

December 2014

THE FLORIDA WILDLIFER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Erin Myers

Like any other science, biology is not black and white.

To be successful in our field, we must adapt to the changes in our environment: climate change, sea level rise, habitat loss, changes in land use, and the overall changes in life contribute to the challenges we face as natural resource professionals in Florida. As a consequence, we must look at innovative management approaches to habitat and wildlife conservation.

One such approach that I use daily is working with partners across the landscape. I think we can all use assistance from neighbors, be it additional personnel, expertise, financial support or equipment. In my role as a biologist with the USFWS I have the privilege of working with not only other agency personnel, but also NGOs and private landowners across South Florida. The assistance I receive from these partners is essential to making conservation projects a success.

Although I am constantly learning from my colleagues, I think the private land-

owner offers a unique perspective to Florida's history and ecosystems. Many of the ranching families in Central and South Florida have been working this land for many generations, observing the changes and adapting as needed. When working with these landowners, I strive to listen to both their needs and

history when developing and implementing management practices so that there is a benefit to both the landowner and our native habitat. Currently, I am working closely with ranchers in the endangered Florida grasshopper sparrow (FGSP) habitat in Central Florida, looking for (and finding) sparrows and learning how to successfully manage this elusive species.

Many ranchers manage their lands not only for cattle, but also to benefit wildlife (including endangered species). Ranchers implement a variety of vegetation management actions, including prescribed grazing and prescribed burning, to manage the health of their entire ranch. Of course, natural resource professionals in Florida are aware of the



Erin Myers, President (right), with Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewell

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STUDENT CHAPTER REPORT

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



10th Annual
Florida Bat Festival

The University of Florida Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society is affiliated with The Wildlife Society (TWS), The Southeastern Section, Florida Wildlife Federation, and the State Chapter, which are part of the network for the professional society for wildlife biologists. Student Chapter evening meetings are held bi-monthly throughout the school year.

TWS Chapter events and proceedings are diverse and provide professional and fun opportunities for every member involved. Activities include inviting professionals to speak on a wildlife topic at meetings, attending State Chapter meetings, participating in the Southeastern Section Student Wildlife Conclave in the spring, and getting involved in political issues that affect wildlife resources. Career-building skills are also acquired, such as writing resumes and applying to graduate school. The Chapter also hosts an annual "Wild Game Dinner" in the spring, cleans up an adopted section of road adjacent to a state natural area, provides any assistance at a local wildlife rehabilitation center when necessary, and organizes other social gatherings. Some events the Student Chapter of TWS participated in are highlighted in the images (right, below). Participation in the Student Chapter of TWS is an excellent way to begin a student's wildlife career.

Highlights and events taken from the Student Chapter's most recent newsletter are as follows:

- ☐ The annual wild game dinner for the Student Chapter is in February. This is their biggest fundraising event of the year and is always a big hit. Please let Elizabeth Sanchez (ecsanchez9@ufl.com) know if you would like to make a tax-deductable donation of meat, gift cards, raffle items, hunting/fishing trips, etc.
- ☐ On November 6, the Student Chapter participated in the Great Suwannee River Cleanup East of Trenton, Florida. On November 13, they participated in the Lube Bat Festival here they assisted in games and wildlife outreach while having the unique opportunity to see fruit bats. November 20-21 was Survival Weekend.
- ☐ The Student Chapter will be participating in the annual TWS Southeastern Conclave, which will be held at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA, from March 12-15, 2015.

For more Student Chapter information, please visit their website

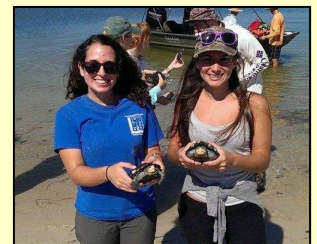
<http://grove.ufl.edu/~tws>

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Greenwood
FLTWS Rep: Lauran Diaz



Exotic plant removal at
Paynes Prairie Preserve SP



Lauran Diaz & Elizabeth
Sanchez assist
MS student E. Saurez
w/ diamondback terrapin
captures



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President's Message

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benefits prescribed fire has on our native ecosystems, but many are unaware (or downright against) the use of prescribed grazing. Prescribed grazing, however, which differs from open grazing, can be a very useful tool for managing vegetation in our native grassland habitats. Prescribed grazing involves planning for both cattle production and grassland health, and often includes wildlife habitat needs. By changing cattle density or grazing intensity within a grassland pasture, a manager can manipulate vegetation diversity and structure to meet their goals.

Although biologists primarily recommend prescribed fire as the top vegetation management tool in Florida's fire-dependent habitats, prescribed grazing can be used to supplement this practice or replace it where fire is not feasible. It's adaptive management!



We are requesting volunteers to help chick-proof rooftops in the Panhandle on the following dates:

Wednesday, January 28 - prepping party: getting supplies ready for chick-proofing rooftops (TBD)

Tuesday, February 3 - Bayou Dwellers Cabana (Fort Walton Beach)

Monday, February 9 & Tuesday February 10 - Chateau Motel (Panama City Beach)

Wednesday, February 11 - Friday, February 13 - Silver Sands Outlets (Sandestin)*

Wednesday, February 25 - Inn on Destin Harbor (Destin)

Tuesday, March 3 - Old Time Pottery (Destin)

If available, please email Michelle Landis, Rooftop Nesting Coordinator for Audubon Florida (mlandis@audubon.org, 850-276-4069) and pass on to anyone that may be interested. Thank you!



FLORIDA NEWS

THANK YOU! YOU VOTED YES ON AMENDMENT 1—WATER AND LAND LEGACY AMENDMENT!!!

Be sure your voice is continued to be heard on how you want to see those funds used for Florida land, water and wildlife. You can contact your local legislators to let them know. The Florida Senate has launched a website where you can submit comments on implementation of Amendment 1. Submit your comments [here](#),

Find your local Senator [here](#).

Find your local Representative [here](#).



Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society Fall Meeting Review

The Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society's (FLTWS) held their fall meeting in Osprey, FL, October 22-23, 2014. The meeting began with a field trip to [Oscar Scherer State Park](#) followed by the business meeting, which included revisiting the strategic plan, hearing yearly reports from committee chairs, and discussing other old and new business. The second day was comprised of a workshop about effective ways for working with local governments that ultimately became a discussion about how the Chapter can develop an official position statement on feral and free-ranging domestic cats.

Even though the fall meeting this year was small (< 10 attendees), it was a great opportunity for members and officers to connect and discuss many of the poignant issues facing FLTWS' biologists and land managers, such as endangered species conservation and management, landowner incentive programs and even feral cat control. Attendees also discussed the FLTWS spring conference (March 31-April 2, 2015 in Jacksonville, mark your calendars!), ways to get Florida biologists more involved in the State Chapter and ideas for new workshops and outreach events. We look forward to seeing all of you at the spring conference!



Florida Scrub-Jay at Oscar Scherer SP

Photo by Karen Lueck



FLORIDA NEWS

Migration and the Return of Banded Birds

By Stefanie Nagid, NE FL Policy Associate, Audubon Florida

With the onset of cooler temperatures and falling leaves, migratory birds make their way south to their wintering grounds. Florida is the last stop on the Atlantic Flyway in North America where migratory birds take a break and fatten up before continuing the final leg of their long journey. If you are out birding this time of year, you are likely to come across banded birds, but you may not know how important it is to report banded birds. Banded bird sighting reports are vitally important to the conservation and long-term survival of many of our most imperiled bird species, and bird watchers of any age and level play a critical role. For instance,

- ◆ Reporting banded birds helps biologists to understand migratory patterns, territory size, range, habitat use, mortality, longevity, and a number of other factors critical to a species survival.
- ◆ Reporting banded chicks, adults, and migratory shorebirds helps pinpoint beaches, causeways, and islands that are important feeding and resting areas for birds prior to or during migration so those special places are protected from disturbance.
- ◆ Reporting banded chicks and adults at nesting sites helps assess "nest site fidelity" -the innate habit of returning to the same location year after year to nest.
- ◆ The period between hatching and a chick's first flight, when they can fly to avoid danger, is critical to their survival. Observing banded chicks may help to pinpoint factors in preventing them from reaching this critical stage.

If you see a banded bird:

- ◆ Note the date, time, and location (with GPS if possible)
- ◆ Note the species
- ◆ Note which leg or legs have bands
- ◆ Note the color and order of bands -upper or lower and left or right leg. If the band or flag has an alphanumeric code, try to note the code
- ◆ Take a picture! Digital cameras work great through scopes and sometimes even binoculars.



American oystercatcher
(*Haematopus palliatus*)



Wood stork (*Mycteria americana*)

Some sites where you can report banded birds in general or by specific species include:

- ◆ All banded birds including Sandpipers, Red Knots, Sanderlings, Rudy Turnstones: <http://www.bandedbirds.org/>
- ◆ Piping Plovers: Any banded piping plovers: email piping.plover@usace.army.mil
- ◆ Yellow or light blue flagged: email npwrc.ternplover@usgs.gov
- ◆ Metal bands with white or gray flags: email cheri.gratto-trevor@ec.gc.ca


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NEWS



The Wildlife Society Online Mentoring Program

TWS' Online Mentoring program is a great way to build professional relationships that will help advance a student's or young professional's career, while gaining knowledge from a wildlife professional. Already a professional? We are always looking for mentors to volunteer. It is easy to sign up, just go online to our [Online Mentoring Program](http://mentor.wildlife.org) with your TWS Member ID number and register.

Want to help but don't have the time to contribute? TWS' Online Mentoring Program is the focus for TWS' 2010 Investor's Campaign. If you are interested in being a donor, please send your donations to The Wildlife Society, 5410 Grosvenor Lane, Suite 200, Bethesda, MD 20814 with Investor's Campaign in the memo field. 

(Continued from page 5)

- ◆ American Oystercatchers: <http://amoywg.org/banding-re-sighting/>
- ◆ Least Terns: email mkorosy@audubon.org
- ◆ Roseate Spoonbills: <http://web1.audubon.org/spoonbill/>
- ◆ Snowy Plovers: <http://www.fosbirds.org/content/how-report-banded-snowy-plovers>
- ◆ Wood Storks: email billy_brooks@fws.gov
- ◆ Painted Buntings, Southeastern American Kestrel, Burrowing Owl (all sightings): <https://public.myfwc.com/FWRI/RareUpland/UserHome.aspx>



Piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*)

FLORIDA NEWS

FLORIDA CELEBRATES HIGH SEA TURTLE NEST COUNT THIS SEASON

From the DEP Press Office



More than 1,800 biologists, interns and trained volunteers patrol Florida's 199 nesting beaches to identify, mark and monitor nests. Researchers at Florida's three National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERRs), located in Naples, Apalachicola and Ponte Vedra Beach, gather evidence to track sea turtle populations and document the success of the nests.

This year, 960 total nests have been reported in Florida's three NERRs. Researchers at Guana Tolomato Mantanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve have reported 134 nests, including 10 rare green turtle nests. The nest count in Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve has increased from 475 in 2013 to 560 nests this year. At the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve, 266 nests have been identified.

Researchers say the number of nests have increased over the years due to increased conservation efforts and fewer detrimental storms.

Sea turtle nesting season is from early May to the end of October. Beachgoers can take some simple actions to ensure they are not hindering hatchlings from successfully making it to the water are listed below.

Remove all belongings from the beach, flatten sand castles and fill in holes.

Dispose of litter in designated receptacles on the beach.

Stay off dunes and use the designated walkovers for crossing.

Shield any artificial lighting that may shine toward the beach.

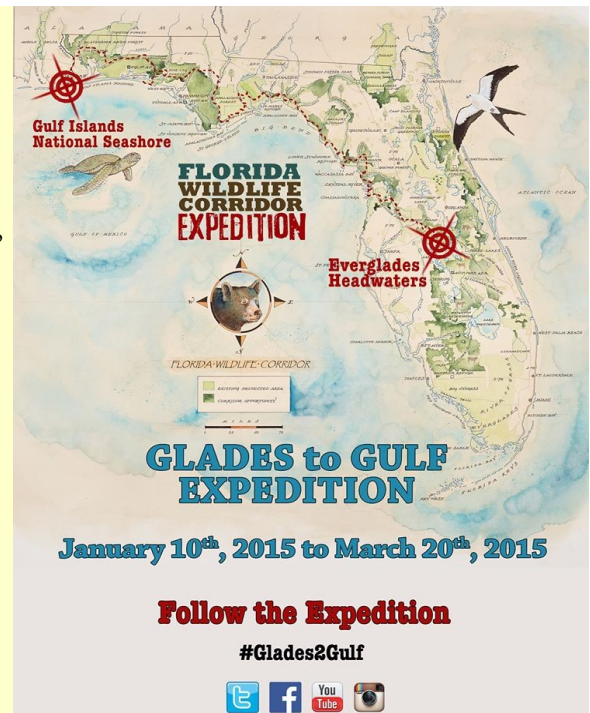
For more information on Florida's National Estuarine Research Reserves, click [here](#).



FLORIDA NEWS

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

January 10, 2015 marks the kick off for a new expedition to expand public awareness and generate support for a connected Florida Wildlife Corridor. We will highlight stories of ecological importance, from Longleaf Pine restoration and the health of the Gulf fishery to the survival of the Florida black bear – expanding the statewide corridor vision west to Alabama. Follow the team — conservationist Mallory Lykes Dimmitt, wildlife photographer Carlton Ward, and bear biologist Joe Guthrie — on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) or [Pinterest](#). Or join them at one of the following Trail Mixers.



January 24, 2015, 9:00am

Trail Mixer #3 - Rainbow River Paddle

19158 SW 81st Place Road Dunnellon, FL 34432

Join the Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition team at the Rainbow River for 2 hour paddling excursion! Experience part of the Expedition with the team on Saturday January 24th. Space is limited to 75 guests, so RSVP [here](#)!

This trip is self supported, so guests must rent a canoe or kayak or bring their own.

Arrival / Meeting Time: 9:00 AM [Allow time to unload your boats and be ready to launch 10AM]

Meeting Location (Put In): [Rainbow Springs State Park](#) at the Hickory Pavilion.

Activity Start Time: 10AM

Activity End Time: Approximately 12PM-1PM

Take Out: Rainbow Springs State Park

Participation requires a separate reservation with the outfitter, Rainbow Springs State Park, prior to the event. Prices are the following: \$22 for one or two people, \$33 for three people, and \$44 for four people, which will be paid to the park concessionaire on the day of the event. Call (352) 796-7211, ext. 4770 to make a reservation. Visa and MasterCard are accepted. *Please note that guests are responsible for paying the park admission fee of \$2.00.

[See it on Facebook!](#)

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FLORIDA NEWS

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January 31, 2015, 9:00am - January 31, 2015, 2:00pm

Trail Mixer #3- Steinhatchee River Paddle

7022 SW 358 HWY Steinhatchee, FL 32359

Join the Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition team at the Steinhatchee River for a 5-7 mile paddling excursion! (A 2-mile trip is also an option). Experience part of the Expedition with the team on Saturday January 31st. This event is being sponsored by the Dixie County Tourist Development Council.
Meeting Time: 9:00 AM

Meeting Location: Good Times Marina (7022 SW 358 HWY Steinhatchee, FL 32359)

A light breakfast will be provided for guests at the Good Times Marina. Following breakfast, guests will be shuttled to Steinhatchee Falls for the paddling excursion. The paddling trip ends back at the Good Times Marina. Shorter shuttling options are available by arrangement.

Activity Start Time: 10:00 AM

Activity End Time: Between 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM **Space is limited to 35 guests, so RSVP [here](#)

**If you prefer to paddle a shorter distance, please call Kay McCallister at 352-258-0187 to make arrangements for a 2 mile paddle.

**This trip is self supported, so guests must rent a canoe or kayak or bring their own. If you'd like to rent a canoe or kayak, we recommend contacting Suwannee Guides & Outfitters. For more information, please visit their [website](#) or give them a call 352-542-8331. Rentals are discounted to \$15 for a single and \$25 for a double.

**In order to participate, you acknowledge that you're acting as your own private trip and are responsible for your own safety and welfare.

See it on [Facebook](#)



Gifts to Support Florida Wildlife

The holidays may be over, but gift-giving that supports Florida wildlife can continue all year!

- ◆ Vehicle [license plates supporting Florida wildlife](#) and habitats, including “Protect the Panther,” “Conserve Wildlife,” “Helping Sea Turtles Survive,” “Save the Manatee” and “Go Fishing.” Available at local county tax collectors’ offices, with more information at [BuyaPlate.com](#).
- ◆ Colorful FWC [manatee decals](#) and [sea turtle decals](#) to stick on boats, bikes, backpacks, guitar cases or computers. Available for a \$5 donation at local county tax collectors’ offices, with more options to order at [MyFWC.com/Manatee](#) or [MyFWC.com/SeaTurtle](#).
- ◆ A Florida [fishing license or hunting license](#) purchased online at [License.MyFWC.com](#) or in stores. There are licenses for residents and visitors, including a [youth Gold Sportsman’s License](#) good until a child turns 17 that locks in the price and gives a young person bragging rights as a card-carrying sportsman.
- ◆ A [Lifetime Sportsman License](#) for Florida children and young adults covering hunting, and freshwater and saltwater fishing. The license is available at a greatly reduced cost of \$500 (plus processing fees) from now through Dec. 31, 2014. Gov. Rick Scott in mid-November signed an executive order authorizing the FWC to make this temporary fee reduction. The lifetime license can be purchased for state residents ages 5 to 21 [online](#), by calling 888-347-4356 or at local tax collectors’ offices across the state.
- ◆ Florida wildlife T-shirts, sweatshirts, art or other gifts available at [WildlifeFlorida.com](#). Strut [apparel](#) featuring your favorite species!
- ◆ A personal floatation device, also known as a life jacket, to give someone you care about a safe boating experience. A newer model, such as an inflatable belt pack or suspender-style life jacket, could replace an older, bulkier life jacket.
- ◆ Registration of a family member or friend with [TrophyCatchFlorida.com](#), along with the gift of a scale to weigh fish. Just registering that person makes him or her eligible for a drawing for a bass boat, and any time the angler takes a photo of an 8-pound or larger bass and submits it according to TrophyCatch rules, the reward will be at least \$100 in gift cards, club shirts, decals and certificates.



Find [gifts for people who love the outdoors](#) at MyFWC.com by clicking on “Get Involved” and then “Support FWC.”

Or find the perfect gift at our FLTWS [merchandise store](#).



MEETINGS AND EVENTS OF INTEREST

29th Annual Everglades Coalition Conference

January 8-10, 2015 in Key Largo, Florida

evergladescoalition.org

11th Annual Southwest Florida Nature Festival

January 16-18, 2015 in Naples, Florida

Register [here](#).

6th Annual Florida Scrub Jay Festival

February 28, 2015 at Merritt Island NWR

More details [here](#).

39th Annual National Wild Turkey Federation Convention

February 12-15, 2015 in Nashville, Tennessee

http://www.nwtf.org/special_events/convention.html

Natural Areas Training Academy

Managing Visitors and Volunteers in Natural Areas

March 9-May 1, 2015, online

May 6, 2015, in-person in Keystone Heights, Florida

<http://tinyurl.com/nt4sz2u>

Natural Areas Training Academy

Conservation Site Assessment and Planning

March 16 - April 10, 2015, online

April 14-15, 2015, in-person, Melrose, Florida

<http://tinyurl.com/lgtk8nh>

Ignition Planning & Prescribed Fire Techniques for Wildlife

April 6-9, 2015 in Venus, Florida

Register [here](#).

Safe-Capture Wildlife Chemical Immobilization Workshop

September 23-24, 2015 in Kissimmee, Florida

<http://www.safecapture.com/>

The 22nd Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society

October 17-21, 2015 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

<http://www.wildlife.org>

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FLORIDA CHAPTER NEWS

IGNITION PLANNING & PRESCRIBED FIRE TECHNIQUES FOR WILDLIFE



Hosted by Archbold Biological Station, The Florida Chapter Of The Wildlife Society, and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

April 6-9, 2015

Archbold Biological Station

123 Main Drive

Venus, FL 33960

This training is designed to provide wildlife biologists and land managers with basic information on wildlife habitat management opportunities associated with prescribed fires in Florida. It includes sections addressing how ignition plans can be developed and implemented to meet specific wildlife objectives while minimizing risk.

Topics Include:

- ◆ PRESCRIBED FIRE/WILDLIFE HABITAT ENHANCEMENT TECHNIQUES
- ◆ IGNITION PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: 18 MARCH 2015

Cost is \$400 and helps support FLTWS.

[REGISTER HERE](#) OR [DOWNLOAD A REGISTRATION FORM](#)



FLORIDA CHAPTER NEWS

FL TWS 2015 Spring Meeting

March 31st- April 2nd

Jacksonville Ramada Hotel and Conference Center

SAVE THE DATE! The Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society will hold its annual Spring Meeting on March 31st- April 2nd, 2015 at the Jacksonville Ramada Hotel and Conference Center. The meeting will highlight ways to effectively address contentious wildlife issues. Certified Biologist Continuing Education Credits will be offered. FL TWS meeting committee encourages students to submit papers and posters for our student competitions. Come make the most of our numerous networking opportunities and social events during this year's Spring Meeting.

Additional details will be forthcoming in future meeting reminders as well as on the <http://www.fltws.org> meeting page website. Managers, researchers, administrators, educators, students, and all natural resource professionals will benefit from the information exchange available at this Spring Meeting.

Mark your calendar today and start making your plans to attend FL TWS 2015 Spring Conference!





**Florida Chapter of The
Wildlife Society**

Laramie Ferry, Newsletter Editor
620 South Meridian St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600

Place
Stamp
Here

**YOU ARE INVITED TO
JOIN THE FLORIDA
CHAPTER OF THE
WILDLIFE SOCIETY**

**An organization of wildlife profes-
sionals and others interested in
proper management of Florida's
natural resources.**

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

