



# The Buzzard Bulletin

Notes & Information for CREW Trust Volunteers

August-September, 2019

Volume 3, Issue 6

## Notepad

### Welcome

Welcome to new Communications Director Allison Vincent.

She began working full-time on June 1, coming to the CREW

Trust after having served in the same capacity at Super Science and Amazing Art, an educational entertainment company.



She has also worked in community programs with museums such as the Edison and Ford Winter Estates and the Golisano Children's Museum in Naples.

### Amazon smiles on CREW Trust

Donate to the CREW Trust without donating.

It's accomplished by shopping online at <https://smile.amazon.com> and designating the CREW Land & Water Trust as your preferred charity.

Amazon then will donate 0.5% of the price of all eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the CREW Land & Water Trust.

As of the end of May this year, AmazonSmile had already donated over \$577 to the CREW Trust.

## First 2019-2020 dates announced

To sign up to help at an event, contact Savannah. For more information, visit the online Volunteer Resource Library (see "Staying connected," page 2).

### FOR VOLUNTEERS ONLY

- Dec. 6: Volunteer social
- Jan. 11: CREW Review

### VOLUNTEER HELP NEEDED AT

#### FGCU Colloquium Class field trips

- Sept. 6: 9:30 am
- Sept. 13: 9:30 am & 2:00 pm
- Sept. 26: 9:30 am & 12:30 pm

#### Outreach programs

- Oct. 20: Ding Darling Days
- Nov. 2: Wiggins Pass Nature Fest

#### Strolling Science Seminars

- Dec. 6: Panthers
- Jan. 18: Strange Plants
- Feb. 7: Herpetology
- Mar. 6: Nature by Any Other Name

#### CREW Concert & Silent Eco Auction

- Feb. 29 at Riverside Park in Bonita Springs

#### Specialty Walks

- Oct. 12: Fall Wildflower Walk
- Jan. 24: Bird Walk

#### Weekly walks, November-April

- BRS Guided walk assistants each Wednesday
- FPS Guided walk assistants each Thursday

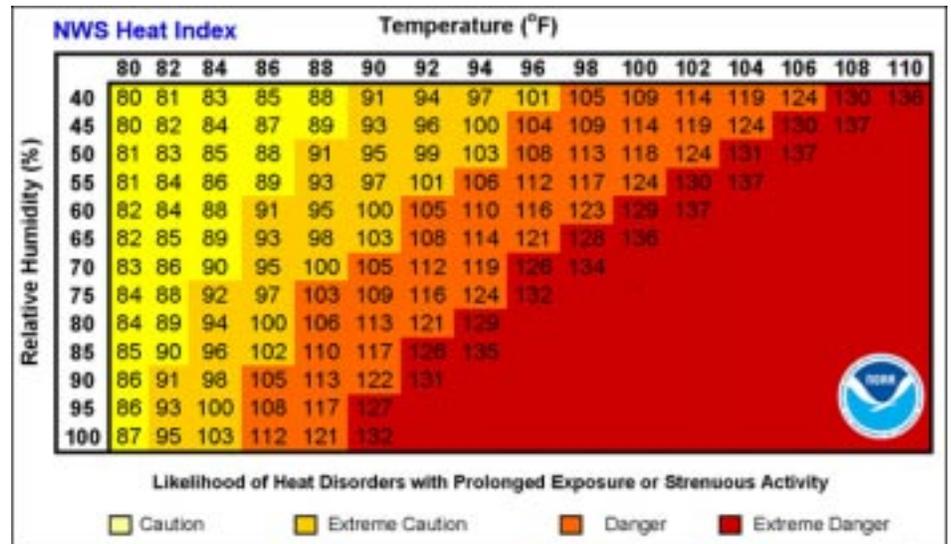
#### Monthly walks/tours, January-April

- BRS Bicycle tour assistants 3rd Saturday each month
- CD Guided walk assistants 3rd Tuesday each month
- CMT Guided walk assistants 1st Tuesday each month

## Use caution during hot, muggy weather

Whether enjoying a hike on the trails or on a CREW Trust work detail maintaining the trails, always be aware of the heat index, stay hydrated, and don't hesitate to call it an early day

when the heat becomes oppressive. Use the chart below to determine the heat index, which is a combination of temperature and humidity. It is a better indicator of dangerous conditions.



# Swamp critters: Things you otter know

## WHO DAT?

A River Otter is basically a semi-aquatic weasel, related to fishers, martens and mink. It has a long, slender body; a short neck, face, and legs; and a long, thick tapering tail.

## A FURRY INCHWORM

Otter movements on land appear awkward where its running motion makes it look like a very large, furry inchworm. The long body is arched with its four short legs galloping along.

## THAT STINKS

Like other members of the weasel family, the otter has scent glands located near its anus which are used to mark home ranges with scent. Otters in a swamp mark their ranges on the highest land available, including the trail, by rubbing their butt on the ground or depositing scat. The scat appears oily, and contains bits of shell and other indigestible pieces. Fresh scat has a very distinct, strong fishy smell.

## Staying connected

### People

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### Web sites

[www.crewtrust.org](http://www.crewtrust.org)

[www.trackitforward.com](http://www.trackitforward.com) (hours)

[www.crewtrust.org/crew-trust-volunteers](http://www.crewtrust.org/crew-trust-volunteers) (volunteer library—the password is **crew17**)

The Buzzard Bulletin contains notes and information for CREW volunteers and is emailed six times a year (September, November, January, March, May, July). Dick Brewer, editor.

## LINE DANCERS

Otters are wanderers within their habitats which can range over several miles of waterway. Their territories are more linear than round and they continually move from one end to the other. For this reason, they are rarely found at the same spot on a daily basis.

## CLOSE THE HATCHES! DIVE!

A special set of adaptations are ideal for its aquatic life style. Its fur is dense with an oily waterproof undercoat and an outer coat of long stiff guard hairs, and its ears and nostrils are valved so they close under water. Its powerful lungs allow it to swim up to a quarter of a mile under water at speeds up to six miles per hour before having to come up for air. It can remain submerged for up to five to seven minutes.

## SNORT, CHUCKLE, WHISTLE

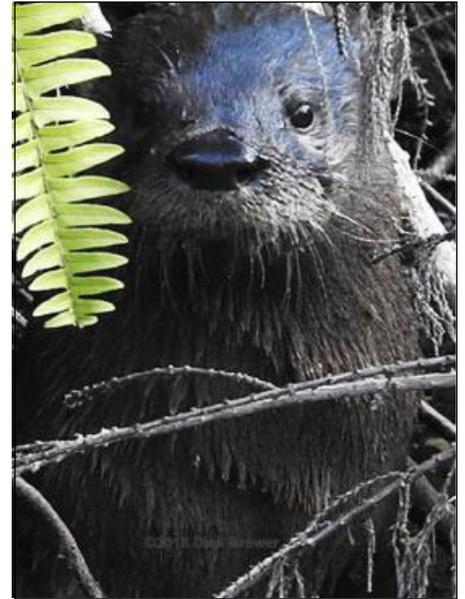
Vocalizations include a whistle and a shrill, chattering call emitted during mating season. River Otters also chuckle softly to siblings or mates, and they can also chirp, snort, and growl.

## A LA CARTE

Otters are not specific in their food choices, but they are purely carnivorous. Their main diet consists of fish, crustaceans, mollusks, amphibians, reptiles including small gators, invertebrates, and occasionally small birds and mammals. A favorite morsel is crayfish. Fish that they eat are primarily slower moving rough fish rather than the quicker game fish, so they don't compete with people for fish.

## HOME SWEET HOME

Otter dens vary with the availability of sites. Most otters locate their dens in excavations close to water and under tree roots, rock piles, logs, or thickets. In the swamp, hollow bases of cypress trees are popular. A typical den consists of a hole leading into the den with a main entrance below water level. They may occupy two dens, one used



as a temporary resting den and the other used as a permanent nesting den.

## HOT AND HEAVY

Males are sexually mature at two years of age but do not usually mate until they are around four. Females rarely breed before two years. Males may mate with more than one female if the females' territories overlap that of the male. Mating usually occurs in the water, and delayed implantation results in the gestation period extending to as much as 270 days.

## AND BABY MAKES THREE... OR FOUR, FIVE, OR SIX

Litter size varies from one to five with two about average. Females may mate again as soon as 20 days following birth, which means that female otters may remain continuously pregnant once they reach sexual maturity.

## BLIND, FURRY, AND WET

Newborns are fully furred but the eyes are closed for the first month or so and none of the teeth are erupted. Young first enter the water at about seven weeks, get the adult waterproof fur at about 12 weeks, are weaned at around 18 weeks, and stay with the mother for about a year. The male, evicted while the young are small, returns to help care for them when they are half-grown. The young disperse before the arrival of the next litter.