



# Florida Fish & Wildlife News

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Summer 2020

*Affiliated with the National Wildlife Federation*

## *Protecting the Florida We Love*



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# Chair's Message

Jay Exum

## Greetings Florida Wildlife Federation Members and Supporters!



I wrote the last "Message from the Chairman" in April and, in that article, I had hoped that we were past the peak of Covid-19 cases. Yet here we are, three months later, at the epicenter of a renewed surge of this frightening and persistent global pandemic. It is likely that the virus has impacted the health of someone in your family or someone close to you, and it is even more likely that it has wreaked havoc on your finances and drastically changed your daily routine. At that time, I urged you to go to a park, a local greenway or trail and seek respite there. Having been to several local and state parks recently, I know that people are indeed seeking solace outdoors – it is one source of tranquil stability that we can count on.

A benefit of my working from home for much of the last four months has been the ability to pay close attention to the wildlife in my yard. I have seen warblers passing through Florida on the way to their northern nesting habitats, fawns from our local deer herd and poults from the local flock of turkeys; and I have heard the surreal sounds of the male alligator bellowing in my pond. Sometimes the unique aspects of living adjacent to a large conservation area can go unnoticed, but not if you are confined to quarters for four months. Recently, I witnessed a black bear marauding two of my Chickasaw plum trees in pursuit of its fruit. Bears don't do anything daintily, and this young bear destroyed the tree to get at a few of the native plums. Ironically, I planted the tree for wildlife, but I didn't count on the destructive dining habits of black bears. I captured the photo of the marauder

before I ran it out of my plum grove. Wherever you are, take this time to slow down and discover the idiosyncrasies of the wildlife around you.



*Juvenile black bear marauding through my chickasaw plums. Photo by Jay Exum.*

At FWF, our face-to-face outreach may have been restricted, and our statewide travel may have been limited, but we are still working to improve our effectiveness as advocates for wildlife and habitats across the state. To be able to better communicate with a membership that is more and more dependent on digital communication, we are taking this opportunity to overhaul our website, and refocus our efforts on electronic media. Look for wholesale changes to our website and improved communication through various social media platforms soon.

*Jay H. Exum*

## Florida Fish & Wildlife News

### FWF Board

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Vice Chair: Dave Preston  
Vice Chair: Joe Atterbury

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Regional Director:  
To be appointed  
District I Director:  
Laurie Hood  
District II Director:  
Pepper Uchino

### Southern Region:

Regional Director:  
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District VII Director:  
Linda Stanley  
District VIII Director:  
Ana Meira

### Northeast Region:

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Ray Carthy  
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Membership & Database  
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Lynn Jones

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Photographer: Lauren Johnson  
Location: Admiral Mason Park, Pensacola  
Animal: Bumblebee Plant: Pickerelweed

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# Enjoy Nature. Enjoy Conservation Collier

**D**o you live in Southwest Florida? During these days of social distancing, you can still connect with nature! Many Conservation Collier preserves REMAIN OPEN and provide a great place to enjoy the peace and solitude of the trails. These include the Gordon River Greenway, Marco Island's Otter Mound Preserve, the Cocohatchee Creek Preserve in North Naples, Freedom Park and more.

The Conservation Collier program, which is not currently funded to purchase additional preserves, will be eligible for more funding in the upcoming November election! You can learn more about the initiative to further expand this successful land conservation program by visiting the YES Conservation Collier Facebook page (And don't forget to give their page a 'Like'!). **Go to: [YesConservationCollier.org](https://www.facebook.com/YesConservationCollier)**



*Photos by Conservation Collier*



## Nominees for District Directors

"Eight District Directors (one for each district) shall be elected by the Individual Associate and Corporate or Business members. Nominations for those eight District Directors shall be published to the Individual Associate and Corporate or Business members in the form of a ballot at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting. Such ballots shall be received by the Federation's principal place of business no later than fifteen days prior to the annual meeting; otherwise, the votes on such ballots shall not be counted. The ballots shall be tabulated by the Federation's employees, verified by the Organizational Affairs Committee, and announced at the conclusion of the other elections. The eight District Directors so elected shall be the nominees who received the most votes and neither declined their nomination nor were elected to another office or directorship."

*FWF Bylaws, article XI, section B – as amended September, 2005.*

**Please vote online at [www.fwfonline.org/site/Ballot](http://www.fwfonline.org/site/Ballot)**  
Only current members may vote.

**Voting ends September 11, 2020.**

### **NORTHWEST REGION**

***District 1***  
David Ward

***District 2***  
Pepper Uchino

### **NORTHEAST REGION**

***District 3***  
Ray Carthy

***District 4***  
To be determined

### **CENTRAL REGION**

***District 5***  
Matthew Erpenbeck

***District 6***  
Joe Welbourn

### **SOUTHERN REGION**

***District 7***  
Linda Stanley

***District 8***  
Ana Meira





# Dear Federation Members and Supporters:

Even as the hot summer temperatures continue and a busy hurricane season is predicted, we are still dealing with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. That is a lot to digest even as we rapidly move into the national election. During this tumultuous time, the Federation continues to strive to make a better and more sustainable Florida for ourselves, future Floridians and visitors.

The 2020 Legislative Session saw some progress on environmental issues, but all passed bills awaited a potential veto from the Governor. Measures that made it past the Governor's desk include House Bill 1061, which creates an **Aquatic Preserve** on the Gulf of Mexico's Nature Coast (Pasco, Citrus and Hernando Counties). This is the first new aquatic preserve in 32 years and should help preserve the large expanse of sea grass beds that are critical to the life-stages of so many of our marine species, from shrimp to sea trout. A new water protection bill that increases fines by 50% for those who pollute our waters (Senate Bill 712) also became law. Importantly, Governor DeSantis vetoed a bill that would have gone even further to gut what remains of growth management (Senate Bill 410). Unfortunately, the **toll roads** plan, which would push three massive roads and thereby sprawl into the rural areas of the peninsula, is still alive and we need to keep opposing this expensive 1950's mode of

transportation planning. Thank you to all who voiced your opinions during the 2020 Legislative session!

As to wildlife habitat conservation, the state budget, which was recently signed by the Governor, includes \$100 million for

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*“ Our environmental education program is growing, and each of us can be more aware of our connection with Nature. I have found that as you educate yourself on the wonders of the woods and waters of Florida, you grow more dedicated to preserving them. ”*

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land protection via the **Florida Forever** program. While short of the spending we believe is required by 2014's Amendment 1, the Water and Land Legacy Amendment approved by 75% of voters, it is still a significant amount of money. As an example of why these dollars are so important, on May 28, 2020, the Florida Cabinet unanimously approved seven acquisitions totaling over 32,000 acres, permanently

protecting these properties for native wildlife and water recharge. The major purchases include:

**Bluffs of St. Teresa** - 17,000 acres to protect the entirety of the St. Teresa peninsula at the mouth of the Ochlockonee River in Wakulla and Franklin Counties. One of the most wonderful places in North Florida with sand banks reaching 20 feet in height and adjacent to 6,000 acre Bald Point State Park, this purchase will protect water quality in Ochlockonee Bay. Important fisheries and habitat for many native species, including the black bear, will be preserved.

**Working Ranchlands** - Approximately 2,800 acres in Desoto County will be protected by a permanent conservation easement benefiting water recharge and open space.

**Devil's Garden** - Over 10,500 acres in Hendry County will be added to the existing complex of protected lands in the southern part of the state and provide critical habitat for the endangered Florida panther.

Also approved were smaller tracts to protect lands in the Green Swamp in Polk County (where Central Florida gets much of its water supply), on the Apalachicola River in Liberty County, and the purchase of the last remaining private inholding in the Topsail Preserve in Walton County.

All of the Florida Forever acquisitions go towards retaining environmental beauty and health.

Moreover, all transactions only involve willing sellers.

As an update on the Water and Land Legacy Amendment which voters overwhelmingly approved, the Federation continues its litigation to make the Legislature do the will of the people. After multiple hearings and appeals, we are back at the trial court level in Tallahassee. More to follow.

One overarching issue that we all need to be constantly paying attention to is climate change. There can be little doubt that our planet is heating up and we are the cause as pollutants such as carbon dioxide get trapped in our atmosphere and retain heat emitted from the Earth. Other nations have set positive goals to confront this situation and have acted vigorously to mitigate this threat. We can do it as well. Sea level rise from a warming Atlantic and Gulf is even now pushing saltwater into our

coastal cities and contaminating our freshwater aquifers.

Our environmental education program is growing, and each of us can be more aware of our connection with Nature. I have found that as you educate yourself on the wonders of the woods and waters of Florida, you grow more dedicated to preserving them. Environmental education is more than an academic exercise as we seek answers to face global climate threats and the worldwide diminishment of species. Take a look at our Creature Feature and Nature at Home segments on our website.

A sad indicator of existing problems is the slow death of the once famed Apalachicola Bay, which is now proposed to be closed to wild oyster harvest. This bay used to provide a substantial portion of all oysters consumed in the nation, but now the oyster

population has dwindled to such an extent that the state can only attempt to increase numbers by eliminating harvest altogether. Oysters only live within a specified window of salinity, and the level of salinity has been drastically altered by upstream use, especially in Georgia.

Indeed, there are a myriad of issues we face, but we must persevere.

As we continue our efforts, many thanks to all who support the Federation. We could not do it without you.

Please be safe.

**Action Item:** Please go to the Florida Department of Transportation website and tell them what you think of the toll roads – <https://floridamcores.com/#contact-us>.

*Quinn T. Robertson*



## Featured Animal

### Everglades Dwarf Siren (*Pseudobranchius axanthus belli*)

The Everglades dwarf siren is one of the most secretive and unknown creatures in the Florida Everglades. Found nowhere else in the world but the cypress swamps, marl prairies, and depression marshes around and south of Lake Okeechobee, this two-legged aquatic salamander moves about at night hunting for small invertebrates. Sirens are neotenic salamanders, meaning that they reach sexual maturity without

ever leaving the water and losing their juvenile characteristics, such as their external gills (those bushy red structures behind the head) that are used to extract oxygen from the water. During droughts, they coat themselves in mucus and burrow into the mud or beneath decaying plant matter and wait for the next big rain. Threats to the Everglades dwarf siren include water pollution, the drying up and fragmentation of suitable habitats, and habitat destruction by increased development on the edge of the Everglades.



Animal: **Everglades Dwarf Siren** Photographer: **Tasman Rosenfeld**  
Location: **Florida Everglades**



## The Problem with Exotics – What We Can Do

**I**nvasive exotic plants are a major problem in Florida. These unwelcome species might be attractive, but they can rapidly run wild, threatening many natural areas by overgrowing native plants. Some of the removal of invasive plants can require using herbicides or machinery and may best be done by professionals. But **we can take steps in our own gardens, yards and neighborhoods to prevent the spread of some of these invaders.**



Plant: **Firebush** Photographer: Marney Richards

A recent Twitter post caught the attention of our FWF staff. An individual posted he had noticed nandina growing in a friend's yard. He enlisted another friend, they removed the invasive nandina, and replaced it with a native firebush. Those are the kind of friends to have!

**Nandina** (*Nandina domestica*) is a native of China and Japan introduced in the United States over 200 years ago as an ornamental plant. Its nickname is "heavenly bamboo" but this plant is not a heavenly addition to our landscape. As happens with many exotic



Plant: **Nandina** Photographer: Emmanuel Douzery. Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0.

ornamentals, nandina escaped its intended garden boundaries and invaded natural areas in North and Central Florida. Nandina forms dense thickets and displaces the native vegetation our native wildlife depends on. At home we can avoid planting nandina and learn how to remove any from our yards. Some beneficial alternatives are native firebush (*Hamelia patens*) and Virginia sweetspire (*Itea virginica*).

**Coral ardisia** (*Ardisia crenata*) is another troublemaker. This native of Southeast Asia is a designated invasive species and illegal to propagate or sell without a license. Like nandina, it has dark green leaves and bright red berries



Plant: **Coral ardisia** Photographer: Augustus Binu. Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0.

and grows vigorously. The seeds are consumed and easily spread by wildlife, especially birds. Once ardisia escapes into natural areas it will rapidly expand its presence, out-competing the native vegetation in parks and woodlands and destroying biodiversity. We can help control the spread of ardisia in our neighborhoods by learning to recognize it, then digging up the plants making sure no berries are left to make new plants. Good alternatives to ardisia are wild coffee (*Psychotria nervosa*), and dwarf cultivars of our native hollies (*Ilex* spp.). Please check with your local County Extension Office to learn the best way to remove invasive plants. And consider joining a group in your area like the Gainesville Greenway Challenge (<https://youtu.be/ylZA-aQXaqI>) that needs volunteers to help remove ardisia from nature parks.

**Lantana camera**, is another invasive exotic plant that is often found in Florida yards and landscapes. It has spread widely to forests, citrus groves, creekbanks and roadsides, crowding out native species. The exotic lantana has been able to hybridize with our native Florida lantana (*Lantana depressa*) which is now considered endangered. We can remove this invasive plant from our yards, ask our local nurseries not to sell it, and request an alternative like the beautiful red salvia, or Tropical sage (*Salvia coccinea*).

The invasive plant problem in Florida is huge and is aggravated by





Plant: **Lantana** Photographer: **Joaquim Alves Gaspar**. Own work, CC BY 2.5.

our warm and warming climate. We can help by knowing the plants in

our gardens and yards. You might even start a family project using the app, **Seek**, by iNaturalist to identify plants. Let's remove and properly dispose of invasive plants and replace them with native alternatives! Go to : (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep467>). As consumers, we can work with local nurseries to encourage them to make a switch to natives, along with the non-natives we know aren't invasive. We can also volunteer with family and friends for removal projects in

our neighborhoods and local parks.

The University of Florida IFAS websites (<http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/plant-directory/> and <https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/>) provide more information on nandina, ardisia, and lantana and other invasive plants, or contact your local County Extension Office.

*Marney*

## FWF Scholarship Update

The Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Department at the University of Florida has awarded \$4,000 from FWF Scholarship Funds at the UF Foundation to the following graduates and undergraduates:

- **Andrew Marx**, a Ph.D. student whose doctoral research focuses on integrating captive breeding genetic management with *in situ* genetic management for the Perdido Key beach mouse and the federally-endangered grasshopper sparrow. He is interested in continuing to look at Florida species in the context of landscape genetics and landscape ecology.



- **Alex Potash**, a Ph.D. student, is an advocate for conserving and properly managing longleaf pine forests and has spent the last four years examining the dynamics of

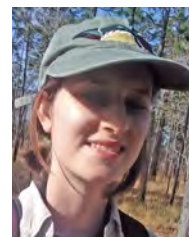


Florida's longleaf ecosystems. His research focuses on fox squirrel behavior and its implications on the health of longleaf pine forests.

- **Hannah Henry** is interested in animal care, research, and environmental education. She currently volunteers with the Aquatic Animal Health Program, based at the UF College of Veterinary Medicine, and is a research assistant for the UF Sea Turtle Research team. In her career, she would ultimately like to become a lead environmental or education manager at an ecological organization. She is particularly interested in protecting Florida's endangered species.



- **Sylvia Van Boskirk** has volunteered as a surveyor and data collector at St. Augustine Alligator Farm and at Fort Matanzas National Park. For the past three summers, Van Boskirk was a volunteer bird steward for St. John's Audubon Society, where she protected a least tern colony at Anastasia State Park beach. After receiving a bachelor's degree, she plans to obtain a master's degree in wildlife conservation and ecology, specializing in ornithology and avian conservation. Then, she would like to get her doctoral degree and pursue a career in academia.



**To make an online donation to the FWF Scholarship Fund, please go to:**



<https://www.uff.ufl.edu/OnlineGiving/FundDetail.asp?FundCode=013403>

You may also send your donation to the FWF office.  
P.O. Box 6870, Tallahassee, Florida 32314. Attn. Michelle



**We've Moved!** – The Southwest Florida office has a new home! Our new address is 4851 Tamiami Trail N, #255, Naples, FL 34103. Our new contact number is: (239) 302-1767.

## Southwest Florida: Thriving with Wildlife on a Shared Landscape

Wild Florida is home to a wide variety of species including the majestic and endangered Florida panther. As human population in Southwest Florida continues to grow, there is a subsequent need for residential development that, undoubtedly, encroaches on wildlife habitat. It is not surprising that many species of native wildlife are being reported in close proximity to humans. While having interaction with wildlife provides wonderful opportunities to observe and learn about wild animals, sometimes this proximity presents challenges and inconvenience to regular human activity. The Federation, in coordination with the fStop Foundation, has launched a campaign to help reduce potential human-wildlife conflict in such areas.

Wildlife is all around us and we are all a part of the same ecosystem. Each species plays an important role and contributes to keeping our environment healthy. This campaign aims to elevate this concept. It is



White-tailed deer move along the forest edge. Photo by fStop/FWF



Florida panthers moving quietly through the night. Photo by fStop/FWF

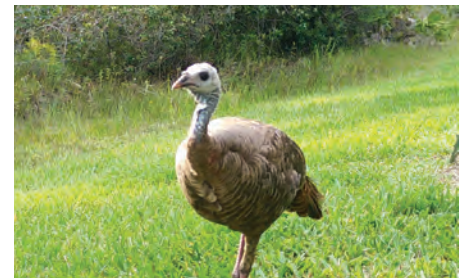
important to understand that we must not just tolerate wildlife, but rather, learn to share the landscape.

Education is one of the most important elements of wildlife conservation and is an essential tool to help reduce human-wildlife conflict. This educational initiative highlights the importance of habitat connectivity not only for the wide-ranging Florida panther, but all native wildlife. With this goal in mind, the Federation has reached out to residents whose houses are located on the border of wild landscapes along Corkscrew Road in Lee County. Volunteers were selected and cameras were placed in their backyards to document wildlife that live and share the land.

Engaging the public to be a part of the process that captures wildlife on camera fosters a sense of stewardship and appreciation for wildlife. This leads to increased tolerance and, therefore, less potential conflict. This project will also allow the Federation to curate a collection of wildlife photos and videos of native wildlife utilizing areas that are on the interface of wild

lands and residential communities. The collected footage will be used to create an education tool that can be used to promote wildlife conservation across Southwest Florida.

Cameras have been deployed for less than two months and we have already captured hundreds of images documenting an array of wildlife.



Osceola turkey hen walks through a yard alert to danger. Photo by fStop/FWF

### Collier County to Purchase HHH Ranch

Collier County Commissioners voted unanimously earlier this summer to move forward with plans to purchase the 967-acre property known as HHH Ranch. The Florida Wildlife Federation has long supported the preservation of this particular property, but costs had previously prevented the County from making a deal. Since 2017, appraisals and negotiations proceeded between the County and the landowners. Thankfully, this spring, the County and landowners agreed to the price and the land now moves towards closing.

The purchase, however, did not come with any land use decisions for the property. While the County is well



*“Wildlife is all around us and we are all a part of the same ecosystem. Each species plays an important role and contributes to keeping our environment healthy.”*

aware of the environmental value of the property, they are still considering a range of options, such as housing or road construction. These land uses are likely to degrade and/or destroy natural resources on the property.

The Ranch, if it remains in preservation, can serve as an excellent location for additional Alligator Alley wildlife underpasses between North Belle Meade and

Picayune Strand State Forest. The nearly 1,000 acre ranch is just to the west of Collier County's 6,500 acre North Belle Meade Natural Resource Protection Area and south across Alligator Alley is Picayune Strand State Forest. The HHH Ranch is nesting and foraging habitat for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker and is breeding habitat for the endangered Florida panther. In fact, Florida Panther (FP) 224 has a home range that overlaps all of

North Belle Meade and has reared at least two litters of kittens on this ranch twice over the past years.

The closing for the purchase is scheduled for the end of 2020, and the County has committed to engaging with stakeholders to discuss and finalize all future potential land uses for the HHH Ranch. The Federation is committed to protecting the environmental integrity of this property and the North Belle Meade region.



*Aerials of HHH Ranch. Photo by FDOT*



## *Featured Natural Area*



### *Hal Scott Regional Preserve and Park*

East of Orlando and bordering the Econlockhatchee River, the Hal Scott Preserve and Park is a welcome respite from the developed areas of Orange County. Approximately 9,500 acres in size, the Park provides opportunities to camp, hike, horseback ride, bike, fish and view native wildlife. Species found here include white-tailed deer, turkey, bald eagles, river otters and sandhill cranes. The rare red-cockaded woodpecker is also a resident. Once used as a timber and turpentine plantation (where pine trees were “milked” of their sap), the Park is now managed to restore more natural habitats, including the use of prescribed fire. The area is a popular hiking spot as trekkers enjoy palmetto scrub and prairies resplendent with wildflowers in season. Location: 3871 Dallas Blvd., Orlando, FL 32833; phone (386) 329-4404. (owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, you may want to call to make sure the Park is open)



*Two pine lilies rise into the sky above the scrub brush during a clear sunset. Location: Hal Scott Regional Preserve  
Photographer: Brian Kamprath*



## A Tree Pandemic

We know invasive exotic plants and animals have caused a lot of problems to our natural world and our economies. Sadly, there are other threats.

Along with invasive exotic plants, we also get diseases that come from other nations. Our current Covid-19 pandemic is a good example of one that is affecting us right now.

I would like to bring your attention to a problem caused by both an exotic insect and a fungus. The story starts with two trees common to the Southeast that are being harmed by the recent introduction of both a foreign beetle and a foreign fungus. These victims are the red bay and the sassafras. The red bay tree, it is feared, will be eradicated from the Southeast by this scourge. The sassafras tree will be affected by the disease, but to a lesser extent. Many people have heard of sassafras as settlers often used this aromatic tree to make tea brewed from the bark of its roots. The bark, twigs, and leaves of sassafras are also important foods for wildlife.

The red bay, also an aromatic plant, is in the laurel (*Lauraceae*) family and can be used as a substitute for the bay leaves you buy in the grocery store. It is often used in Southern cooking to flavor gumbo. Both trees, although not commonly used in urban landscapes, have good aesthetic qualities. The sassafras often produces good fall color, and the red bay has beautiful lustrous evergreen leaves. Beyond the direct usefulness to

us, the red bay is an important host to three butterflies: palamedes, schaus and spicebush swallowtails. The seeds of red bay are eaten by turkeys, quail, deer, songbirds and bears.

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*“Historically, our failures to stop an unwanted pest from coming into our country has been very costly.”*

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In 2002, the destructive **Asian ambrosia beetle** was found in insect traps near Savannah, Georgia. The beetle is a native of India, Japan and Taiwan. This beetle **spreads a fungus** which causes the red bay trees to die. The name for the disease is Laurel Wilt. Laurel Wilt is spreading now and has affected other species in the Lauraceae family including avocado trees. At the present time, there is no known method to halt the spread of this disease.

Historically, our failures to stop an unwanted pest from coming into our country has been very costly. Examples in the tree world of North America include Dutch elm disease and chestnut blight.

This recent loss of red bay trees from our landscape brings us to the difficult question of how we can keep this from happening.

The relationship of a beetle and a fungus are often found in nature. The problem is that these relationships are often connected to many other relationships in their place of origin. This complexity when transferred to another continent in bits and pieces can wreak havoc on plants and animals native to the receiving continent. Our world is very interconnected now, and the great expanses of oceans that used to separate the continents are not as effective at limiting the spread of these pests.

Many areas of Florida have already lost their mature red bays. I am told that in the Everglades where red bay can be a common tree, a mere two percent seem to have a natural resistance. Not much, but let's hope that they continue to survive and repopulate the species, so that one day, red bay trees return to their recent prominence in our Florida forests.

More information can be found on Laurel Wilt disease at the following web page maintained by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

[https://www.fdacs.gov/content/download/4639/file/laurel\\_wilt.pdf](https://www.fdacs.gov/content/download/4639/file/laurel_wilt.pdf)

Stan Rosenthal is Forest Advocate with Florida Wildlife Federation and UF/IFAS Extension Forestry Agent Emeritus.

*Stan Rosenthal*



# Impact of Climate Change

## Thoughts from Generation Z

It may seem that what happens thousands of miles away from us is insignificant. However, this is far from the truth when discussing the impact of Siberia's **unusually high temperatures** on the rest of the world.



Allison Ramos

From January to May, Siberia's temperatures have been about 14 degrees Fahrenheit above average. Warmth in the region has not been this prolonged for thousands of years, and scientists blame the temperature as the cause of wildfires and thawing permafrost. On a regional level, these conditions have resulted in agricultural and herding difficulties, collapsing homes and buildings, buckled roads, more wildfires, and the most catastrophic oil spill in the Russian Arctic's history. In addition to its regional impact, prolonged temperatures in Siberia can have an impact on the rest of the world as well.

Wildfires and thawing permafrost worsen global warming by releasing methane into the atmosphere. Methane gas is twenty-eight times stronger than carbon dioxide, and once in the atmosphere, it circulates around the globe. This can negatively change the weather in other parts of Europe and even the United States.

While these extreme temperatures are occurring far away from us, we must remain aware of the impacts they have on the region and the lasting effects they have on the world. We must do our part to **slow and prevent global warming**, protect our wildlife, and ensure the next generation has a future by keeping the Earth habitable.

Puede parecer que lo que sucede a miles de kilómetros de nosotros es insignificante. Sin embargo, esto está lejos de ser verdad cuando se discute el impacto de las temperaturas inusualmente altas de Siberia en el resto del mundo.

De enero a mayo, las temperaturas de Siberia han estado alrededor de 8 grados Celsius por encima del promedio. El calor en la región no se ha prolongado tanto en miles de años, y los científicos culpan a los incendios forestales y al descongelamiento del permafrost por el aumento de la temperatura. A nivel regional, estas condiciones han resultado en dificultades agrícolas y de pastoreo, colapso de casas y edificios, carreteras rotas, más incendios forestales y el derrame de petróleo más catastrófico en la historia del Ártico ruso. Además de su impacto regional, las temperaturas prolongadas en Siberia también pueden tener un impacto en el resto del mundo.

Los incendios forestales y el deshielo del permafrost empeoran el calentamiento global al liberar metano a la atmósfera. El gas metano es veintiocho veces más fuerte que el dióxido de carbono, y una vez en la atmósfera, circula por todo el mundo. Esto puede cambiar negativamente el clima en otras partes de Europa e incluso en los Estados Unidos.

Si bien estas temperaturas extremas se producen muy lejos de nosotros, debemos estar conscientes de los impactos que tienen en la región y los efectos duraderos que tienen en el mundo. Debemos hacer nuestra parte para frenar y prevenir el calentamiento global, proteger nuestra vida silvestre y asegurar que la próxima generación tenga un futuro donde nuestra tierra sea habitable.



Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to Florida Wildlife Federation whenever you shop on AmazonSmile.

When you Start With a Smile, we can facilitate wildlife crossings statewide which protect wildlife and humans. Visit <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/59-1398265> to sign up!



# Black Bear Research

**M**y name is Lori Lindsay and I'm a graduate student at Miami of Ohio University, where my master plan focuses on bear education and outreach and human-bear conflict. I've been spending time this summer as an intern for the Florida Wildlife Federation (FWF), concentrating on the Central Florida area. As you may know, both human and bear populations continue to grow in our state. With approximately 900 people moving to Florida every day, human encroachment, habitat fragmentation, and habitat loss mean an increased likelihood of human-bear interaction and/or conflict. Bears are driven by food; they are opportunistic and will go wherever their noses lead them. The Florida black bear is highly adaptable and will readily change its behavior to take advantage of human-provided



*Animal: Florida black bear  
Location: Weirsdale, Florida  
Photographer: Cathy Connolly*

food sources such as garbage, bird/wildlife feeders, or pet food. Even open garages can lead to stocked refrigerators and freezers or stored garbage, pet food, or birdseed. While typically shy and wary of humans, bears can learn where to find the best food sources with the highest calories. In the Central Florida area, that is typically in and around our neighborhoods and homes that are built into or close to the Wekiva River Basin area. This situation can often mean bad things for bears. Because of this, education on how to live and recreate safely so bears and other wildlife can thrive in our shared landscape is critical.

I'm thrilled to be able to help FWF with a targeted focus on the Florida black bear. It's been a bit unconventional due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as my initial primary focus was to prepare and give presentations on how to live safely with bears in bear country. With in-person group meetings being off the table, I'm targeting groups that may be interested in doing something in an online forum. It's a different type of opportunity, **so should you or a group you are involved with be interested in scheduling something, please let me know.** I'm also focused on putting the final touches on a landing webpage about bears for the FWF website, as well as pulling together a Bear Facts sheet that can be used statewide at FWF outreach events. Another fun project I'm working on is collecting camera videos (such as Ring, for example) of bears and other wildlife in and around human-dominated spaces for an upcoming educational tool FWF is producing. It is a unique way to engage stakeholders and wildlife enthusiasts in an important project to promote the importance of humans and wildlife sharing the same landscape and doing so safely. This project piggybacks on trail camera

work that is already being done by FWF in the South Florida area, with a slight twist on the type of videos. I'll also be deploying some trail cameras in the Central Florida area with the goal to collect some additional

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*“ The Florida black bear is highly adaptable and will readily change its behavior to take advantage of human-provided food sources such as garbage, bird/wildlife feeders, or pet food. ”*

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footage that can blend in and hopefully provide some different species for the project. Should you or someone you know have some wildlife video around your home/property that you would like to share for this project, please send those to [FloridaBearAware@gmail.com](mailto:FloridaBearAware@gmail.com).

I am incredibly thankful to the Florida Wildlife Federation for giving me the opportunity to further my skills and partner with them, as well as for their dedication and professionalism in every interaction. I'm thoroughly enjoying learning more about and focusing on their mission to conserve Florida's wildlife, habitat and natural resources through education, advocacy and science-based stewardship. The projects I'm working on and the skills I'm further developing will be helpful to me as I move forward in my career path. I look forward to the rest of the semester and to helping share my passion for the black bear. I'm so grateful – thank you, FWF! **Ms. Lindsay may be reached at** [lindsall@miamioh.edu](mailto:lindsall@miamioh.edu)





## FLORIDA WILDLIFE FEDERATION'S *Wild Florida Sweepstakes*

### Play the Wild Florida Sweepstakes Today and Win \$20,000 in Cash!

Five second prize winners will receive a  
**\$50 Bass Pro Shop Gift Card.**



**How to Enter:** Ticket contributions are \$5 each. Six tickets for \$25, 15 for \$50, 35 for \$100, and 50 for \$125 (the best value). Watch for your sweepstakes tickets in the mail.

For more information, read the Wild Florida Flyer and the Official Rules at our website, [www.fwfonline.org](http://www.fwfonline.org). To enter, click the Programs icon at the top of our webpage. If you would like a set of tickets mailed to you, send an email to FWF at [sweeps@fwfonline.org](mailto:sweeps@fwfonline.org) or call our toll-free number (800) 656-3014. Please provide your full name and complete mailing address to receive a packet of tickets.

By playing the sweepstakes you help FWF advocate in critical areas such as **Clean Water**, the preservation of the **Florida panther** and the sustainability of species like the **Florida black bear**.

Thanks for supporting the Florida Wildlife Federation!

FLORIDA WILDLIFE FEDERATION'S LOU KELLENBERGER

## 2020 PHOTO CONTEST

### Calling All Florida Photographers!

The Florida Wildlife Federation is pleased to announce the sixth year of the **Lou Kellenberger FWF Photo Contest**. The Contest celebrates the enjoyment of taking photos in Florida's great outdoors and promotes FWF's mission to encourage citizens to participate in sustainable outdoor recreation. Enter your most compelling nature images and photos of Florida today at [www.snappiephoto.com](http://www.snappiephoto.com). Entries will be taken from now until December 31, 2020.

Entry donations are \$5 for one

photo, \$10 for 3 photos, and \$25 for 7 photos. One Overall Contest winner will be selected for the First Prize of \$300, a Second Prize winner will receive a Kindle Fire tablet, and the kids' contest winner will receive an outdoor backpack. Only digitally uploaded images may be entered. Judging will follow the closing date of December 31, 2020.

Visit [www.snappiephoto.com](http://www.snappiephoto.com) to get started. Contact FWF at (850) 656-7113 for more information.

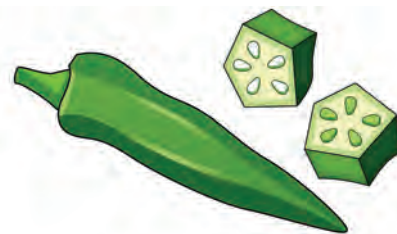
## FLORIDA WILDLIFE Kids' Quiz

by Marney Richards

**1.** Smaller than a robin, this year-round Florida resident has a dark hood and back, rusty sides and a white belly. Do you know this bird?



**2.** What veggie grows in summer gardens throughout Florida and is popular in Southern dishes like gumbo?



**3.** Do you know a Florida freshwater fish that can take gulps of air or buries itself in the mud and can survive for weeks?



See page 14 for answers and more information.

# Jim and Ginger Visconti

## Where There's a Will, There's a Way... For Wildlife

Jim and Ginger Visconti live in Jefferson County east of Tallahassee and near the small town of Monticello. Lifelong conservationists, the Viscontis, originally from New York State, have made themselves a wonderful home in rural North Florida. They have retrofitted their house to accept solar power and enjoy the wooded land that surrounds them, as well as the abounding native wildlife.

The Viscontis wanted to make sure that after they were gone, their special place on Earth would be saved for Nature. They very generously allowed a perpetual conservation easement to be placed on most of their wooded acreage, and have listed the Florida Wildlife Federation in their wills as the recipient of their land.

It is by the magnanimous actions of residents such as the Viscontis that the Federation can keep fighting the good fight for a sustainable Florida.

***Please join with Jim and Ginger and help make sure we and future residents can enjoy***



*Jim and Ginger Visconti (and friend), Manley Fuller and Preston Robertson*

***a healthy, clean and environmentally sustainable Florida.***

***A bequest or trust benefitting the Florida Wildlife Federation is easy to arrange, makes creative use of assets, and can benefit your***

***family as well as help the Federation.***

For more information on how estate planning can benefit both you and wildlife, please contact or call Preston Robertson at (850) 656-7113.

## Answers to FLORIDA WILDLIFE Kids' Quiz

**1. The Eastern Towhee** does look a little like a robin but is smaller with a thick bill and distinct coloring. You might hear a towhee rustling around under shrubs in your yard if you leave plenty of leaf litter for them to forage in. Listen for the call that sounds like the bird calling its name, *tow-hee*.

**2. Okra** loves our heat and humidity. It is related to hibiscus and has a beautiful flower. The pods can be picked when about 3 inches long and still soft, then fried, pickled, or used in soups and stews.

**3. The Bowfin or "mudfish"** can live in water with low oxygen and breath air from the surface because they have an air bladder that works like a lung. They grow 2-3.5 feet long and eat fish, snakes, amphibians and insects. This species can be traced to fossils from 150 million years ago!

*How Did You Do, Florida Kid?*





## Thank You to Our Donors

### New Legacy Member:

Linda Heller, *The Villages*

*\*Legacy Club Members are those who have donated \$5,000 or more in a single gift. Eagle Club Members are \$2,500 donors and Life Members are \$1,000 donors.*

### Thank You for Your Generous Support!

**“FWF’s mission is to conserve Florida’s wildlife, habitat, and natural resources through education, advocacy and science-based stewardship.”**



Animal: American alligator  
Photographer: Holly A. Yocum



### IN MEMORIAM

*Donations have been received in memory of:*

**John Dufek**

*by Diane Hines*

**Vic Heller**

*by Linda Heller*

**Curtis Simmons**

*by Patti Berry and  
Dennis Rogers*

**Madeline Squibb May**

*by Jane Sheldon Chapter of  
The Daughters of the  
American Revolution*

*The Federation thanks you for your thoughtful contributions. We express our sympathy to family and friends of those who have passed away.*

### Backyard Gardening is Growing!



Charlenia Rutland-Persons shows off her plants in South Florida



## We're Social!



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Photographer: **Dan Mele** Animal: **Suwannee Cooter** Location: **Ginnie Springs**

*Just before going into the cavern at Ginnie Springs, I noticed some Suwannee cooters swimming overhead. I was able to fire off a few shots before this one was out of sight.*



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