



Corkscrew
Swamp Sanctuary

Along the Boardwalk

December, 2008

www.corkscrew.audubon.org

Volunteer uniforms are changing

Volunteer uniforms are changing. Gone are shirts with patches and in are shirts embroidered with the Audubon logo and the word *Volunteer*.

The new shirts are cotton khaki buttondown fishing shirts with a caped back and multiple pockets.

The final cost hasn't been determined yet but should be in the range of \$24-\$30, depending on whether it's short sleeved or long sleeved. Sample



sizes for volunteers to try on are in Mary Short's office in the Nature Store.

The new uniforms will only be ordered once a month and are only available through the Nature Store. Uniform requests must be in by the 15th of the month and must be prepaid.

Additional apparel such as jackets and vests are also available. More information will follow.

So, don't buy a replacement shirt and sew on patches. Get the new shirt.

New research staff on board and ready to go

Michael Bush has recently joined the Corkscrew research team to assist with ongoing projects throughout Southwest Florida.

Mike comes to Corkscrew with a Bachelors degree from the University of Minnesota with a major in Fisheries and Wildlife and minor in Biology.

While an undergrad, he held several jobs including being a U of MN research assistant collecting fish in Appalachia, a volunteer aboard a NOAA



research trawler in the Aleutian Islands, and as a teaching assistant for two university biology courses.

His most recent job was a Wildlife Aide for a park district in the Twin Cities metro area assisting with Trumpeter Swan and Osprey reintroduction/monitoring programs and with land management.

Mike is very excited to be here and cannot wait to still be wearing shorts and sandals in January.

Donation provides new bridge for education

Exciting renovations are taking place at Weslyn Strickland Outdoor Education Center. The area includes learning stations created for 2nd and 5th grade field trips.

A generous donation to Youth Education programs allowed an old bridge by the library to be replaced using recycled Pao Lope from the unused section of boardwalk behind the library.

Bird Trivia

Where does the name *titmouse* come from and what does it mean?

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

Volunteer Dates

Potluck dinnerDec. 3
Volunteer Day workDec. 13
Christmas Bird CountDec. 20
Contact Sally for more information

Quick ID Guide:

Four stinging caterpillars

Caterpillars do not have the type of sting apparatus found in bees and wasps. Instead, caterpillars have specialized spines or hairs which are hollow and connected to underlying poison glands.

When brushed against, these structures break away, releasing toxins. In some cases, broken spines may penetrate the skin; in others, toxins spill out to spread on the surface of the skin.

The sting inflicted on humans is not a deliberate attack by the caterpillar but the result of inadvertent contact with the caterpillar's toxin-bearing spines.

Reactions to contact vary from slight itching or burning sensations to swelling, numbness, and intense pain. The type of reaction depends on the species of caterpillar, degree of contact, and susceptibility of the individual. Reactions may be severe for individuals with allergies or sensitive skin.

A caterpillar "sting" should be immediately washed to remove any insect hairs and poison that remain. An ice pack helps reduce swelling, and lotions containing steroids will lessen the discomfort and promote healing.



Io Moth Caterpillar



Puss Caterpillar



Saddleback Caterpillar



Tussock Caterpillar

In Case a Visitor Asks

Do all spiders bite? Are they poisonous?

There are two problems with this question: a technicality, and a set of false assumptions.

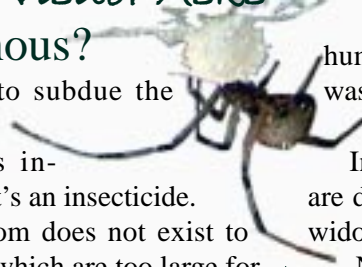
First, the technicality. "Poisonous" and "venomous" are two different things. No spider is poisonous (harmful to eat, breathe or touch). Mushrooms are sometimes poisonous, but spiders are not. Spiders are venomous (their toxins are proteins and work by being injected, not by being eaten).

Second, there are false assumptions about spider venoms. Almost all spiders are venomous. The purpose of spi-

der venom is to subdue the spider's prey, almost always insects. In brief, it's an insecticide.

Spider venom does not exist to harm creatures which are too large for spiders to eat, like humans. Most local spiders are harmless because they are not aggressive and will not bite indiscriminately, or their fangs are simply too small to nip through our comparatively thick skin.

A minority of spider species have venom that can cause localized pain in



humans, like the venom of bees or wasps, although bees and wasps are far more dangerous than spiders.

In Florida, only two spider species are dangerous to people: recluses and widows.

Nevertheless, all larger spiders (body length of a half inch or more) should be treated with caution. Avoid flicking them away from your body. When provoked, some can defend themselves by retaliating with a painful bite. People allergic to bee stings may react more strongly to the bite of a spider than an ordinary person.

November Sightings



A Big Cypress Fox Squirrel peers down from between Signs 10 and 11 (November 25).



A Gray Catbird sings in low brush. Catbirds arrived at the start of the month (November 14).



A new, uncollared Florida Panther explores the area south of the fish farm (November 25).
©2008 Ralph Arwood

Philanthropists of the Year

Nelson, Gabel honored as Audubon of Florida's Philanthropists of the Year

The husband and wife team of Kris Gabel and Greg Nelson were honored as Audubon of Florida's 2008 Philanthropists. Their roles as active volunteers were recognized in 2007 when they received the Audubon of Florida Volunteer of the Year award.

Greg and Kris have given of themselves in so many ways and continue to do so. The Sanctuary is the beneficiary of their time, professional expertise and now a generous financial commitment to the Education Program.

In 2007, Kris was chair of the Volunteer Fundraising Committee and they both purchased materials and built an extension to the boardwalk observation platform. In 2008, they prepared a bequest of to the Education Department at Corkscrew and additional funds to

Audubon of Florida. Greg worked with Nature Store Manager Mary Short to develop an online retail operation for the store, he purchased and donated the

domain name, and he edited product photos for the site. "It was a huge undertaking," said Short. "Greg was determined to get the site up and running in a couple of weeks. He offered his personal time and financial support."

Kris and Greg's dedication and financial support make it possible for the Sanctuary to provide environmental education for the children of the future. "We were always impressed at the quality of the Sanctuary and at the excitement, sophistication and dedication of the volunteers. We really enjoy helping others and knowing that our work there will help people enjoy this special place for generations to come."

"They encourage all around them to realize their full potential," said Education Director Rebecca Beck.



White-eyed Vireo

Vireo griseus maynardi

While most vireos inhabit tall trees, the White-eyed Vireo is usually found in low thickets where its presence is most easily detected by its loud and distinctive song.

Individual repertoires consist of a dozen or more distinct songs, each comprised of up to ten variable elements. Individual songs are repeated many times before switching to another song. A young bird's song is mostly learned from the father's repertoire with a few songs copied from immediate neighbors or calls of other bird species.

The White-eyed Vireo is a relatively small bird, around five inches in length. It is olive green above, white below with yellow flanks, and has two white wing bars. The adult has a white eye surrounded by yellow "spectacles." The immature is similar to the adult but has brown eyes.

The American Ornithological Union recognizes six subspecies of White-eyed Vireos. The one found here, *Vireo griseus maynardi*, is a year-round resident that breeds in Florida from the Keys north to St. Augustine.

The different subspecies decrease in size and brightness of color from north to south. The northern subspecies, larger and brighter yellow, is fully migratory, breeding from Illinois east to southern Connecticut and wintering in Mexico and the Yucatan Peninsula.

White-eyed Vireos can inhabit virtually any habitat type that contains a well-developed understory including, dense thickets, pine flatwoods, cypress swamps, and scrubby edges of roads, canals, and ponds.

Preferred breeding habitat has extensive undergrowth, shrubs, and saplings, interspersed with taller trees. Common birds in the same breeding habitat include Carolina Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Tufted Titmouse.

In the breeding season, White-eyed Vireo males defend territories for the seasonally monogamous breeding pair.



The males establish territories while the females wander from territory to territory, eventually settling on one and mating with that territory's male.

Females choose a nest site, sampling potential nest sites in a territory by straddling the fork of a branch and pivoting. The site is most often a low, Y-shaped horizontal branch from one to eight feet above ground.

Nest building begins several days after pairing. Both adults construct the nest, collecting spider and caterpillar silk, attaching it to forked branches to create a cup or until a wad of webbing fills the crotch of the branch. They then attach plant matter inside and out and shape the cup with their bodies by settling into the mass and rocking or shifting their weight. The female lines the nest. It takes from three to five days to build a nest.

The nest is a hanging cup usually located in a dense thicket. It is a deep open cup composed of twigs, strips of bark, coarse grass, bits of paper wasp nest, and leaves that are bound together with plant fibers and spider webs. The lining is fine grass and bits of Spanish moss. The outside of the nest is often decorated with lichens, moss, or leaves.

In Florida, early egg dates are around the second week of April. A clutch consists of 3 to 5 eggs which both adults incubate for 12 to 15 days.

Young are born without down, with eyes closed, and pinkish bodies. Both parents bring food. Quills break through the skin around day five or six and feathers usually emerge from sheaths on day seven. By day eight or nine, the young



preen themselves and cower in response to movement near the nest. The young leave the nest ten or eleven days after hatching, usually in mid-morning. They climb out and walk along branches near the nest and after perching for several minutes, make a feeble flight into nearby vegetation.

The White-eyed

Vireo forages in shrubs or dense undergrowth using short deliberate hops or flights, pausing to look for insects by tilting its head and peering. It gleans by picking, hovering, reaching, lunging, or hanging.

Most catches are made while perched, but some are taken in air. Favorite prey are caterpillars but it also eats insects, spiders, and small lizards. In fall and winter when insects are less common, its diet is supplemented with seeds and berries including sumac, poison ivy and wild grape. Most foraging occurs from three to fifteen feet off the ground.

After food capture, the White-eyed Vireo typically perches and swallows the prey. It will pin larger items to a branch with a foot, disassemble it, and then eat. Sometimes it will flog caterpillars repeatedly on a branch before eating.

Cool Facts

- The only fossil record in North America for the family Vireonidae is a wing bone of a White-eyed Vireo from the late Pleistocene of Florida, from approximately 400,000 years ago.
- The White-eyed Vireo bathes by rubbing against wet foliage.