



Audubon | FLORIDA

# Naturalist

Winter 2020

Roseate Spoonbills,  
American White  
Pelicans, and Willets.  
Photo: Shane Conklin



## Jud Laird, Chair

Florida Audubon Society

This marks my last Naturalist issue as Chair of Audubon Florida's Board of Directors. While I look forward to continuing my involvement with Audubon, my term as Chair will come to a close in January when my successor is elected by the Board.

In the past four years as chair, I have watched with both awe and pride as Audubon Florida advocated for climate, water, and conservation legislation in the state capital, and brought hundreds of thousands of people closer to nature at our Centers. We have expanded our coastal program to 166 sites, brought our EagleWatch monitors to 46 counties, strengthened our policy advocates in Tallahassee, restored 670 acres at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, grown to nearly 100 employees across the state, and inspired countless others to look towards the skies.

We have more to accomplish, we have more to strive for, but I am proud of the staff, volunteers, and dedicated members who have made it all possible.

Happy Holidays to you and yours.

Jud Laird, *Chair, Audubon Florida*



## Julie Wraithmell, Exec. Director

Audubon Florida

As we look towards 2021, Audubon Florida joins the country in a state of flux. From new legislators, to positive news in the fight against COVID-19, to a sigh of relief after the end of an exhausting hurricane season, we can look towards 2021 with both the hope that springs from forging partnerships as well as the satisfaction of looking forward to the return of cherished traditions.

We have used 2020 to take stock of what works and what doesn't as we move ahead to protect birds and the places they need. We need to and will do better at creating a more inclusive conservation movement, and have already taken our first strides during the 2020 Virtual Assembly (pg. 11).

As we adapted to the pushes and pulls of a unique year, the coastal program won a new grant to continue our work protecting nesting sea and shorebird species while transitioning from the busy baby bird season to winter monitoring (pg. 4). Research continues at the Everglades Science Center, data that will be used to inform continued restoration progress in the River of Grass (pg. 8). Our Center for Birds of Prey and Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary teams remain dedicated to staff, volunteer, and visitor safety, and re-opened their doors this fall so the public can be close to nature once more (pg. 3).

Because I know how hard our team works on behalf of Florida's natural environment, and how strongly you support our work, I see a bright future in the new year.

Julie Wraithmell, *Executive Director, Audubon Florida*

## 2020 Florida Audubon Society Leadership

### Executive Director

Julie Wraithmell

### Board of Directors

Jud Laird, *Chair*  
Heidi McCree, *Vice Chair*  
Carol Colman Timmis, *Secretary*  
Scott Taylor, *Treasurer*

Amy Albury  
Jim Brady  
Steve Buczynski  
Paul Ferber  
Ann Harwood-Nuss  
Kirsten Hines  
Lois Kelley  
Amy Koch  
José Latour  
Ron Magill  
Brian Miller  
Steve Nellis

Douglass Pitts Jr.  
Alex Preisser  
Angela Renner  
Lida Rodriguez-Tasseff  
Dan Savercool  
Paula Wehr  
Kristine Young

### Emeritus

Joe Ambrozy  
Sandy Batchelor  
John Flanigan  
Steve Lynch  
Michael Sheridan



Dianna Flynt teaches visitors about raptors under new COVID-19 re-opening protocols.

## Florida Centers Re-open with New COVID-19 Protocols

Staff at both the Center for Birds of Prey and Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary worked hard to develop new procedures and protocols to safely re-open their doors to the public. Our priority is keeping our staff, volunteers, and visitors healthy, but we know how the natural world both calms and heals us in difficult times.



After six months of closures, Audubon Center for Birds of Prey was able to open our doors September 17. The Center is in great need to offset income loss due to closures, program cancellations, and limits with in person activities. We encourage you to recharge this winter by visiting to learn about conservation, birds of prey, and how you can help.

– Katie Gill Warner, Center Director

At the Center for Birds of Prey, visitors sign up for designated time slots, and remain in the outdoor areas of the center. Kids and adults alike love meeting our ambassador birds, including kites, owls, eagles, and more. In the Raptor Clinic, both staff and volunteers continue to care for injured birds, releasing as many as possible back into the wild.

[Learn more at cbop.audubon.org](http://cbop.audubon.org)

In Southwest Florida, Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary re-opened in September. Now, as many as 240 visitors can sign up in advance for a designated time slot to enjoy the boardwalk without congesting facilities. All visitors (including members) are required to reserve their tickets in advance. Luckily, the re-opening allowed visitors time to see the blooming Ghost Orchid, which first displayed buds in June before the last petal fell in late October. **At both the Center for Birds of Prey and the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, tickets must be pre-purchased online.**

[Learn more at corkscrew.audubon.org](http://corkscrew.audubon.org)



While the Sanctuary staff continued critical wetland conservation field activities during the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, we were delighted to welcome visitors back to the boardwalk in September. The pre-registration process and new safety precautions, such as wearing masks and a one-way direction on the boardwalk, enhance the visitor experience and allow people to re-connect with nature. Our visitors express their thanks as they leave the boardwalk and are happy to have this safe, outdoor experience in Southwest Florida.

– Lisa Korte, Ph.D., Sanctuary Director, Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary

## Audubon Florida Earns Major Gulf Restoration Grant

This fall, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Board of Directors approved over \$10 million in funding for Florida's Shorebird Program, including a \$3.2 million grant to Audubon Florida to help fund our coastal stewardship efforts through 2024. The grant originated in Gulf Restoration funding, helping to restore the Gulf and its wildlife populations after the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

Audubon's grant supports eight full-time coastal biologists in addition to 11 nesting-season (seasonal) staff who monitor and protect threatened coastal birds and their habitat at more than 160 sites on the Gulf Coast and in Northeast Florida.

The coastal program performs critical surveys of adults, nests, downy and feathered chicks, and flight-capable offspring. Staff members provide training



A banded Piping Plover is spotted in Florida. The bird was banded in 2010. Photo: Jean Hall

and management of on-beach stewardship and public education at active nesting sites, conduct regular monitoring and abatement of human and predator disturbance at active nesting sites, and coordinate with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission on regulatory issues.

*The grant does not meet all our program needs. We need you to protect coastal species! To learn more visit: [fl.audubon.org/conservation/coastal-conservation](https://fl.audubon.org/conservation/coastal-conservation)*



Photo: Jean Hall



Many of the continent's shorebirds like these Willets, Marbled Godwits, Black Skimmers, and more migrate through or winter in Florida, making Audubon's work important year round, not just in nesting season.

## Winter Monitoring Protects Vulnerable Species and Enhances our Understanding of Conservation Areas

Coastal bird conservation is a year-around effort, and includes monitoring bird species during their breeding season, migration, stop-overs, and winter months. Since 40% of Earth's bird species migrate, each new season brings a distinct community of birds with specific habitat needs.

In the winter of 2013, the Piping Plover pictured above was photographed at the Big Marco Pass Critical Wildlife Area. Banded in 2010 in Michigan, resights of the bird — including this year — showcase the species' fidelity to this coastline, the importance of our wintering sites to migratory shorebirds, and that this tiny species can be long-lived (10 years and counting!).

*Using wintering bird data, Audubon has successfully worked with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to expand Critical Wildlife Areas for wintering birds and encourage beach communities to reduce the amount of disturbance wintering birds encounter.*

We use information from our coastal bird monitoring program while advocating for important habitat outside of the nesting season. Stop-over habitat is vital for migrating shorebirds to refuel on their journey. Once at their wintering locations it is critical for coastal birds to be able to forage sufficiently to have enough energy for the next breeding season.

# The Data Is In! Now It's Time to Improve Water Quality in the Guana River System

Water issues in our state not only affect the flora and fauna we love, but our own communities as well. Audubon's work with partners to restore the health of the Guana River System in the Northeast Florida Ponte Vedra Beach area has reached an important milestone. After years of effort on a water quality data project championed by staff at the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve (GTM Research Reserve) and supported by the local community, enough data has been collected to show nutrient impairment in the Guana River and its headwaters in Ponte Vedra Beach. While this finding is unfortunate, recognition of impairment according to state water quality standards makes clear the troubles facing this beautiful resource in Northeast Florida, and will set the stage for serious efforts to restore water quality in the region.

*Senate President Wilton Simpson has named committees for 2020-2022, making Chair and Vice Chair assignments. Check out committee assignments at: <https://www.flsenate.gov>*

## 2021 Florida Legislature Session Preview

The 2021 session brings new leadership to the Florida House and Senate, with the promise of new partnerships, new legislation, and new opportunities for conservation. Despite recent gains in general revenue taxes coming into the state over the last three months, the coronavirus pandemic leaves a major dent in the state budget (\$3 billion less than what was expected before the coronavirus first began) creating a lot of uncertainty in funding for important conservation and water projects and programs.

On a positive note, both Senate President Wilton Simpson (R-Trilby), and House Speaker Chris Sprowls (R-Tarpon Springs), have clearly stated the need to develop a statewide strategic plan for sea level rise, hurricanes, and flooding. With rising seas and increasing intensity of storms across the state, we are glad to see state leadership on this issue. The Senate and House leads



A Wood Stork rests at the GTM Research Reserve.

are also on the same page when prioritizing a five-year planning horizon for environmental projects, similar to measures already in place for state transportation planning.

Other items to note include:

- **The creation of the Pandemics & Public Emergencies Committee by the House and Senate to address COVID-19 and to plan for future emergencies.**
- **Access to the Capitol is severely limited due to COVID-19, casting a shadow on session and bringing a new set of challenges for attending committee meetings, providing testimony, and more.**
- **This is the year for redistricting, the process by which new congressional and state legislative district boundaries are drawn. District lines are redrawn every ten years following completion of the United States census. The federal government stipulates that districts must have nearly equal populations and must not discriminate based on race or ethnicity. How those maps are drawn can drastically change the future of state politics.**

The Audubon policy team is ready to pound the pavement to ensure environmental protections are strengthened and conservation programs, including the Florida Forever and Rural and Family Lands programs, remain fully funded.

But we need your help. Be sure you are signed up to receive our regular Audubon Advocate email newsletters during committee weeks and Session, as well as action alerts when we need you to lend your voice to Florida's wildlife and wild places.

**Sign up here: [fl.audubon.org/advocate-signup](https://fl.audubon.org/advocate-signup)**

***Five weeks of pre-session committee hearings begin Jan. 11. The 2021 legislative session starts March 2.***

# Conservation Leadership Initiative Alum Reflects on Future Career in Environmental Movement — *By Herby Zephir*

---

John Muir, famously known as “Father of the National Parks” once said:

*“In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks.”*

I wonder how much the underrepresented youth — spread across the low-income communities of our nation — would receive if they could walk and seek out the thrills of the outdoors? My name is Herby Zephir, a first-generation college student and a senior at the University of Florida; majoring in Natural Resource Conservation and minoring in Sustainability Studies.



Herby Zephir

After 23 years, I finally saw a national forest for the first time as an intern with the Doris Duke Conservation Scholars Program (DDCSP); it was the magnificent Ocala National Forest (ONF). Before my summer internship at ONF in 2019, my definition of what the natural environment looked

like consisted mainly of royal palm trees; oddly placed around Homestead, FL (my hometown & urban city). After my first visit and experience at ONF, I learned a valuable lesson: that the area I lived in does matter, and that it directly influenced my ability to be cognizant of the things that surrounded me. Most importantly, it affirmed to me the notion that one could only respect the natural environment to the degree which they were exposed to it.

I falsely defined the natural environment as the patches of green spaces around my hometown, but the truth is that my misunderstanding reflects an even greater social issue: the lack of exposure to the outdoors for people of color living in disadvantaged communities. I consider it a privilege to have been selected as a recipient of Audubon Florida's Conservation Leadership Initiative (CLI) and having worked so closely with the

Marion Audubon Society (MAS). My experience with CLI & MAS completely reshaped my view of the world; as it relates to the outdoors. I no longer viewed wood as the inanimate base for telephone poles — projecting upright, from concrete slabs around my neighborhood. Instead, I view wood as a natural resource full of ecosystem services — rewarding to all life.

My Audubon experience was lifechanging and I would be remiss if I failed to mention my mentor and the person responsible for transforming me into the outdoor embracing, Black birder that I am today, Barbara Schwartz (Conservation Chair, MAS). She approached me after reading an article published about me by Dr. Jack Payne (former University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Science Senior Vice President). He wrote about the social change that is following scientific progress as more people of color, such as myself, enter and contribute to the conservation field while using the platform to share our views.

I entered the conservation field harboring optimism for the type of impact I would make. Instead, I ended up bearing the load of imposter syndrome. I felt like I did not belong in conservation because no one looked like me — Barbara initially didn't know this. However, she warmly welcomed me into the field as her mentee and created a safe atmosphere for me to get out of my comfort zone, share what I knew about wildlife science, and feel like I too can contribute to conservation.

Barbara's encouragement directly led me to CLI, which in turn exposed me to areas and activities in conservation. Through CLI, I was able to build a network with students with similar career interests as well as conservation leaders. The activities I engaged in during my internship with CLI gave me firsthand experience bird watching. More importantly, those activities gave me an outlet to pursue the outdoors and use what I had learned to serve my community.

Together with my mentor Barbara Schwartz, we guided Environmental Science students on bird walks at the College of Central Florida (CCF), identifying birds and teaching them how to use binoculars. We assisted students of Vanguard High School's EcoKnight Ecology Club identify birds while kayaking at Silver Springs State Park. My most memorable experience with MAS?



Zephir attends Audubon Florida Assembly in 2019.  
Photo: Luke Franke

Sharing my background with students at CCF, and how pursuing the outdoors broadened my horizons to see the transcendental beauties of the natural environment.

Empowering underrepresented youth through the use of environmental education is my dream. Seeing how captured and fascinated young people are after learning something new about the natural environment continues to drive me to spread environmental awareness. Environmental outreach has thus become my civic duty because, for the profession of conservation to grow, people of all backgrounds (with even the slightest bit of interest in the outdoors) must have an opportunity to engage in it; to at least see what difference it makes.

My experience with MAS and CLI can be defined by this short poem by Aadhira called “Freedom” — it is inspired by the poet’s recollection of an unknown bird they once spotted. It reads:

*The hole, my nest was safe...  
The food around kept me alive...  
But being holed curbed my wings...  
And taught me, surviving isn't living...  
I flew out, stretching my wings...  
Now, I've the sky to soar and a life to live!*

Thanks to Barbara, MAS, and CLI, I stretched my wings and now confidently pursue a career in conservation.



Zephir birding in Ocala National Forest.

Living within the urban city “curbed my wings,” distorting my perception of the environment. It put me in a survival mode, whereby constantly seeing the disparities that surrounded me, I couldn’t see the beauty in life found in natural world. Going bird watching through Loblolly Woods Nature Park and by kayak through Silver Springs State Park with MAS refreshed my morale. Finally, I felt a sense of normalcy in life. I understand how nature-dependent all life is and believe more people of color can gain this same understanding if given the opportunity because that’s where change begins.

Now when I return to my hometown and spend time outdoors with family, I can share with them this beautiful perspective of the natural world that I gained — this is thanks to the efforts of Barbara, MAS, and CLI.

## Audubon Science to Help Inform Army Corps Efforts to Combine, Speed Restoration for Biscayne Bay and More

The Biscayne Bay and Southeastern Everglades Ecosystem Restoration Project (BBSEER) kicked off in the summer of 2020, led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) with the South Florida Water Management District as the state partner. The first phase of the project is a feasibility study focused on formulating a plan that will improve the quantity, quality, timing, and distribution of freshwater to Biscayne Bay and Southeastern Everglades, Biscayne National Park, Barnes Sound, Card Sound, and Manatee Bay, by restoring wetland and nearshore estuarine habitats. The project also aims to improve the resiliency of marsh and coastal habitat to sea-level rise and other climate related impact.

Project planning for BBSEER is expected to take three years. In addition to the Corps and the District, a Project Delivery Team (PDT) composed of federal and state agency representatives, local government staff, and tribal representatives will provide input and wide-range

of technical and scientific expertise to the planning process. Audubon's Jerry Lorenz, Ph.D., Everglades Science Center Director, is a member of the PDT, and his extensive expertise gained over decades of monitoring and gathering data in Biscayne and Florida Bays will be an invaluable addition to the PDT and will help ensure the final project plan is driven by sound science.

BBSEER is not the first time the Corps has combined multiple CERP projects in an effort to expedite restoration and/or reduce costs. Expediting restoration is a laudable goal but should not come at the expense of achieving all of the intended ecological benefits authorized by Congress.

Audubon's science and policy teams will work to ensure the final project does not result in scaled-down benefits for the Southeastern Everglades, Florida Bay, or Biscayne Bay.

## Fish Sampling Provides Critical Data for Florida Bay

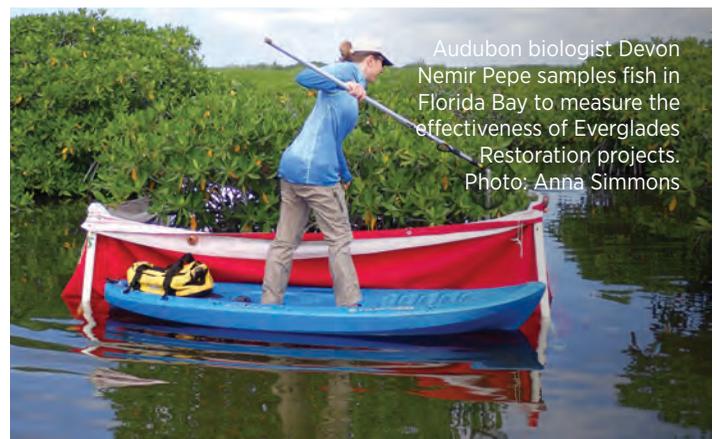
On any given winter morning, you can find Audubon researchers at the dock in Tavernier in the Florida Keys, loading up boats with gear in the predawn light. In the busy season, November through April, the fish crew at Audubon's Everglades Science Center (ESC) begin their day in the dark and are on the water by sunrise.

ESC staff have been examining prey availability for nesting birds in Florida Bay for 30 years by monitoring hydrologic conditions and sampling prey-base fishes in the bay's coastal mangrove zone. Each month during the busy winter season, researchers conduct fish sampling at 11 study sites throughout Southern Biscayne Bay, Florida Bay, and Cape Sable. A fish sample occurs over three consecutive days, using a drop net technique to capture fish. These primary and secondary producers serve a vital purpose in Florida Bay, making up the food base for many higher trophic level predators such as game fish, crocodilians, wading birds, and fish-eating birds of prey.

Water management practices have disrupted the Everglades' natural sheet flow pattern. ESC research links changes in freshwater flow to decreased plant production and subsequent loss of small fishes. The data also illustrate

how sea-level rise has been detrimental to the natural fish community's overall functioning and productivity in these mangrove wetlands. In the winter nesting season, wading birds depend on seasonal dry-downs to concentrate their prey, which in turn makes feeding easier. However, because sea-level rise prevents water levels from falling low enough in the dry season to concentrate fish, successfully raising chicks has become much more difficult.

Long-term monitoring efforts at ESC track the changing trends in fish community dynamics over time. This information helps to evaluate the efficacy of restoration efforts that aim to increase freshwater flow to the Everglades and sheds light on the harmful effects of rising sea levels.



Audubon biologist Devon Nemir Pepe samples fish in Florida Bay to measure the effectiveness of Everglades Restoration projects. Photo: Anna Simmons

## Finding Creative Ways to Get the Job Done at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary

The pandemic has affected all aspects of Sanctuary operations. This year, staff were forced to suspend the internship program. Normally, a conservation intern is hired for a six-month assignment and lives on-site, assisting with a variety of monitoring projects that help drive management decisions. The data they collect contribute to our understanding of how the habitats within the Sanctuary and the Western Everglades are changing.

As we continue to adapt to the coronavirus pandemic, Florida Gulf Coast University students came to the rescue! The students have provided valuable assistance with the fish sampling program and will soon assist with trail camera monitoring and maintenance.

Speaking of creativity, educators turned to technology when it became clear that the pandemic would cancel school field trips. During a typical year, hundreds of Collier County Public School students enjoy an immersive experience in the swamp, learning about the Sanctuary's 13,000 acres of pine flatwoods, wet prairies, and cypresses as part of the Collier County Public School Field Trip Specialist program. Now, fifth-grade students and teachers can virtually experience the richness of Florida's natural resources through the Wild Florida Adventure Tour, developed by Sanctuary staff with the support of the Community Foundation of Collier County.

The habitats protected by the Sanctuary are important for Florida panthers. After this male panther was killed in 2017 on a nearby roadway, then-FWC Commissioner Liesa Priddy reached out to staff at the Sanctuary and arranged for it to be preserved. A permanent new exhibit, in the preliminary planning stages, will give this animal new life in the Blair Audubon Center where students and visitors can gain a better understanding of the value of habitat conservation. The taxidermy expenses were generously underwritten by Mark Clemons with Everglades Adventures in Clewiston and Troy Shirley of American Outdoors Taxidermy in Ocala.



A student volunteer collects data on fish populations.



Sanctuary Director Lisa Korte, Ph.D., left, and former FWC Commissioner Liesa Priddy examining the taxidermied Florida panther.



Bald-Eagle  
Photo: Venu Challa

## SeaWorld Orlando Works with the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey to Help Eagles Soar

Audubon Center for Birds of Prey and SeaWorld Orlando have teamed up to help eagles soar. Since 2004, the SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund has supported the rescue and rehabilitation of Bald Eagles. Audubon has had the opportunity and privilege of working with many of the SeaWorld teams, including the SeaWorld Cares team; SeaWorld parks as locations to place non-releaseable raptors; and SeaWorld employees who volunteer at the Center. Audubon is grateful for their partnership.

Angela Westerfield, a current Advisory Board member with the Center and SeaWorld Orlando staff member says, "Volunteering my time at the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey for the past 12 years has given me the opportunity to work directly with a variety of amazing birds as they are cared for and rehabilitated. I am proud of SeaWorld's partnership with the Center and honored to be a part of the mission to save and protect Florida's birds of prey."



Angela Bowman ready for the release.

**Since 1979, Audubon Center for Birds of Prey has treated 2,015 Bald Eagles. Staff have released 628 rehabilitated eagles into the wild.**

## Join Us for Audubon's Wind Beneath Our Wings week February 14 – 21, 2021

Join Audubon for a week of activities and celebrations to raise money for Audubon Center for Birds of Prey. In this ever challenging environment, we invite you to join us for a week-long celebration including an online auction, special virtual experiences with Florida's

Raptors, an exclusive virtual cocktail hour and other surprise guests and activities.

**Visit [windbeneathourwings.org](http://windbeneathourwings.org) for details.**

## In October, Audubon Florida held its First Ever Virtual Assembly: Reimagining Audubon Florida – A Call for Inclusive Conservation

More than 500 people participated in virtual field trips, important discussions, and success celebrations. Throughout, we delved into our current work and where we hope to take Audubon Florida into the future.

### Our learning sessions included:

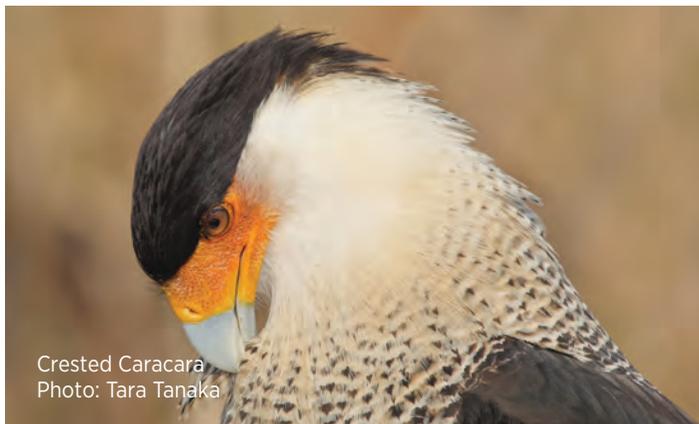
- **Outdoor Hacks: Tips and Tricks from the Experts for Safety, Comfort, and Enjoyment in the Outdoors**
- **Outdoors for All: How Racism Impacts the Outdoor Experiences of People of Color and Recommendations for Allies and Organizations**
- **How Climate and Water Quality Affect Communities of Color and Low Income: Opportunities for Conservation and Justice**

While we missed gathering in person as we would in an ordinary year, the advantage of a virtual Assembly is that all of this exciting content is now available, free of charge, online. We hope you will help us keep this conversation going in Florida's conservation community. Curious where to start? Try the inspiring keynote from author, biologist, and Black birder Drew Lanham, Ph.D. You won't be disappointed!

“ The work of inclusion and conservation is going to take all of us. We hope that this Assembly inspires you to continue your efforts and keep the conversation going.

—Julie Wraithmell, Audubon Florida Executive Director

Recordings from all of the Assembly sessions are available on our educational webinars page: [fl.audubon.org/about-us/educational-webinars](https://fl.audubon.org/about-us/educational-webinars)



**JESSIE BALL  
DU PONT  
FUND**

*Assembly support generously provided by: Jessie Ball duPont Fund*

Inclusive. Accessible. Equitable. Collaborative. This is the world that the Jessie Ball duPont Fund hopes to help build. At the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, we're committed to creating communities of belonging. That starts with a commitment to inclusive conversations and spaces and leads to more equitable opportunities. We're proud to support Audubon Florida in their goal to make the outdoors accessible, welcoming and safe for all people.

# Thank You to Our Supporters in 2019-2020

---

## **\$100,000 and Above**

The Batchelor Foundation, Inc.  
Brunckhorst Foundation  
The Everglades Foundation, Inc.  
Florida Power & Light Company  
The Mosaic Company Foundation  
River Branch Foundation  
Robert F. Schumann Foundation  
Dianne and Mike Shanley

## **\$50,000-\$99,999**

Cedar Hill Foundation  
Darden Restaurants  
Deering Foundation  
Walt Disney World Resort  
Duke Energy Foundation  
Jud Laird  
Manitou Fund  
Heidi and Brian Miller  
Stephen and Merrilee Nellis  
The Rathmann Family Foundation  
The Spurlino Foundation  
Elaine Berol Taylor & Scott Bevan Taylor  
Foundation

## **\$25,000-\$49,999**

Audubon of the Western Everglades  
Gordon J. Barnett Memorial Foundation  
The Clinton Family Fund  
Community Foundation of Collier County  
Mary J. Figg  
Allyn L. Golub, PhD  
Anna and Marvin Hamburg Remembrance  
Ann Harwood-Nuss, M.D.  
Knopf Family Foundation  
John and Rachel Paz  
South Florida National Parks Trust  
Dick and Sharon Stilwell  
Turner Foundation, Inc.

## **\$10,000-\$24,999**

The Alexander Foundation  
American Eagle Foundation  
Judy M. and C. Frederick Buechner  
Deb Carrier and Harry Gaines  
In Memory of Donald and Carolyn Chidester  
The Chingos Foundation  
Margaret and Edward Dudnyk  
Dykes and Lisa Everett  
Falcon's Treehouse - Marty and Cecil Magpuri  
Felburn Foundation  
Paul Ferber  
Joseph Z. Fleming  
Dick and Mimi Ford  
The Joe and Sarah Galloway Foundation  
Mark Gudelski and JP Mulholland  
Reid and Mary Hughes  
Lois E. and William G. Kelley Fund of the  
Columbus Foundation  
Anthony and Judith Licata  
Lykes Bros. Inc.  
Mary Ann Mahoney  
Judy and Tom Maish  
The Martin Foundation, Inc.  
Mitigation Marketing, LLC  
Naples Garden Club  
Ocean Reef Conservation Association, Inc.  
OUC - The Reliable One  
The Perkins Charitable Foundation  
Pinellas County Community Foundation  
W. Douglas Pitts, Jr.

Rayonier  
Mr. and Mrs. John N. Rigsby  
The Robinson Foundation  
Karen Rohovsky Memorial/Johnson & Johnson  
Matching Fund  
William J. and Tina Rosenberg Foundation  
Mary Jane and Frank Semcer  
Michael and Judy Sheridan  
Tavistock  
Anne Drackett Thomas  
Carol Timmis  
Mary Sue and William Weinaug — Wekiva Island  
Welchwood Foundation, Inc.  
Wells Fargo Foundation  
Louis Wolfson, III

## **\$5,000-\$9,999**

Joseph T. Ambrozy  
American Fundraising Foundation, Inc.  
Arthrex Inc.  
Michael and Christine Attardo  
Barron Collier Companies  
Bay to Bay Properties, LLC  
Caroline and Jeffrey Blydenburgh  
John C. Bock Foundation  
The Brown Foundation  
Preston and Cherie Came  
C.A.N. Foundation  
John and Georgia DallePezze  
Pam and Doug DeNeve  
Devon Creek Foundation, Inc.  
The Frank E. Duckwall Foundation, Inc.  
Mr. Wayne L. Feakes  
Alfred and Harriet Feinman Foundation  
Ferman Motor Car Company  
The Folke H. Peterson Foundation  
The Freed Foundation Inc.  
Mona Gardner  
Shelton Granade  
The Green Heron Fund  
The Art and Phyllis Grindle Foundation, Inc.  
The Merrill G. and Emita E. Hastings Foundation  
Sandy and Mike Hollenhorst  
Jinny and John Johnson  
William Lichtenberger  
Paula and Paul Loftus  
Kate and Al Luzius  
Ron Magill Conservation Endowment at  
the Zoo Miami Foundation  
Massey Services, Inc.  
Charles McClure  
Dixie Mills  
The Naples Trust Company a division of The  
Sanibel Captiva Trust Company  
Navron Corporation  
Anne Nobles and David Johnson  
Janis Parker  
Robert M. and Helen A. Ritchie Charitable  
Foundation  
Robertson Foundation  
Kathy Sayre and John Corbitt  
SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund  
Dianne Siegal  
Phyllis and Stephen Strunk  
Jim and Jonnie Swann  
TECO Energy  
John and Mary Lou Winn  
William and Virginia Young  
Stanley J. Zamo and Mildred L. Zamo  
Charitable Foundation

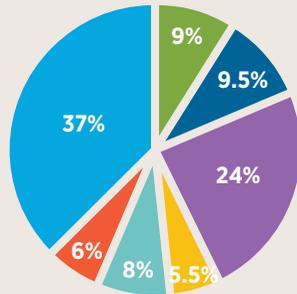


Royal Terns  
Photo: Walker Golder

## AUDUBON FLORIDA & FLORIDA AUDUBON SOCIETY FINANCIALS JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30, 2020

### EXPENSES BY PROGRAM

**TOTAL  
EXPENSE**  
\$10,993,545



\$4,031,808 Coastal Stewardship & Restoration

\$2,679,921 Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary

\$1,040,903 Public Policy

\$1,029,393 Florida Program

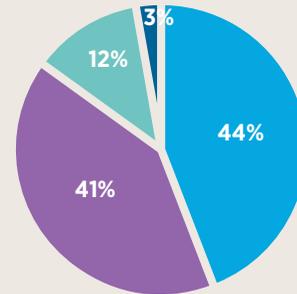
\$928,240 Everglades Science

\$683,882 Center for Birds of Prey

\$599,398 Everglades Conservation

### REVENUE SOURCES

**TOTAL  
REVENUE**  
\$8,876,745



\$4,881,738 Contributions & Bequests

\$4,465,497 Government Grants

\$1,333,678 Center Admissions & Other Revenue

\$312,632 Investments

## FLORIDA AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC. STATEMENT OF ASSETS, LIABILITIES, & NET ASSETS AS OF JUNE 30, 2020

### ASSETS

<b>Current Assets</b>	
Cash	54,530
Cash - <i>Restricted</i>	19,403
Charles Schwab Investment	5,043,406
Charles Schwab Investment - <i>Restricted Geanagel</i>	670,167
Charles Schwab Investment - <i>Restricted VonBoroski</i>	366,632
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>6,154,138</b>
<b>Other Assets</b>	
Land	2,578,510
Building & Improvements	2,270,834
Furniture & Equipment	44,459
Accumulated Depreciation	-1,280,975
<b>Total Other Assets</b>	<b>3,612,828</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>9,766,966</b>

### LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities	36,255
<b>Net Assets</b>	
Land-Preservation	503,612
Board Designated Aquisition Fund	3,336,177
Unrestricted Net Assets	5,024,835
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	581,782
Permanent Restricted Net Assets	300,000
Net Income	-15,695
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>9,730,711</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>9,766,966</b>

## Assembly Awards & Chapter Successes

---

Audubon Florida honored seven individuals for their exceptional conservation efforts during the 2020 Audubon Florida Virtual Assembly.

### ***Guy Bradley Award***

#### **Ann Paul**

For a career in service to Florida's wading birds and the Audubon warden tradition. Paul recently retired after nearly 30 years at Audubon's Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuaries in Tampa! Paul worked tirelessly on all aspects of bird conservation: erecting signs, cleaning up dangerous discarded fishing gear, advocating for important policy changes, and willingly sharing her vast knowledge with all who asked.

### ***Champion of the Everglades Award***

#### **Peter Frederick, Ph.D.**

For his contributions to the understanding of the Everglades' signature waterbirds and service to the public trust. Dr. Frederick's career in research has been instrumental in the protection of the Everglades and its signature wading birds. He has also been an important scientific voice in many appointed roles of public service, including a seat on the state Acquisition and Restoration Council governing conservation land acquisition and management.

### ***Florida's Special Places Award***

#### **Michelle Waterman and Allison Conboy**

For improving conditions for nesting shorebirds at coastal parks (Amelia Island, Little Talbot Island, and Big Talbot Island state parks). Conboy, Park Services Specialist at the Talbot Islands State Parks, and Waterman, Park Manager at the Talbot Islands State Parks, work in some of Florida's truly special places.

### ***Volunteer of the Year Award***

#### **Maggie Haynes**

For her dedication to EagleWatch and the ambassador birds at the Center for Birds of Prey. Haynes joined Audubon EagleWatch in 2017 to learn more about Bald Eagles and get involved in their protection on a local level. Since then, her journey has expanded into volunteering in most areas at the Center for Bird of Prey.

### ***Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award***

#### **Lt. Rob Gerkin (FWC)**

For a decade of efforts to protect beach-nesting birds in Sarasota County. Lt. Rob Gerkin has partnered with Audubon Florida since 2015 and has worked alongside



Duval Audubon engages visitors in birding experiences.

Sarasota Audubon Society long before then to protect beach-nesting birds in Sarasota County.

### ***Distinguished Philanthropist***

#### **Ann Harwood-Nuss, M.D.**

For her generous support of Audubon's core values at Audubon Center for Birds of Prey and statewide. For eight years, Dr. Harwood-Nuss has invested her time in Audubon's mission. In 2012, she gave her first gift to Audubon, and since then she has contributed generously to the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey and Audubon Florida. In 2015, Dr. Harwood-Nuss became a member of the Audubon Florida Board of Directors, where she currently leads our conservation committee and serves on our development committee. She is always willing to share fundraising ideas with the committee and help us thank our generous supporters in the Jacksonville area.

### **Chapter Successes**

On day one of the Assembly, chapter conservation manager Jacqui Sulek introduced chapter leaders from around the state and led a celebration of their successes. Highlights included: Duval Audubon's children's Christmas Bird Count, which engages as many as 50 youngsters and their parents through a partnership formed with the local zoo; Orange Audubon Society's Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive Ambassador Program; South Florida Audubon's dune restoration project along 23 miles of Broward beaches; Peace River Audubon Society's Native Plants for Birds Yard Certification; Manatee County Audubon Society's restoration and management plans at Felts Audubon Preserve; and many, many more.

The celebration concluded with some words from Florida Power & Light Company's grant program manager Meredith Rollo, who announced grant awards to help 13 chapters in enlisting their communities in local Plants for Birds projects.

# Thanking the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey Corporate Conservation Partners

In 2019, the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey launched our Corporate Conservation Partners program to engage local businesses in the Centers' mission.

Corporate Conservation Partners provide Audubon Center for Birds of Prey with heightened community awareness and critical mission support. Funds are used to support our education, clinic, raptor rehabilitation, and conservation programs. The support of our partners meant more than ever as the Center had to shut down due to COVID-19. While the Center was closed to the public, the staff continued the important work of treating and releasing injured raptors, and transitioning their important conservation education programming to online platforms. We are grateful to our inaugural class of partners:

**SIGNATURE SPONSOR**



**PREMIER SPONSOR**



**FEATURED SPONSOR**



*To learn more about how you can help the Center soar to new heights as a Corporate Conservation Partner, please contact Katie Warner at [Katie.Warner@audubon.org](mailto:Katie.Warner@audubon.org)*



Florida-Scrub-Jay  
Photo: Steven Chu

## Jay Watch Volunteers Have an Unusual but Successful Season

During the summer monitoring season, volunteers fan out across the state to monitor endemic Florida Scrub-Jays. The data they collect are used to direct both conservation and restoration efforts to protect this Threatened species. This year, new COVID-19 protocols meant only experienced volunteers could go out into the field, but Audubon still trained (virtually) new volunteers, provided online webinars about this fascinating species, and collected as much critical information on the scrub-jay as they could.

151

**VOLUNTEERS VIRTUALLY TRAINED**

57

**VOLUNTEERS GAVE 510 HOURS TO SURVEY 18 SITES**



Thank you to the Disney Conservation Fund for their continued support of Jay Watch, and to our intrepid volunteers for their service and flexibility!

4500 Biscayne Boulevard, Suite 350, Miami, Florida 33137

Tel: 305-371-6399 | Fax: 305-371-6398 | [fl.audubon.org](http://fl.audubon.org)

**Executive Director:** Julie Wraithmell | **Production:** NPC Printing, Inc. | **Editor:** Erika Zambello | **Associate Editor:** Renee Wilson | **Designer:** Frances Roy Agency | **Cover:** Shane Conklin | **Contributors:** Beth Alvi, Chris Farrell, Doug Gaston, Lisa Korte, Ph.D., Jud Laird, Helen Marshall, Devon Nemire-Pepe, Caroline Stahala, Ph.D., Jacqui Sulek, Katie Warner, Renee Wilson, Julie Wraithmell, Erika Zambello, and Herby Zephir.

The Naturalist is published by Audubon Florida. No portion of this publication may be reproduced without written permission from Audubon Florida © 2020. The Florida Audubon Society, National Audubon Society (doing business as Audubon Florida), and the 47 chapters in Florida work together in a strategic alliance.



## ASSEMBLY SPONSORS



## 2020 CARES Act

The 2020 CARES Act includes important changes that impact your charitable giving deductions—in a good way. If you itemize your deductions, you can deduct up to 100 percent of your adjusted gross income (AGI) for 2020 cash gifts made to charitable organizations (as opposed to the usual 60 percent).

The CARES Act also waives required minimum distributions from most retirement plans. Withdrawing less from your plan can give your portfolio more time to recover from a volatile market.

***Please contact Suzanne Bartlett with any questions at [suzanne.bartlett@audubon.org](mailto:suzanne.bartlett@audubon.org).***