



# The Buzzard Bulletin

Notes & Information for CREW Trust Volunteers

December, 2019–January, 2020

Volume 4, Issue 2

## Notepad

### Welcome

Welcome to new CREW Trust volunteer Reece Nanfito.

### Au revoir

Education Coordinator Savannah Kushner will leave in January when she and her husband move to Georgia where he will finish his advanced individual training.

“CREW will forever be near and dear to my heart,” she said, “and I’m so thankful for all of the wonderful people and unforgettable experiences that I’ve had.”

### Social date change

The Volunteer Social is moved to Friday, December 13. Time and place are the same as before.

### Trail marker help

Help is needed to post new trail markers in CREW’s Cypress Dome and Marsh Trails. Most will be placed on trees, but some 4x4x8 posts are still needed for intersections and places where posts would be more visible.

### Flint Pen Strand

A FPS guided hike leader training document is now available in the Volunteer Resource Library.

### CREW Review

The CREW Review is Saturday, January 11, from 9 AM to noon. Details will be emailed closer to the event date.

## Bird banding research project resumes

The mist netting and banding of migrating sparrows on CREW lands resumed in November and continues through April.

Target species are Grasshopper, Savannah, and Swamp Sparrows.

To volunteer, enter your name and indicate your available dates at

<https://doodle.com/poll/4785evq4yd2h55pn>

New helpers also need to complete a waiver form. Contact Kathleen Smith at least two days prior to helping at [kathleen.smith@myfwc.com](mailto:kathleen.smith@myfwc.com).

Wear comfortable shoes, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt with no



front buttons. Pants and shoes will get wet from dew on the morning grasses. Bring water and a snack.

Volunteers help set up and take down nets, walk briskly or run through a tall grassy field to drive birds into the nets, and help record the data.

December dates at Gargiulo North are the 6th and 9th. Dates at Gargiulo South are December 19, 20, 23, 26, 27, and 30. January–April dates will depend on volunteer availability.

Maps and directions are available at [www.dickbrewer.org/Gargiulo.pdf](http://www.dickbrewer.org/Gargiulo.pdf).

## Watershed walk ending, soil rocks begins

The Walk Through a Watershed program ends in December and the 2nd grade Soil Rocks program at the Marsh Trails returns in January.

Volunteer assistants are needed on these January dates: 15, 16, 21, 22, 24, 28, 29, 30, and 31. Contact Savannah to help.

## Sweeping Nature’s Peace at Bird Rookery

CREW Trust volunteers are needed who can contribute to Nature’s Peace walks this season.

The walks are led by volunteer Doug Machesney.

Volunteers are needed, primarily as “sweeps,” to help keep the groups together on the short walks at the start of the trails at Bird Rookery Swamp.

The Alzheimer’s Support Group brings escorts with each participant, so CREW Trust volunteers basically watch for safety issues.

Volunteers do the same with Lighthouse of Collier County, which brings visually impaired visitors along with staff and escorts.

To donate a few hours of time to help visitors experience nature’s peace, please contact Doug Machesney at [dougmac@embarqmail.com](mailto:dougmac@embarqmail.com). Dates for the remaining walks are below.

### ALZHEIMER GROUP

January 8, March 4

LIGHTHOUSE

February 20

# Adaptations enable wildlife to survive annual dry-downs

Dry-downs are a regular and essential occurrence in Southwest Florida and are necessary for the survival of a swamp as a whole.

Water flow across CREW lands comes from rainfall. No springs, lakes, or rivers provide water. So during the rainy summer season, the ground becomes saturated, sheet flow begins, and low areas fill up. During the dry winter and spring seasons with little or no rain, everything begins to dry up.

## REQUISITE FOR CYPRESS

Many plants such as cypress trees can't reseed in water and must have a dry-down in order for new seedlings to germinate and quickly grow tall enough so that their crowns are above the water level when the summer rains return.

## TWO OPTIONS

Wildlife adapts to the ebb and flow, but it means a change for them. There are two basic strategies: stay and tough it out, or move on.

Warm-blooded animals require daily food and don't have a choice. They must travel to areas that provide food and water.

Cold-blooded animals don't need to feed daily, so they have options. Many stay. Some burrow deeply into the bottom mud while it's still moist and create a nearly impervious "cocoon" where they survive until water returns.

## AESTIVATION

Many reptiles and amphibians can greatly slow their metabolism. Oxygen consumption and heart rate drop significantly and stored fat is metabolized much more slowly.

The term for this dry season, hibernation-like system shut down is *aestivation*. Everything from Apple Snails to Alligators aestivate.

## SEEK SHELTER

Aquatic snails and crayfish burrow into the soil while it is still damp. A crayfish burrow in FPS is in the lower photo. Water snakes find cool, protected shelters such as beneath exposed roots or fallen trees where they are safe from predators and can await the return of the water.

## ALLIGATORS

Alligators can travel, walking several miles over land, usually at night when it's cooler, and they seem to have a water-seeking orientation which brings them to safety in the nearest river, pond, canal, or lake. They are also capable of digging long horizontal burrows into muddy banks or digging out a hole in the lake bottom. A mother gator and some of her offspring are in her burrow in BRS in the top photo.

## TURTLES

Turtles may either stay or go. Some like the Chicken Turtle wander far and dig down into the dirt or litter to wait for rainy days. Red-bellied Turtles dig



down into the bottom mud so that only their nostrils protrude above the surface.

## FROGS

Aquatic frogs settle into the cracks in the muddy bottom and wait for the water to return. Treefrogs find a deep spot in the base of a Tillandsia or other sheltered nook

where they are protected.

## FISH

Some fish can survive in wet mud for short periods of time, up to several days, but none can survive a full dry-down. So they utilize different strategies.

Some are great dispersers and seek out permanent water bodies for the dry season. As soon as the area re-floods, they disperse and return.

Other species are prolific breeders and while individuals may die, others survive in deeper water so the species as a whole rebounds quickly. Gambusia (mosquito fish) can sustain a 90% kill and still be at full numbers in the fall because of their rapid reproduction.

## MORE STRATEGIES

Other aquatic invertebrates adapt by timing their reproduction so that an immature life form (larva or eggs) is in the soil growing during the dry-down and the new adult won't emerge until the water returns.

## 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.