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FLORIDA Audubon Naturalist

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Audubon's Mission *To conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats, for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.*

CREATING A MORE RELEVANT CHAPTER

2011 AUDUBON ACADEMY

March 18-20, 2011

Paramount Plaza Conference Center, Gainesville, FL

Be part of a satisfying, fun weekend learning new ways to integrate critical conservation and education goals into the programs of Florida's 44 Audubon chapters.

The 2011 Audubon Academy will feature round-robin workshops on citizen science, collaborative grants, advocacy skills, creating partnerships, and Important Bird Areas (IBAs). Walking workshops and half-day field trips will take learning outdoors to great birding sites nearby.

Chapters are Audubon's crucial link to the community and government in taking actions that will protect Florida's birds, wildlife, and habitats. Now in its seventh year, Audubon Academy strengthens chapters by providing encouragement, knowledge, and tools for action. This financially sustainable enterprise is led by volunteers with support from Audubon Chapter Coordinator Jacqui Sulek and funded by chapters, Academy participants, and Florida Audubon Society

Registration materials and program schedule will be posted at www.audubonoffloridanews.org in early January 2011. Register and pay on-line. To reserve a room (special rate: \$82/night/double) call 352-377-4000 or visit www.paramountplaza.com.

For more details, contact Joyce King, Academy Coordinator, sjoyceking@comcast.net or Jacqui Sulek, Chapter Conservation Coordinator, jsulek@audubon.org



Loggerhead shrike by Greg Stephens

Love Being Outside

2011
Conservation
Action Agenda

Audubon Assembly
Highlights



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FLORIDA AUDUBON LEADER to Head Up Federal Gulf Coast Restoration Task Force

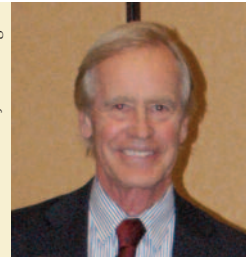
Audubon of Florida Executive Director and Florida Audubon Society President Eric Draper (left) with John Hankinson, outgoing chairman of the Florida Audubon Society Board of Directors. Photo by Charles Lee

It is never easy to say goodbye to someone who has contributed so much to Florida Audubon Society's success. The parting is easier, though, when the leader is leaving to carry conservation forward in an important new position. That is just what former board chairman John H. Hankinson, Jr., will do as he steps down from the Florida Audubon Society Board of Directors to accept the role of Executive Director of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force in October.

The appointment was announced by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lisa P. Jackson in October after President Barack Obama signed an executive order establishing the task force to coordinate efforts to implement restoration programs and projects in the Gulf Coast region.

Since the Deepwater Horizon spill began in April, Hankinson provided important leadership to Florida Audubon's effective response to the disaster. Audubon bird stewards, beach monitors, and scientific researchers protected coastal areas and vulnerable bird nesting sites from both the impacts of the spill and the damage wrought by spill response and clean up efforts. Audubon looks forward to working with Hankinson and to playing a key role in science and advocacy to heal Gulf habitats and species.

Master Naturalist John Elting



JOHN ELTING TO LEAD FLORIDA AUDUBON SOCIETY BOARD

Master naturalist John Elting is probably happiest when he is knee-deep in swamp water leading a walk through Fakahatchee Strand to spot a rare orchid.

During one such walk, Elting told the Naples Daily News, "There's more photosynthesis going on here than anywhere. Being in here is like taking a happy pill. People get what I call the 'Faka-habit.' They say, 'I've gotta get back there.'"

It is this passion for—and deep knowledge of—Florida's special places that Elting contributes as a Florida Audubon board member and now in his new role as board chairman. Along with his passion for the outdoors, Elting brings strong financial and communications savvy and dynamic leadership to his new role. He began his career on Wall Street as an investment banker with Goldman Sachs, founded Elting Enterprises, Inc., and built a broadcast group of three AM and two FM radio stations, among other accomplishments, before retiring.

Ten years ago he became a certified master naturalist and served three terms as founding president of Friends of the Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve. While it may be tough to pull Elting out of the swamp and into the boardroom, Florida Audubon Society welcomes him as chairman and looks forward to the passion, leadership, and guidance he will bring to achieving Audubon's mission.



Eric Draper on Anna Maria Island, near a posted nesting area for black skimmers. Read about Audubon's protection of this site on page 9. Photo by Marianne Korosy

LOVE BEING OUTSIDE Come Together and Protect Florida's Resilient Coasts

The other day I called Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary Director Ed Carlson to ask about nearby field trips. Ed enthusiastically described the glorious day at Corkscrew, the blue skies and perfect weather. Ed was in love with the outdoors around him.

As we talked he was interrupted by a Corkscrew visitor and I listened as he kindly directed them to the nature center and boardwalk. In that moment the entire Audubon experience came together. Corkscrew is Florida's premier outdoor destination. Ed's is the perfect example of the passion of sharing with others Florida's rich natural beauty.

With this issue of the Naturalist we celebrate the love of being outside. Florida provides so many places and opportunities to see and experience nature, and we are given so many challenges to conserve the places that make Florida special. That is why I am asking you to get outdoors and enjoy Florida's wildlife and special places.

I also want you to support Audubon's mission of helping others enjoy and protect nature. You can use the enclosed envelope to give generously this year to support our mission.

Just being outdoors serves a conservation purpose. Florida's birds and other wildlife, our rivers, shores, woods and swamps need your presence. Let me tell you why.

Florida is blessed with diversity of wildlife and natural communities. Today's conservationists walk in the tracks of 100 years of effort to preserve the wonderful and wild character of the places we inherited. But we face some of our greatest challenges ever. Conservation land and waters, once thought to be held in perpetual public trust, are under serious threat. Legislators have denied land managers the funds and staff they need to do their jobs and are threatening to close parks or turn them over to private uses.

That is why Audubon is determined to build an ever stronger constituency to protect Florida's special places. We need your support and we need you to be a part of this movement. Embrace a place. Love being outside and give generously to Audubon so we can help others enjoy the outdoors and protect the places that make Florida special.

Eric Draper

President, Florida Audubon Society
 Executive Director, Audubon of Florida

Help Audubon

Achieve Its 2011 Conservation Action Agenda



Citrus Chapter members enjoy a birdwalk at Florida Audubon Society's Ahhochee Hill Sanctuary Photo by Christie Anderberg



Exploring Lake Okeechobee, left to right: Jacquie Weisblum, former Interior Dept. Undersecretary Nathaniel Pryor Reed, University of Florida's Dr. Karl Havens, Dr. Paul McCormick of SFWMD, and Don Fox, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission. Photo by Dr. Paul Gray Photo by Paul Gray.

Audubon of Florida's six regional conservation resolutions cover:

- Central Florida Ecosystems
- Everglades Ecosystem
- Florida Gulf Coast Ecosystems
- Northeast Florida Coastal Ecosystems
- Northwest – Protect Florida's Beaches
- Southwest Florida Ecosystems

Read about your region and others by visiting www.audubonofflorida.org and clicking on the 2011 Conservation Action Agenda button.

In 2011 Floridians will face a less environmentally-friendly Congress, Legislature and Governor and Cabinet. As such, Audubon's science-based, solution-oriented advocacy is needed now more than ever.

Audubon's 2011 Conservation Action Agenda for Florida's birds and special places should prove persuasive to Florida's newly-elected leaders because it makes sense for the environment and the economy now and in the future.

Developed by staff and volunteer leaders, the Conservation Action Agenda was approved at the Audubon Assembly. The agenda emerged from the work of 44 local chapters organized into six ecological regions. The 2011 agenda focuses on four priorities: coastal habitats, land and water conservation, Everglades restoration, and energy and climate policy. The agenda also includes six regional priorities.

Download your copy at www.audubonofflorida.org and Click on 2011 Conservation Action Agenda in the left column. Help Audubon carry its conservation messages to Washington DC and Tallahassee. Go to www.audubonofflorida.org and click on "take action" to join Audubon's Conservation Network. You'll get timely information and ways to help birds and other wildlife.

American oystercatcher and chick by Marina Scarr



Audubon's 2011 Conservation Priorities

Florida's Special Places

Florida is an exceptional place with unique and diverse ecological communities and wildlife. Land conservation programs have placed a protective overlay around nearly one-third of the state, and fresh water resources are held in public trust for the benefit of people and wildlife. Florida's land and water conservation efforts are unique among states thanks to the focus on designating, protecting and restoring connected ecosystems and natural communities.

Among the benefits Florida's conservation lands and waters offer are unique recreational experiences, outdoor environmental education, bird watching and other wildlife observation and study. Audubon members and staff are among the many Floridians who help steward the state's public lands and waters and who play important roles as monitors of wildlife and ecological conditions. Stewards of special places are among the best advocates for conservation action and improved management of public lands.

Audubon's Conservation Action Agenda focuses on building constituencies to protect Florida's special places with funding for Florida Forever to buy and manage public lands. Audubon's Special Places campaign will help more people focus on unique locations to inspire a sense of place.

Coastal Conservation

Florida's coasts are home to a remarkable range of birds and other wildlife. Coastal areas are shared with a growing human presence that is using and altering shorelines and waterways in ways that are often incompatible with the health and functioning of coastal ecosystems. Marshes, beaches, shoals, seagrass meadows, maritime hammocks, scrub and mangroves constitute a complex and rich mosaic of living systems that have evolved in response to climate and geophysical events. Florida's shorebirds and seabirds depend on our coastal habitats for breeding and wintering and as a migratory habitat. Many of Florida's coastal birds are threatened or endangered.

Audubon will focus on threats caused by human activities and on recovery from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil disaster, which brought our coastal resources into sharp focus providing an opportunity to engage more individuals in meaningful coastal conservation.

Greater Everglades Ecosystem

The Greater Everglades Ecosystem encompasses three million acres and includes some of Florida's most productive wildlife habitats. The Everglades' slow-moving fresh water once flowed continuously from the upper Kissimmee River south to Lake Okeechobee, through sawgrass marshes and tree islands to the coastal wetlands and seagrasses of Florida, Biscayne, and Rookery bays.

Regarded as North America's most significant nesting area for wading birds, the Everglades ecosystem hosts more than 350 avian species. For decades, natural areas have been ditched, drained, polluted, invaded by exotic species, and paved over. Now many species are jeopardized. The best measure of success for Everglades restoration is a return of abundant bird populations, which will serve as indicators of the health of the ecosystem as a whole.

Audubon's action plan for the Everglades calls for controlling pollution and restoring wetlands so that abundant seasonal freshwater rehydrates parched habitats to restore the Everglades' wading bird colonies.

Energy and Climate Change

Florida is vulnerable to climate change impacts including sea level rise, coastal erosion and flooding, severe storms and droughts with corresponding storm surges and saltwater intrusion. These catastrophic consequences of climate change are expected to increase rapidly over the next century and may lead to widespread changes that will make adaptation by most species impossible. At the same time that adaptation is necessary, mitigating climate change by reducing human emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases is critical.

Audubon's action plan calls for achieving policies to reduce climate-altering emissions and passing state renewable energy and energy and transportation efficiency policies.

2010 Audubon Assembly in St. Petersburg

Florida Audubon Society gratefully thanks these 2010 Audubon Assembly sponsors who share our vision for conserving birds and other wildlife and their habitats and solving the challenges of climate change.

Their generous support made it possible to bring together conservation leaders from around the state to chart Audubon's course to protect Florida's resilient coasts and special places.



Pulitzer-prize winner and new President of National Audubon Society David Yarnold made the Assembly one of his important stops on his tour of the Audubon world. Photo courtesy of National Audubon Society



Former Miami-Dade Commissioner Katy Sorenson (center) receives the second annual Florida Woman in Conservation Award from last year's recipient, Betty Castor, and Eric Draper. Photo by Charles Lee



Chapter leader Cynthia Plockerman presents a resolution during the 2011 Conservation Action Agenda setting session on Saturday. Photo by Charles Lee



Florida Senator Dennis L. Jones, winner of the Audubon Theodore Roosevelt Award, and Wildlife Policy Director Julie Wraithmell. Photo by Charles Lee



Bird Stewards honored for their work are, left to right, Jeanne Dubi (Sarasota Audubon), Marianne Korosy (Clearwater Audubon), Saskia Janes (St. Pete Audubon), Suzi Fox (Manatee County Turtle Watch), Ned Shuler and Teddy Shuler (St. Johns Audubon), Brad Cornell (Collier County Audubon), Lesley Royce (Duval Audubon), and John Hood (Clearwater Audubon and FAS board member). Photo by Charles Lee

More than 200 conservation leaders gathered at the 2010 Audubon Assembly in October. Their collective commitment to conservation was powerful evidence of why Audubon is so special.

Some of the reasons that fuel their dedication were highlighted in inspiring remarks by Eric Draper at the kickoff luncheon. Motives for their commitment were shared at breakfast by presidents of Florida's 44 Audubon chapters. David Yarnold, new president of National Audubon Society, spoke about his commitment at the Friday banquet. Conservation heroes highlighted why Audubon is important as they accepted awards, and participants showed why we're so powerful during learning sessions and the lively conservation-action agenda-setting session.

Why Audubon? Because we love birds and natural places. We love being outside. We create productive partnerships, base our effective conservation and advocacy on rigorous science, build consensus, focus on win-win solutions, and achieve real conservation outcomes. Why Audubon? Because a 110-year tradition of conservation in Florida has built a strong, flexible and resilient community of researchers, policy advocates, citizen scientists, and volunteer conservation leaders who are as effective today as they have been for more than a century.

As you look at these highlights of the 2010 Audubon Assembly, remember: it is your engagement in this community that makes Audubon so special.



Spectacular Season for Wading Birds Expected



Roseate spoonbills by Chuck Hanson, SFWMD

Florida Audubon loves being outside because it's the only true way to connect with birds and wildlife, and explore and understand the natural world.

This season in South Florida, Audubon biologists predict that special places such as Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary and the southern Everglades—studied by Audubon's Tavernier Science Center researchers—will provide spectacular opportunities to connect with wading birds.

Wood storks, egrets and ibises should put on a show at Corkscrew and the upcoming nesting season of roseate spoonbills in Florida Bay is expected to be successful, according to Tavernier Research Manager Pete Frezza. All this anticipated abundance is the result of weather and water cycles' effects on vegetation and reproduction of prey-base fish populations for wading birds.

An ocean temperature pattern, called the El Niño/La Niña-Southern Oscillation in the Pacific Ocean, occurs in irregular cycles that alternate between warmer and cooler surface ocean temperatures. These temperature fluctuations contribute to extreme weather in many parts of the world, including Florida. El Niño conditions this past winter and spring brought exceptionally wet weather to South Florida, preventing the dry downs so important to wading bird breeding. The El Niño now has changed to La Niña conditions, making the forecast for this year's season exceptionally dry.

The rains that truncated wading bird breeding last spring led to an earlier start of the wet season in Florida Bay and Big Cypress, with high freshwater levels and low salinity conditions perfect for aquatic vegetation and prey-based fish to thrive. After that extended growing and breeding season, the present hotter, dryer La Niña conditions are expected to dry down the sloughs and swamps, concentrating the prey base, and providing excellent foraging conditions for wood storks, roseate spoonbills, and other wading bird populations.

"The table is set for this year. The Swamp is full of water and full of prey," said Corkscrew Director Ed Carlson. "The planets have all lined up to give us what should be a great year for wading birds."

Florida Citizen Scientists Have Lots to Do This Winter

Just as northern snowbirds drive and fly into town this season, so do an amazing diversity of birds stop over on their migrations, winter in backyards and special places, and join the resident species that spend all year here.

This is the season that bird lovers, nature enthusiasts and Audubon citizen scientists enjoy the singular privilege of being outdoors in Florida's winter. Unlike anywhere else in the continental United States, the weather is pleasantly cool and dry and the birds—and bird are abundant.

In December and January, one of Audubon's finest traditions in wildlife conservation, the Christmas Bird Count (CBC), will bring together thousands of people all over Florida to collect information about the numbers, types and locations of birdlife. The 111th CBC is scheduled for Tuesday, December 14, 2010, to Wednesday, January 5, 2011. To get involved, visit <http://birds.audubon.org/> and click on the Christmas Bird Count. The data collected in this longest-running

wildlife census is used by Audubon and other organizations to analyze the bird populations' health and to guide conservation action. Scientists will focus analysis of this year's data on understanding the impact of the Gulf oil disaster on vulnerable species.

February is also a great month to take out the binoculars and participate in the 2011 Shorebird Survey – scheduled for February 7-10. Contact Billy Brooks at billy_brooks@fws.gov for more information. Audubon's 14th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) in partnership with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology takes place from February 18-21. Last year, birders throughout Florida reported 277 species.

This year, get outside and help create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent and in Hawaii. Tools, tally sheets and instructions for sending counts are all available at www.birdcount.org.



Disney Partners with Audubon to Advance Restoration of Florida Bay

Thanks to generous support from Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund, Audubon scientists now have the opportunity to analyze decades of water quality, submerged aquatic vegetation, and fish community data to further Audubon's goals of restoring more natural freshwater flows to the southern Everglades.

The Disney funds also will enable Audubon to build a virtual lab website where visitors will uncover the interaction between the components of a healthy estuary and how weather and water management practices can impact the entire food chain, culminating with roseate spoonbill nest production. By communicating this vital scientific knowledge through exciting new media to citizens and decision-makers alike, Audubon will increase its effectiveness as a voice for restoration of Florida Bay that achieves ecological benefits. Thanks, Disney!

Audubon Bird Stewards Make a Difference Nesting Rates Soar on Anna Maria Island

In 2009, only three pairs of snowy plovers were nesting on a privately-owned beach at the north end of Anna Maria Island in Manatee County. Audubon bird stewards had protected the area on big weekends such as Memorial Day and July 4th. This year Marianne Korosy and bird steward volunteers joined forces with Turtle Watch volunteers led by Suzi Fox to strengthen and expand the posted areas for both birds and turtles.

About 200 least terns landed within the posted snowy plover area soon after the tape went up, Korosy said, requiring frequent expansion of the area's boundaries. Korosy is SW Florida local government outreach coordinator for Audubon. She reported that on Memorial Day weekend,

volunteers from Audubon's Gulf Spill volunteer registry and Manatee Audubon Society staffed a tent with spotting scopes that let beachgoers see the nesting birds without disturbing them. The volunteers talked with more than 160 people on that three-day weekend, educating them about the habits of beach nesting birds and the importance of protecting their habitat.

As bird stewards continued their monitoring throughout nesting season, they counted 275 black skimmer pairs nesting on Anna Maria Island. When chicks began to hatch, Fox, now an active member of Audubon, led small groups of enthralled visitors to view the colony.

This project re-energized members of Manatee Audubon and united the efforts of two strong environmental groups—Turtle Watch and Audubon—to benefit birds and other wildlife.

Audubon coordinates bird stewarding programs such as this one throughout Florida and is a major partner in the Florida Shorebird Alliance. The partners include concerned citizens, citizen scientists, professional biologists and land managers, community groups, non-government organizations, businesses, and government agencies. Learn more by visiting www.FLshorebirdalliance.org

Thank You

Audubon of Florida and Florida Audubon Society work in a strategic partnership to achieve science-based, solution-oriented conservation of the state's special places for the benefit of birds, other wildlife and humanity. This work is made possible by the generous support of individuals, corporations, foundations and organizations that share our vision for healthy land, water, air and wildlife. Thank you.

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From Coast to Coast: Major Donors Making Difference

Every donor counts, from individual members to major donors. The critical work conducted through these major gifts, and the cumulative impact of smaller contributions, is felt throughout the state.



Bald eagle by R J Wiley

Responding to the Gulf Oil Crisis

When oil threatened the coast, Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund and other contributors helped recruit volunteers, support bird rescue, protect nesting areas, and collect scientific data. Disney Friends for Change engaged youth all over the world. Thousands of volunteers responded with many who are now trained as beach stewards along Florida's fragile coast.

Creating Shorebird Sanctuaries in Northeast Florida

Northeast Florida's growing region includes several very Important Bird Areas (IBAs). Balancing the demands of beach recreationists and the needs of nesting birds is tough. The Jessie Ball duPont Fund, along with northeast donors, supported Audubon's wildlife biologist and volunteers in implementing crucial beach protection measures.

Providing a Voice for Conservation at the Capitol

Expanding clean energy, advocating coastal protection, protecting springs, and conserving special places are Audubon priorities. Elaine and Scott Bevan Taylor Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, FPL Group Foundation, Mitigation Marketing and Lake Nona Marketing were major donors for science-based policy.

Nurturing Florida's Inland Rookeries

Two of Audubon's special places, the Tampa Bay Coastal Islands and Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuaries, support rich habitats for a diversity of birds and other species. The Martin Foundation and donors such as Collier County Audubon assure Corkscrew remains the gem it is. At the Coastal Islands Sanctuaries, the Pinellas Community Foundation—Theodore and Marian Tonne Fund, Mosaic, and others sponsored sanctuary stewardship, outreach, and research.

Rescuing and Rehabilitating Florida's Birds of Prey

One look at the majestic eagles, colorful hawks, and priceless owls at the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey and you know why The Batchelor Foundation, Disney, Sea World, Progress Energy, and others support this facility. Billed the best raptor rehabilitation center east of the Mississippi, its staff and volunteers treat injured raptors and release them back into the wild.

Restoring the Everglades from Okeechobee to the Florida Keys

From Lake Okeechobee and the Northern Everglades, to the vast sawgrass of Everglades National Park, to the Florida Keys, Audubon develops thoughtful science and advocacy to influence positive restoration efforts. The Everglades Foundation, Darden Restaurants Foundation, The Batchelor Foundation, J. M. Kaplan Fund, R. Kirk Langdon and Pamela Garrison, Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund, The Perkins Charitable Foundation and The Forrest and Frances Lattner Foundation are major donors supporting this effort.

Bolstering Statewide Efforts for Conservation

Educating environmental citizens is an immense job. The Energy Foundation has been visionary in its support of Audubon of Florida's energy and climate work. Progress Energy Foundation also helped Audubon launch a new conservation program, Protect the WEB: Water, Energy and Birds Are All Connected. Donors including Louise Courtelis, The Elizabeth Ordway Dunn Foundation, and Barron Collier Companies' Katie Sproul play pivotal roles in building the capacity of our statewide team of committed conservationists.



Carrie, a female eastern screech-owl, was rescued in May 2008. A genetic defect that causes malformed talons and feathers means she will not survive in the wild, and she is a permanent resident of the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey. Generally nocturnal, screech-owls spend most of the day roosting in hollow trees, but will use man-made nest boxes when natural nesting sites are not available. Photo by Susie Warren

Help support Florida's Raptors

Join the Adopt-a-Bird program and help protect Florida's raptors. Donations support Audubon Center for Birds of Prey's educational ambassador birds who permanently reside at the Center. Give green this holiday season by "adopting a Raptor" for yourself or sending an "adoption" to friends and loved ones.

The Adopt-a-Bird program at the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey is an important way you can participate in the conservation of Florida's magnificent raptors. Contributions are applied to the care, feeding, and medical treatment of birds brought to the Center for care, and those permanently housed there for educational programs. Adoption levels range from \$35 and up. Adoption packets include a certificate, photo, biography, species information and free admission to the Center.

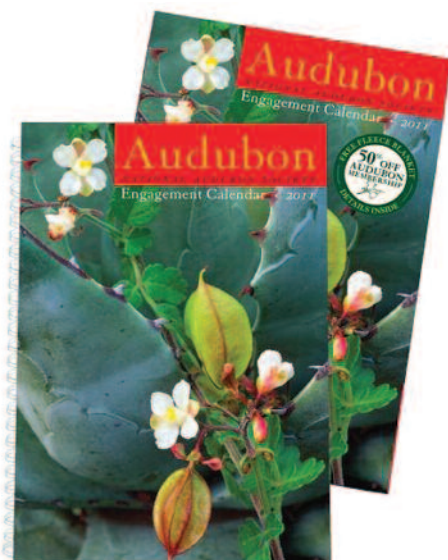
The Center is open during the holiday season. Visit and learn about Audubon's conservation programs. Download adoption forms at www.audubonofflorida.org or call 407-644-0190. Center hours: Tuesday-Sunday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Closed Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Great Gifts at the Nature Store

Support Audubon when you shop for the holidays

The Nature Store at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary has a terrific selection of nature-inspired merchandise, including the Audubon Engagement Calendar shown here (\$13.99). Stop in or call the shop at 239-348-9151 x 4 to place orders by phone. The knowledgeable staff will help you select just the right gifts for everyone on your list.

The Sanctuary is open everyday from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at 375 Sanctuary Road West, in Naples, FL. Admission to the boardwalk within one hour of closing is not allowed and the Sanctuary may close when severe weather threatens. For more information on admission fees, call (239) 348-9151 or visit www.corkscrew.audubon.org.



Financial information about National Audubon Society can be obtained by writing to us at 225 Varick St., 7th Floor, New York, New York, 10014 or as stated below: NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY FLORIDA REGISTRATION # CH281: A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE, WITHIN THE STATE, 1-800-HELP-FLA. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE STATE.

Financial information about Florida Audubon Society can be obtained by writing to us at 444 Brickell Avenue, #850, Miami, FL 33131 or as stated below: FLORIDA AUDUBON SOCIETY REGISTRATION # CH425: A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE, WITHIN THE STATE, 1-800-435-7253 WITHIN THE STATE OF FLORIDA. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE STATE.

Take the Conservation Challenge with Audubon and Inspire Others to Save Water and Energy

Take the Conservation Challenge and join Audubon of Florida in expanding its community of people who act on and share their innovative strategies for saving energy, water and birds.

Called *Protect the WEB: Water, Energy and Birds are ALL Connected*, Audubon of Florida has launched a fun, step-by-step program to help you reduce your carbon footprint and contribute to climate solutions, save water, plant native landscaping in yards to attract more birds and butterflies, and save money. The program lays out ten energy-saving and ten water-saving steps, from easiest and least expensive to costlier and most efficient, in a Conservation Challenge.

Created with generous support from Progress Energy and other partners, more than 50 Audubon leaders have taken the challenge, begun to track the savings on their water and electricity bills, and share stories of their gains and innovations. As part of the WEB project, Audubon has launched a Facebook page that brings together people who have signed the Conservation Challenge to share success stories, and recruit their friends and neighbors. Visit *Protect the WEB: Water, Energy and Birds are ALL Connected* on Facebook and contact Jacqui Sulek jsulek@audubon.org for a Conservation Challenge kit.



Photo of mockingbird by Greg Stephens

Spoonbill Lagoon

The acrylic painting "Spoonbill Lagoon" by Peter R. Gerbert on this edition's cover was commissioned by Florida Audubon Society board member Michael Sheridan. It was honored with the 2010 Florida Audubon Society's Wildlife Artwork of the Year Award.

A limited edition of 250 prints on canvas (16 x 23 inches) have been numbered and signed by the artist and are available for purchase. A portion of the proceeds will directly benefit Florida Audubon Society's conservation and spoonbill research efforts. To place an order, visit www.PeterRGerbert.com.



Congratulations, 2010 Chapter Award Winners

Audubon of Florida recognizes special Audubon chapters each year for their enormous strength and creativity, and the energy of their leaders and volunteers.



Fakahatchee sunrise Photo by R J Wiley

Best Chapter - South Florida Audubon

Changing its name from Broward Audubon and expanding its vision and activities has revitalized South Florida Audubon. The chapter received grants and organized two Together Green volunteer days with Broward County's Naturescapes program and area high schools. They launched high-profile initiatives from Project Perch (turning recycled PVC pipe into perches for burrowing owls in school yards), to saving the last mangroves of Port Everglades.

Best Membership Recruitment Program - Santa Fe Audubon

When Joyce King decided to start a new Audubon chapter in north central Florida, that rural four-county area had only 14 Audubon members. Within 18 months, the new chapter's membership expanded to more than 180, a result of its outstanding programs and conservation projects, and the energy and dedication of its leaders.

Best Chapter Display - St. Petersburg Audubon

Creating a powerful, eye-catching educational chapter display is one of the best ways to generate interest and inspire people to get involved. A panel of judges was invited to help determine the most outstanding display for 2010, and St. Petersburg Audubon took the prize.

Best Education Project - St. Petersburg Audubon

Long-term conservationist Dr. Harold Albers has been the driving force behind the St. Pete Audubon Teacher Ecology Camps. These environmental education camps have graduated 65 elementary school science teachers, increasing their knowledge by providing hands-on experience, an environmental curriculum, and activities to use in the classroom.

Best Conservation Projects - Duval and Francis M. Weston Audubon societies (tie)

Duval Audubon's volunteer bird stewards spent countless hours at Huguenot Memorial Park protecting large colonies of royal terns and laughing gulls that nest there. They educated the public, participated in community meetings, endured the wrath of thousands of motorists accustomed to driving on the beach, and traveled to Tallahassee to talk with lawmakers. And they won first-ever temporary beach closures, giving hope that one day birds will enjoy permanent, car-free nesting at this historic site.

Francis M. Weston Audubon protects the Panhandle's Blackwater River State Forest and, since 2009, 25 Audubon volunteers have logged 131 birding trips, 1,350 hours of surveying, and identified 156 bird species. In the process, citizen scientists discovered micro-communities of unique species embedded in the larger forest. This gave forestry managers a clearer idea of wildlife populations that had been unknown or little-understood, improving their ability to sustain them.



Margaret Spontak with Queenie the barn owl at Audubon Center for Birds of Prey. Photo by Susie Warren

Margaret Spontak, Director of Gifts and Grants

Audubon of Florida welcomes Margaret Spontak as Director of Gifts and Grants. From her base at Audubon Center for Birds of Prey, Spontak handles donor cultivation, annual fund execution, and foundation management.

Most recently she was senior vice president for Workforce Connection in Ocala, where she acquired and managed significant grants, including one for green jobs training through the U.S. Department of Labor. Previous positions include assistant director, University of Florida Leadership Institute; director of policy and planning, St. Johns River Water Management District; and executive director of the Discovery Science Center in Ocala.

In 1993 Pineapple Press published Protecting Paradise: 300 Ways to Protect Florida's Environment, co-authored by Spontak and Peggy Cavanaugh. Named a Hometown Hero by the 1000 Friends of Florida, Spontak has long been involved in volunteer efforts to protect natural areas, water, and wildlife. "It is a great honor to be working for Audubon of Florida in a capacity where I can help develop the resources needed for the organization's critical conservation work," she said.

Traci Romine Moves to New Position

Following five years with Audubon of Florida as the Florida Climate and Communications Director, Traci Romine moved to an international non-governmental organization at the end of 2010. Romine accepted the position of Energy Finance Campaign Director with Oil Change International. Her passion for climate solutions and her experience with Audubon will serve Romine well in her new position, which focuses on international advocacy to shift public fossil fuel subsidies and increase clean energy access globally.

Audubon of Florida Staff

To email a staff member, use: first initial of first name + last name @ audubon.org
For example, the email address of a staff member named Red Knot would be rknot@audubon.org.

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Samantha Follis,
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Kathryn Haley, *Nature Store
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Mike Knight,
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Deborah Lotter, *Educator*
Kathleen Rice,
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Mary Short, *Nature Store Manager*
Sally Stein,
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Jonathan Webber

Jonathan Webber, Conservation Campaign Manager

Audubon of Florida welcomes Jonathan Webber to the Tallahassee office, where he works to promote Audubon's leaders and programs. He also manages the organization's online presence, including the website www.AudubonofFloridanews.org and new media communications.

Webber earned a master's degree in applied American politics and policy from Florida State University and bachelor's degree magna cum laude in political science from Florida Atlantic University. His experience ranges from directing political research, policy analysis, and communications for a Florida state house candidate to handling new media communications for a major law firm.