



Corkscrew
Swamp Sanctuary

Along the Boardwalk

January, 2008

www.corkscrew.audubon.org

New boardwalk signs coming soon

Progress is tangible on the new interpretative and historical signs for the entry and the boardwalk.

Signs planned for the boardwalk will replace those that are missing or have faded graphics. Most of the text will remain the same, but all will receive new or similar photos and graphics.

Three of the new signs are already installed on the walkway from the parking lot to the Blair Center. All of the signs will be of similar design and construction.

A fourth sign to replace the "Planning Your Visit" sign by the butterfly garden, shown above, has arrived and will soon be installed.



Six boardwalk signs have been proofed and are ready for fabrication in Canada; the other signs are in varying stages of planning and composition.

To date, funds for the project have come from the Volunteer Fundraising Committee. However, the final cost will exceed the amount the committee has raised. If you can help with a donation for the project, contact Lori Piper about how to designate your gift.

January festivals offer talks, trips, activities

January 18-20

Southwest Florida Birding Festival
www.rookerybay.org/Bird-Festival-2008.html

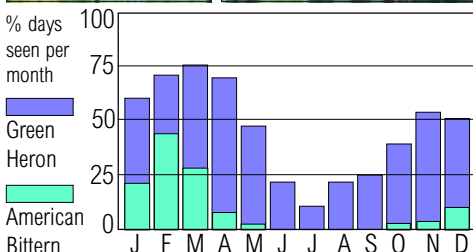
Based at Rookery Bay, the Southwest Florida Birding Festival offers birding field trips to 18 locations in Southwest Florida, including Corkscrew. Speakers include Ken Meyer (Short-tailed Hawks), Scott Wiedensaul, Pete Thayer, Jerry Jackson, Dave Graff & Mike Owen (Orchids of Fakahatchee), Jerry Lorenz, Ted Below, and Steve Carbol. Other activities include a native plant sale and a Florida butterflies workshop.

January 25-27

Big O Birding Festival
www.bigobirdingfestival.com

The Big O Birding Festival focuses on Hendry County and Lake O, offering birding trips to STA-5 and Dinner Island, several canoe birding trips, a regional tour for birds, and a just-after-sunset Owl Hoot trip. Speakers include author Robert Fulton with Cornell's Ivory-billed Woodpecker search, plus an arts-and-crafts show.

Quick ID Guide: Green Heron vs. American Bittern



Both birds are found among grasses and reeds along edges of water, usually marshes. Both are solitary, move slowly, and often stand with extended neck and bill pointed up. The physical differences end there.

The Green Heron is smaller than a Pileated Woodpecker. The American Bittern is large, about the size of Yellow-crowned Night Heron.

The Green Heron has a streaked breast and neck; the Bittern has a boldly striped breast and neck.

The Green Heron has a dark green solid-colored back and a similarly dark colored crest. The Bittern has an exquisitely patterned light brown back with a brownish crest.

The Bittern has a dark streak from the back of the bill down the side of the neck, and a noticeable light bar over the eye. The Green Heron has neither of those markings.

Vocally, the Green Heron's two calls are a sharp, piercing *skeew* and when it's nervous, an irregular series of low knocking *kuk kuk kuk* notes.

The Bittern's calls are a deep, gulping, pounding *bloonk-adoonk* and in flight it utters a nasal *squark*.

The Green Heron usually hunts by crouching low on a solid surface like a log or limb just above the water's surface and waiting for prey. The American Bittern forages in the water, standing erect and slowly stalking.

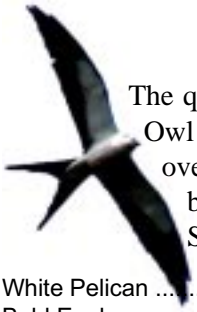
Bird Trivia

What is the only bird that drinks water the way that people do?

Discover the answer at www.collieraudubon.org/birding.html

In Case a Visitor Asks

How big is that bird, and what is its wingspan?



The question most often arises when visitors are looking at a Barred Owl sitting in a tree, or occasionally a Swallow-tailed Kite soaring overhead. Below are answers about wingspans and weights for some birds that might be seen from the boardwalk. Figures are from Sibley's *Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America*.

White Pelican	108" ..	16.4 lb	American Bittern	42"	1.5 lb
Bald Eagle	80"	9.5 lb	Barred Owl	42"	1.6 lb
Sand Hill Crane	77" ..	10.6 lb	Limpkin	40"	2.4 lb
Great Blue Heron	72"	5.3 lb	Red-shouldered Hawk	40"	1.4 lb
Turkey Vulture	67"	4.0 lb	Little Blue Heron	40"	12 oz
Wild Turkey (male)	64" ..	16.2 lb	White Ibis	38"	2.0 lb
Osprey	63"	3.5 lb	Short-tailed Hawk	37"	15 oz
Wood Stork	61"	5.3 lb	Tri-colored Heron	36"	13 oz
Black Vulture	59"	4.4 lb	Pileated Woodpecker	29"	10 oz
Great Egret	51"	1.9 lb	Green Heron	26"	7 oz
Swallow-tailed Kite	51"	15 oz	Chuck-will's Widow	26" ..	4.2 oz
Roseate Spoonbill	50"	3.3 lb	Belted Kingfisher	20"	5 oz
Anhinga	45"	2.7 lb	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	18" ..	2.3 oz
Black-crown. Night Heron	44"	1.9 lb	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	6" ..	2/10 oz
Yellow-crown. Night Heron	42"	1.5 lb	Ruby-throated Hummingbird ..	5" ..	1/10 oz



Great Egret, above. Wood Stork, below.



December Sightings



A Mockingbird surveys the pine flatwood area from the boardwalk railing (December 14).



A Soldier butterfly gets nectar from Climbing Aster blooms in the wet prairie (December 14).



A Black-throated Green Warbler forages in vines and shrubs by the shortcut trail (December 7).

Audubon of Florida Philanthropist of the Year

Audubon of Florida honored a Corkscrew volunteer at its annual Audubon Assembly this fall: Joe Ambrozy was recognized as the Audubon of Florida Philanthropist of the Year.

Although he had been a regular visitor to Corkscrew for years, Joe didn't begin volunteering at Corkscrew until after he retired and moved from New Jersey to Florida in 1997. Already an avid birder, he began as a boardwalk naturalist and taught birding.



photo: R. Wiley

He also began working on Corkscrew's development committee, focusing on ways to preserve Corkscrew and its wildlife.

He provided major financial support during the Blair Center construction. A plaque on the back porch recognizes his work on that project.

After a break for knee replacement surgery, Joe has returned to the boardwalk as a Monday volunteer, and he manages Corkscrew's monthly boardwalk bird

census and leads a team for the annual Corkscrew Christmas Bird Count.

He is a member of the Board of Directors for Audubon of Florida where he is an active and vocal advocate for funding and implementation of projects for Corkscrew and for Audubon of Florida as a whole. He has also served as Audubon of Florida treasurer.

In an article in the winter 2007/2008 *Florida Naturalist*, Ed Carlson commended Joe: "His passion for birds and the natural environment is unwavering, and that passion is backed up by dedicated service and major financial support."

Profile

Carolina Wren *Thryothorus ludovicianus*

Singing one of the loudest songs per volume of bird, the Carolina Wren's *tea-kettle, tea-kettle, tea-kettle* and *tweedle, tweedle, tweedle* are familiar across the Southeast. For most Floridians, the Carolina Wren is the common house wren that nests in and around houses and garages, and is more likely to nest in a hanging plant than in a birdhouse.

The Carolina Wren is a year-round resident and can be distinguished from other wrens that winter in Florida by its rust-colored, unstriped back and wings, a buffy underside rather than whitish, a prominent white eye stripe and white chin, and its exceptionally loud voice.

Three subspecies breed in Florida: *T. l. ludovicianus* in the panhandle; *T. l. miamensis* in the peninsula; and *T. l. nesophilus* only off the Franklin County coast.

While the Carolina Wren is a southern bird that does not migrate, some younger birds travel northward for unknown reasons and set up residence. As long as the winters are mild, they will build resident populations, but if winter becomes severe, they perish rather than return south. The next generation repeats the northward cycle.

Carolina Wrens tend to sing anywhere at any time. Unlike other wren species, only the male Carolina Wren sings the loud song. It can sing up to 40 different song types, singing one repeatedly before switching to a different song type, and it may sing up to 3,000 times in a single day.

Neighboring males frequently match song types, and male and female sing duets. Some song elements may be appropriated from other species, too.

Their melodic and loud voices are easy to hear, but the wrens are not al-



ways as easy to sight. When they sing, they are like ventriloquists. Their bills point upward, so birders typically look for the noise and bird 10 to 15 feet above where the wren actually is.

The Carolina Wren inhabits a wide variety of habitats from swamps to forest to residential areas. It prefers moist woodlands and needs moderately dense shrub or brush cover.

A pair bond may form between a male and a female at any time of the year, and the pair will stay together for life. Members of a pair stay on their territory year-round and forage and move around the territory together.

A female Carolina Wren cannot defend her territory alone if her mate dies, so when they forage together, she spends much of her time watching for predators; they forage close to brush where they can quickly hide. Likely predators are Blue Jays, hawks, and Barred Owls.

Food consists primarily of insects and spiders with occasional fruit and seeds. Caterpillars and moths comprise the majority of the insect diet.

They forage on or near the ground and hop along far more often than they fly. They probe into cracks in bark, turn over vegetation with their bills, and glean insects from ground, tree trunks,

and branches. Large insects are dismembered by hammering with bills and shaking until small pieces break off.

However, wrens sometimes ascend to the higher branches of trees by climbing along a grapevine searching in the leaves and chinks of the bark for hidden food, and by alighting sidewise against the trunk and creeping up the side. They creep and hop in nearly equal degrees.

Breeding begins in late February and continues occasionally into September. Typically two broods are raised per season although sometimes three occur in the South.

Male Wrens build several nests and the female chooses one. Nests are usually in secluded locations with partial sun and shade in the vicinity of thick underbrush. Once the best site is selected, both the male and female work on the final nest.

The nest is round and dome-shaped with a side entrance. It is bulky and made of grasses, cypress needles, string, feathers, dried leaves, and almost always a piece of shed snake skin, or something that resembles shed snake skin such as a strip of clear plastic.

In natural areas, the Carolina Wren nests in cavities, tree roots, and palm fronds and boots. Nests can be up to 10 feet above the ground, but rarely higher.

Around houses, Carolina Wrens nest in practically anything – hanging baskets, clothespin bags, and behind cans on garage shelves – but almost never in bird houses that have been installed specifically for their use.

Three to five white eggs speckled with reddish-brown spots comprise a clutch. Incubation takes 12 to 16 days. At hatching, the young are helpless with some pale gray down, but they grow quickly and leave the nest when about 12 days old. They can breed the first spring after their birth.

