<http://fl.audubon.org/signup>

## Audubon Leads Way for New 7,000 Acre Water Preserve Area in the Everglades

By Julie Hill-Gabriel, Audubon Florida Director of Everglades Policy

Noted Miami author Carl Hiaasen often describes the Everglades of his childhood as one that was within reach. The famed wetlands of the River of Grass were practically in everyone’s backyard. Today, only about half of the historic Everglades remains.

In the early 1990s, as Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties were rapidly urbanizing, my predecessors at Audubon recognized the need for a series of wetland buffers between residential development and Everglades habitat. Working with our allies in the Everglades Coalition, we developed the concept of the “Water Preserve Areas” (WPA).





Audubon staff further refined this idea, convened numerous technical workshops, and presented a plan to the agencies working on restoration. These ideas were incorporated into the landmark Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP).

I am pleased to report that this concept is becoming a reality. The new Broward County Water Preserve Areas project was authorized by Congress earlier

this year. It will create a wetland buffer and two water storage areas envisioned decades ago by Audubon scientists, advocates, and members.

Together these components will impact over 7,000 acres on the western edge of developed Broward County. By improving water quality, expanding the acreage of wetlands, and preventing water from seeping out of the Everglades, the project will ultimately benefit over

750,000 acres in the Greater Everglades Ecosystem.

The Broward Water Preserve Areas is an extraordinary project that not only restores but creates new habitat, using the land that remains between the Everglades and developed areas. To watch this project transition from concept to construction reminds me how much we benefit from the bold ideas of the Audubon leaders who came before us.

## Cape Sable: Restoration Success Meets a New Threat in the Everglades

By Pete Frezza, Audubon's Everglades Science Center Research Manager



Photos by Mac Stone

Cape Sable in the Southern Everglades is an extraordinary place for birds and other wildlife. As a biologist at Audubon's Everglades Science Center, I monitor water conditions and prey fish abundance in the vast, difficult to reach interior marshes found in this area. We use these data to measure the overall health of this important and unique habitat.

Our field work has demonstrated that increased flow from the Gulf of Mexico through manmade canals was leading to elevated salt content of the water, causing serious harm to the ecosystem. One of these problems is loss of forage fish - the prey that is so important for the myriad wading birds that are dependent on this area.

Audubon's research has been influential in the National Park Service's acquisition of nearly \$10 million in funding to construct dams to slow the flow of saltwater through the harmful canals. The project has been a remarkable success so far. Flow from the Gulf into the marshes has been mitigated, salinity levels are down, and prey base fishes are increasing in density and diversity. These benefits appear to be working.

This past summer, I observed hundreds of Roseate Spoonbills making the interiors of Cape Sable home once again. The birds were almost all juveniles, indicating successful nesting somewhere

in their nearby mangrove haunts. It was a wonderful sight.

Despite this important success, there is another threat that could change the Southern Everglades and coastal habitats forever. Over my years spent within these wetlands, the effects of sea level rise have become increasingly evident, not only in our data, but even to the naked eye.



The alarming sea level rise warnings at places like Cape Sable have prompted our team to address this issue head-on. Audubon's Everglades Science Center has helped produce a new program to help

citizens engage with their elected officials about the issue of climate change and sea level rise.

If you care about Cape Sable and other important coastal habitats, you are needed to become a climate messenger.

Please visit <http://www.FloridaClimateMessenger.com> right now for more information on how you can help.

# Extraordinary Vision

“Will 2014 be remembered as the pinnacle of a conservation movement in Florida or as a bold first step? That all depends on how we approach the coming year. Audubon chapter leaders and staff are more engaged and united now than ever before. Join Audubon Florida and help create the future of conservation.”

- Ann Harwood-Nuss, Audubon Florida Board of Directors

## A Commitment to Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary

By John Howard, Close Friend Foundation

As a young boy I played every day in the woods of western Pennsylvania. I took nature for granted. It wasn't until after many years of working on building projects that I began to appreciate where I came from. My wife, Marty, was raised by parents who were birders, hikers, and wilderness lovers. In fact, her father was the person who introduced us to Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary almost 20 years ago.

Obviously we love Corkscrew and love being there. But once we got involved, what really impressed us was the quality of Audubon's conservation effort. Under Sanctuary Director Jason Lauritsen's leadership - and all the way through the 170 volunteers - everyone is dedicated and enthusiastic. It's contagious.

I believe a true philanthropist is one that gets satisfaction from increasing the well-being of mankind. It's about much more than writing checks and getting tax deductions. It's about a feeling in your heart.

Our initial support has warranted our being included in Corkscrew's Cypress Council. However, we are officially announcing that we will step up again with a five year commitment similar to others who are joining the Council. We have proposed another project for next year and look forward to applying our commitment toward that project.

Marty and I want to thank the Audubon community for the recognition you have given us. But, this is not about John and



Marty and John Howard

Marty. This is about appreciating and perpetuating Corkscrew while finding more people to help support and preserve what is a source of research and education. Corkscrew, above all, is a nature sanctuary and is very important to the health of Florida's habitat and clean water flows.

## Engaging the Next Generation of Conservation Leaders

By Danielle Rhemer, CLI class of 2013

My love for the outdoors began in childhood. I could always be found covered in dirt, climbing trees, and catching lizards in the yard. But it was not until high school that I discovered my passion for conservation.

Phil Weinrich, my ecology teacher and an avid birder, inspired me to pursue a career in Environmental Education. It was not his vast knowledge of local flora and fauna that drew me to him, but his passion for creating the conservation leaders of tomorrow.

The main goal of Environmental Education is to change hearts and to foster a love of nature in students. This is not an easy task. Environmental Education teachers are trying to connect with the over-connected. While modern communication allows us to connect

with people around the world, it does not create lasting connections to the world around us.

Audubon's Conservation Leadership Initiative (CLI), hosted each year at the Audubon Assembly, is a perfect example of what it takes to create lasting relationships and foster a love of nature. I participated in this program for the past two years - first as a college student, then as a mentor. The CLI has introduced me to Audubon leaders and conservation professionals who inspire me with their love for our environment.

I learned from Mr. Weinrich and Audubon's CLI that connections to the natural world are best face to face, surrounded by nature. It is my hope that I will inspire the next generation of conservation leaders.

*Danielle Rhemer is a middle school science teacher at All Saints Catholic school in Jupiter, Florida. For the past two years, Danielle has participated in Audubon's Conservation Leadership Initiative (CLI), where college students are matched up with mentors for an immersive day-long environmental leadership training session. The CLI takes place each year at the Audubon Assembly.*



Danielle Rhemer working with young students.



# Audubon's 2015 Legislative Agenda

## Amendment 1

Voters did something extraordinary on November 4 when 75% said “Yes” to the Water and Land Conservation amendment. Now it is time to ask the Governor and Legislature to follow the will of the people when appropriating funds in the state budget. \$500 million dollars will be allocated in the first year. Will legislators read the amendment the way voters did?

A survey of members at the Audubon Assembly about how to spend funds from Amendment 1 showed overwhelming support for buying conservation lands along better management of public lands. Audubon members also showed strong support for spending for the Everglades and protecting Florida's water resources.

Amendment 1 puts one-third of documentary stamp taxes into the “Land Acquisition Trust Fund” and dedicates those dollars to protecting and restoring land and water including the Ever-



Nearly 300 attendees at the annual Audubon Assembly rallied in support of Amendment 1 just days before Election Day.

glades and springs. A faithful reading of Amendment 1 should generate at least \$150 million for land conservation, an equal amount for the Everglades, and additional funds for land management and coastal and water resource protection.

Audubon has written to Governor Scott and legislative leaders urging that they

view Amendment 1 as a clear call to renew spending for the environment. The Florida Forever list shows 1.8 million-acre backlog of conservation projects. Most of those projects will help protect wetlands and the aquifers from which springs flow.

## Year of Water

Springs legislation failed last year in part due to calls for statewide overhaul of Florida water policy. This year, House Speaker Steve Crisifulli has said he intends to make water his legacy. Senate leaders are challenged with restoring springs and coastal estuaries.



Audubon will urge Legislators to work within and expand existing laws to find solutions. Priority recommendations are to put the environment first:

1. Use water more efficiently on farms and in homes and businesses.
2. Reuse treated wastewater and stormwater to restore wetlands and recharge groundwater or to reduce pumping groundwater for power plants and agricultural irrigation.
3. Control pollution sources such as land disposal of sewage sludge and fertilizers.
4. Restore budget cuts that undermined Florida's five water management districts.

Your part is to engage with legislators.

The message is simple:

- Spend the Water and Land Legacy Amendment dollars on protecting and restoring water and land.
- Pass legislation that mandates efficient use and reuse of water, puts controls on pollution sources, and restores water management district budgets.

Sign-up to get the Audubon Advocate eNewsletter to stay engaged with the important conservation news from Tallahassee:

<http://fl.audubon.org/signup>.

**Your voice is needed.**

# Audubon Assembly 2014: Make It a BIG YEAR for Florida's Land, Water, and Wildlife

## Audubon Assembly Sets Conservation Priorities for 2015

Nearly 300 people gathered in Stuart, Florida for the Audubon Assembly to set our annual conservation action agenda by approving state and regional resolutions that address our public policy priorities. The action agenda provides members, chapter leaders, directors, and staff and the public summary statements of our policy and conservation positions. Audubon appreciates the work of chapter leaders, board members and others in shaping and helping to focus our conservation agenda.

### Water for the Environment




Protect water at its source in aquifers, springs, rivers, lakes, and wetlands. Sustain water supply by requiring efficient use and reuse of water by farms and cities. Improve water quality by preventing pollution and putting costs of clean-up those causing the pollution. Keep citizens involved in water decisions.

### Coastal Conservation & Stewardship




Enlist coastal bird stewards to monitor and guard important coastal bird habitats. Conduct bird surveys of nesting productivity and migratory use. Promote protection and management of undeveloped coastal areas and oppose inappropriate development and armoring of shorelines. Oppose oil and gas drilling off Florida's coasts.

### Florida's Special Places



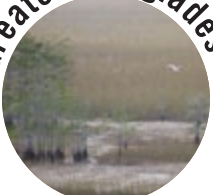
Identify critical habitats for birds and other wildlife. Protect and restore conservation lands through acquisition and conservation easements. Work with public agencies to make sure that conservation lands are adequately funded. Encourage appropriate human use of conservation lands and the scientific study of wildlife and water resources. Enlist volunteers to protect habitat strongholds.

### Climate Change and Sea Level Rise



Support federal and state policies that lead to reduced emissions of greenhouse gases including renewable energy and efficiency rules. Educate people about policies and personal actions to that lead to reduced emissions of greenhouse gases. Promote ecologically sound sea level rise adaptation strategies that conserve and allow landward migration of habitats.

### Greater Everglades



Restore water flows through the Everglades and manage water for the benefit of the environment. Improve wildlife habitat connectivity. Protect and restore wetlands to maintain habitat functions. Reduce nutrient pollution.

## Thanks to the Audubon Assembly Sponsors



To read or download a copy of Audubon Florida's 2015 Conservation Action Agenda, please visit:

<http://bit.ly/coservationactionagenda>





# Audubon Assembly 2014 Award Winners

**Champion of the Everglades**  
Representative Patrick Murphy  
Florida's 18th Congressional District

**Guy Bradley**  
Doris M. and Patrick R. Leary

**Theodore Roosevelt**  
Everglades Foundation

**Women in Conservation**  
Karen Marcus

**Chapter of the Year**  
Francis M. Weston Audubon Society



Jacqui Sulek, Jim Brady and Eric Draper.

**Best Conservation Project**  
Tampa Audubon Society



Jacqui Sulek, Nancy Murrah and Eric Draper.



From the left: Jacqui Sulek, Joyce King, Linda Bystrak, Adrienne Ruhl, Richard Baker, Carolyn Antman and Eric Draper.

**Florida's Special Places**  
Palm Beach County  
Natural Areas Program

**Distinguished Philanthropist**  
Close Friend Foundation

**Volunteer of the Year**  
Cheryl Merz  
Wells Fargo Green Team

**Best Education Project**  
Venice Area Audubon Society



Jacqui Sulek, Bonnie Hurley and Eric Draper.

**Volunteer of the Year**  
Cheryl Merz



Cheryl Merz and Mark Rachal

## Anniversaries

- **Santa Fe Audubon Society - 5 Years**  
Represented by Joyce King
- **Pelican Audubon Society - 50 years**  
Represented by Richard Baker
- **Apalachee Audubon Society - 50 Years**  
Represented by Adrienne Ruhl
- **Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society - 50 Years**  
Represented by Linda Bystrak
- **Duval Audubon Society - 75 Years**  
Represented by Carolyn Antman

## Audubon Florida Staff

**Audubon Florida**  
fl.audubon.org  
4500 Biscayne Blvd., Ste. 205 Miami, FL 33137  
305-371-6399

**Key Contacts**  
Eric Draper, Executive Director  
305-371-6399, ext. 123  
edraper@audubon.org

Victoria Johnston, Donor Relations Manager  
305-371-6399, ext. 134  
vjohnston@audubon.org

**Public Policy Office**  
308 N. Monroe St., Tallahassee, FL 32301  
Jonathan Webber, Communications Manager  
850-222-2473  
jwebber@audubon.org

**Local Audubon Chapters**  
Jacqueline Sulek, Chapter Conservation Manager  
850-251-1297  
jsulek@audubon.org

### EVERGLADES CONSERVATION

**Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary**  
Jason Lauritsen, Sanctuary Director  
375 Sanctuary Rd. West, Naples, FL 34120-4865  
239-229-8170

**Everglades Policy**  
Julie Hill-Gabriel, Director of Everglades Policy  
305-371-6399, ext. 136

**Everglades Water Quality**  
Charles Lee, Director of Advocacy  
407-620-5178

**Lake Okeechobee Watershed Program**  
Paul Gray, Ph.D., Science Coordinator  
863-655-1831

**Southwest Florida Audubon Policy Office**  
Brad Cornell, Big Cypress Policy Associate  
239-643-7822

**Everglades Science Center**  
Jerome Lorenz, Ph.D., State Director of Research  
305-852-5318

### BIRDS AND COASTAL STEWARDSHIP

**Coastal Wildlife and Habitats**  
Julie Wraithmell, Director of Wildlife Conservation  
850-222-BIRD (2473)

**Important Bird Areas**  
Marianne Korosy, Florida IBA Coordinator  
(727) 742-1683

**Coastal Islands Sanctuaries**  
Ann Paul, Tampa Bay Area Regional Coord.  
813-623-6826

### FLORIDA SPECIAL PLACES

**Center for Birds of Prey**  
Katie Warner, Program Manager  
1101 Audubon Way  
Maitland, FL 32751-5451  
407-644-0190

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Audubon Florida is deeply grateful for the generous support of the individuals, corporations, foundations, and organizations that support our conservation work throughout Florida. Your gifts make the extraordinary happen.

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The Everglades Foundation, Inc.  
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## \$100,000 - \$249,999

Close Friend Foundation  
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## \$50,000 - \$99,999

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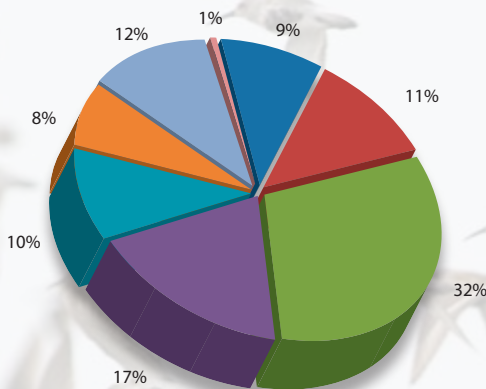
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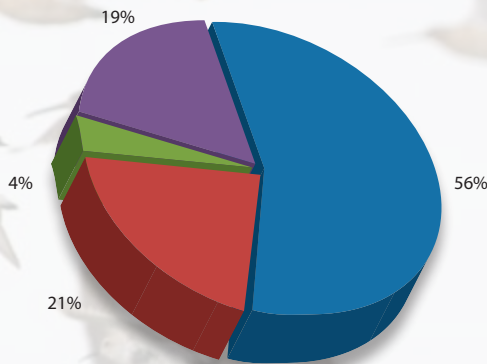
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### Expenses by Program



Florida Program	\$510,943
Public Policy	\$597,081
Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary	\$1,732,308
Florida Coastal Habitats	\$904,670
Everglades Conservation	\$571,936
Center for Birds Of Prey	\$415,790
Everglades Science	\$656,324
Other	\$10,616
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$5,399,668</b>

### Revenue Sources



Contributions & bequests	\$3,033,282
Government grants	\$1,120,762
Investment	\$207,861
Center Admissions & other revenue	\$1,037,763
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$5,399,668</b>

## FLORIDA AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC. Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Assets As of June 30, 2014

### ASSETS

Current Assets	
Cash	185,026
Cash - Restricted	19,754
Account Receivable	50,000
Charles Schwab Investment	3,336,177
Charles Schwab Investment restricted	931,563
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>4,522,520</b>
Other Assets	
Land	3,034,379
Building & Improvements	2,247,387
Furniture & Equipment	154,972
Accumulated Depreciation	-901,612
<b>Total Other Assets</b>	<b>4,535,126</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>9,057,646</b>

### LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities	
Equity	6,755
Land-Preservation	503,612
Aquisition Fund	3,110,947
Unrestricted Net Assets	4,355,221
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	78,401
Permanent Restricted Net Assets	300,000
Net Income	702,710
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>9,050,891</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>9,057,646</b>



**4500 Biscayne Blvd. #205, Miami, FL 33137**

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

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Annual Report 2014

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Photo by David Macri