



Corkscrew
Swamp Sanctuary

Along the Boardwalk

October, 2006

www.corkscrew.audubon.org

Conservation Collier needs your support

In November, 2002, the voters of Collier County agreed to tax themselves for the first time ever, to pay for a conservation land buying program that would buy at least \$75 million worth of environmentally sensitive land over ten years. That successful referendum created Conservation Collier, which very shortly will have spent the entire amount on over 800 acres of important lands missed by the state and federal agencies.

The money went much faster than originally anticipated for a reason we can all relate to: the incredible escalation in land prices. A few examples of the amazing diversity of habitats and wetlands already purchased or ap-

proved for purchase can be viewed at the Conservation Collier web site (www.colliergov.net/natresources/ConservationCollier/index.cfm).

There will be a question on this November's election ballot asking whether the voters wish to continue funding Conservation Collier's vital program. A rejection will mean local land buying will cease, while approval sends a strong message to the county commissioners to continue levying the 0.25 mil ad valorem tax which has been funding the program since 2003.

Tell your friends, neighbors, neighborhood organizations to **VOTE YES** for Conservation Collier at the November 7 elections.

A note from the Development Team about giving

Volunteers have asked about making gifts to Corkscrew in their wills. Bequests that benefit Corkscrew are processed by National Audubon Society. To make a bequest, ask your lawyer to use the following language in your will:

I bequeath to the National Audubon Society Inc., a not-for-profit organiza-

tion located at 70 Broadway, New York, NY 10002, ____ % of my residuary estate (or a specific amount) for the benefit of Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary.

To receive the Audubon brochure on planned giving, contact Candace at cforsyth@audubon.org.

Wish List update

Special thanks to Bob Mellor for his donation to purchase an additional radio for volunteer and boardwalk use. It has already been ordered.

Items still needed include back issues of *Butterfly* magazine; five additional radios; a planer, band saw, and pressure-treated lumber; and 10 pairs of Nomex fire fighting pants.

Please send any contributions, payable to National Audubon Society, to Lori and specify on the check where the funds are to be allocated.

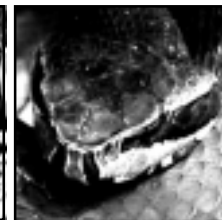
Quick ID Guide

Distinguishing a Banded Water Snake from a Water Moccasin

First, do not judge by the body's color or size, or even the head's shape because one defense mechanism Banded Water Snakes use is to flatten out to look like a Moccasin.



Instead, look at the head. If you can't see the head, you may not be able



to tell. The lower jaw of the Banded Water Snake has lots of fine vertical stripes while the Moccasin has two or three large blotches.

Then, look at the eye. The water snake's pupils are round; pit vipers pupils are vertical slits like a cat.

Download color photo comparisons of young, immature, and adult snakes, at www.corkscrew.audubon.org/Wildlife/Snake_BWS_Mocc.pdf

Short Takes...

Nature Store

Many new items are now in the Nature Store including 2007 Audubon Calendars.. Stop by and check them out, and consider the Nature Store for your hard-to-find holiday gifts.

Audubon Assembly

For all who will be here and are interested, the Audubon Assembly is October 19-21 in Cocoa Beach. Information is available at the Blair Center. Pick up a copy of the *Florida Naturalist*.

Discover Corkscrew

The first Discover Corkscrew program of the 2006-2007 season is a guided Night Walk on October 25. Reservation information is available on the Corkscrew web site (click on "Information" and then "Discover Corkscrew.") Information for other programs is also posted there.

Blair Center voted the best

Florida Monthly readers voted the Blair Center as the best nature center in Florida in 2006. Winners are at www.floridamagazine.com/previous/bof.html

Ed in Swamp Buggy Fest

Ed will be driving the Corkscrew swamp buggy in the Swamp Buggy Festival parade to encourage voter support for Conservation Collier.

In Case a Visitor Asks



What causes the peeling and shredding of bark on the cypress trees?

Peeling bark and shredded bark are two different issues, quite unrelated.

The first part of the question: cypress bark naturally peels in large sections, *left*. It's a normal occurrence with mature bald cypress trees.

The second part of the question: large patches of shredded bark on the trunks of cypress trees might be caused by several things, all animal.

Bears will mark territory by clawing a tree. Scent glands on the paws



leave an odoriferous calling card for other bears. But bears are not common on the boardwalk, and they don't climb high in trees to mark them.

The more likely culprit is the Gray Squirrel, *left*, which will shred and tear off small pieces of bark from the trunks of trees and take them to its nest or drey to use as a nice soft lining.

Climbing animals such as bears, squirrels, raccoons, and bobcats do not shred patches of bark as they climb.

September Sightings



A Praying Mantis waits for a meal to land on a Pickerelweed bloom (September 15).



Butterfly Peas bloom in wet areas in the pine flatwood (September 19).



An Ovenbird hunts for caterpillars and insects along the boardwalk (September 19).

BIRDS

Anhinga
Great Blue Heron
Great Egret
Snowy Egret
Little Blue Heron
Green Heron
Black-crowned Night Heron
White Ibis
Wood Duck
Black Vulture
Turkey Vulture
Red-shouldered Hawk
Purple Gallinule
Limpkin
Mourning Dove
Barred Owl
Common Nighthawk
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird
Belted Kingfisher
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker

Pileated Woodpecker
Eastern Phoebe
Great-crested Flycatcher
Tree Swallow
Blue Jay
Tufted Titmouse
Carolina Wren
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Catbird
Mockingbird
Eastern Wood Pewee
White-eyed Vireo
Red-eyed Vireo
Northern Parula Warbler
Black-throated Blue Warbler
Yellow-throated Warbler
Golden-winged Warbler
Pine Warbler
Prairie Warbler
Palm Warbler
Black-and-white Warbler

American Redstart
Prothonotary Warbler
Worm-eating Warbler
Hooded Warbler
Canada Warbler
Ovenbird
Northern Waterthrush
Louisiana Waterthrush
Common Yellowthroat
Summer Tanager
Veery
Cardinal
Boat-tailed Grackle
Common Grackle

BUTTERFLIES

Zebra Longwing
Gulf Fritillary
Ruddy Daggerwing
White Peacock
Viceroy
Queen

Black Swallowtail
Tiger Swallowtail
Giant Swallowtail
Palamedes Swallowtail
Brazilian Skipper
Skipper spp.
Pearl Crescent
Phaon Crescent
Gray Hairstreak
Clouded Sulphur
Sulphur spp.

MAMMALS

Gray Squirrel
Cottontail Rabbit
River Otter
Raccoon
White-tailed Deer

HERPS

Alligator
Green Anole

Brown Anole
Five-lined Skink

Water Moccasin
Banded Water Snake
Peninsula Ribbon Snake
Black Racer
Yellow Rat Snake

Mud Turtle
Peninsula Cooter
Red-bellied Turtle

Pig Frog
Leopard Frog
Greenhouse Frog
Florida Cricket Frog
Oak Toad
Green Treefrog
Squirrel Treefrog
Cuban Treefrog

Painted Bunting

Passerina ciris

contributed by Kristine Gabel

October has arrived and with it come our Painted Buntings, perhaps the most colorful birds that we have in the swamp. They are most often seen at the bird feeders near the Bunting House.

The Painted Bunting has two distinct breeding populations in North America.

The eastern population – the ones we see – winters here in South Florida and the West Indies (mostly the Bahamas and Cuba) and migrates north in April to breed along the Atlantic Coast from northeastern Florida to North Carolina.

The western population winters in southern Mexico and Central America and migrates north to Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas to breed.

The male bunting is unmistakable. It has a blue head with a red eye ring, a red chest and rump, and a bright green back with darker grayish wing tips and tail.

The female is plain green, slightly darker above, with no visible markings. Juveniles, both male and female, are green like the females but are more of a grayish-green.

Buntings prefer somewhat open areas with low dense brush surrounding some taller trees.

They tend to forage on the ground and in the fall and winter their diet consists mostly of seeds. During the breeding season, they primarily eat insects, insect larva, and spiders, and they have even been observed taking insects out of spider webs.

Because of their preferred habitat and feeding preferences, they are often very hard to find; however, they are



easily attracted to bird feeders during the fall and winter.

Males are very territorial on their northern nesting grounds, defending their territories with songs and sometimes fights that include pecking, wing striking, and grappling. They are pugnacious and the disputes are sometimes bloody and fatal. However, they get along well here because there is no female or territory to defend.

Painted Bunting territorial and mating songs are a fast, repeated warble of different tones, but all we might hear during

the winter is their call note—a sharp, metallic sounding *tsick*.

Painted Bunting Trivia

- The Painted Bunting belongs to the *Passerina* genus of birds in the Cardinal family *Cardinalidae*.
- Many Southwest Florida native birds have some true green feathers, but the female Painted Bunting is the only native bird to have ALL green feathers, although several shades of green.
- In French, the Painted Bunting is known as *Passerin nonpareil*, meaning Without Equal.
- In Spanish, it is known as *Mariposa Pintada*, meaning Painted Butterfly.
- Painted Buntings migrate at night. Our eastern population molts at its nesting area and then travels directly to its wintering grounds here.
- “According to an American Indian legend, when the great spirit was giving all the birds their colors, he ran short of dye so he gave the very last one, the Painted Bunting, a coat of many colors made from dabs of whatever was left.” (Pope 1991).
- According to *Birds of North America*, the maximum verified age of a wild Painted Bunting is 12 years. The mean life expectancy is much less.
- Painted Buntings are on Audubon’s Watch List because breeding data has indicated a significant decline in their numbers, due perhaps to habitat loss, to trapping in Mexico for the pet trade, and/or possibly to some cowbird parasitism.



Frequency of Painted Bunting boardwalk sightings at Corkscrew

Numbers below the months are the percent of days each month from 1998 through September, 2006, that a volunteer observed a Painted Bunting. For more statistics, visit the Corkscrew web page (www.corkscrew.audubon.org), click on “Wildlife” and then on “Birds” in the right column.

