



The Buzzard Bulletin

Notes & Information for CREW Trust Volunteers

April-May, 2021

Volume 5, Issue 4

Notepad

Welcome

Welcome to new CREW Trust volunteers Wayne Bauman, Jim Markey, and Cathy Pomanti.

Volunteer learning opportunities

Three volunteer training sessions are coming up. Register at Track-it-Forward. All are from 8:30 AM-11:30 AM. Contact Julie for any questions.

- Mar. 30: Plants of BRS
- Apr. 12: Entomology at FPS
- Apr. 28: Megafauna at CMT

Species listings

Among the 552 different wildlife species documented on SFWMD/CREW lands are 89 species of butterflies/moths and 27 species of warblers. *See Wildlife documented... page 2.*

Media help

A volunteer with knowledge of photo editing and writing is needed to partner with Allison and Julie for a long term scheduling project to share the CREW view of the natural world on social media. Contact Allison if interested.

Volunteer resources

Everything from wildlife checklists to species profiles to bulletins about trail first aid and safety are always available in the Volunteer Resource Library on the CREW Trust web page. *See Staying connected/Web sites... page 2.*

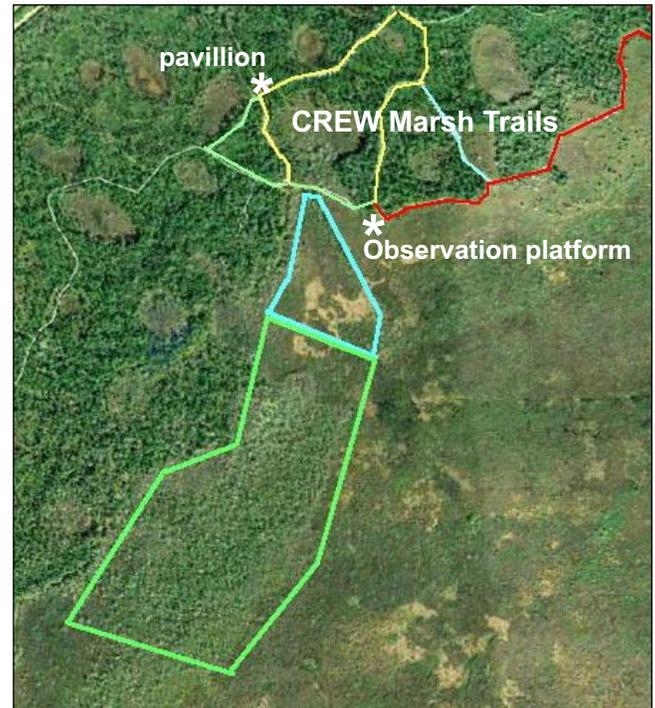
Mechanical treatment of willow to begin

Coastal Plain Willow, a native plant, can overrun areas to the detriment of all other native marsh plants, so it needs to be controlled.

The blue polygon in the map at the right shows the proposed 15-acre area in the CREW marsh where willow will be reduced. Work should begin in April or May.

The area in lower green area shows the 85-acre area that is projected to be treated in 2022.

More information about Coastal Plain Willow is on page 3.



Congested? Itchy eyes? It's tree pollen season

If you've been blaming that yellow stuff on your car for clogging your airways, making your nose run, and causing your eyes to itch, you've been blaming the wrong thing.

Yellow pine pollen is just a marker; its presence on your car signals the arrival of other pollens in the air.

Pine pollen is large and heavy and drops quickly to the ground, which is why it coats everything. But, because it drops out of the air quickly and also because it has a waxy coating, it usually isn't a cause of allergies.

The main cause of sneezing is all of the other trees that are producing pollen at the same time.

When pine pollen appears, oaks are usually pollinating. Oak and wax myrtle pollen are smaller than pine pollen, so they more easily circulate in the

air which is why they bother more people. Most people aren't even allergic to pine pollen.

Spring is tree pollen season, typically from early March through April, although it can begin in February and linger into May.

Summer is grass pollen season, May and into October, and autumn is weed pollen season from September to November. Spring is the worst season due to variety of tree pollens.

What makes some years worse than others?

It depends on the previous season. In a year with good rainfall after a very dry year, trees will release a very large amount of pollen. In a dry year, a tree is more dormant because of the lack of moisture, as if it knows it has a less likely chance to achieve pollination.

Identification tip

Small white waders

Three small white waders with straight bills can be identified by looking at the colors of their bills.

Cattle Egret: bill is all yellow.

Little Blue Heron: juvenile's bill is two-tone, grayish-blue by the head and dark at the tip.

Snowy Egret: bill is all black with bright yellow-orange by the eye.



Staying connected

People

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Web sites

www.crewtrust.org

www.trackitforward.com (hours)

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.

Why do some larger spiders weave 'zipper' webs?

Arachnologists think they now know why

These zigzags of silk found in many orb webs are termed stabilimenta because they were once thought to aid in stabilizing and strengthening the web. It turns out, though, that this extra silk is laid too loosely on the web to add any extra strength or absorb shock.

Numerous ideas about the function of stabilimenta have been proposed over the years; some are more plausible than others.

Maybe the additional silk helps to support the spider's weight. Or is it extra silk left over from web construction? Maybe the silk has special properties that reflect UV light and thus attract insect prey to the web. Another theory

is that it serves as a "love path" to direct the male to the female

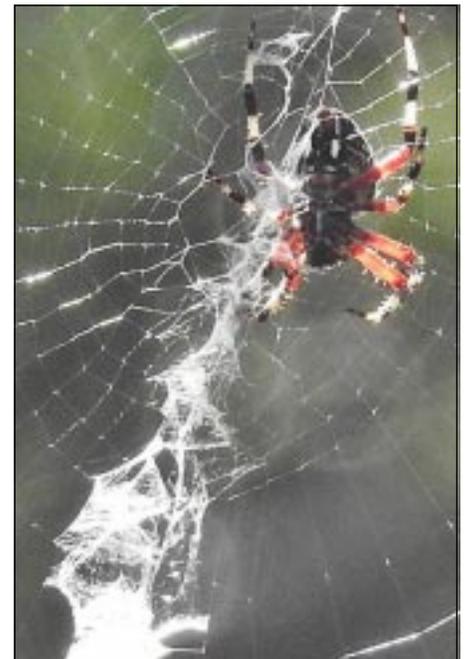
Today, most arachnologists (scientists who study spiders) mostly set aside such romantic notions in favor of theories of predator defense and web protection.

It seems plausible that stabilimenta act to conceal or distort the outline of the spider or to increase the apparent size of the spider by adding irregular shapes to the web. This may effectively ward off potential predators.

Stabilimenta may also act to advertise the web itself so birds can avoid flying into the sticky silk, which is a bonus to bird and spider alike.



Garden Orbweaver (*Argiope aurantia*) adults weave the classic zipper web. Younger ones have patterns that vary.



Spotted Orbweavers (*Neuscomadomicilliorum*) create white blotches in the web that are generally unpatterned.

Wildlife documented on SFWMD/CREW lands

Before leaving in January, FWC biologist Kathleen Smith collated documented wildlife observations on SFWMD/CREW lands. A separate plant list already existed.

birds	191 species
mammals	34 species
reptiles	40 species
amphibians	20 species

The lists, arranged by order-family-species, are available at www.dickbrewer.org/CREWguides and will be updated whenever new species are reported and verified.

insects	201 species
spiders	22 species
fish	33 species
invertebrates/crustaceans ..	11 species

Coastal Plain Willow: A wetlands Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Coastal Plain (Carolina) Willow (*Salix caroliniana*) is native to the United States and is the only willow that occurs naturally in South Florida.

It is a common small to medium sized wetland tree found in swamps, along ditches, and at the edges of ponds and marshes. The genus name, *Salix*, is derived from two Celtic words meaning *near water*.

It is a sturdy and well-anchored tree that has a long life span relative to most other plant species. It is a rapid grower, maturing in around 20 years with a height of around 30 feet.

Although deciduous, willows in Southwest Florida barely lose their leaves in December before blooms appear and a new crop of leaves burst forth. Its most active growth period is in the spring.

Separate male and female trees bear somewhat inconspicuous flowers in catkins in mid-spring. Flowers on the female trees mature to small pods which open to reveal white, silk-tipped seeds which are dispersed by the wind.

Although it is a wetland tree, it does have medium tolerance to drought, and



Coastal Plain Willow stand in Cypress Dome

like most hardwood species, willows are capable of sprouting back after fire.

People have utilized Coastal Plain Willow in a myriad of ways.

The inner bark and leaves of many willows, including the Coastal Plain Willow, yields the medicinal extract salicin (salicylic acid). This chemical is the active ingredient in common aspirin, and chewing a leaf provides the familiar taste of aspirin.

Native Americans chewed or boiled tea from the leaves and inner bark of this medicinal tree to relieve fever and minor pain from toothache, arthritis, and headache. One of the willow's nicknames was the "toothache tree." It was also used to treat a variety

of other ills. An inner bark concoction was used for colds, fever, diarrhea, and dysentery.

Native Americans fashioned the inner bark into ropes, bags, and fish nets. Willow branches also provided straight and sturdy shafts for making arrows. Twigs of willow, known as osiers, are still woven into baskets and wicker furniture.

The reddish brown wood breaks down rapidly when in contact with the soil, providing ready nutrients for other plants that grow in sandy soils.

Although soft and too weak for structural framing, the wood resists splitting. At one time it was a top choice for artificial limbs. Pioneers turned willow wood into charcoal, which they ground fine and used as a component in gunpowder. The long, flexible branches are still used for making willow chairs and tables.

In an article on creating a rain garden to conserve and recycle water, *Audubon* magazine recommended the Coastal Plain Willow as one of 13 trees and shrubs to plant ("Good to the Last Drop," *Audubon*, September 2003).

RATIONALE FOR CONTROL

Although native to Florida wetland landscapes, Carolina Willow must be controlled if its encroachment poses a threat to existing natural communities.

Willows possess several characteristics that make them successful pioneer species. These include fast growth, efficient nutrient uptake, flood and drought tolerance, resistance to fire, efficient seed dispersal, and robust re-establishment after disturbances.

The tendency of willow to replace and eliminate other plant communities on a broad scale can result in the loss of wildlife and plants that occur only in those other communities and can reduce the overall habitat diversity.

When Carolina Willow dominates the landscape, it changes the hydrologic balance by transpiring more water than the herbaceous plant communities that it replaces. Its high water content can result in a lower water table, which in turn promotes the proliferation of more deeply rooted species which could change the habitat to a hardwood swamp.

Willow management is needed to keep herbaceous marsh communities and their wildlife from disappearing.

RATIONALE FOR PRESERVING

Carolina Willow has been found to harbor a greater diversity of birds, frogs, and especially insects than communities dominated by marsh plants like maidencane, sawgrass, or cattail.

According to *Butterflies of Eastern North America*, Coastal Plain Willow is host to 111 different species of butterflies and moths, and it hosts a variety of other species.

Other wildlife, especially deer, eat willow twigs, buds, and leaves.

Due to its high water content, Coastal Plain Willow is resistant to fire and can tolerate mild drought conditions. Therefore, its communities provide important nesting sites for wading birds such as ibises, night herons, egrets, spoonbills, anhingas, and herons.

A willow community can also act as a "nurse crop" by providing shade and fire protection for hardwood swamp species such as maple, laurel oak, and bald cypress.

Without control, willow dominated areas succeed to hardwood swamp usually within 10-20 years. Those hardwoods then shade out the willow and it disappears.