

# Audubon FLORIDA *Naturalist*

Annual Report 2016



Purple Gallinule  
Photo: R.J. Wiley

## 2016 Florida Audubon Society Leadership

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Executive Director, Audubon Florida

President, Florida Audubon Society

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Cover Photo by R.J. Wiley

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*Jud Laird, Chair  
Florida Audubon Society*

Dear Audubon Members and Supporters,

What a privilege it is for this to be my first communication to you all as the newly elected chair of Audubon Florida. I have had the honor of watching first-hand, the progress and growth of this organization. I am now proud to chair the best state conservation board in the nation and thank outgoing chair Steve Lynch for his great leadership.

In October I joined conservation leaders, volunteers and supporters from around the state at the annual Audubon Assembly in St. Petersburg Beach to celebrate our conservation accomplishments. Coming together at the Assembly allows us to experience how important all of Florida's habitats are and to agree on our conservation strategies. Every year our message is stronger and more meaningful.

This year, we are excited to welcome new staff members, who are spreading our message to the next generation of leaders in conservation. Sean Cooley and Helen Marshall, together with Celeste De Palma and Vicky Johnston, are tapping into their peers to engage them in our mission. We're happy to say that conservation is trending and it's trending for the next generation of leaders.

I am excited to continue to do my part to support our staff and volunteers in this work. We have been able to accomplish great things for Florida's special places and birds because of you. I hope you'll join me in continuing to spread our message and engage the next generation in our work. You are the key to the future of a healthy Florida ecosystem that benefits birds, wildlife, and future generations.

With gratitude,

*Audubon Florida is governed by a 28-person board of directors. At the 2016 Audubon Assembly the board elected Jud Laird to a two year term as board chair. Jud succeeds Steve Lynch who served as chair since 2014. The board also elected Heidi McCree as Vice Chair, Charlie Margiotta as Treasurer and Carol Timmis as Secretary. The board also welcomed both Amy Albury and Rob Williams for three-year terms. Along with Steve Lynch, we thank outgoing officers Mike Sheridan and West McCann for their outstanding efforts on behalf of Audubon Florida.*



*Eric Draper, Executive Director  
Audubon Florida*

Dear friends,

I recently toured Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary near Naples. In the back country I saw where our founders first counted thousands of Wood Stork nests. But it was the perfectly still birdlife, butterflies and tropical plants that made me determined to continue to fight for Florida's wetlands.

My drive to the north side of Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary gave reason for worry. Large trucks brimming with rock and sand from nearby quarries hurtled down the road. Land for a huge new development was being cleared. According to local Audubon leaders, pro-growth county politicians changed the rules that had protected water resources.

Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary chief scientist, Dr. Shawn Clem, tells me that mining and development is changing the hydrology of Southwest Florida. Water level monitoring stations at Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary show dramatic changes over time. It takes the right amount of water at the right time to make a swamp productive for Wood Storks and other wading birds. The absence of stork nests tells the story.

We are now witnesses to what happens when humans drain the swamp. South Florida has lost half of its historic wetlands. Engineers have figured out how to ditch and dewater Florida's flat landscapes, but that is bad news for wading birds, as almost every Everglades species is in some sort of decline.

The good news is that at Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary we are reclaiming swamp from old farm fields. It is possible to manage water and landscapes and recover their historic wetland functions. Restoring the freshwater wetlands comprising the Everglades ecosystem requires good science supporting strong advocacy. That is Audubon's unique role in Florida conservation.

Birds are the measure and treasure of healthy wetlands. As Florida grows, we can and must protect the shallow waters where wading birds forage.

As you read through this *Naturalist* issue, I hope you are inspired to support our efforts to protect and restore Florida's wetlands. Visit Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, volunteer with local Audubon groups, and give generously to Audubon Florida's science, education and advocacy work.

Sincerely,

P.S. – Our science, education and advocacy work depends on your gifts. Use the enclosed envelope to make a year-end contribution directly to Audubon Florida.

# Birds and Wetlands Teach the Next Generation

Last month, a group of eight-year-old students got the experience of a lifetime. While visiting the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey, they got up-close and personal with Paige the Bald Eagle—a rare encounter with the large beak and talons of one of nature’s top predators.

Audubon Florida provides experiences to thousands of school-age students every year at the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey and Audubon’s Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. Rescued eagles and owls serve as great teachers and so does a walk through ancient cypress forests.

Today’s children are tomorrow’s entrepreneurs and policymakers. Audubon Florida shares natural Florida’s beauty to excite a passion for birds, wildlife and their habitats. We need today’s students to believe in our mission to conserve birds and the special places they need to thrive.

While visitors to the Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland get to experience the toughest birds around, Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary student explorers step back in time to untouched habitats through the heart of a 13,000 acre wetland area. While hundreds of miles apart, both provide refuge to threatened and endangered birds while also serving as an important hub for research and community education.

Florida’s next generation will face the consequences of climate change and the urgent need to protect water resources. Now more than ever, the next generation—our children and grandchildren—should have even more opportunities to ignite a passion for conservation already felt by so many Audubon members.



**To learn more about Audubon Florida’s education work and explore with us, visit [AudubonCenterForBirdsOfPrey.org](http://AudubonCenterForBirdsOfPrey.org) and [Corkscrew.Audubon.org](http://Corkscrew.Audubon.org) today!**

# Conservation Leadership Program Graduates Another Group of Young Leaders



The Conservation Leadership Initiative class of 2016 at the annual Audubon Assembly in October. Photo: R. Munguia

Three Conservation Leadership Initiative graduates have taken their next steps into becoming local conservation leaders by joining the boards of their local Audubon chapters. Alana Boyles, University of Tampa, has joined the Tampa Audubon Society Board of Directors. Melissa Gonzalez, University of Central Florida, has joined the Orange Audubon Society Board of Directors. Zak Lee, Florida Atlantic University, has joined the South Florida Audubon Society Board of Directors. Each year, Audubon Florida hosts the Conservation Leadership Initiative at the Audubon Assembly for 25 exceptionally qualified Florida college students. Through the Initiative, students from throughout the Sunshine State learn about Audubon's fight to conserve and restore the places that make Florida special.

Audubon Florida is one of the only conservation organizations in the United States that actively recruits and inspires college students to protect and conserve their environment. The Conservation Leadership Initiative also includes a student-only leadership session and a special communication session.

In these sessions, students and chapter leaders discuss how to better communicate conservation ideas, develop restoration programs, cultivate engaging activities, find internships and become better environmental advocates. Not only are graduates better equipped to fight for the environment after completing the program, but Audubon Florida gets to learn more about how to engage and inspire the next generation of conservation leaders.

The class of 2016 was the most competitive class yet with the Conservation Leadership Initiative only accepting the top 25 students that applied. Nine Florida colleges and universities were represented with a large diversity in majors. Engineering, communication and political science students all shared a seat at the conservation table this year. With a growing network of CLI alumni, Audubon Florida is setting the example for all conservation organizations and building a strong, diverse and passionate group of CLI graduates each year. Visit [fl.audubon.org/CLI](http://fl.audubon.org/CLI) to learn more.



**Melissa Gonzalez**  
CLI Class of 2014  
University of Central Florida  
Orange Audubon Society



**Alana Boyles**  
CLI Class of 2014  
University of Tampa  
Tampa Audubon Society



**Zak Lee**  
CLI Class of 2015  
Florida Atlantic University  
South Florida Audubon Society

*Conservation Leadership Initiative sponsored by*



# FRESHWATER WETLANDS UNITE



## Greater Everglades Ecosystem

The Greater Everglades Ecosystem is about half of its original size. Damming and draining water has resulted in fragmented habitat and a 90 percent reduction in wading birds in the Everglades. Short hydro-period wetlands that are only wet for part of the year are particularly important. Fish reproduce during the wet season. When water levels drop in the dry season, the fish are crowded in less water, providing a concentrated food source for birds like Roseate Spoonbills and Wood Storks. However, human-caused changes in this natural cycle have led to the sharp declines in wading bird species.

**Restoration goal:** Strengthen federal, state and local policies that prevent the further loss of wetlands and complete Everglades restoration projects.

### Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary

Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary was historically Florida's largest Wood Stork Rookery. Yet Wood Storks have only nested there in two of the past 10 years. Audubon scientists discovered that the loss of nearby wetlands has left wading birds like Wood Storks without a sufficient food source for successful nesting.

**Restoration goal:** Halt the destruction of shallow wetlands and improve state and federal policies for wetlands protection.

### Everglades National Park and Florida Bay

The flow of freshwater into the Southern Everglades was cut off in 1928 with the construction of Tamiami Trail. This road acted as a dam, allowing less freshwater to enter Everglades National Park and wading birds populations to decline. At the southern end of Everglades National Park, Florida Bay is disconnected to its natural upstream freshwater source. Without enough freshwater reaching Florida Bay, high salinity levels have led to massive seagrass die offs and negative impacts to the fish that birds need to survive.

**Restoration goal:** Build restoration projects and operate these projects at full capacity to reconnect the River of Grass north and south of Tamiami Trail and increase flows to Florida Bay. With additional water storage south of Lake Okeechobee, these projects can provide sufficient freshwater for Florida Bay.

# THE GREATER EVERGLADES



## Kissimmee River

Decades ago, the once meandering Kissimmee River was altered into a straight line. Its floodplain, that was naturally as large as two miles wide, served as important wetland habitat for fish and wading birds. When it was channelized, however, wetlands were drained and productive wildlife habitat was degraded or lost.

**Restoration goal:** Complete the Kissimmee River Restoration project. In previously restored areas, wading birds like Snowy Egrets and Great Blue Herons have returned and begun to thrive.

## Lake Okeechobee

Lake Okeechobee is one of the Everglades most valuable freshwater ecosystems. But manmade alterations to the Everglades result in harmful nutrient-laden water that enters Lake Okeechobee faster than it can flow out. Over the past decade, high water levels are often followed by periods of drought. When excessive water levels threaten the aging Herbert Hoover Dike, billions of gallons of harmful nutrient-rich water are released to prevent dike failure. Dangerously low levels in Lake Okeechobee are also detrimental and can result in damages to important habitat.

**Restoration goal:** Maintain Lake Okeechobee water levels between 12.5 and 15.5 feet to protect the valuable marsh habitat. Construct smarter water storage solutions south of Lake Okeechobee to provide a more natural southern outlet for freshwater.

## St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries

When Lake Okeechobee water levels are too high (>15.5 feet), harmful freshwater discharges rush east and west toward the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries. As some of the nation's most productive estuaries, they rely on a delicate balance of freshwater and saltwater. Releases of nutrient-laden freshwater from Lake Okeechobee damages these estuaries and results in ecologically devastating consequences like this year's toxic blue-green algae bloom.

**Restoration goal:** Complete water storage projects that hold discharges and provide a source of clean water for the Caloosahatchee estuary in the dry season. Complete projects outlined in the Everglades Agricultural Area, remove excess nutrients and more naturally move this water through the Central Everglades.

## Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge

The Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge has been a successful steward of 144,000 acres of Everglades habitat for 65 years. During the summer of 2016, the Refuge welcomed the largest wading bird colony in the Everglades with more than 7,000 active nests. A current attempt by the State of Florida to revoke a cooperative agreement and evict the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which manages the Refuge, puts the future of this crucial wildlife habitat at risk. If the agreement is revoked by the State of Florida, it would be the nation's first loss of a National Wildlife Refuge.

**Restoration goal:** Preserve the status of the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge to keep wildlife management a top goal for this region and maintain the successful partnership between the State of Florida and the Refuge.

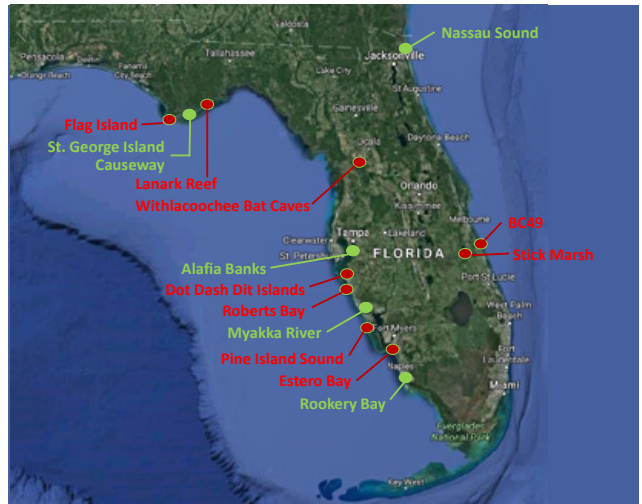
# Audubon Moves to Block Permit Threatening Little Estero Island Critical Wildlife Area

This fall, Audubon learned of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's intent to permit a private boardwalk across state-owned mangroves, a coastal lagoon and into the very heart of Little Estero Island Critical Wildlife Area in Lee County. This important Critical Wildlife Area supports nesting Least Terns, Snowy Plovers, Black Skimmers and more, as well as migrating and wintering birds like Red Knots, Piping Plovers and Reddish Egrets. If approved the precedent would be set for private use and degradation of protected public conservation lands. Audubon intervened in the request by Texas Holdem LLC and Squeeze Me Inn LLC to build this private boardwalk for use at their rental houses on Fort Myers Beach. After an initial rejection by the Department of Environmental Protection, Audubon amended and refiled a petition in November.

**BREAKING NEWS:** After a dismissal by the state's Department of Environment Protection, Audubon successfully fought for a hearing by an independent Administrative Law Judge.

## FWC Approves 13 New Conservation Areas and Expands Five Existing Conservation Areas for Vulnerable Birds and Wildlife

In November, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) voted unanimously to create 13 new and expand five Critical Wildlife Areas (CWA's). Based on Audubon data, these protections will allow the posting of in-water buffers around nesting and roosting islands to protect rare and declining birds and wildlife. Species like the Roseate Spoonbills, American Oystercatchers, and Wood Storks will receive protections from devastating disturbance. This vote was the culmination of more than a year of efforts by Audubon staff, chapters and partners who advocated at public FWC meetings. At November's meeting, more than 28 supporters spoke including representatives from ten Audubon chapters. Despite objections from anglers and boaters opposed to these protections, FWC supported Audubon's position to establish more CWAs in one year than were created in the last 30 years combined!

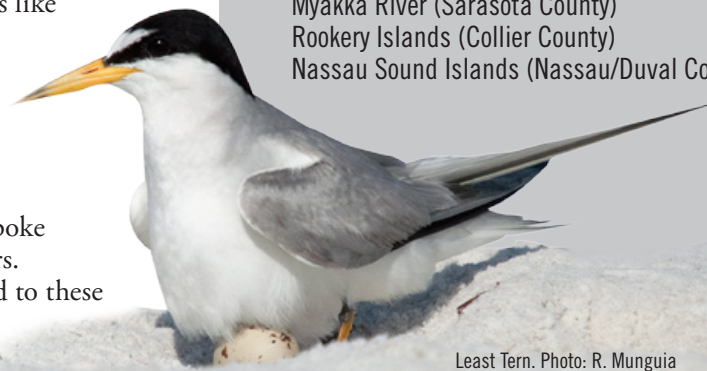


### ● New Critical Wildlife Areas:

- Lanark Reef (Franklin County)
- Flag Island (Franklin County)
- Withlacoochee Caves (Citrus County)
- Dot Dash Dit (Manatee County)
- Roberts Bay (Sarasota County)
- Broken Islands (Lee County)
- Useppa Oyster Bar (Lee County)
- Hemp Key (Lee County)
- Matanzas Pass Island (Lee County)
- M52 (Lee County)
- Coconut Point East (Lee County)
- Stick Marsh (Indian River County)
- BC49 (Brevard County)

### ● CWA expansions:

- St. George Island Causeway (Franklin County)
- Alafia Banks (Hillsborough County)
- Myakka River (Sarasota County)
- Rookery Islands (Collier County)
- Nassau Sound Islands (Nassau/Duval Counties)



Least Tern. Photo: R. Munguia

## Florida Extends State Protections to 23 Imperiled Species

Recently, FWC also adopted its new Imperiled Species Management Plan including the “uplisting” of 23 species from the old “Species of Special Concern” status to “state Threatened.” As a result, these species (including American Oystercatcher, Reddish Egret, and Burrowing Owl) will now enjoy much stronger protections and considerations in state permitting decisions. Three years ago, Audubon also successfully advocated to consider the loss of habitat for state Threatened species in permitting decisions. This drastically increases the opportunity for successful lives of thousands of baby birds.



# Audubon Files U.S. Supreme Court Petition to Protect Apalachicola

Audubon joined the fight to protect Florida's water rights before the U.S. Supreme Court. Right now, Florida and Georgia have been in a decades-long debate about how water can be allocated among numerous states, and the matter is now in litigation before the Supreme Court.

Water flowing through the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers in Georgia joins together near the Florida border to form the Apalachicola River. The Apalachicola River, which discharges to Apalachicola Bay, supports a broad floodplain forest and vibrant estuary. Local economies depend on the preservation of these natural resources. When healthy, the Apalachicola Bay estuary supports an oyster industry that yields more than 10 percent of the entire country's oysters.

Generations of birds and other wildlife have depended upon this mighty river. Its waters have carried the eroding Appalachian Mountains to the Gulf, forming the sparklingly white sugar-sand beaches for which the region is known. Rare and imperiled Snowy Plovers, terns, and pelicans also nest upon the bay's beaches and islands. True to its name, the American Oystercatcher also depends on the slimy treats that thrive in the area. In addition to coastal birds, the wide floodplain forest of meandering creeks, ancient cypress, and ravines all function as a migration superhighway for millions of songbirds. On nights of heavy migration, songbirds migrating in the Apalachicola area are often mistaken for clouds or rain on weather radars.

In the U.S. Supreme Court case, a special master is reviewing how Georgia's over consumption of water negatively impacts downstream environments and rare, threatened and endangered species. Once made, the decision will impact Audubon's Lanark Reef, one of the last remaining undeveloped barrier islands within the Apalachicola Bay ecosystem. This island was purchased with the help of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and donors from across the country; Audubon's Lanark Reef is intended to be preserved forever for its iconic coastal wildlife. Stewarding Lanark Reef is a task Audubon takes very seriously and it gives us on-the-ground data about conditions in the region. When threats to the ecosystem arise, like Georgia's diversion of river water, we are compelled to weigh in on behalf of the birds that rely on this important part of Florida's environment.

Audubon's Lanark Reef has been designated a *Globally Important Bird Area* by BirdLife International because of its hemispheric significance for wintering American Oystercatchers. Photo: R. Munguia



**Litigation is expensive – fighting in the Supreme Court and stopping groups like Texas Holdem from trampling vulnerable land costs tens of thousands of dollars. Please help us defend helpless birds and their habitats. They need you.**

**[GiveToAudubonFlorida.org](http://GiveToAudubonFlorida.org)**

Least Tern. Photo by R. Munguia

# Three Women Set Out to Make A Long-Term Difference for Birds and Wildlife



Left to right: Dixie Mills, Mona Gardner, and Janet McNew

Three Florida friends don't usually end a warm spring day on the Gulf of Mexico by deciding to make multi-year financial pledges to Audubon Florida, but a day in April was very different for Mona Gardner, Janet McNew, and Dixie Mills. This day, these three Floridians didn't just soak up the sun and learn more about birds and wildlife aboard an Audubon Florida boat trip. They became inspired by Audubon Florida's commitment to preserving and conserving the species and special places that call Florida home.

During this year's Audubon Assembly, Gardner, McNew and Mills were honored with the Coastal Stewardship Award. An award typically reserved for only one individual, Audubon felt that their generous multi-year commitments to Audubon Florida's Coastal Stewardship work deserved to be recognized. Beach-nesting birds, such as terns and plovers, are struggling to survive in Florida, often because of the intense disturbance by recreational beachgoers. With support from everyday Floridians, Audubon's coastal conservation work fights to protect beach-nesting birds and all coastal habitats to ensure generations to come can continue to enjoy the beauty that is natural Florida. Help support our work through multi-year commitments to Audubon Florida. Contact Helen Marshall at [hmarshall@audubon.org](mailto:hmarshall@audubon.org) or (305) 371-6399 ext. 140.

Wilson's Plover. Photo: R. Munguia

*It starts with the lure of birds and follows them into the strips and patches of wilderness that sustain them. Because Audubon Florida protects these shreds of birds' disappearing world and fights to gather more together and reweave them for the future, I gladly support its vital mission.*

— Janet McNew

*Protecting the environment in all of its beauty and complexity has captured my mind and heart. Audubon Florida advocates effectively for key policy changes, and also organizes many programs to protect endangered species and improve conditions for all of us. I am happy to support the work of these dedicated volunteers and professionals.*

— Dixie Mills

*As a child, I was struck by the powerful image of the "canary in the coal mine" as a predictor of danger, not only to the canary but to its human companions. I worry that our threatened wading and shore birds are our canaries, warning us of potential danger from a degraded and disappearing coastline. My multi-year pledge to Audubon Florida's Coastal Stewardship program is a small way of saying that I'm paying attention and want to help.*

— Mona Gardner

Your gifts to Audubon Florida help protect coastal wildlife, the Everglades, water resources, and special places in the Sunshine State.

Give generously at [GiveToAudubonFlorida.com](http://GiveToAudubonFlorida.com)



# Audubon Society of the Everglades Leads Fight to Protect Florida's Most Beloved National Wildlife Refuge in the Everglades

In October, Audubon Florida recognized the Audubon Society of the Everglades (ASE) as the Chapter of the Year in its category. It is no coincidence that ASE has been recognized as an outstanding chapter. They are spearheading the effort to save the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages the Loxahatchee Refuge – also known as Water Conservation Area 1 – through a 50-year lease agreement with the South Florida Water Management District. The terms of the lease agreement are based on a series of 13 performance measures, including achieving maintenance control of four invasive exotic species in the Refuge: Australian Pine, Brazilian Pepper, Old World Climbing Fern, and Melaleuca. The District argues that Refuge staff are not eradicating Melaleuca and Old World Climbing Fern fast enough as the reason behind their notice of default that threatens the existence of the Refuge. If the District follows through, Florida would become the first state in the country to eliminate a refuge — setting a very dangerous precedent nationwide.

ASE's new Conservation Committee immediately took the issue to the press galvanizing national, state and local groups to ensure this precious Everglades habitat remains

part of the National Wildlife Refuge system. Florida was the birthplace of the National Wildlife Refuge system, and the Audubon Society of the Everglades has been instrumental in focusing the conversation in a constructive way. ASE calls for cooperation among the agencies to resolve the issue of invasive exotics in the Refuge rather than terminating the long-lasting partnership. To date, this campaign has activated more than 18,000 people across the country to plead with Governor Scott to save the Refuge. Sign the petition to help save this critical Refuge at [fl.audubon.org/SaveLoxahatchee](http://fl.audubon.org/SaveLoxahatchee) today.



Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge.  
Photo: Lolan Shive

## Halifax River Audubon Creates Tool to Teach Cuban Children About Native Birds

By: Lisa D. Mickey



Members of the Halifax River Audubon chapter in Daytona Beach came up with a colorful idea during a 2014 birding trip to Cuba. After encountering numerous beautiful birds, inquisitive children and many long bus rides, the idea of producing a coloring book featuring the birds of Cuba was born. “Coloreando Las Aves de Cuba” (Coloring the Birds of Cuba), is now a printed product that HRA members hope will reach the hands of Cuban children and help them become future stewards of their nation's birds and habitat.

David Hartgrove, Conservation Chair of Halifax River Audubon, contacted Lakeland-based illustrator and Cuban native Reinier Munguia to design the book and produce the captions in the Spanish language. A first printing of 2,000

copies in Spanish will eventually reach Cuban children through educational programs offered at two Cuban national parks.

“It makes me feel good that we've been able to make this happen,” said Hartgrove. “It will help kids understand those colorful birds they're seeing have names and lives.”

Gary Markowski, executive director of Caribbean Conservation Trust, has organized birding trips to Cuba since 1996, and will begin distributing copies of the books in Cuba this fall. Because of his connections, Markowski hopes the books will reach the hands of Cuban children eager to learn about the birds they have seen up close through the spotting scopes of visiting tourists.

“I don't think there's a lot of conservation being taught,” said Markowski. “And there's no recreational birding in Cuba among the people because there are no resources.”

Just in time for the holiday season, 1,000 copies in English have been printed and are available for purchase to Florida Audubon chapters. The price is \$3 per copy for orders of 30 or more, or single copies for \$5. To order or for more information, contact David Hartgrove at [birdman9@earthlink.net](mailto:birdman9@earthlink.net) or 386-788-2630.

# 2017 Conservation Action Agenda Set at Audubon Assembly



Hundreds of conservation leaders and staff gathered at the 2016 Audubon Assembly to set Audubon Florida's 2017 Conservation Action Agenda. Twelve resolutions – seven regional and five statewide – provide guidance on priority issues and conservation efforts. The agenda provides members, chapter leaders, directors, staff, and the public with summary statements of our policy

and conservation positions. The 2017 Conservation Action Agenda is believed to be the only statewide conservation agenda that uses an open process to set its policy agenda with all stakeholders invited to participate.

Regional priorities unite Audubon Florida chapters in seven regions. State priority issues integrate with National Audubon Society's strategic plan (available at [strategicplan.audubon.org](http://strategicplan.audubon.org)).

## Audubon Florida Prepares for 2017 Legislative Session

With many new legislators and legislative leaders ready to make their mark on the Sunshine State, there are many risks and a few opportunities for Florida's environment. Audubon is making the Everglades, land conservation, water policy and coastal habitats the top issues for the upcoming 2017 lawmaking session.

### Everglades

Senate President Joe Negron's proposal to build 60,000 acres of water storage reservoirs in the Everglades Agricultural Area will help stop discharges of dirty water to estuaries while increasing freshwater flows to the Everglades. Audubon is all in on the President Negron proposal and continues to generate thousands of communications to legislators from Floridians urging their support for smart solutions to Everglades water storage. The sugar industry and other special interests are fighting the water storage proposal.

### Environmental Budgets

Having helped pass the Legacy Act last year to require the Florida Legislature to use voter-approved funds to support Florida springs and the Everglades, Audubon will again promote spending on land conservation along with Everglades and springs spending. Audubon's budget recommendations include \$150 million for conservation land acquisition, \$200 million for the Everglades and estuaries, and \$50 million for spring restoration.

### Water Policy

Last year, the Florida Legislature passed SB 552, which addressed water quality, water supply and spending on water infrastructure. Audubon took the position that the bill provided for better enforcement of water quality rules but much is left to be done with planning and providing clean freshwater for springs and coastal systems.

The 2017 Conservation Action Agenda centers on these themes:

- Everglades Ecosystem,
- Climate Change,
- Water for the Environment,
- Coastal Conservation, and
- Important Bird Areas and Waterways.

To help advance Audubon Florida's conservation work you can:

- Get Involved: [fl.audubon.org/GetInvolved](http://fl.audubon.org/GetInvolved)
- Support our Work: [GiveToAudubonFlorida.org](http://GiveToAudubonFlorida.org)
- Join our Action Network to Stay Informed: [fl.audubon.org/ActNow](http://fl.audubon.org/ActNow)

2016's rancid toxic algae blooms in coastal estuaries and rapid growth of other algae in many Florida springs showed that Florida's water policies and spending are falling short of solving Florida's water crisis.

Audubon will continue to recommend that key government decision makers:

- Restore water management budgets — slashed in Governor Scott's first year by 30 percent — to provide funds for water resource protection projects, science and land management;
- Upgrade stormwater regulations for new developments;
- Strengthen wetland rules and enforcement to benefit nature's most productive systems and support fish, birds, and the entire ecosystem;
- Control sewage in all its forms rather than ignoring the growing impact of the second largest source of nutrients in Florida's waterways; and
- Require water conservation to meet new water supply needs.



Everglades National Park. Photo: R. Munguia

# Audubon Assembly 2017

The Audubon Assembly was held in October on St. Petersburg Beach this year, and the sold-out event once again fired up conservation leaders from across the Sunshine State. Audubon Florida's Julie Wraithmell headlined the event and reminded attendees of the legacy we have been charged with carrying forward. Thank you to everyone who attended this year's event, and we look forward to creating more unforgettable memories as we work to save Florida's environmental future, together.

## 2017 Award Winners:



**Champion of the Everglades**  
Senator Rob Bradley



**Florida's Special Places**  
Richard Hilsenbeck



**Guy Bradley Award**  
Team OCEAN, Rookery Bay National



**Distinguished Philanthropist**  
Dorothy and John Blair (awarded posthumously)



**Volunteer of the Year**  
Ann Harwood-Nuss



**Small Chapter of the Year**  
Cedar Keys Audubon



**Large Chapter of the Year**  
Tampa Bay Audubon



**Staff Award of Distinction**  
Carol Cassels



**Staff Award of Distinction**  
Celeste De Palma

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Waste Management

# Thank You

The generosity and dedication of our supporters enables Audubon to protect Florida's birds and conserve their habitat. To learn more, please visit [fl.audubon.org](http://fl.audubon.org) or contact Victoria Johnston at 305-371-6396 or [vjohnston@audubon.org](mailto:vjohnston@audubon.org).

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Brunckhorst Foundation  
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The Mosaic Company Foundation  
River Branch Foundation

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

Audubon of the Western Everglades  
Cedar Hill Foundation  
Darden Sustainability  
Duke Energy Foundation  
Mosaic Fertilizer

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

American Eagle Foundation  
Gordon J. Barnett Memorial Foundation  
Judy and C. Frederick Buechner  
The Walt Disney Company  
Florida Power & Light Company  
Jud Laird  
Pinellas County Community Foundation, Theodore and Marian Tonne Fund  
The Rathmann Family Foundation  
The Robinson Foundation  
SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund  
Robert H. Stamps and Loretta Satterthwaite

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

Joseph T. Ambrozy  
Barron Collier Companies  
Lang E. Baumgarten  
Debra Carrier and Harry Gaines  
Charlie Causey  
The Chingos Foundation  
Collier Enterprises Management Inc.  
Deering Foundation  
Dykes Everett  
Paul Ferber  
The Freed Foundation Inc  
The Galloway Foundation  
Joseph P. Gaudino  
Allyn L. Golub, Ph.D.  
Dr. Ann Harwood-Nuss  
Close Friend Foundation  
Mary and Reid B. Hughes  
John C. Bock Foundation  
Jose Latour  
Lykes Bros. Inc.  
Steve Lynch  
Marcia MacKinnon  
Charles Margiotta  
Chauncey & Marion D. McCormick Family Foundation  
Brian and Heidi Miller  
Stephen & Merrilee Nellis  
Ocean Reef Conservation Association  
James R. Palmer  
The Perkins Charitable Foundation  
Rayonier  
Michael Sheridan  
Smolker Bartlett Loeb Hinds & Sheppard  
Joanne and Cyrus W. Spurlino  
Richard and Sharon Stilwell  
Elaine Berol Taylor & Scott Bevan Taylor Foundation  
Carol Timmis  
Frederick S. Upton Foundation  
Louis Wolfson, III

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

All Aboard Florida  
Ralph Arwood  
Bay to Bay Properties  
Bohler Engineering  
Judith Breuggeman and Larry Schwartz  
C.A.N. Foundation  
Katie Carpenter  
CSX Corporation, Inc.  
Genevieve L. Dimmitt  
Falcon's Treehouse, LLC  
The Fledgling Fund  
Hal and Marian Flowers  
Frank M. Ewing Foundation Inc.  
FWH Architects, Inc.  
Anonymous  
Donna and Brian Hampton  
Merrill G. & Emita E. Hastings Foundation  
Anonymous  
Jinny and John Johnson

Kathleen Swann Brooks Family Foundation  
Kitson & Partners, LLC  
Knight Family Trust  
Carolyn and Stuart Langton  
Mad Dog Construction  
Tom and Judith Maish  
Navron Corporation  
Gloria M. & W. Douglas Pitts  
Robert M. & Helen A. Ritchie Charitable Foundation  
William J. & Tina Rosenberg Foundation  
Ruth's Hospitality Group  
Scherer Construction of North Florida  
Katie Sproul  
Phyllis and Stephen Strunk  
TECO Energy  
Mary Sue and William Weinaug  
Wells Fargo Foundation  
William & Virginia Young  
Stanley & Mildred Zamo Foundation

## \$2,500 - \$4,999

The W. Richard Bingham and Winifred W. Bingham Foundation  
Leona Boldt  
Richard Booth  
The Gracey Luckett Bradley Charitable Unitrust  
Betty Byrne and Hudnall Ware  
L. Vane Carroll, Jr.  
Eric Draper  
Mr. and Mrs. Derick Driemeyer  
Joseph H. Ellis  
Celia and James L. Ferman, Jr.  
Mona Gardner  
Gator Ford  
Kenneth A. Hale  
Bret Lyon  
Mary Ann Mahoney  
Massey Services  
Heidi and Doug McCree  
Dixie Mills  
The Dr. and Mrs. Harry J. Free Giving Priorities Fund of the National Christian Foundation Tampa Bay  
Talbot D'Alemberte and Patsy Palmer  
Panther Island Mitigation Bank  
Pinellas County Community Foundation, William P. Bushnell Fund  
Bill and Joan Randolph  
Douglas Santoni  
J. Holley Taylor and Debra Duffer  
The Ruth & Vernon Taylor Foundation - Douglas and Monica Taylor  
Judith Gaskins Thompson  
Victoria and Walter Tschinkel  
Dennis and Elizabeth Turner  
Ann and Bill Vanderbilt  
Wheelabrator McKay Bay, Inc.

## \$1,000 - \$2,499

AECOM  
Paula Allen  
Alice and Brad Andrews  
Carolyn Antman  
Jean R. Armour  
Robbelee Arwood  
Michael and Christine Attardo  
Richard H. Bailey  
Richard and Juanita Baker  
Pennie Beach  
Elinor Beidler Siklossy Foundation  
Loren Blackford  
The Bond Foundation, Inc.  
James Brady  
Dan and Connie Burkhardt  
Paul and Linda Burnham  
John & Glenda Burkhart  
Carwill Foundation  
Central Florida Stamp Club  
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation  
Clearwater Audubon Society  
Lew & Dawn Allyn Family Fund of the Community Foundation of Collier County  
Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Cookson  
The Corwith Fund  
Covanta Energy  
Dr. David Cox  
Art and Nancy Cullman  
Cheryl S. Cummer and Jack Lyle  
Helen and Derek Day  
Daniel B. DeLisi  
Drs. Jitendra and Saryu Desai  
Drs. Edwin and Dorothy Sved Charitable Gift Fund  
Duval Audubon Society  
Emilio and Katherine Echevarria  
Mr. John W. Elting  
Environmental Services Association of Alberta  
Wayne L. Feakes

Mike and Colleen Fearnery  
First Green Bank  
John F. Flanigan  
Flash-Rite, Inc. - Lisa Metcalf  
Florida Energy Pipeline Association  
David M. Foster  
John Fox  
Joy and Spencer Frantz  
Wendy and Martin Frezza  
Pamela J. Garrison  
Winston Guest  
Halifax River Audubon  
Rex and Beryl Hamilton  
Clay Henderson  
Louis Herskowitz  
Dr. Robert E. Hess, Jr., DVM  
Harold E. Hirsch Foundation  
Karyn Hoffman  
Holbrook Travel, Inc  
Hopping Green & Sams, P.A.  
Johnson & Johnson  
Dale Kammerlohr  
Jane Karlsten  
S. Joyce King  
Harold L. Wyman Foundation, Inc.  
Mark & Barb Langenhan  
Louis Leibowitz Charitable Trust  
Isa and Marvin Leibowitz  
Kate B. Luzius  
Mallory Lykes and David Belcher  
Maitland Women's Club  
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West and Julie McCann  
Christopher D. McIlvaine  
Meredith Corporation Foundation  
James Mihelcic and Karen Curry Moran  
Susan and Fredric Mishkin  
Yvelisse Chase Morrell  
James and Mari Moye  
MPS Foundation  
Carol and Dick Munro  
Naples Zoo  
Mr. David L. Neel  
Nestlé Waters  
Diane Newman  
Judy and John Orcutt  
Orlando County Utilities  
The Peninsula Charities Foundation  
Timothy Priebs  
Publix  
Rebecca S. Richardson  
Virginia and John Rigsby  
Jeffrey Ross  
Ms. Doris J. Rudnick  
Sarasota Audubon Society  
Susan Schumann-Skehan  
Security Information Systems - Ann and Michael V. Megler  
Phyllis Shapiro and Partha Bagchi  
Deborah Shultz  
Sidney Hollander, Jr. Trust  
W. Kelly Smith  
The Society of Experimental Test Pilots  
South Florida Audubon Society  
Southport Ranch  
Mary Anne and Tom Spann  
Veronica and John Stewart  
The Other Stratton Foundation  
Carolyn and William Stutt  
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Tampa Audubon Society  
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Edward and Mary Ann Ward  
Waste Management  
Paula Wehr  
Deb Wilson  
John C. Winn  
Edward Alain Wood-Prince  
Mary Ida and Carl D. Yost  
Doug D. Young

## \$500 - \$999

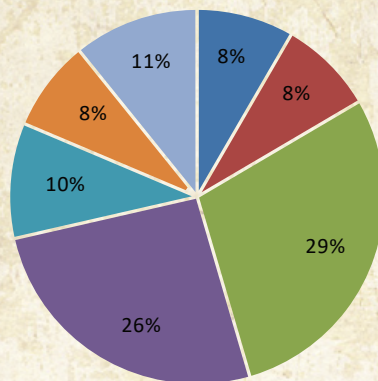
Kathleen Abraham  
Linda and John Anderson  
Thomas Arthur  
Alan L. Atterbury  
Audubon Society of the Everglades  
Catherine Autry  
James H. Averill, Jr.  
Ms. Bryan Baldwin  
Marion and Andrew E. Barnes  
Birkitt Environmental Services, Inc.  
Nelson Blankenship, Jr.  
Veronika and Christopher Bleau

# Audubon Florida & Florida Audubon Society

## Financials July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

Florida Audubon Society and National Audubon Society operate together as Audubon Florida – led by a state board and operating team. Contributions and other income to Audubon Florida are used to support state level science, education, and conservation programs. Contributions to Florida Audubon Society are used to train volunteer leaders, support advocacy, and build our state endowment. For more on how your funds and planned gifts are used to advance Audubon's mission, please contact Sean Cooley at 850-222-2473 or email scooley@audubon.org.

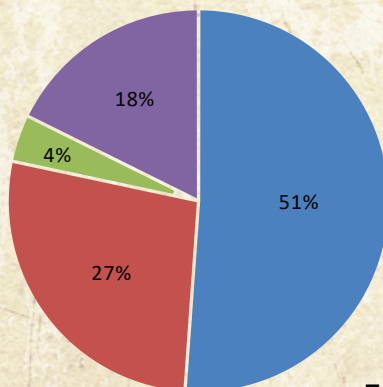
### Expenses by Program



- Florida Program \$526,993
- Public Policy \$515,375
- Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary \$1,824,185
- Florida Coastal Habitats \$1,636,591
- Everglades Conservation \$597,014
- Center for Birds Of Prey \$493,472
- Everglades Science \$681,713

**Total Expenses \$6,275,343**

### Revenue Sources



- Contributions & bequests \$3,213,991
- Government grants \$1,710,461
- Investment \$240,653
- Center Admissions & other revenue \$1,110,238

**Total Revenue \$6,275,343**

### FLORIDA AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC. Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Assets As of June 30, 2016

#### ASSETS

Current Assets	
Cash	36,347
Cash - Restricted	19,434
Charles Schwab Investment	3,856,279
Charles Schwab Investment -Restricted	939,075
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>4,851,135</b>
Other Assets	
Land	3,040,510
Building & Improvements	2,247,387
Furniture & Equipment	39,360
Accumulated Depreciation	-1,138,462
<b>Total Other Assets</b>	<b>4,188,795</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>9,039,930</b>

#### LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities	6,755
Equity	
Land-Preservation	503,612
Board Designated Acquisition Fund	3,336,177
Unrestricted Net Assets	4,028,235
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	581,782
Permanent Restricted Net Assets	300,000
Net Income	283,369
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>9,033,175</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>9,039,930</b>

Lisa Boyce  
Christine Brandt  
Gordon & Janice Cameron  
The Newton Fund at the Central Florida Foundation  
Paul R. Clifford  
Victoria Colangelo  
Community Foundation of Tampa Bay - James L. and Cecelia Ferman, Jr. Fund  
J. Fletcher Creamer Foundation - in memory of Theodore Sudal  
Mr. and Mrs. C. Henry Depew  
Mrs. Deanie Dorwart  
Curtis Duffield  
Joan M. Dunn  
Harry and Leslie Durling  
Barbara Dye  
Ron Elenbaas  
Engelhardt Hammer & Associates, Inc.  
Susan and Michael Estes  
Becky and Mike Evers  
Michael Gaebel  
Deborah Gale  
Robert Gerwig  
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Gary L. Greenfield  
Sharon Grider  
William and Linda Guthrie  
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Pamela Kenney  
Fatima S. Khokhar  
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Dr. and Mrs. John Kreager, MD  
James Kushlan and Kirsten Hines  
Lake Region Audubon Society  
Kathleen S. Lee  
Mr. William E. Lewis  
Jerry Lorenz, Ph.D.  
The Lyme Forest Fund  
Maitland Rotary Art Festival  
Janet McNew  
Miami Corporation  
Jan Milner  
Phyllis M. Mueller  
Deborah Mynhier  
Noel and Marianne Nation  
Trevor Nimmons  
Northrop Grumman  
Carol And Michael O'Mahony  
Beatriz Ortega  
Praveen & Elena Pathak  
Randa Paver  
Mr. Hugh W. Pearson  
Nicholas G. Penniman, IV  
Patrick and Sandra Powers  
Estate of Robert H. & Nellouise S. Quigley  
Reese Family Charitable Foundation  
RGD Productions  
John W. Rippon  
Riverglades Family Offices  
William and Marilyn Roberts  
Margaret A. Rolando  
Traci Romine  
Lawrence and Janet Ruston  
Margaret Ann Schlairet  
Lynn Scholz  
Dashiehl Schulte  
The Schultz Foundation  
Seminole Audubon Society  
Nicholas A. Shirghio  
Dianne & Leighton Siegel  
Marcia Smythe  
Southstate Management Corp.  
Margaret Spontak  
St. Petersburg Audubon Society  
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TriSect - Shelley Lauten  
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Rory C. Trumbore  
Marge Trumbull  
Tina and Roger Van Ghent  
Susie Warren  
Anita J. Waser  
Phyllis and Bradford Weekes  
Mr. & Mrs. John D. Wernette  
West Volusia Audubon Society  
Tracy Webb Widener  
Winter Park Veterinary Hospital  
Anthony Wright  
Maureen and John A. Wurtz



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Annual Report 2016

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**Cover Photo:** R.J. Wiley

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**Photographers:** Charles Lee, Reinier Munguia, Lolan Shive, RJ Wiley, and Audubon Florida Staff.

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