



January 2016

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Becky Bolt,
President

Dear Members,
Happy New Year! I am looking forward to a productive, meaningful 2016 as we continue to positively impact Florida's wildlife resources. Our new Executive Board and committee chairs are an enthusiastic, no-nonsense group that has already made great progress on several fronts that will propel us into the new year. To mention a few:

We are in the process of improving our membership records database so that we can better use you and your skills, our greatest assets, to achieve the Chapter's mission. (If you are unfamiliar with our mission, please go to www.fltns.org and read it. It is important.) We will also be able to more easily remind you to pay your membership dues!

Our membership committee recently sent out a survey to almost 1,500 wildlife professionals and stu-

dents. The response was very good and we are using the results to help design future meetings and Chapter endeavors.

Plans are well underway for our Spring 2016 meeting. Look at the Chapter website for the date, location, hotel information, and other important details. It's going to be great!

If you haven't already, join our FLTWS Face Book group for frequent Chapter news updates and interesting wildlife posts.

The digital archiving of our past records is almost complete. This monumental task will allow us to quickly and easily access our history, and negates the need for boxes of paperwork that must be kept and passed along as Chapter officers change.

There is now an on-line form that can be used to nominate people for awards that are presented during our annual Spring meetings. These include the Herb Kale Award (lifetime achievement) and Paul Moler Award (excellence in herpetology), as well as several new awards that were instituted last year. Nominations are accepted at any time, so be on the lookout throughout the year for that oppor-

(Continued on page 3)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Florida Spotlight</i>	2
<i>Did you know?</i>	3
<i>Chapter News</i>	4
<i>Congrats Claire!</i>	5
<i>TWS Mentor Program</i>	6
<i>Record Sea Turtle Nests</i>	7
<i>Python Challenge</i>	8
<i>Congrats Erin!</i>	9
<i>Support Florida Wildlife</i>	10
<i>Meetings and Events</i>	11
<i>Spring Meeting Announcement</i>	12



FLORIDA SPOTLIGHT

Florida beach mouse (*Peromyscus poilionotus*) surveys

There are 16 subspecies of oldfield mouse (*Peromyscus poilionotus*), 8 of which are considered beach mice, and are found on both the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts of Florida. All subspecies (but the Santa Rosa beach mouse) are state and federally protected. The main threats to beach mice are habitat loss from development, hurricanes, and predation (both native and non-native).

FLTWS member and committee chair, Mark Ausley, conducted surveys on Perdido Key in May 2015 to determine presence-absence of Florida beach mouse. Results? Present!



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President's Message

(Continued from page 1)

tunity to recognize deserving individuals and groups.

A big-picture goal for the near future is to solidify our relationships and share resources with groups with similar missions, such as the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Wildlife Federation, and other societies (e.g., Society of Wetland Scientists, Gopher Tortoise Council, Partners for Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, American Bird Conservancy). Our recent experience with Amendment 1 funding shows that we must have a strong, organized presence and voice if we are to successfully conserve Florida's natural resources. We cannot do this alone.

Finally, a BIG THANK YOU to all of the volunteers that give their time and energy to make the mission of FLTWS a reality. If you are not currently involved, but would like to be, please contact any board member. There are lots of jobs, large and small, but they are all significant. You can make a difference.

Sincerely,
Becky Bolt
President, FLTWS
becky.bolt@fltws.org



Did you know?

Florida had the second-biggest population gain of any state in the nation in the past year. New figures released by the U.S. Census Bureau shows Florida gained more than 365,000 people from July 2014 to July 2015. Only Texas had a bigger gain in pure numbers, and the Lone Star State added 490,000 residents. Florida added more people in the past year than California did. Florida's population now stands at 20.2 million residents, making it the third most populous state behind California and Texas.



FLORIDA NEWS

New Report Assesses the Impacts of Emerging Threats on Gulf Coast Species and Ecosystems

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today released its Gulf Coast Vulnerability Assessment (GCVA), a comprehensive report that evaluates the effects of climate change, sea level rise and urbanization on four Gulf Coast ecosystems and 11 species that depend on them. The ecosystems are mangrove, oyster reef, tidal emergent marsh and barrier islands. The species are roseate spoonbill, blue crab, clapper rail, mottled duck, spotted seatrout, eastern oyster, American oystercatcher, red drum, black skimmer, Kemp's ridley sea turtle and Wilson's plover.

To learn more about the GCVA visit: <http://gulfcoastprairielcc.org/science/science-projects/gulf-coast-vulnerability-assessment/>. To learn more about the Landscape Conservation Cooperative Network visit: <http://lccnetwork.org/>.



Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society Fall Meeting Review Wekiwa Springs State Park

What more could we ask for besides a beautiful day in a beautiful setting, lots of friend (old and new), and some amazing chili and fixin's? We spent time eating, chatting, and playing Cornhole. There were door prizes and FLTWS paraphernalia for sale. Members and their families came from near and far (including Rog Vanderhoof all the way from the Pacific Northwest!). We had a great time, so much so that we may decide to make this an annual event!



FLORIDA NEWS

FWC biologist receives prestigious wildlife conservation award recognizing young professional



Claire Sunquist Blunden, a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) employee since 2010, has received the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies' 2015 Mark J. Reeve Memorial Award that recognizes a young professional for outstanding service in the conservation of fish and wildlife resources.

"This award is a huge honor," said Commission Chairman Brian S. Yablonski. "Claire has done an excellent job working on the Imperiled Species Management Plan, a first-of-its-kind conservation tool. We are very proud of Claire."

Blunden's work was commended by the association for being far-reaching and significant to conservation in Florida, particularly for state and federally listed species.

She was recognized by AFWA for her work in facilitating engagement with stakeholders to obtain valuable feedback on development of the [Imperiled Species Management Plan](#), a strategic comprehensive plan to conserve 57 imperiled species. AFWA noted that relationships she has fostered with partners and stakeholders will be critical when it comes to implementing the plan, scheduled to be finalized and considered for possible FWC approval in 2016.

Initially in her FWC career, Blunden served as a regional volunteer coordinator. She established major volunteer programs where citizen scientists contribute to the research and management of Florida wildlife, including monitoring nest boxes of the southeastern American kestrel and helping organize the Jay Watch partnership to survey populations of the Florida scrub-jay. Currently Blunden is the stakeholder coordinator for imperiled species management planning in the agency's Division of Habitat and Species Conservation.

"Claire Sunquist Blunden is a leader in developing successful approaches to conserving Florida's fish and wildlife," said Dr. Thomas Eason, FWC's director of the Division of Habitat and Species Conservation. "Claire's skills and enthusiasm as a young wildlife conservation professional are outstanding. I hope her achievements will inspire other young people to help us conserve the beauty and diversity of Florida wildlife for future generations."

The Reeve award is given annually to a wildlife professional age 35 or younger who overcomes challenges through creativity and personal initiative, while inspiring others to do the same. It honors Mark Reeve, an AFWA staff mem-

(Continued on page 6)



WILDLIFE 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. Contributions are tax-deductible.



(Continued from page 5)

ber who lost his life at 40 due to a long-term illness. He had been able to take a good idea and run with it despite being younger and less experienced than many others in the conservation field.

"It's a privilege to work with so many talented partners, stakeholders and staff who are motivated to contribute to wildlife conservation in Florida," said Blunden. "This award represents the hard work and collaboration of the Imperiled Species Management Plan team."



WILDLIFE NEWS

FWC designates new Critical Wildlife Area to protect nesting birds in southwest Florida

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) designated a sandbar in Collier County, known as “Second Chance,” as a Critical Wildlife Area. The island, which is part of a larger shoal complex, is an important nesting site for Wilson’s plovers and state-listed least terns and black skimmers.

Second Chance received its name in 1997 when a local ecologist observed least terns nesting there for the first time. The sandbar was considered a second chance for nesting least terns, which had abandoned other nesting sites in Collier County.

More information on Second Chance can be found [here](#).

Wisdom has returned to Midway Atoll!

Wisdom a Laysan albatross and, the world’s oldest known banded bird in the wild has returned to [Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge and Battle of Midway National Memorial](#). On November 19 and just in time for the special day of giving thanks, [almost a year to the day she returned last year](#), Wisdom was spotted with her mate among the world’s largest nesting albatross colony.



Wisdom was first banded in 1956. And because Laysan albatross do not return to breed until they are at least five years old, it is estimated Wisdom is at least 64 years old, but she could be older. Wisdom’s bands were continuously replaced and combined with meticulous record keeping, we can verify she is the same bird first banded by noted author and Service ornithologist, Chandler Robbins. Biologists may find even older birds as old worn bands continue to be routinely replaced.

Read more about amazing, Wisdom, [here](#).



FLORIDA NEWS



2016 Python Challenge™

The Florida Everglades is an extraordinary ecosystem, unlike any other in the world! It is home to a variety of rare and unique wildlife including native birds, mammals, fish and reptiles. However, some reptiles do not belong there and pose a threat to native wildlife. To address this, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is teaming up with the Fish & Wildlife Foundation of Florida to bring back the Python Challenge™ in January 2016, along with a [Burmese Python Removal Competition](#) that runs from January 16 through February 14 in south Florida. This exciting conservation effort will help protect the rare Everglades ecosystem and the animals that live there from these invasive, nonnative snakes.

In the early winter of 2013, nearly 1,600 participants in the first Python Challenge™ trekked through more than a million acres of swamps and sawgrass in search of the well-camouflaged Burmese python. With the 2016 Python Challenge™, you too can join us in the Burmese Python Removal Competition this January and February in [participating areas](#) around south Florida! And for those not registered for the python removal competition, there are still plenty of ways you can get involved. Learn more about our upcoming family-friendly [events](#), enter one of our [online contests](#), attend a Python Challenge™ [in-person training](#) (you don't have to be a registered participant to attend), check out the official [gear](#), or even become a [sponsor](#)! By getting involved with the 2016 Python Challenge™, you are helping to conserve the Florida Everglades and the native wildlife that call this national treasure home.

For more info, visit the [Python Challenge webpage](#).



FLORIDA NEWS



Congrats to our very own FLTWS member and past president, Erin Myers (photo, left), for receiving the prestigious 2015 USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program Regional Director's award! Erin was recognized for her novel and complex habitat conservation work as part of the Cooperative Recovery Initiative. Erin's efforts, in partnership with landowners like Lefty Durando (photo, right), are putting acres on the ground for the endangered Florida grasshopper sparrow throughout the Everglades [Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge & Conservation Area](#).

Way to go, Erin!!!



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

31st Annual Everglades Coalition Conference

January 7-10, 2016 in Coral Gables, Florida

evergladescoalition.org

12th Annual Southwest Florida Nature Festival

January 15-17, 2016 in Naples, Florida

Register [here](#).

2016 Python Challenge

January 16—February 14, 2016 in the Florida Everglades

More info and registration [here](#).

7th Annual Florida Scrub Jay Festival

February 13, 2016 at Oscar Scherer State Park

More details [here](#).

40th Annual National Wild Turkey Federation Convention

February 11-14, 2016 in Nashville, Tennessee

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

National Conservation Training Center

Climate-Smart Conservation

February 23-25, 2016 in Live Oak, Florida

<http://training.fws.gov/>

National Invasive Species Week (NISAW)

February 21-27, 2016

More details [here](#).

FLEPPC 2016 Annual Conference

March 9-11, 2016 in Melbourne, Florida

More details [here](#).

24th Annual Pelican Island Wildlife Festival

March 12, 2016 in Sebastian, Florida

More details [here](#).

Mangrove and Macrobenthos Meeting 2016

July 18-22, 2016 in St. Augustine, Florida

More details [here](#).

Safe-Capture Wildlife Chemical Immobilization Workshop

September 21-22, 2016 in Kissimmee, Florida

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

The 23rd Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society

October 15-19, 2016 in Raleigh, North Carolina

<http://www.wildlife.org>

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FLORIDA CHAPTER NEWS

FL TWS 2016 Spring Meeting April 13th to 15th Holiday Inn Gainesville-University Center

SAVE THE DATE! The Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society will hold its annual Spring Meeting on April 13-15, 2016 at the Holiday Inn Gainesville - University 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.fltw.s.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 2016 Spring Conference!

