

January 2012

THE FLORIDA WILDLIFER

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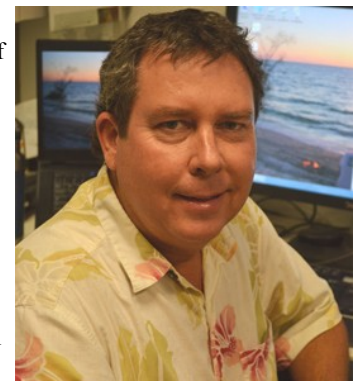
By Dale Gawlik

As I read news story after news story about dire economic conditions, job losses, and rising numbers of uninsured, I wonder if the priority of the Chapter in our member's lives has changed. It would be easy to see why some people might set aside environmental concerns while they wrestle with personal challenges. Understandable yes, but at the same time our members are dedicated to fostering the wildlife resources of the state of Florida, and wildlife are increasingly in need of good stewards. Just as the value of a lighthouse can only be measured during a storm, the value of FLTWS may be most apparent when the environment and our members are most challenged. Two years ago, Arnold Brunell wrote in his President's message that we are entering challenging economic times. Arnold was right. The intervening years have indeed been hard on Florida's wildlife professionals, who saw employers cutting staff and benefits, workloads increasing, and much of the public getting distracted from conservation support while they focused on economic survival.

If these alarming economic circumstances weren't bad enough, some people saw in them an opportunity to weaken conservation efforts. Politicians are increasingly trying to link conservation legislation such as the Endangered Species Act and Clean Water Act, to the sudden decline of our nation's economy. What message is this conversation sending to the public? My neighbor, a friendly guy who is indifferent to most environmental issues, is now convinced that environmental regulations are holding this country down. He tells me that if it weren't for strict environmental regulations, companies wouldn't have to send jobs overseas to be competitive. Never mind that economists say that the biggest incentive for outsourcing is cheap labor. "Now don't get me wrong," he says, "I support the pollution controls on cars, and I have kids so I am grateful that we have clean water. But the other environmental regulations are too strict." I wonder to which regulations he is referring, but he doesn't give specifics. He just refers repeatedly to environmental regulations.

What does the link between environmental laws and the economy have to do with the Chapter and the value of a lighthouse in a storm? The economy and politics are driving a storm of change in our society, and as stewards of the public's wildlife resources, we may find ourselves in need of a beacon from time to time. One significant benefit of being a member of The Florida Chapter of the Wildlife Society is that we have that beacon in the form of a professional code of ethics. The code sets us apart from nonmembers in that we have joined a unique self-regulated profession that promotes an understanding of, and appreciation for, the values of wildlife and their habitats. Our code states clearly that our primary responsibility is to the public interest, conservation of the wildlife resource, and the environment. It is comforting to have professional guidance that does not shift with changing economic or political circumstances.

I don't need to list a string of benefits of being a member of the Chapter because if you are reading this, you are probably already a member and convinced of the benefits. I just wanted to share with you one very contemporary reason for being a member of this well established professional group. I hope you are convinced that the Chapter is an organization worthy of your valuable time and energy. There is a great value in having a diversity of ideas and expertise on committees and in leadership roles and we welcome it. I am especially reaching out to those of you who have not yet taken that first step and joined with your peers in improving our unique professional body. 🐾



Florida Chapter of The Wildlife
Society President
Dale Gawlik

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STUDENT CHAPTER REPORT

Highlights From the University of Florida Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society

Submitted by Angela Mulligan

Beast Feast was a Success! University of Florida Student Chapter of TWS members worked hard up to the very last minute to put on the annual wild game dinner. The line was long and the patrons came hungry and ready to taste what was in store (see pictures below). Live music, face painting and, of course, copious amounts of food made the night a success allowing the club to raise over \$5000! Members used their culinary creativity to provide a unique smattering of tastes and textures. Some of the unique fare included cricket cookies, python and raccoon.

Meat, prizes and monetary donations were made by many businesses and individuals in the Southeast to make this event possible. Thank you so much to everyone who played a part in making this happen. We are looking forward to this year's event. If anyone is interested in donating meat or raffle prizes to Beast Feast, please contact Angela Mulligan at amulligan3@ufl.edu.

Other news from the Student Chapter:

- ◆ They have been preparing for the Southeastern Student Conclave Competition at the University of Tennessee by working on knot tying, species identification, and bird calls. The competition will take place March 15-18, 2012.
- ◆ Over 70 children learned about alligators and conservation from the educational outreach team at local elementary schools.
- ◆ The group volunteered at the Florida Forest Festival, Lubee Bat Festival and Green Team to reduce waste at football games.
- ◆ They embraced the fall weather with a camping trip in November.

For more Student Chapter information, please visit their website: <http://www.wec.ufl.edu/tws/> 🐾



Photos by Justin Mitchell

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FLORIDA NEWS

What to do with that Burmese python or Nile monitor you just saw?

Submitted by Cheryl Millett

Do you report invasive animals when you encounter them? If you do, thanks for providing a better understanding of their distribution in Florida and for making it more possible to rapidly respond to new populations. If you don't, here's how easy it is: call 888-IVE-GOT-1 and/or navigate to www.IveGot1.org and record the date, location, a description of what you saw (with a photo is even better), and your contact information for follow-up questions or if a response is warranted. It's that easy!



The Python Patrol at work. Photo by Cheryl Millett

A great resource for developing your ability to determine which species of reptile you are seeing is the online REDDy training offered by UF/IFAS at <http://ufwildlife.ifas.ufl.edu/REDDy/getreddy.shtml>. The training takes ~40 minutes and helps with likely habitats for encountering invasive snakes and lizards, how to identify them and how to report them. There are even downloadable datasheets, identification sheets and fact sheets, as well as a certificate after you pass the final quiz (and I know you will).

If you are interested in going a step further and responding to invasive snake reports by catching them and transporting them for training or research, then I invite you to join Python Patrol. Through Python Patrol, you can get trained to safely capture and transport invasive snakes to become part of the response to remove them. We have focused trainings in the Keys, the Everglades and Big Cypress to date, but we're looking to expand to the northern Everglades, Treasure Coast and southwest Florida in the coming months. If you are in those areas and are interested in becoming part of Python Patrol, contact cmillett@tnc.org. Hope to see your report and maybe even your capture soon! 🐾

FLTWS Assists with 2011 National Bobwhite Technical Committee Meeting and 2012 Southeast Deer Study Group Meeting

FLTWS recently assisted the National Bobwhite Technical Committee (NBTC), which is comprised of the fish and wildlife agencies of the 25-state core range of the bobwhite quail, various research institutions, and private conservation groups. NBTC is the parent entity of the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative (NBCI), the unified strategy to restore wild quail on a national, range-wide level. The 2011 annual meeting, was hosted by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and Tall Timbers, and was held August 9-12, 2011 in Tallahassee. FLTWS was a sponsor and assisted with designing and maintaining their meeting webpage, handled the finances for the meeting, assisted at the event, and maintained an FLTWS exhibit at the event.

Similarly, FLTWS is assisting with the upcoming 2012 Southeast Deer Study Group Meeting, hosted by the FWC on February 26-29, 2012 at the Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort in Sandestin. This will be the 35th annual meeting of deer biologists, managers, researchers and enthusiasts. The theme for this year's meeting is: "Shifting Paradigms: Are Predators Changing the Dynamics of Managing Deer in the Southeast?" In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in the role predators play in regard to managing deer in the Southeast. FLTWS is proud to sponsor and assist such important initiatives!

FLORIDA NEWS

Invasive plant student videos now online!

Submitted by Stacia Hetrick, University of Florida/IFAS Osceola County Extension



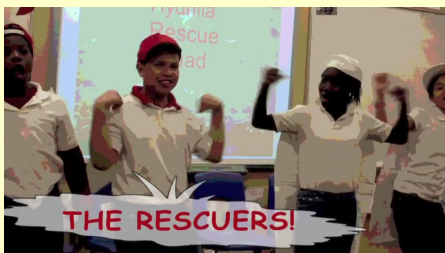
The Osceola County Extension Office and the University of Florida/IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants (CAIP) are pleased to announce the debut of their **Invasive Plant Student Video Challenge** project. Over 250 students from Osceola County schools were challenged to create short videos on topics relating to hydrilla, hygrophylla and other invasive aquatic plants infesting area lakes and ponds.

After learning about the impacts invasive aquatic plants are having on freshwater habitats in Osceola County, students were challenged to write, act and film their own short stories as part of their science studies during the school year. Coordination of the project and editing support was provided by faculty and staff from the Osceola County Extension Office and the University of Florida/IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants.

The student videos are being used to help spread awareness about invasive aquatic plants that threaten Florida's waters and cause economic hardship. They can be viewed at <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/osceola/challenge>, the UF/IFAS Invasive Plant YouTube channel, <http://www.youtube.com/user/UFInvasivePlantsEDU> and the event is also posted on Facebook™ (search for UF Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants – Education Initiative). Video story plots, written and acted out by the students, range from invasive plant invasions on an airplane flight to pond-side adventures of local anglers and/or citizens unwittingly emptying invasive plants from their aquariums.

The project is an outreach component of Osceola County's Demonstration Project on Hydrilla and Hygrophylla in the Upper Kissimmee Chain of Lakes. Thanks to a \$2.881 million grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Osceola County is conducting a Demonstration Project which seeks to find new solutions for managing hydrilla and hygrophylla.

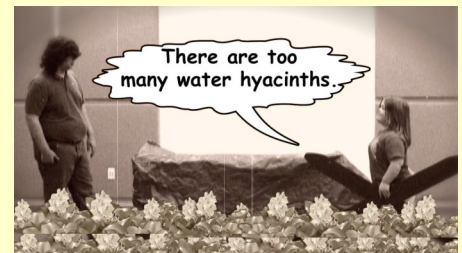
If left unmanaged, hydrilla infestations (and other invasive plants) choke out native plants, impede waterway navigation and recreational use and can result in extensive lake flooding during storm events from slow water flow and clogged flood control structures. For more information, please contact the Osceola County Extension Office at (321) 697-3000.



Students from Ms. Maggie McAndrew's 2009/2010 4th grade Science Club at Koa Elementary School created a video about rescuing native plants from the aquatic weed, hydrilla.



Students from Ms. Judy McDonald's 2009/2010 8th grade class at Narcoossee Middle School created a video about controlling the aquatic weed, hydrilla on infested lakes.



Students from Ms. Judy McDonald's 2009/2010 8th grade class at Narcoossee Middle School created a video about skiing on lakes infested with the aquatic weed, water hyacinth.



FLORIDA NEWS

Endangered Snail Kites, Invasive Apple Snails, and Hydrilla

Submitted by Stacia Hetrick, University of Florida/IFAS Osceola County Extension

Florida is home to one of the most endangered birds in the United States, the Everglade snail kite. It is also home to a very invasive freshwater snail, the island apple snail, and one of the most troublesome aquatic weeds in the country, hydrilla. This has created a unique ecological situation on our local lakes where invasive hydrilla is serving as important foraging habitat for the endangered snail kite due to the presence of invasive apple snails. How did this happen?

Snail kites are a medium-sized hawk whose diet consists entirely of apple snails. Their population has declined to less than 800 birds and their entire U.S. population is restricted to central and southern Florida. The kite has lost most of its historic nesting and feeding habitat in south Florida because of droughts and floods and many kites have moved north to the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes in Osceola County. In the past few years, about 30 to 80% of all nesting snail kites have nested solely on one lake: Lake Tohopekaliga (Lake Toho). This is a vulnerable situation because if the kites have a bad nesting year on Lake Toho then their entire population is greatly affected.

One of the main reasons that snail kites have chosen Lake Toho for nesting is an abundance of an invasive, exotic apple snail from South America known as the island apple snail. Island apple snails came to Florida by being deliberately or accidentally released by aquarium hobbyists. They appeared in Lake Toho around 2004 and have spread to other local lakes and ponds and have become much more abundant than our native Florida apple snail in most areas. Although the endangered snail kites have specialized bills and feet that are designed for catching and eating the Florida apple snails, which are about the size of a golf ball, the kites have adapted to eating the much larger island apple snails, which can grow to be as large as a baseball. Unlike our native Florida apple snails that feed on algae and are found in relatively shallow water, the island apple snail eats aquatic plants and can occur in deeper areas of the lake.

Lake Toho supports an enormous amount of island apple snails and the lake contains much hydrilla, which the snails feed upon. The aquatic weed hydrilla is an invasive, exotic plant that was introduced to Florida from Asia in the 1950s through the aquarium trade. It has since spread throughout much of the United States and many Florida lakes and ponds are filled with this nuisance weed. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is implementing an adaptive approach to hydrilla treatment to balance the needs of the stakeholders and to help protect the endangered snail kite by increasing the bird's access to its food source, the apple snails. This translates to less hydrilla being managed on Lake Toho and some other Central Florida lakes.

In summary, an abundance of invasive hydrilla and invasive apple snails have made Lake Toho one of the best areas in the state for endangered snail kites to forage and nest. Management agencies are working to balance the needs of the endangered kites with the needs of the people and businesses that use the lake or depend on it for their income.

To learn more about hydrilla and the Demonstration Project that is being conducted in Osceola County, visit <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/osceola>. To learn more about snail kites, visit <http://myfwc.com>. You can help save the snail kite by avoiding nesting areas and reporting any harassment to FWC's Wildlife Alert Program at 888-404-FWCC (3922). * Note: A version of this article was published originally in Airboating Magazine.

FLORIDA CHAPTER NEWS

Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society: Fall Meeting Review

The Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society's (FLTWS) Fall Business Meeting was held at the St. Augustine Lighthouse and Museum in St. Augustine on October 11-12, 2011. The first day consisted of the business meeting, which included discussing old and new business, hearing reports from the various committees, and watching a presentation from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service representative, Keenan Adams, on the proposed Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area. Planning for the Spring 2012 Conference and responding to calls for expert opinions were two topics discussed in detail. Following the meeting, all of the members enjoyed a delicious dinner poolside at the hotel catered by Mango Mangos.

On day two of the Fall Business Meeting, there were two free workshops offered to FLTWS members. FLTWS, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), the National Park Service (NPS) and Audubon offered a shorebird identification and monitoring workshop at the beautiful Fort Matanzas National Park (www.nps.gov/foma/index.htm). After NPS personnel provided a brief history of the park to the participants, Monique Borboen, from Audubon, led the group in the search for shorebirds. She has an extremely skilled eye for finding and identifying birds. She also gave instruction on information collection and presented FWC's new bird monitoring database to the participants in attendance. The St. Augustine Alligator Farm also offered a personalized tour to several participants with the help of FWC Biologist, Patrick Delaney.

This fall meeting was a great opportunity to network with other wildlife professionals from across the state. Over 20 members attended the workshops and were able to learn from very knowledgeable subject matter experts. In addition to networking and learning opportunities, this was a great opportunity for the Chapter to discuss our ongoing business, so that we can continuously improve as a chapter. For pictures of the meeting and the workshops, see page 7 or visit the FLTWS Facebook page.

UPDATE: The Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area

On January 18, 2012, The Everglades Headwaters NWR and Conservation Area was formally established with a 10-acre donation of land in south-central Florida by The Nature Conservancy. The donation triggered creation of the nation's 556th wildlife refuge and was the first of many land purchases and conservation easements. The plan is to create a 150,000-acre national wildlife refuge in the headwaters of the Everglades. For more information, access the official news release from the FWS site here:

<http://www.fws.gov/southeast/evergladesheadwaters/>. 🐾

FLORIDA CHAPTER NEWS



THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY NEWS



19th Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society Portland, Oregon October 13-17, 2012



Call for Contributed Papers and Posters: Deadline April 13, 2012

The Wildlife Society will hold its 19th Annual Conference in Portland, Oregon on October 13-17, 2012. The meeting will include workshops, symposia, panel discussions, breakfast roundtables, special poster sessions, contributed papers (oral presentations), and contributed posters. We invite submission of contributed papers and posters on topics of wildlife ecology, management, conservation, education, or policy.

Instructions for Submitting Abstracts

TWS is working with Coe Truman Technologies - OASIS for abstract submission and conference program planning. The submission site will be open by February 15, 2012. The site is accessed via a link from www.wildlife.org. Abstracts must be under 300 words, and should include a statement of objectives, brief description of methods, principal results, and conclusions. You will be asked to choose one of the following subject categories for your paper/poster.

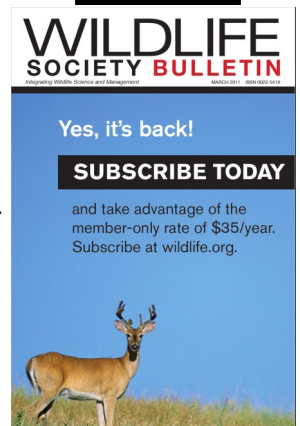
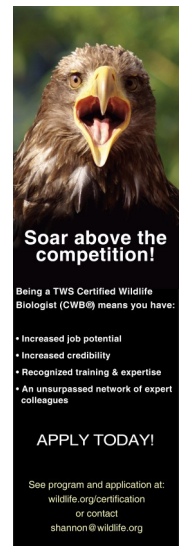
- Conservation and Management of Birds
- Ecology and Habitat Relationships of Birds
- Population Dynamics of Birds
- Conservation and Management of Mammals
- Ecology and Habitat Relationships of Mammals
- Population Dynamics of Mammals
- Reptiles and Amphibians
- Biometrics
- Conservation of Communities, Ecosystems, and Landscapes
- Human Dimensions, Conservation Education, and Conservation Policy
- Wildlife Damage Management
- Wildlife Diseases and Toxicology
- New Technology and Applications

Notice of Decision

Notice of acceptance will be made by Early June 2012.

Questions?

Questions about the conference program may be directed to Program Committee Coordinator, Tricia Fry at tricia@wildlife.org. For all other conference questions, please call (301) 897-9770 or membership@wildlife.org. 🐾



FLORIDA CHAPTER NEWS

Florida Chapter of the Wildlife Society and Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council's 2012 Spring Conference April 16-19, 2012 Ocala Hilton

SAVE THE DATE! The Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society in conjunction with the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council will hold their Spring Conference in Ocala, Florida, **16-19 April 2012**. The Conference will include symposium, plenary session, technical sessions, poster session, vendor expo, beast feast, concert, socials, banquet dinner, awards ceremony, workshops and field trips. This meeting provides an excellent opportunity for students and professionals working on wildlife research, management, and invasive species control in Florida to present results of recent studies, discuss works in progress, and share ideas. Students will be given special incentives by the organizations to attend the conference and present their research. This year's plenary theme is "*Invasion of the Habitat Snatchers: Wildlife Invades!*", but papers and posters dealing with any wildlife or invasive species topic are encouraged. Topics can include, but are not limited to, ecology, economics, management, restoration, risk assessment, policy and regulation, evolutionary biology, and interdisciplinary projects. Abstracts will be edited and provided to registered conference participants. Proceedings will not be published.

Additional details will be forthcoming on the <http://www.fltw.org> conference page website. Managers, researchers, administrators, educators, students, and all natural resource professionals will benefit from the information exchange and networking opportunities available at this Spring Conference.

BE A SPONSOR OR EXHIBITOR! The FLTWS-FLEPPC conference is a great opportunity to build relationships and support wildlife management and exotic pest plant control by registering as an exhibitor and/or sponsor. Sponsorship opportunities include door prizes, silent auction items, refreshment breaks, education/research grants, and field trip coordination, just to name a few. If you would like to be a sponsor or exhibitor, please visit the FLTWS website at http://store.fltw.org/category_s/56.htm for Vendor Registration, Sponsorship levels, and Donation information. If you have additional questions, please contact Stefanie Nagid, FLTWS Program Committee Chair at Stefanie.nagid@fltw.org.

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS! The deadline for submitting abstracts for papers or posters is **March 1, 2012**. Abstracts should be 350 words or less and conform to the general style of Journal of Wildlife Management abstracts. For more information, visit the FLTWS website at http://www.fltw.org/documents/2012CallForPapersInstructions_FINAL.pdf. A notification of acceptance or rejection will be emailed to the corresponding author no later than March 29, 2012. Presenters are strongly encouraged to submit abstracts via e-mail to Paul Moler at FLTWS-abstract@att.net.

*Mark your calendar today and start making your plans to attend the
FL TWS-FLEPPC 2012 Spring Conference!*



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Harry Dutton Named the 2011 SEAFWA Biologist of the Year



Harry Dutton was named the 2011 Wildlife Biologist of the Year by the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in October at their annual conference in Nashville, Tennessee. Harry J. Dutton has worked for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission since 1990 and currently serves as Florida's Alligator Management Program (AMP) Coordinator. Harry has made significant contributions to alligator management on a state level, and these contributions are merely the outcomes of a dedicated career.

Throughout his career, he has demonstrated an exceptional ability to tackle tough alligator management issues by applying the best scientific information; building consensus and support from colleagues; and effectively engaging the hunting public and other stakeholders.

Through his leadership, the AMP stands as an outstanding example of integrating scientifically sound research and monitoring as a basis for management recommendations. His passion for alligator resources is matched by a strong sense of compassion and caring for the people around him. This combination of talents has fueled Harry's effectiveness in influencing and motivating the people to make a positive difference for alligator resources beyond what one person or career could hope to achieve.

Harry's strong technical abilities, natural leadership skills, and unquestioned passion for alligator resources have helped build and maintain a widely respected alligator program in Florida. He has successfully translated this passion into a clear vision for alligator conservation and played a key role in developing an exceptional and motivated team of alligator biologists and support staff. He has always embraced the team concept and recognized the value of partnerships. His personality and demeanor have fostered exceptional cooperation within the agency, with other agencies, organizations, and the public, and this cooperative approach has resulted in numerous accomplishments and successes throughout his career. Congratulations, Harry!



Big News for the Following FLTWS Members!

Please join us in congratulating the following FLTWS Members on their exciting news!

Eric and Kimberly Tillman welcomed to the world a new baby girl, Karolyn.

Adam and Emma Willcox are expecting a baby girl in March 2012.



Patrick Delany and Stacia Hetrick have announced their engagement. 🐾

MEETINGS AND EVENTS OF INTEREST

Conservation Site Assessment and Planning Workshop

January 31-February 2, 2012 in Melrose, FL

<http://www.natacsap2012.eventbrite.com>

Southeast Regional Sea Turtle Meeting

February 1-4, 2012 in Jekyll Island, GA

<http://iconferences.seaturtle.org/serstm/>

35th Annual Southeast Deer Study Group Meeting

February 26-29, 2012 in Miramar, FL

<http://www.fltws.org/SEDSG2012.php>

Private Landowner Prescribed Fire for Wildlife Training

February 28-29, 2012 in Tallahassee, FL

<http://www.fltws.org/2012FireCourse.php>

North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference

March 12-17, 2012 in Atlanta, GA

<http://www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org/>

Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society Conference

April 16-19, 2012 in Ocala, FL

<http://www.fltws.org/STD2012SpringConference.php>

Florida Marine Mammal Health Conference IV

April 24-27, 2012 in Sarasota, FL

<http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/marinemammal/index.htm>

32nd Annual Florida Native Plant Society Conference

May 17-20, 2012 in Plant City, FL

<http://www.fnps.org/pages/conference/>

Florida Marine Science Educators Association

May 18-20, 2012 in St. Petersburg, FL

<http://www.fmsea.org/events/>

Safe Capture International 16 Hour Workshop

September 19-20, 2012 in Kissimmee, FL

http://www.safecapture.com/sch_ms.html

The Wildlife Society Annual Conference

October 13-17, 2012 in Portland, Oregon

<http://joomla.wildlife.org/>

6th National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration

October 20-24, 2012 in Tampa, FL

<http://www.estuaries.org/conference/>

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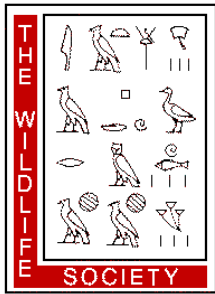
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Florida Chapter of The
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Place
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YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE FLORIDA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

An organization of wildlife professionals and others interested in proper management of Florida's natural resources.

Visit our website www.fltw.s.org to become a member.

