

Flyways

A PUBLICATION OF



Audubon
of Southwest Florida

Protecting Nature... For People Too.

Fall, 2017

- 20th Annual Environmental Breakfast
- 2017-18 Programs & Field Trips
- Post-Irma Wildlife Updates
- Conservation 20/20 – Edison Farms

President's Message

I hope everyone has recovered from Hurricane Irma. The Chapter had to cancel its first field trip, but, with some effort, still had the monthly program. Through the chaos, the 2017-18 season has begun, and the Chapter has kicked-off the monthly programs and field trips, is promoting and expanding its environmental education projects, and will be supporting environmental issues, particularly those that concern Southwest Florida. I hope that you can participate in these activities and projects, and help out with an event. One event that you should attend is the 20th Annual Environmental Breakfast at 7 am on October 26, at the Riverside Community Center in Fort Myers. Neil Wilkinson, past Chapter Board Member and co-founder of the Environmental Breakfast, will make a presentation on the history of the Breakfast as well as some new initiatives he is involved in for the Center of Environmental & Sustainability Education at FGCU.

Dan VanNorman





20th Annual Environmental Breakfast

Thursday October 26, 2017

Riverside Community Center

Fort Myers (breakfast served at 7:30 am)

Please RSVP to - Audubon of Southwest Florida
audubon.southwest.florida@gmail.com

FGCU Scholarship Recipient

Audubon of Southwest Florida is pleased to announce the recipient of our 2017-18 scholarship at Florida Gulf Coast University- Courtney Kern, an Environmental Studies major.

Courtney, a senior honors student, has volunteered with Audubon, the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, Shy Wolf Sanctuary, and is Shorebird Steward where she educates the public about nesting shorebirds and collects data about their behavior. Courtney completed an internship at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary in Naples, where she did routine trail camera monitoring, fish processing, and fieldwork.



2017-18 Upcoming Programs

October 26th 20th Annual Environmental Breakfast at Riverside Community Center: Neil Wilkinson, FGCU

November 16th Historical Wading Bird Trends in Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve: Kelsey Lang, DEP

December 21st Holiday Party-Binoculars and Scopes

January 18th Amphibians and Reptiles with live specimens: Shane Johnson, Vice President of Calusa Herpetological Society

February 15th Climate Change: Carol Newcomb, FGCU

March 15th Sea Turtles: Kelly Sloan, FGCU

April 19th Piping Plovers: Audrey Albrecht, SCCF

June Annual Dinner TBA



UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, PROGRAMS WILL BEGIN AT 7 PM AT THE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA MASONIC CENTER, 10868 METRO PARKWAY, FORT MYERS

Audubon of Southwest Florida 2017 / 2018 Field Trips (Emphasizing the Great Florida Birding Trail)

Members and non-members / beginner to advanced birders – all are welcome!

Events are free; but, donations are always appreciated. Depending on the nature of the outing, you may want to bring a camera, field glasses, sunscreen, water, or even a folding chair. Dress appropriately for the weather. Parking or rental fees sometimes apply.

Powell Creek Preserve

Saturday, September 16, 2017 – 8:00 am

Join us as we revisit Powell Creek Preserve – this time during the rainy season. The Preserve offers a diverse variety of natural communities, and provides a closeup look of a functioning filter marsh.

Hawk Watch

at the Sanibel Lighthouse

Sunday, October 15, 2017 – 8:00 am

This will be our 14th Annual Sanibel Lighthouse Hawk Watch. A short walk from the parking area to the lighthouse - you'll want to bring a folding chair as we watch overhead.

Corkscrew After Hours Panthers!

Friday, November 3, 2017 – 5:30 - 9:00 pm

Interested in prowling around the swamp at night? Arrive early to learn more about Florida Panthers in the classroom from 6:00 to 7:00 pm during ASWF's and FWC's Panther Outreach Specialist, Jayne Johnston's presentation on "Living with Panthers". Afterwards, roam the boardwalk lit only by the moon and listen to the sounds of the swamp at night,

Cape Coral's Rotary Park

Saturday, December 16, 2017 – 8:00 am

Predominantly a mangrove estuary with a series of man-made wetlands, this is one of the only preserved green spaces in heavily-developed Cape Coral. As such, it is a magnet for species seeking out foraging areas.

Black Island Trail

at Lover's Key State Park

Saturday, January 14, 2018 – 8:00 am

Within Lover's Key State Park, the Black Island Trail is 2.5 miles of hiking adventure through a maritime hammock along the canal banks of Black Island.

Kayak with the Manatees

Saturday, January 27, 2018 – 9:00 am

& Monday, January 29, 2018 – 9:00 am

One of our favorite annual outings, we launch onto the orange River from Manatee Park and are almost immediately surrounded by manatees. Bring your own kayak, or rent from the on-site outfitter.

Bunche Beach

Saturday, February 17, 2018 – 8:00 am

Experience one of the best birding sites in Lee County. This is a natural tidal wetlands area located on San Carlos Bay. A natural area indicative of the entire area before the introduction of exotic plant species - it is "Old Florida."

Bicycle Tour of Ding Darling

Sunday, February 25, 2018 – 8:30 am

Another annual favorite, we leisurely bicycle the 8 mile round trip on Wildlife Drive with incredible views of herons, egrets, ibises, storks and spoonbills.

Matanza's Pass Preserve

Saturday, March 17, 2018 – 8:00 am

Boardwalk trails through this preserve lead through the mangroves (watch for Palm Warblers and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers) to an overlook at Estero Bay where low tide brings great views of wading birds. This site is an often overlooked jewel.

Caloosahatchee Regional Park

Saturday, April 28, 2018 – 8:00 am

The diversity of habitats in this park guarantees an impressive species list. Walk the trails on the south side of CR 78 (River Rd.), passing through dense hardwoods to the river overlooks.

Six Mile Cypress Slough

Saturday, May 12, 2018 – 8:00 am

This site offers some of the best birding around. The boardwalk invites you to walk slowly and silently through the freshwater swamp and hardwood hammocks, watching the wildlife at close range. Blinds and viewing platforms offer places to sit for long periods and observe.

Shorebirds! - dates to be determined

We'll meet at Bunche Beach with our volunteers from the Florida Shorebird Alliance to check out the shorebirds. There will be multiple dates upcoming.



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Great Florida Birding & Wildlife Trail: Post Hurricane Irma Update

*Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission sent this bulletin at 09/15/2017
05:05 PM EDT*

On September 10 and 11, 2017, Hurricane Irma impacted much of Florida. As a result, many of the sites on the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail (GFBWT) are partially or totally closed to the public. Check the homepage of our [website](#) for the current status of all 510 Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail sites throughout the state, and come back for further updates. Also, look for updates on our social media platforms.

[GFBWT Facebook](#)

[GFBWT Twitter](#)

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's top priority is to provide significant resources to the statewide efforts to help our citizens and visitors recover from the devastating impacts of Hurricane Irma. Thank you for your patience and understanding.



ECO-VOICE.ORG

The web site for Eco-Voice, Inc. is a public service facilitating the flow of information about environmental issues and events in South Florida.

Every morning before 6 am a selection of news items, great photos, and announcements of environmental events relevant to South Florida, with links to sources and additional information, is e-mailed to subscribers. Visit us on Facebook and contribute to the discussion

To join the email list for the Eco-Voice Daily Digest email [click here](#). It's FREE!

Florida Wildlife and Hurricane Irma

While the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is always concerned about Florida's fish and wildlife resources, our number one priority before, during and after Hurricane Irma is the health and safety of our state's residents and visitors.

Florida's fish and wildlife species have experienced natural weather events such as hurricanes for thousands of years and generally are well adapted for survival. FWC monitors the health and well-being of fish and wildlife populations and evaluates the need to assist them on a case-by-case basis.

The best way that people can stay safe and help wildlife is to be alert and give

wildlife their space.

If you encounter wildlife that appears to be injured, call the FWC's Wildlife Alert Hotline at 888-404-FWCC (#FWC or *FWC on a cell phone) or send a text or email to Tip@MyFWC.com.

Additionally, you can report injured wildlife to local licensed wildlife rehabilitators. They are listed at <http://myfwc.com/conservation/you- conserve/assistnuisancewildlife/wildlife-rehabbers/>

▪ **Sea turtles** have a nesting strategy that

accommodates natural storm events.

Nesting female sea turtles deposit several nests throughout the season, hedging their bets to make sure that even if a storm hits at some point during nesting season, there is a high probability at least a few of the nests will incubate successfully. People are asked not to try salvaging sea turtle eggs or digging up nests. Contact seaturtlestranding@myfwc.com or mtp@myfwc.com to let the FWC know the location of sea turtle nest erosion and/or exposed eggs.

▪ **Manatees** can become stranded or trapped during and after a storm. If you are aware of a stranded, trapped, injured or dead manatee, call the FWC's Wildlife Alert Hotline at 888-404-3922 (#FWC or *FWC on a cell phone) or text/email Tip@MyFWC.com.

▪ **Bears** may be seen more frequently after a hurricane, when communities are cleaning up after the storm. If you live in bear country in Florida, be aware of bears searching for food in your neighborhood. Report any problem with bears or potential for human-bear conflict to your FWC regional office or to the FWC Wildlife Alert Hotline at 1-888-404-FWCC (#FWC or *FWC on a cell phone).



▪ **Invasive species** - Natural disasters such as hurricane winds and flooding can contribute to the spread of invasive species.

Call 888-lve-Got1 or report an invasive species sighting online at lveGot1.org. If a high priority invasive species such as a Burmese python is encountered, citizens also should call 1-888-lve-Got1.

▪ **Captive wildlife** can escape during natural disasters.

Critical Incident Disaster Plans are required for all license holders.

After the critical incident passes, FWC captive wildlife Investigators contact all facilities to assess any damage to facilities and the health and whereabouts of all animals possessed.

▪ **Alligators and snakes** may be observed more frequently in areas with flooding.

As with all wildlife, treat them with respect, keep them at a distance and give them space.

Lee Conservation 20/20 to Buy Huge CREW Parcel – Edison Farms!

In the midst of recovery from Hurricane Irma, the Lee County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously on September 19 to use their Conservation 20/20 Program to buy the 4,000-acre Edison Farms parcel. One of the few remaining undeveloped large parcels of land left in Lee County, this property is on the Florida Forever conservation land acquisition list as part of the highly ranked Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) Project. It has been a conservation goal of citizens and conservation organizations for decades but also a controversial target of developers. Past owners have tried to get an I-75 interchange built there, proposed building the new Red Sox training stadium, tried to route the extension of County Road 951 through it, dig rock mines, and put thousands of houses across it. With all this threat on development on lands in the Density Reduction/Groundwater Resource Area (DR/GR), the conservation community breathed a collective sigh of relief and began thinking about strategies to restore the wetlands and wildlife habitats.

Audubon of Southwest Florida's members and friends will recall that Lee Conservation 20/20 was just reauthorized by a November, 2016 ballot referendum in which 84% of Lee voters approved

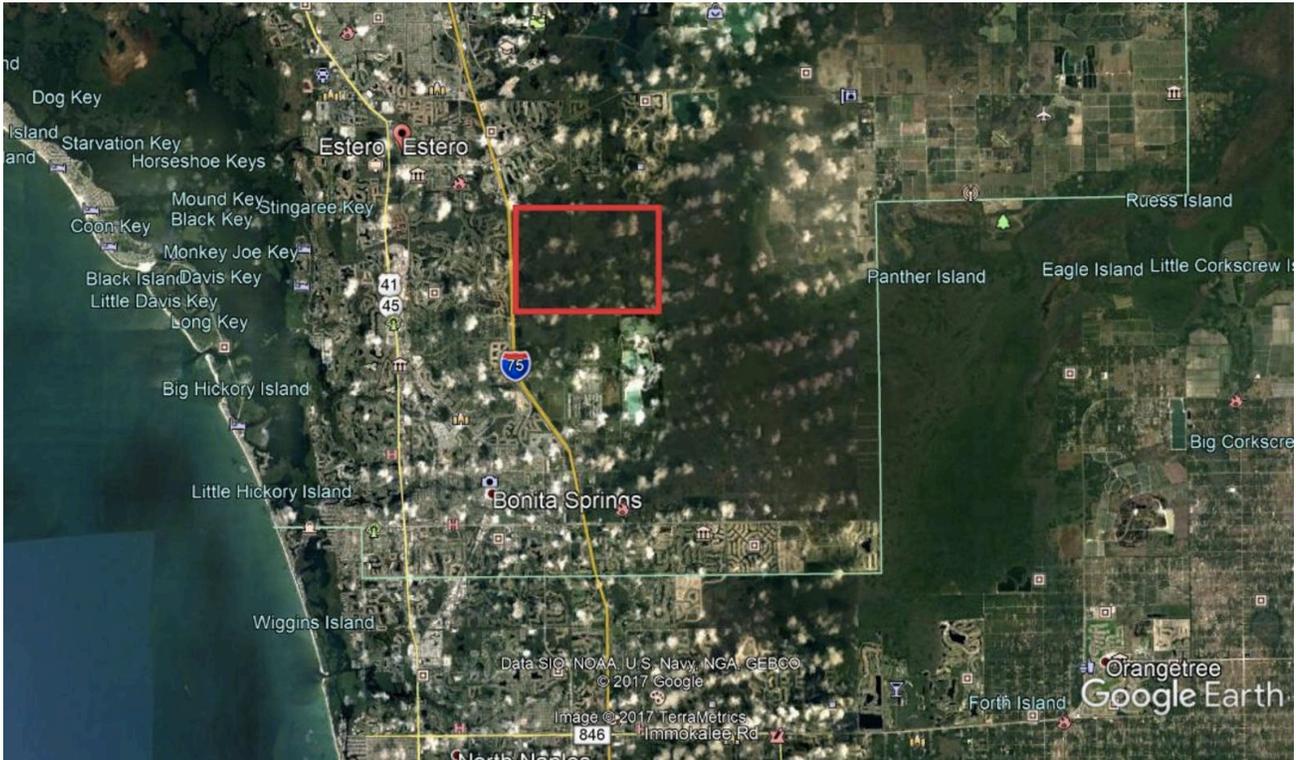


continuing the program. One of the complaints had been that almost no acreage had been protected over the past several years, so buying Edison Farms (deal to close by the end of December) is an important re-entry into vital land conservation by the 20/20 Program and this Board of Commissioners.

The timing was significant also because of Hurricane Irma and all the flooding downstream. Commissioner Brian Hamman, in voting for the purchase noted for skeptics of spending

\$42.4 million in the midst of expensive recovery efforts, that it was exactly the right thing to do because it will prevent the disastrous increase in flooding sure to occur if Edison Farms and other CREW lands are developed, plus its restoration will significantly enhance flood protection and water supply for Lee citizens. Audubon agrees wholeheartedly – something to celebrate!

Edison Farms outlined in red, within the Florida Forever CREW Project



Our Chapter In History...January 1981

Flyways announced that the much-anticipated Audubon Aviary at the Calusa Nature Center was nearing completion after three years of work. The dedication was set for February 9 and was to be followed by a week-long open house. Carol Newcomb, the center's naturalist, would be giving tours of the facility that housed injured birds. Note: Carol is a current ASWF board member.



ASWF Board

Directors -

*Brad Cornell
Wayne Daltry
Jayne Johnston
Carol Newcomb
Melinda Lynch
Courtney Kern
Pete Quasius
Carl Veax*

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*Conservation - Brad Cornell
Education - Jayne Johnston
Field Trips - Jim Rodenfels
Newsletter - Courtney Kern
Membership - Jayne Johnston
Programs - Gerri Reaves
Publicity - Carol Newcomb

President – Dan VanNorman
Secretary - Gerri Reaves
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How to reach us

- We invite you to stay in touch through our website - www.audubonswfl.org or on Facebook - just search under “Audubon of Southwest Florida”
- And, please send us your e-mail address. That way you can be sure you receive advance notification of any upcoming events, programs, field trips, etc., and also receive our e-newsletter. Just send a note to audubon.southwest.florida@gmail.com
- If you prefer, you may mail us at –
P.O. Box 61041
Fort Myers, FL 33906-1041

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THE FLORIDA REGISTRATION NUMBER FOR AUDUBON OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA IS CH30193

Are you thinking of making a charitable donation?



Qualified Charitable Distributions from your IRA may be a good tax strategy if you are at least age 70½ and are considering making donations to your favorite charities.

A direct charitable distribution from your IRA may be used towards satisfying any Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), and best of all is excluded from your taxable income regardless of whether you itemize deductions. To qualify, the funds must be transferred directly by the IRA trustee to your eligible charity.

Audubon of Southwest Florida is a perfect recipient – we are a public charity under 501(c)(3) and donors may deduct contributions as provided in IRC section 170. We are also registered with the State of Florida's Division of Consumer Services under registration number CH30193.

A copy of our tax-exempt determination letter may be requested by contacting us at:

audubon.southwest.florida@gmail.com

Contributions may be mailed to:

Audubon of Southwest Florida
PO Box 61041
Fort Myers, FL 33906-1041