



Corkscrew  
Swamp Sanctuary

## Along the Boardwalk

April, 2008

[www.corkscrew.audubon.org](http://www.corkscrew.audubon.org)

### Volunteers recognized for service

The 2008 volunteer recognition dinner was held on Saturday, March 22, in the Blair Audubon Center. 90 people were in attendance for an evening of friends, food, Ed's story, and good times.

All volunteers were recognized for their contributions of talent and time, collectively contributing 15,141 hours to the Sanctuary in 2007. Education and boardwalk volunteers were recognized for their efforts as naturalists and program leaders who together reached 89,880 visitors and program participants this past fiscal year.

Name plates and stars were added to the volunteer service board, located by the entrance to the Nature Store, for total hours of service. Eight name plates were added for volunteers reaching 500 hours: Larry French, Cliff Kobrin, Marcia Leider, Carol Mulder, Steve

Nellis, Greg Nelson, Judy Rothman and Len Rothman. Four volunteers had one

star added to their name plate after completing a total of 1000 hours of service: Priscilla Higgins, Carolyn Machesney, Bill Meador, and Ginnie Young. Three volunteers accumulated 2500 hours or more and had a second star added to their name plates: Leslie Burgess, Elly Dorrance, and Dick Wakeling.

Volunteers received the 2008 Corkscrew service pin designed by artist David Williamson. The design features a Ghost Orchid to recognize the amazing one discovered within sight of the boardwalk this past summer.

Volunteers who were unable to attend the dinner can pick up their pins from the basket in the Bunting House, or if unable to do this, let Sally know and she will mail one to you.



Panther update...

### Tracker speaks April 3

Several panthers are roaming the sanctuary area, two of them recently observed by volunteers. Three have radio collars and are continually tracked.

Roy McBride, who tracks and collars the panthers, will speak at a special seminar at Corkscrew on Thursday, April 3, at noon in the Blair Center classrooms. He will give a PowerPoint presentation on his work and on the panthers.

The panther at the right, photographed last June by Ralph Arwood, and the panther photographed by Art Blatt last month were not collared and therefore were not being tracked. Art Blatt's was fairly large but lean, perhaps a female. The interns have also seen a much smaller panther several times recently that appears not to be collared.



The panther seen around the boardwalk by the interns and Phil Nye was a 90+ pound female who was subsequently trapped and outfitted with a tracking collar.

### Quick ID Guide: Elderberry, Water Dropwort, Water Hemlock

**Elderberry** has a brown, woody tree-like trunk and compound leaves with opposite leaflets. It is found in wet areas and along the edges of wet woodlands. The fruit is a purplish black and used in wines, jellies, and pies.



**Water Dropwort** has a thin, hollow, round green stem with very thin leaves. Flowers branch from the top of the stem. It is found in the wet prairie. A member of the carrot family, it is host to the Black Swallowtail caterpillar.



**Water Hemlock** has thick, multiple green stems growing from a single base and serrated, compound leaves. Several flower clusters are on the same stem. It is often seen between the lakes. All parts of the plant are toxic.



### Bird Trivia

Why do some birds have such heavily pigmented feathers in their tails and wings?

Discover the answer at [www.collieraudubon.org/birding.html](http://www.collieraudubon.org/birding.html)

## In Case a Visitor Asks

### What happens to alligators and turtles when the lakes dry up?

Different species have different ways of coping with dried ponds and lakes. Wading birds fly and mammals walk to new feeding areas. Fish that aren't already eaten will die and provide vultures and raccoons with food.

Reptiles and amphibians have different strategies. Some move while others can stay and tough it out until summer rains and water return.

Those that move, including some alligators, can sense the direction of available water and can travel surprisingly long distances to reach it.

Those that stay have an advantage: they are cold-blooded and don't have to eat every day.

Alligators can go for months without eating, living off of stored fat at the bases of their tails. A wide base indicates that the animal has been eating well. The larger the gator, the more fat that is stored. Small gators can live off of their stored fat for a short while, but they do not have enough to survive a prolonged dry spell.

Temperature is another concern for cold-blooded animals. They could overheat and die in the open.

Some turtles dig down into the mud with just their nostrils sticking up. Water snakes find cavities under exposed roots and logs. Alligators that stay will dig dens in mud banks and crawl in.

Then another aspect of the cold-blooded advantage goes to work: metabolism, heart rate, and breathing all slow – a “dry season hibernation” called *aestivation*.



An alligator peers from its den at the north lake during the 2007 dry-down.

## March Sightings



An Ovenbird ventures out from cover to forage under the Bunting House feeders (March 14).



Delicate Ionopsis Orchids bloom near Sign 8. More were near the south lake (March 25).



A large male gator grabs a Red-bellied Turtle at the north lake. The turtle survived (March 28).

## Blair Center Events

### Cunningham photography exhibit in foyer through April

A new photography exhibit is coming to the Blair Center foyer for the month of April. Dick Cunningham's photographs hang in galleries around the country, but it is the first time he will exhibit at Corkscrew.

From the swamps of Florida to the mountains of Alaska, Cunningham has been photographing the natural beauty and wildlife of the United States for the last 35 years. “Photography to me utilizes the subtle color and lighting found in our natural environment to capture a

mood or feeling of that moment in time for the viewer to experience.”

Cunningham worked in the family photofinishing business in Danville, Illinois, but moved to Breckenridge, Colorado, where he opened and for 15 years operated the Cunningham Gallery. He also organized three art festivals and shows.

In 1993, he moved to Naples with his wife and three children where he now partners with his brother in Naples Custom Photo.



### PBS' *NATURE* at Corkscrew

WGCU Public Media and Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary are partnering to highlight the PBS series *NATURE*.

Three special screenings will be held at Corkscrew. Each will feature information about *NATURE*, a showing of a brief clip from the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary episode of the series, and *NATURE* door prizes.

The Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary/*NATURE* events are all on Monday, April 7. The three showings are at 9 AM, 11 AM, and 1 PM.

Admission is included with a member admission or visitors' paid admission. There is no charge for volunteers.

## Green Treefrog *Hyla cinerea*

The Green Treefrog is probably the most commonly seen and one of the most beautiful of the North American treefrogs. It is more slender than any of the other treefrogs, and the slenderness is accentuated by the lengthwise stripes of metallic white on each side.

The Green Treefrog has great ability to change from light to dark. The color may be nearly black, or it may be so light a greenish yellow that the stripes on the sides are barely distinguishable. It generally tends to match the color of the object it's on, but not always. Color is also affected by temperature.

It is most easily identified by the white "racing stripe" down the side, which frequently has a dark border. The tops and insides of the rear legs are also white and it tends to have whitish "lips" and a pale underside. While it can change color quickly, the stripe stays the same color. In rare occasions, the stripe may be minute or missing.

Adults range in size from 1-1/4 to 2-1/2 inches, and the female is noticeably larger than the male. Toepads are medium sized and observable except when the frog is at rest position. The tympanum is greenish to green-brown.

The rear legs of Green Treefrogs are so long that, except when leaping or resting, it looks as though the frog ought to be very awkward. Those legs enable it to leap great distances to catch prey. A leap of three to four feet is typical, and it can leap a distance of eight to ten feet.

It is gentle and not easily frightened, unlike the similar appearing Squirrel Treefrogs, which go hyper when approached. When aroused, however, the Green Treefrog becomes as active as any other treefrog. When startled, the Green Treefrog usually takes one long jump and then is still. The Squirrel Treefrog, which has yellowish "lips" and no stripe, keeps hopping and hopping.

A nighttime hunter, Green Treefrog food is small insects— mostly crickets, beetles, moths, and caterpillars. It is usually inactive during the day, staying near water and clinging to stems of aquatic plants, trees, and shrubs. It stays relatively close to the ground while the Squirrel Treefrog is higher in trees and tall shrubs.

Green Treefrogs call most frequently during mating season and prior to rain or on humid evenings, especially when the barometric pressure is dropping. This is most often from the start of the rainy season through late October.

When abundant near water, Green Treefrogs are noisiest just before dusk with the chorus being broken by short intervals of silence. A single note is first, and as though a signal, it is taken up and repeated in a prolonged chorus until it ceases as suddenly as it began.

A single male will call approximately 75 times per minute during mating season. The call is a ringing *quenkenk*, which from a distance sounds like a cowbell.

Green Treefrogs can breed toward the end of their first year, and breeding takes place in late spring to early summer. They breed in water at least several feet deep in permanent ponds, whereas most other frogs breed in shallow temporary ponds that are created by rainfall.

The female lays small masses of eggs on roots of floating vegetation. The egg mass forms and grows as it absorbs water, eventually appearing jelly-like just below the water's surface.

Eggs hatch in four to six days, and the tadpoles change into frogs in about two months, usually from July through October. The tadpoles grow to about 1-1/2 inches, have very long tails, and are greenish with a cream-colored stripe from nostril to eye.

