



EVERGLADE KITE

NEWSLETTER

Monthly Newsletter for Audubon Everglades
VOL 61 | Issue 8 | April 2021



Photo: House Finch © Wikipedia

Bird of the Month: House Finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*)

by Clive & Celesia Pinnock

The 2021 Bird of the Month Series focuses on twelve North American species requested by our Audubon Everglades members. Each month, information on the featured species will cover its description, range, habitat, food, and reproduction. This information will also be covered in the Bird of the Month Power Point presentation at each monthly meeting.

The House Finch is a native of the western United States and was introduced in New York City in 1940 by New York pet shop owners. They were selling the birds illegally and intentionally released them to avoid prosecution. These resilient and highly adaptable birds survived and not only colonized the New York suburbs but, soon after, spread across the continent to join their western counterparts in the Great Plains.

House Finches are small-bodied finches with a short conical bill. Adult males have heavily streaked brown

and tan upper parts and a rosy-red head and breast. The adult female and juveniles are streaked with brown overall. These finches, unlike most other species of finches, possess a slightly notched tail, where others sport a noticeably notched tail. As with other finches, their flight is undulating or bouncy.

These highly social birds are quite gregarious, at times forming flocks of several hundred outside of the nesting season. When not gathered at a feeder, feasting on a variety of seeds, they are found foraging on the ground or high in trees. When resting, the birds commonly perch on the highest branches available in a tree or gather in large flocks on telephone wires.

House Finches inhabit city parks, urban centers, backyards, forest edges, and farms across the continent. In their native habitats in the western United States, the birds occupy deserts, chaparral, open woods, stream sides, and broken grasslands.

In rural areas, they are even found around barns and stables.

The diet of the House Finch is almost exclusively plant materials, including seeds, fruit, and buds. Wild foods are comprised of knotweed, thistle, mulberry, poison oak, cactus and several other plant species. In orchards they can be considered a nuisance since they feed on cherries, peaches, apricots, plums, strawberries, blackberries, and figs. At feeders, they eat sunflower seeds, millet, and milo. They have also been known to visit hummingbird feeders to drink sugar water and, at times, they feed on small insects such as aphids.

Nest locations are highly variable, with nests being placed in coniferous trees, cactus, rock ledges, streetlamps, ivy, hanging planters, and vents. They may even occasionally use the abandoned nests of other birds. Pairs can begin forming during the winter

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

April 2021

Spring has sprung, and love is in the air. With the advent of spring, I hope that you are enjoying our indigenous birds and spring avian visitors, which are showing their finest feather arrays, displaying enthusiastic courtship dances, singing delightful bird arias, and building or settling into their temporary nesting homes. And, of course, I hope that you will be watching for the migrant neotropical songbirds, which will soon be making their way up our coast and stopping to forage in our natural habitats as well as in residential communities and yards with welcoming native trees and shrubs.

Covid-19: Spring is also bringing more Covid vaccinations to our county. On March 15 Palm Beach County was the first county in Florida to have over 50% of its seniors fully vaccinated. I hope that means that many more of you have been able to secure your

vaccines and now feel somewhat safer, while still taking the necessary precautions recommended by the CDC when venturing out to see our beautiful birds.

In-person events: Audubon Everglades will continue to err on the side of caution in not scheduling in-person events or field trips, since everyone's continued safety is our priority. We will continue to be in "flock-down" mode for the foreseeable future.

Out-going Board: I would like to thank outgoing Board members Paton White, Linda McCandless, and Chris Golia for their invaluable service to Audubon Everglades during their tenure on the Board. While Chris and Linda will continue to serve Audubon Everglades as volunteers in other important ways, Paton White, who has served the organization for many years in so

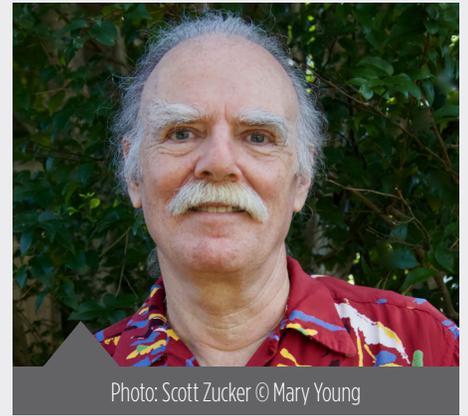


Photo: Scott Zucker © Mary Young

many different capacities, including a four-year term as President, will be moving to Texas. We will sorely miss her leadership, dedication, wisdom and kindness.

Annual Meeting: April is the time for our annual Audubon Everglades meeting, in which we will be voting on our new slate of Board officers and directors, which can be found in the "The Nominating Committee" article in this month's Kite and on the 2021-22 budget, which can be found by [clicking here](#).

The Nominating Committee proudly presents the Slate of Officers for 2021-2022

by Mary Young

| | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| President | Scott Zucker | (election 2021-23) |
| First Vice-President | Sabeena Beg | (election 2021-23) |
| Director | Debbie Smith | (election 2021-23) |
| Director | Mary Young | (election 2021-23) |
| Director | Robert Franzino | (election 2021-23) |
| Director | Lauren Butcher | (election 2021-23) |
| Director | Natasha Warraich | (election 2021-22) |
| Director | Marianne Gabel | (election 2021-22) |
| Director | Susan Kennedy | (election 2021-22) |
| Director | Michelle Bachoon | (election 2021-22) |

The AE Board recently changed the Bylaws so that the four executive positions will be staggered, alternating each year. So next year, our Treasurer and Recording Secretary will be on the slate.

Scott Zucker has served Audubon Everglades since 2015 as a Board member, second vice-president, first vice-president, and in September as president when he replaced Doreen LePage, completing her term.

We are happy to introduce the recent additions to our Board of Directors:

Robert Franzino is a retired Director of Banking and Investments for the New York State American Civil

Liberties Union.

Sabeena Beg is a Marine Biologist and environmental educator, with a background in marketing. She is coordinating our communication efforts.

Natasha Warraich is a Scientist with the South Florida Water Management District and is now our AE Wildlife Biologist.

Lauren Butcher is the Green Schools Program Coordinator and the current coordinator of the Climate Ready program that trains teenagers to be climate ambassadors at Pine Jog Environmental Education Center. Lauren is coordinating our education efforts.

These are new candidates for our Board of Directors:

Marianne Gabel is passionate about protecting birds and creating and protecting their habitat. Her background is in marketing and park and open space advocacy. Marianne is a former Steward in our AE Conservation Stewardship Training Course 2018.

Michelle Bachoon is a civil litigation and insurance defense lawyer. She is a Senior Associate with Clausen Miller.

Susan Kennedy is an environmental lawyer who has been active in helping to secure many conservation initiatives in the northern part of PB County

We wish to thank outgoing Board members:

Paton White has been a member of AE for 15 years and served as Board member, vice-president and president. Paton has been invaluable to the AE Board in her leadership, support, mentorship, and historical knowledge of Audubon Everglades. She will continue to support us, long distance, when she moves to Texas to be closer to her family.

Linda McCandless will continue coordinating Eagle Watch PBC, leading a team for the CBC, organizing the Big Sit, and as a field trip leader.

Chris Golia has become our Volunteer Coordinator and will continue her service as a field trip leader and writing acknowledgement letters to speakers and donors.

Respectfully,

The Nominating Committee: Mary Young, chair, Paul Davis and Charlene Raphael

Audubon Everglades Presents Guest Speaker Ron Magill

Zoo Communications and Media Relations Director, Zoo Miami/Nikon Ambassador USA

APR
06

Tuesday, April 6, 2021 at 7PM
Zoom-Hosted Presentation
(advance registration required)

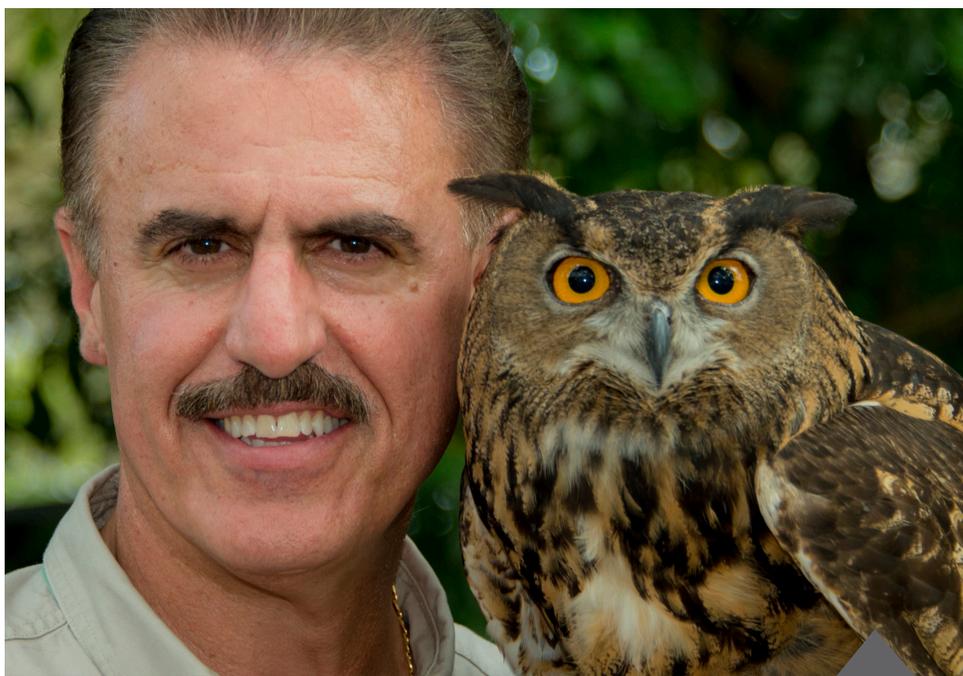


Photo: Ron Magill and Eagle Owl

Ron has worked with wildlife for over 40 years. He is the host of HITN's national wildlife documentary program, "Mundo Salvaje con Ron Magill." As Zoo Miami's "Goodwill Ambassador," he has made frequent television appearances on many programs, including "National Geographic Explorer," the Discovery Networks, the "Today Show," "Good Morning America," "The Late Show," "CBS This Morning," "Dateline," and "CNN," as well as on Spanish networks Univision and Telemundo. In addition, he has written and produced many wildlife

articles and award-winning photographs that have appeared in publications and galleries around the world. He has traveled extensively throughout Africa, Asia and Tropical America while developing and directing conservation projects and Emmy-Award winning documentaries focusing on the wildlife of those regions.

Beyond Zoo Miami and the Zoo Miami Foundation, Ron has worked with several children's charities, with a special dedication to the Make-a-Wish

Foundation, where he helps grant wishes for children facing life-threatening diseases. In addition, he is a regular speaker at schools and civic organizations throughout South Florida, hoping to inspire our youth to follow their dreams and showing them the importance of protecting our world's wildlife for generations to come.

Ron's proudest professional accomplishment is the establishment of the "Ron Magill Conservation Endowment" at the Zoo Miami Foundation. This endowment has raised millions of dollars, is the largest of its kind at the zoo, and provides tens of thousands of dollars annually to wildlife conservation by providing annual scholarships and supporting field conservation projects designed to protect wildlife in its native areas.

Harpy Eagle Project – Panama

In 1993, I initiated a collaborative effort with the government of Panama to raise awareness about the harpy eagle and the important role it plays in the tropical forests of that country. What started as a grass roots effort led to a national campaign that eventually resulted in the Panamanian government officially declaring the harpy eagle the National Bird of the Republic. A public/private partnership developed with key corporate entities in Panama and the U.S. resulted in the building of one of the largest Harpy Eagle centers in the world, and the Harpy Eagle is now a cultural icon throughout Panama. My presentation will show how this project developed and provide interesting insight into this magnificent raptor!

House Finch continued from page 1

when the birds are still in flocks and some paired birds can remain together throughout the year. During courtship, the male performs a flight song display, fluttering upward, then gliding down to a perch, while singing. He can sing at any time of year, and the female joins in the singing during spring, at the start of the breeding season.

The nest is made predominantly by the female and is constructed of grass, weeds, fine twigs, rootlets, leaves, and sometimes feathers. It is typically built 12 – 15 feet above the ground and is an open cup in shape. Four to five pale blue eggs with black and lavender spots are laid and incubated by the female for 13 – 14 days. At hatching, the young are naked except for sparse white down along their feather tracts, and their eyes are closed. Both parents feed the nestlings regurgitated seeds, and the young leave the nest 12 – 15 days after hatching.

The Purple Martins Need Our Help More Than Ever!

by Shelly Rosenberg

While reading the winter issue of *The Purple Martin Update* magazine published by the Purple Martin Conservation Association (PMCA), I was shaken to read some grim statistics. They reported that in 1970, the Purple Martin population was estimated to be 13 million. Today their population is estimated to be 8.7 million, a net population loss of 4.3 million birds. It was also noted that Purple Martins aged 0-1 have about a 27% chance of survival. A 1-year-old has a 61% chance of surviving to year 2, and a 2-year-old has a 49% chance of surviving beyond their second year.

The PMCA also published the results of their 2020 *Project MartinWatch* citizen science project, which reported that 2020 was an above average year for Purple Martin productivity in every region **except the Southeast**, where martins had historically poor reproductive success. This was attributed in part to an earlier than normal start to the Atlantic hurricane season, causing rain, wind and flooding during critical nesting and affecting the availability of insect prey.

February's late winter polar vortex in the southern states gravely affected the early arriving adult martins, causing them to die in massive numbers from freezing temperatures and lack of food. As aerial insectivores, martins consume flying insects midair. When temperatures drop below 48 degrees, insects do not fly. If conditions persist for 3 days, martins begin dying from starvation. Energy spent unsuccessfully foraging for food can also accelerate starvation. I viewed tragic Facebook posts from landlords taking desperate measures to save their martins. They flipped crickets into the air, placed mealworms and scrambled eggs into housing dripping with icicles. Some martins learned to accept this method of supplemental feeding. Others were simply too weak and dehydrated. Landlords placed handwarmers and low wattage lightbulbs into unused housing compartments for warmth, only to find groups of deceased martins huddled together. Although it's against the law, landlords brought martins into their homes and attempted to force feed them. It was heartwarming to see videos of martins learning to feed from a dish. These passionate landlords did everything and anything possible to help their martins survive, even though they had no electricity or water themselves. This was a harsh reminder of just how vulnerable these native songbirds are and how fortunate our Audubon Everglades martins were to be safe during this difficult time.



Photo: © Shelly Rosenberg

As the instability of climate change intensifies, the PMCA and others continue to research how flexible martins can be in the timing of migration and nesting to predict how they may or may not be able to adapt to a rapidly changing world. Adverse weather conditions such as excessive cold, heat, wind, fog, drought, and food scarcity are not the only factors contributing to their population decline. Predation, competition from other martins and invasive species (mainly Starlings and House Sparrows), disease, pesticides, loss of habitat (especially in South America), lack of suitable housing, and pollution are also key obstacles to their survival.

As you can see, life is not easy for Purple Martins, and landlords are often faced with many challenges. Unlike other birds, martins are the only species reliant solely on human-supplied nesting cavities in our region. *The Journal of Science* recently published a study indicating that 3 billion birds have vanished from North America over the last 50 years and that targeted conservation efforts do make a difference. Audubon Everglades, our collaborative partners, and backyard landlords throughout Palm Beach County are committed to making a difference by ensuring the preservation, protection, and safety of our beloved Purple Martins. Martins love people and people love martins. Sometimes all it takes to have a successful colony is to put up housing in an appropriate location. There is an overwhelming sense of accomplishment at the end of each season, when the last nestling fledges. The rewards continue when the martins return to the same location and bring their friends because of successful breeding.

How You Can Help This Important Conservation Effort
If you manage a public location and are interested in becoming a collaborative partner or have questions about establishing your own backyard colony, please email shellyrozenberg@bellsouth.net.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Beggar's Ticks
Spanish Needles *Bidens spp.*

by Helen Laurence

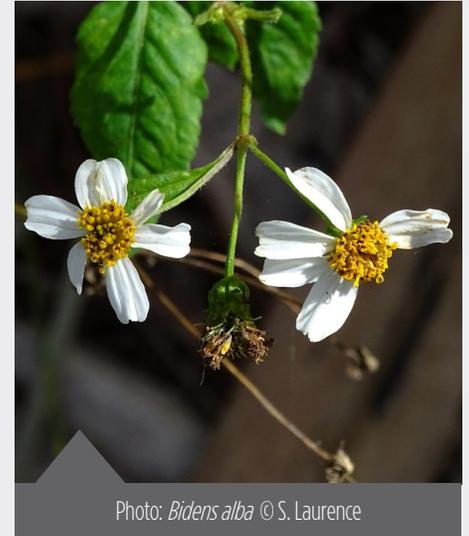


Photo: *Bidens alba* © S. Laurence

Spanish Needles (*Bidens alba*) is the extremely weedy, aggressive and ubiquitous pollinator magnet that is widely considered to be a Florida native plant. For this reason, Teri Jabour, President of the Palm Beach County Atala Chapter of the North American Butterfly Association, famously instructs aspiring butterfly gardeners to "Respect the Bidens!" And I did, or I struggled to do so... until February 2020, when I attended a meeting of the Florida Native Plant Society at which Rufino Osorio, author of *A Gardener's Guide to Florida's Native Plants*, gave a talk presenting convincing evidence that *Bidens alba* is not native to Florida.

In Rufino's words, "*Bidens alba* has no native specialist herbivores or specialist pollinators. Its foliage, flower heads, and seeds are eaten by a wide variety of native insects, birds, and mammals, and its flowers are pollinated by many insects, but all of them are generalists. The lack of any specialist herbivores or pollinators is unusual in a 'native' plant that is common, abundant, and widespread. There is a native bee that specializes on native *Bidens* species, but it has not been reported on *Bidens alba* in the scientific literature.

"The genus *Bidens*, as currently recognized, is diphyletic. This means that its species have two separate origins. One group of *Bidens* species evolved from Latin American species of *Coreopsis*. Another

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REGISTER FOR A TWO-PART ZOOM BOOK DISCUSSION

Join your fellow nature lovers on Tuesdays, April 13 and April 20, at 7PM when members of Audubon Everglades will gather on Zoom to discuss the book by ornithologist **Dr. J. Drew Lanham, *The Home Place: Memoirs of a Colored Man's Love Affair with Nature***. Dr. Lanham was the keynote speaker at the 2020 Audubon Assembly and has written for magazines and publications such as the New York Times.

Pre-registration is required, and space is limited to 12 participants.

This online, Zoom book discussion will meet twice. The book is 212 pages long and divided into three parts:

*Tuesday, April 13 from 7-8PM
(Part 1, Flock: pgs. 1-96)

*Tuesday, April 20 from 7-8PM
(Parts 2 & 3, Fledgling and Flight: pgs. 99-207)

Pre-registration:

To be one of the 12 who discuss this book, email Blue Kaufman at: blue.kaufman2@gmail.com

Please note: when you pre-register you will receive a separate email with the Zoom meeting instructions before the book discussion.

So, pre-register now, obtain the book, and prepare to share your comments about this birder's unique nature experience.

CONSERVATION

by Scott Zucker

I recently had the opportunity to speak at the March 11, 2021 South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board Meeting on the proposed release of approximately, 8.6 acres of a remnant wetland Conservation Easement slated for development within the Wellington Mall Complex. After a long and sometimes heated discussion among board members, the SFWMD Board reached a deadlock, and the petition by the developer failed. However, on March 23rd at 7 PM, the Wellington Village Council meeting agenda includes a potential vote to amend their future land use map and to modify the land use designation for this wetland property located at Wellington Green.

I also recently spoke during the Public Comment Period at the February 26, 2021 Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) meeting concerning FWC Board Chair Rodney Barreto's proposed development on submerged land off Singer Island in the Lake Worth Lagoon. That development would destroy the surrounding sea grass and mangroves and threaten the fish and birds that forage there. Following the comment period, the Board challenged Barreto's development plans, and he backpedaled, saying that he had no "active" plan to fill and develop the property. Later that week

he announced that he would be selling the property. Who purchases this property will determine where this fight continues.

The 2021 Florida Legislative Session continues until April 30. This is an excellent time to contact your legislators to remind them that, when we protect the environment, we protect our quality of life. It is important that they recognize the need to conserve our land, water, wildlife, climate, and access to affordable, renewable energy for all.

You can easily send pre-written letters, which you can edit, to your local Florida legislators by going to Florida Conservation Voters' ["Take Action" page](#).

1000 Friends of Florida, founded by Florida conservation legend Nathaniel Reed, is an excellent website for following important bills that may impact our environment. Go to their 2021 [Florida Legislative Session](#) to see what bills they support or oppose and to take action.

You can find your local legislators [here](#).

You can contact Governor Ron DeSantis [here](#).

Plant of the Month continued from page 3



Photo: *Bidens mitis* © C.J. McCartney

group of species evolved from North American species of *Coreopsis*. *Bidens alba* falls into the Latin American group because (like the other Latin American *Bidens* species) it is more closely related to Latin American *Coreopsis* species than to North American *Bidens* species." (Personal communication, 22 February 2021)

Rufino also tells an amazing story about *Bidens alba* in his book. It seems that *Bidens alba* seeds were found in the ballast of the treasure ship *Nuestra Senora de Atocha*, which sank in 1622. The seeds were recovered in 1987. When soaked in fresh water, the 365-year-old seeds germinated and grew into healthy plants (p. 12). No surprise then, that *Bidens alba* re-seeds itself so vigorously in our gardens today. I do not plant *Bidens alba*, and I pull it out whenever I can, but it perseveres, and pollinators find it and love it. If we paved over our garden (Heaven forbid!), I have no doubt that *Bidens alba* would sprout up through cracks in the pavement.

Be that as it may, there are other *Bidens* species that are better behaved. The Florida Wildflower Foundation has a wonderful brochure on Attracting Birds with Florida's Native Wildflowers, and *Bidens* spp. (various species in the *Bidens* genus) [are high on the list](#). Two species well worth a try are *Bidens mitis* (Smallfruit beggarticks) and *Bidens laevis* (Burr marigold).

If these are not available at local native plant nurseries, seed packets for *Bidens mitis* (Smallfruit beggarticks) and *Bidens laevis* (Burr marigold) are available to [purchase from the Florida Wildflower Cooperative](#).



Photo: Volunteers, Helen Laurence and Buffie Judd, help Lauren Butcher identify and catalog native plants.
© Mary Young

Florida Burrowing Owls

(Athene cunicularia floridana)-State threatened

by Susan Faulkner Davis



Photo: Burrowing Owl © Susan Faulkner Davis

2nd in a series of articles on Florida's endangered or threatened birds

It's hard not to succumb to the charm of a fearless little Florida Burrowing Owl the first time you meet one. A small, round, feathered body appears at the doorway of the burrow. It frankly appraises you with its very large, round bright yellow eyes. Then, depending on the bird's mood, it may go back to its business in the burrow or pop out of the burrow and rush up the slope to a mound of dirt at the top for a better look at you. It is a direct look, unambiguously assessing you as a potential threat. A tiny creature standing no taller than the grasses, full of curiosity, attitude, and fierceness.

This was my introduction to Florida Burrowing Owls. I became involved with Project Perch, an organization affiliated with local Audubon chapters that protects urban and suburban owls in Southeast Florida by installing sturdy artificial burrows in safe places. I write now as one who loves birds, particularly our "special needs" Florida birds, and who enjoys sharing what I learn.

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Project Announcement and Volunteer Opportunity: Audubon Everglades and FAU Pine Jog *Plants for Birds* *Native Habitat Teaching Garden*

by Lauren Butcher

Native Plant Teaching Garden

We are excited to announce that Audubon Everglades, working in partnership with Florida Atlantic University's Pine Jog Environmental Education Center, has received \$5000 in grant funding from the FPL/Audubon Florida Plants for Birds Program to establish a **Plants for Birds Native Habitat Teaching Garden**.

The purpose of the garden is to encourage access to nature for all children by showing local educators how to incorporate and use native habitat gardens on their school grounds to enrich their curriculum and benefit both students and wildlife. Garden features and educational components will focus on the vital interconnections among birds, native plant communities, indigenous insects, environmental health, food crops, and diverse human communities in South Florida.

The project will be a new component of the existing native plant demonstration garden at FAU Pine Jog. Funding will be used to provide additional native plants, interpretive and plant identification signage,

bird nesting boxes, educational resources, and an educational workshop for teachers later this spring. Audubon Everglades and FAU Pine Jog look forward to working with community partners, teachers, and students to "dig in" to this exciting project this spring.

Call for Volunteers!

Volunteer activities will take place on multiple dates/shifts in April and May 2021. Volunteers will have the opportunity to assist with native plant surveying/IDs, site preparation, and garden installation. Knowledge about South Florida native plants is a plus, but not a requirement! As a COVID-19 precaution, we are limiting volunteer numbers at each shift to a maximum of 10 people and will require those present to follow all CDC and university guidelines for COVID safety.

If you are interested in lending your time, effort, native plant, or garden expertise to this worthy project, please contact Lauren Butcher at lbutcher2013@fau.edu or 561-686-6600. We will then contact you with more information about available dates and shifts. Thank you!



Photo: Burrowing Owl © Susan Faulkner Davis

Burrowing Owl continued from page 6

The adorable Florida Burrowing Owl is a subspecies of Burrowing Owl. This little owl is designated as “Threatened” and is also classified as a rare bird in the state of Florida. It is, and has been, under threat from continuing habitat loss. Since these raptors are now found mostly in urban and suburban areas, they are presently facing multiple other threats as well.

Appearance

A Florida Burrowing Owl is the smallest of any owl in our state. It is a short stocky bird with long legs, standing 7.5 -10 inches tall, an imposing little raptor. Their long legs, with a few “hairy” looking feathers, are atypical of owls but are well suited to a bird that spends much of its time on the ground. They have a smooth, round head. Their coloration is brown mottled with white spots on the upper parts and a spotted breast grading to bars across the belly in adults. Juveniles are more solid looking with a buff-colored breast. They have striking bright white facial feathers in the form of a “unibrow” and a chinstrap. Their large, round eyes are usually yellow, but in south Florida there are various, albeit rare, eye color anomalies. Eyes can be pale green, hazel, yellow flecked with black to almost all black; the reason is unknown. An adult weighs about 6 ounces. On the wing they look a bit like a baked potato with slender narrow wings. They are good fliers, soundless in the air since their feathers are softly fringed. They can hover over prey. Florida Burrowing Owls are unusual owls because they are diurnal, hunting during the day. They are also crepuscular, hunting at dawn and dusk, a strategy that allows them to escape to the

cool dimness of their burrows when the sun is full and at its hottest.

Habitat

As its name implies, the Burrowing Owl is the only North American bird of prey to live and nest underground. It is a bird that evolved over millennia, living in dry prairies or on sandy coastal ridges, habitats with harsh conditions, sparse vegetation, and few trees. A Burrowing Owl’s burrows (a family may have more than one) are homes that are occupied virtually year-round. They are used for protection, as a nest, or a storage place for excess food, and they are climate controlled for comfort. Heavy rains will flood burrows, so the owls briefly take to life in the trees during Florida’s rainy season. When life is good and the suitable habitat is left undisturbed, burrows can be occupied by the same family generation after generation. Burrowing Owls can and do occupy a burrow made by another creature but, when digging is easy, they will excavate their own. Their mining tools are their beaks and their talons. With long legs and sturdy Zygodactyl toed feet (toes arranged two in front and two behind), they push the soil out as they dig forward. They are able, given good soil conditions, to easily dig out long tunnels with enlarged chambers. If they hit an obstacle, they dig around it. Burrows in Florida are shallower than those of their Burrowing Owl cousins in the western states. Here the owls must do what nature dictates to stay above our high groundwater table, and burrows can be as shallow as 1-2 feet below ground. Burrows can head in any direction from a burrow entrance and can be from 6 to 15 feet in length.

Having learned about the unknown placement of a burrow’s run and chambers and its relative shallow depth in Florida soils, I understand why owl burrows need protection. By staying well back from the entrance in all directions. We birders can help prevent burrow collapse and save owls from being entombed, a certain death.

Diet and pest control

Florida Burrowing Owls are not picky eaters and will consume varied foodstuffs. Insects make up the bulk of their diet, but they also capture and consume mice and rats, as well as snakes, small lizards, frogs, other mammals, and birds. They often use their burrow as a larder and will temporarily cache food there to eat later. They are excellent at pest control, no matter where they live, and that makes them good neighbors. In urban areas it is necessary to advocate against the use of pesticide, herbicide and rodenticide so these creatures can have plenty of food free of poison. **Part 2 of this Florida Burrowing Owl article will run in the May issue of the Kite**

[A Burrowing Owl Cam in Broward County](#)

EarthCam has teamed up with Birding Adventures, South Florida Audubon Society, NatureScape Broward and the School Board of Broward County to deliver a unique look at a Burrowing Owl colony.



Photo: Burrowing Owl © Susan Faulkner Davis

JOIN AUDUBON