



# The Buzzard Bulletin

Notes & Information for CREW Trust Volunteers

October-November, 2022

Volume 7, Issue 1

## Notepad

### New volunteers

Welcome to new CREW Trust volunteers Payton DeMay and Savannah Pultrone.

### Personal training

Contact Allison for personalized training as a trail steward, sweep, safety, leader, or more.

### Welcome to CREW



**Paola Rivera** is CREW's new education intern. A student at FGCU, she is working towards a B.A. in Environmental Studies. She is particularly interested in ethnobotany and water management.

She loves hiking, painting, skating, and learning about plants and their cool properties.

### Hunting dates

Nov. 19-27: General gun  
Dec. 3-Jan. 1: Small game  
Mar. 4-12: Spring turkey

Hunting is by permit in CDT, CPP, and north of the trails in FPS.

## Volunteers needed for 2022-23 programs

The following programs need volunteer assistance except for the volunteer-only events. Details are posted in Track-it-Forward in the Events section.

More events will be added during the season, and some events might need to be rescheduled due to inclement weather. For updates, watch for emails from the CREW Trust and check the calendar of events in Track-it-Forward.

Volunteers may sweep at just one Strolling Science Seminar and at one Specialty Walk per season. They may attend any program as guests by registering ahead of time at [www.crewtrust.org](http://www.crewtrust.org) and clicking on Programs and Register.

### SPECIALTY WALKS

Oct. 14: Fall Birding - BRS  
Oct. 15: Fall Wildflower Walk - CMT  
Nov. 12: GeoCache Day  
Jan. 9: Winter Birding - FPS  
Mar. 10: Bug Watch - CMT  
Mar. 25: Spring Wildflower Walk-CMT  
Apr. 15: Spring Birding - BRS  
Apr. 22: GeoCache Day

### STROLLING SCIENCE SEMINARS

Oct. 26: When Bugs & Plants Collide  
Dec. 3: Florida's Venomous Snakes  
Mar. 3: From Plant to Plate  
*Programs for kids aged 8-13*  
Nov. 19: Survival in the Wild  
Dec. 17: Bugs for Kids  
Jan. 28: Birding for Kids  
Mar. 25: Herpetology for Kids

### GUIDED WALKS

1st Tuesdays, Nov-Apr - CMT  
3rd Tuesdays, Nov-Apr - CDT  
Wednesdays, Nov-Apr - BRS  
Thursdays, Nov-Apr - FPS

### BIKE/HIKE THE LOOP - BRS

Bike: 1st Saturdays, Jan-Mar  
Hike: 3rd Sundays, Nov-Apr

### ADDITIONAL EVENTS

Feb. 4: Family Day

### OUTREACH EVENTS

Oct. 21-23: Boo at the Zoo

### MEMBERS-ONLY EVENTS

Oct. 15: Sunrise hike - CMT  
Dec. 2: Sunset hike - FPS  
Dec. 21: Bug Watch - CDT  
Jan. 6: Full moon hike - CMT  
Feb. 5: Full moon hike - CMT  
Mar. 24: Bug Watch - FPS

### EDUCATION FIELD TRIPS - CMT

Oct-Nov: Walk Through a Watershed  
Teacher training Saturday, October 8.  
Volunteers are encouraged to attend.

### *Just for Volunteers*

#### BRUNCH WITH STAFF

Monthly meetings. Dates, times, and locations posted in Track-it-Forward

#### HIKE & LEARN

Nov. 1: Butterflies & plants - CDT  
Dec. 10: Bug Theater - CMT  
Feb. 13: Scat, tracks & more - CDT  
Mar. 31: Birding ID - FPS

## CREW Trust reaps benefits from AmazonSmile

People can donate to the CREW Trust without actually donating.

Shop online for merchandise at <https://smile.amazon.com> and designate the CREW Land & Water Trust as your preferred charity and Amazon will

donate a percentage of the price of eligible purchases to the CREW Land & Water Trust.

As of the end of March this year, the CREW Trust had already received over \$1,100 from Amazon.

# What's the difference between a wet prairie and a marsh?

There are several distinctions, all water (hydroperiod) related.

A wet prairie is wet for about half of the year or less. Much of that time there will be surface water, but at the

end of a dry down, the soil is completely dry at the surface and dry up to two feet below the surface. A wet prairie will only have 2-3 inches of muck (organic material) as its base.

A marsh is moist all year. The soil remains damp and soggy even after a dry-down when there is little or no visible surface water. A marsh will have 5-6 inches of muck as its base.



## Wetland Glossary

**wetland:** a land area that is naturally wet for much or all of the year

**hydroperiod:** the period of time when a wetland is covered by water

**swamp:** a forested wetland with woody plants and reasonably good drainage; there are two types of swamps in South Florida— a strand swamp and a cypress dome swamp

**strand:** a forested swamp that forms a linear drainage channel on flat lands; strands occur on land areas with high

water tables where the lack of slope prevents stream formation. Flint Pen and Fakahatchee are strand swamps.

**cypress dome:** a rounded, forested swamp that gets the dome shape from the tallest cypress growing in the center where the water is deepest and soil most nutrient rich; smaller cypress grow toward the edges in shallower water with less nutrients and soil

**pine flatwood:** higher elevation, level land and consistent vegetation that includes slash pine and saw palmetto; hydroperiod of only 1-2 months a year

**slough:** (pronounced *slew*). Sloughs are the main paths of moving water through an area with a hydroperiod of approximately 10-11 months.

**solution hole:** a depression in the bedrock resulting from anaerobic decomposition of plants. The by-product is acidic which dissolves the limestone and allows deeper rooted plants to grow.

**muck:** soil that develops when leaf matter and branches fall and become submerged under water and decompose. Muck soil has a slippery texture with a sulfur or rotten egg aroma due to its anaerobic nature.

**hammock:** an island of hardwood trees in a non-hardwood habitat. It may rise 1 to 3 feet above water level in freshwater sloughs, sawgrass prairies, or pineland. Water slowly flowing around the hammock limits its size and protects it from fires.

## Staying connected

### People

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### Web sites

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

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

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.

## Quick ID Guide:

### Shells: Florida Apple Snail & Island Apple Snail

The shell of the native Florida Apple Snail is flat where the spirals of the shell meet.

The shell of the alien Island Apple Snail has a noticeable, indented channel where the spirals of the shell meet.



Florida Apple Snail

Island Apple Snail

## Paw, Claw & Hoof

# Identifying tracks of CREW's more common animals

When spotting and trying to identify tracks found in sand or mud, look for patterns and traits to narrow the identification possibilities.

### Toes

The number of toes can distinguish between major groups. Bears have five toes although the fifth may not be visible. Canines and felines have four. Gators have both— five toes on front paws and four toes on back paws.

### Claws

Look for claw impressions (small holes) at the front of the toes. Canines, rodents, and bears should have them; feline tracks usually don't.

### Walking patterns

#### Zig-zaggers

The rear paw/hoof usually lands in or close to the spot where the front paw previously fell, leaving a zig-zag pattern between the left and right sides. Deer, fox, coyote, and bobcats are zig-zaggers. Alligators are unique zig-zaggers often with a channel between the left and right side prints where the tail drags through the ground.

#### Waddlers

Waddlers move one side of the body and then the other. The rear foot does not land in the print of the front foot, so the track is composed of four prints. Bears and raccoons are waddlers.

#### Bounders

Bounders put their front feet down and leap forward by lifting the front feet and putting their rear feet in the same spot where the front feet landed. Tracks appear as two paws side-by-side. Otters are bounders.

#### Hoppers

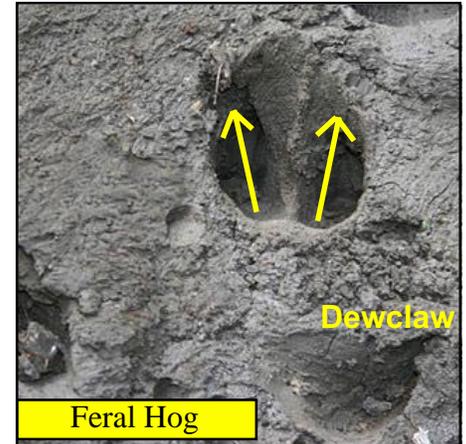
Hoppers move by placing their rear feet slightly ahead of their front feet and pushing off, so the back feet land in front. Rabbits and most squirrels are hoppers.

## Toes that are hooves

Deer and hogs have two toes that form hard, cloven hooves. Dewclaws may be visible in a deep print. A dewclaw is a toe that over evolutionary time became smaller and raised on the back of the leg. They are not usually visible in tracks.



Two toes curve sharply together at the front. If visible, dewclaw tracks are aligned directly behind the toes.



Tracks are wider, rounder, and blunter than deer tracks. Dewclaw prints are outside of a line behind the toes.

## Paws without claws

Cats (Bobcats and Florida Panthers) have four toes on each paw with retractable claws so there are rarely any visible claw prints. The pads and toes are rounded.



Tracks are smaller (2") than panther tracks. There are no claw marks and the toes and pad are rounded.



Adult tracks are large, greater than 3". Kitten tracks can be bobcat size, but there should be an adult track close.

### Zig-zagger track

Zig-zagger tracks often show one paw print on top of the other. The alligator tracks at the right show where the rear paw landed on the print of the front paw.



## Paws with claws



Black Bear front



Black Bear rear

Bear paws are huge. There are five rounded toes and a wide heel pad, although the fifth toe may not always be visible. Short claws and toes spread out in a curve over its foot pad although claw marks may be hard to see unless the ground is really soft. The front and rear tracks are noticeably different shapes and sizes.



Coyote

Coyote and dog tracks are similar. Coyote toes are close together; dog toes are more splayed. Coyote nails are thin and sharp; dog nails are thick and blunt.



Raccoon

Five long, narrow toes that sort of look like a baby's hand. Raccoons waddle when they walk.



River Otter

Five short toes with short claws. The toes are partially webbed which sometimes shows up in sand or mud.



Gray Fox

Fox tracks are dainty and are less than 1.5 inches in length. Coyote prints are wider and greater than 2 inches long.

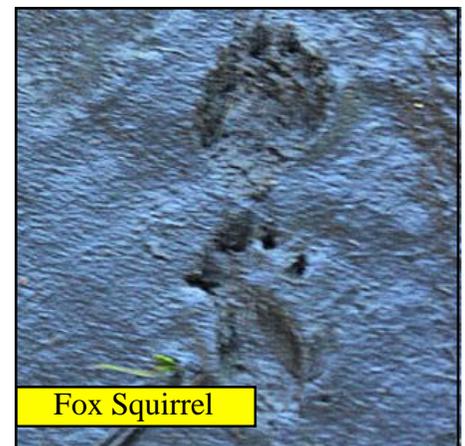


Alligator front

Alligators have really large feet. Also, look for a central channel (tail drag) between the left and right tracks. Front paw prints have five toes and are wide in the heel while rear prints have four toes with a narrow, pointed heel.



Alligator rear



Fox Squirrel

Gray Squirrels are hoppers; Fox Squirrels can also be walkers. Both have larger back feet and smaller front feet.