



THE BUZZARD BULLETIN

Notes & Information for CREW Trust Volunteers

December, 2025-January, 2026

Volume 10, Issue 2

NOTEPAD

Winter social

The winter appreciation social is at Riptide Brewing in Bonita Springs from 6-8 PM on Friday, February 20.

Be among the first to sample a new CREW brew, the Aquifer Ale, and get some CREW swag too. Register in TiF.

New BRS boardwalk

The boardwalk construction has been delayed until June, 2026.

The new boardwalk will replace the current one and follow the same path, but it will be about three feet higher.

New vault toilets should be installed in the BRS parking area before the end of the year.

Hunting dates

There is hunting by permit in FPS north of Harrell and in CDT on the following dates. Please be aware and exercise caution.

- Dec. 6-Jan. 4 small game
- Feb. 28-Mar. 1 youth turkey
- Mar. 7-15 spring turkey

Willow Wednesday

Help is needed to chop down nuisance willows in the small marshes in CDT and CMT. After chopping, branches will be spread and herbicide will be sprayed on the stumps.

This work will complement the larger work FWC and the District are doing in the 5,000-acre marsh. These smaller marshes are too small for heavy machinery.

Details and sign up are in TiF.

Logging

Please log all hours in Track-it-Forward by the end of December. Volunteer hours matter when CREW applies for grants.

Details updated, program added

New twist to January CPR, first aid training

A unique follow-up to October's volunteer CPR and First Aid Training is set for Tuesday, January 20.

Volunteers will meet at Flint Pen and stage some volunteer "victims" along the trail with various ailments. The class will travel the trail to test first aid knowledge and learn how to respond to each of the scenarios.

CREW, Audubon bird hikes

In a departure from last season's CREW guided bird walks, just one volunteer photographer is needed.

However, Audubon of SWFL is hosting free birding hikes on the trails on January 8 and March 11. Volunteers are invited to attend for free and are also needed as sweeps.

Herpetology revisited

John Cassani, Win Everham, and Joe Bozzo are repeating a herp study they first did 10 years ago at nine locations in CMT and CDT. Surveys will happen each month from January through July. The catch-and-release project's goal is to analyze changes in herp populations over time.

Volunteer help is really needed on December 8-9 to set up the sites. Information and sign up are in TiF.

Volunteer help needed

Volunteer assistance is needed at each of the following programs. Information, the types of help needed, and sign-up are posted in TiF.

Strolling Science Seminar

- Dec. 5 - Watershed Quality - CMT
- Dec. 14 - Geocaching - FPS
- Jan. 18 - Medicinal Plants - FPS
- Feb. 7 - Invasive Plants - FPS
- Mar. 21 - Reptile/Amphibians - CMT
- Apr. 11 - Martin nest check - FPS
- Apr. 18 - Spring Blooms - CMT

Strolling Science for Kids

- Jan. 11 - Frogs - CDT
- Feb. 20 - Life in a Log - FPS
- Mar. 7 - Herpetology - FPS

Special Hikes

- Jan. 3 - Hike the Loop - BRS
- Jan. 8 - Audubon Birding - FPS
- Jan. 26 - private group walk - BRS
- Feb. 7 - Hike the Loop - BRS
- Mar. 11 - Audubon Birding - CMT

Guided Walks

- 1st Wednesdays, Dec.-Apr. - CDT
- 2nd Wednesdays, Dec.-Apr. - FPS
- 3rd Wednesdays, Dec.-Apr. - CMT
- 4th Wednesdays, Dec.-Apr. - BRS
- 2nd Saturdays, Dec.-Apr. - BRS

Birding Walks

- Dec. 15 - Bird walk - CMT
- Jan. 19 - Bird walk - FPS
- Feb. 16 - Bird walk - BRS
- Mar. 16 - Bird walk - CMT
- Apr. 20 - Bird walk - FPS

Florida Master Naturalist fresh water wetlands course offered in January at FSW Lee campus

The University of Florida/IFAS is offering a fresh water wetlands course in January as part of its Florida Master Naturalist Program.

All of the CREW trails are fresh water wetland habitats.

The 40-hour course includes field trips to the CREW Marsh Trails, Six-mile Cypress Preserve, and Hickey Creek Mitigation Area.

The Friday in-person classes are held at the Fort Myers campus of Florida Southwestern State College (FSW).

Kevin Doyle is the lead instructor. CREW volunteer Barbara Centola and Allison Doyle are associate instructors.

For registration and detailed information including the course agenda, please click the link below.

<https://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/fmnp/fs26-03inperson.php>

Suck it up...

CREW's carnivorous plants use traps that intrigue medical researchers

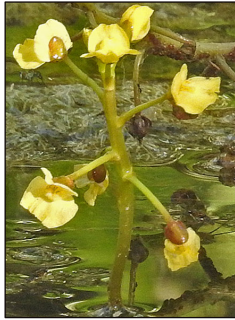
Three plants found on CREW trails – Yellow Bladderwort (*Utricularia floridana*) at the near right, Purple Bladderwort (*Utricularia purpurea*), and Horned Bladderwort (*Utricularia cornuta*) at the far right – grow in water and feed on meat.

They use a suction trap to gobble up passing prey in an instant, which they then slowly digest.

A team of scientists in France has shown exactly how this suction trap works.

The plant's tiny suction trap was much faster and more efficient than the scientists had predicted. It took just a thousandth of a second to open and close.

"It features a remarkable door that acts like a flexible valve," Dr. Philippe Marmottant, one of the scientists, said.



The valve-based trap is set by glands in the plant that continually pump water out of the tiny bladder, creating a depression on the inside. When a passing creature stimulates microscopic, super-sensitive hairs, this trap door buckles inward and opens, allowing the bladderwort to suck in water and any unsuspecting creature in contains.

While its digestive enzymes dissolve its flesh and consume the prey's precious nutrients over a few hours, the water reinflates the trap and closes the door.

"The trap can fire hundreds of times," said Dr. Marmottant. "It is an amazing piece of mechanics."

Researchers are interested in the mechanism because the bladderwort system could provide a template to design miniature

medical devices, such as a "lab-on-a-chip" that could sample tiny amounts of blood which could then be used in diagnostic tests.

Yellow and Purple Bladderworts are more common in the wet swales by the trail in Bird Rookery Swamp while Horned Bladderworts are more common on the southern part of the purple trail in Flint Pen Strand where it is sunny and when it is under water.



Wildlife confirmed in CREW

424 species of insects and spiders
208 species of birds
46 species of reptiles/amphibians
35 species of mammals
35 species of fish

Staying connected

People

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Web sites

www.crewtrust.org
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.

In case a visitor asks...

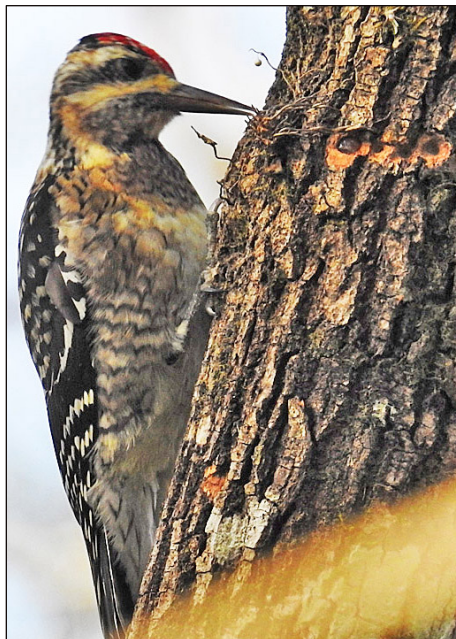
Why do sapsuckers drill holes in straight rows?

The primary food of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker is tree sap, although they also eat fruit and berries, cambium, and they occasionally cache nuts and fruit. They're known to take sap from 246 different native tree species.

The young are fed sap, fruit, and insects, usually regurgitated, until they fledge. Then, parents teach sap sucking to the young.

How do they know the best trees?

Trees react to stress and injury similar to the way people's bodies react to injury or stress. For example, when we have the flu, body temperature rises while an infection causes increased blood flow to the affected area.



Trees react to stress or injury by increasing sap production, and the sap is more sugary. That attracts the sapsucker, which can distinguish between healthy and stressed trees.

When a sapsucker discovers a likely tree, it explores for the best sap source by drilling in exploratory horizontal rows. When the sweet stuff is found, it feeds on the sap. It will guard its sap well from other birds including Ruby-throated Hummingbirds as well as from small mammals.

When the flow of sap from a good hole begins to run low, it may drill a series of vertical holes to take advantage of a known good feeding location.

Three types of mimicry observable along CREW trails

Batesian mimicry is when a harmless species (the mimic) has evolved to imitate the warning signals of a harmful species (the model) in order to benefit from these signals' tendency to deter their mutual predator (the dupe).

A hungry predator that has attacked or tried to eat the unpalatable species learns to associate its colors and markings with a very unpleasant dining experience. So the predator will generally avoid wasting time and energy catching a noxious meal again. A mimic that resembles the model benefits from the dupe's bad experience.

Some CREW insect examples are a Southern Bee Killer, a robber fly, which mimics a Bumblebee, and a Northern Plushback fly which mimics a European Honey Bee.

Serpent examples would include the harmless Scarlet Kingsnake which mimics the venomous Coral Snake and the harmless Banded Water Snake which mimics the venomous Water Moccasin.

Mullerian mimicry is when two poisonous or unpalatable animals have similar coloration and patterns. The idea is that they form a mutualistic relationship where they both benefit from sharing a similar look.

CREW examples are Monarch, Queen, Soldier, and Viceroy butterflies, all of which are distasteful to birds.

Gilbertian mimicry is a rare type of mimicry in plants involving only two species: a host (prey) which is the mimic, and predator which is both the model for the mimicry and the dupe that is deceived by it. The mechanism provides protection for the mimic because parasites and predators rarely attack their own species.

The closest local example of Gilbertian mimicry is the mimicking of Zebra Longwing eggs by some *Passiflora* plants. So far, it has not been observed in CREW.

The female butterfly avoids laying eggs near eggs already on a host plant so her own eggs will have the better chance of survival. Use the link at the right for more information.

MODEL



European Honey Bee



Bumblebee



Queen



Zebra Longwing egg

MIMIC



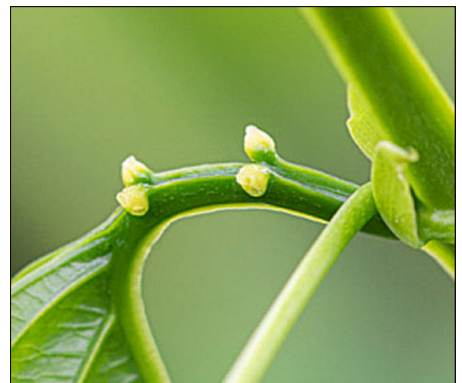
Northern Plushback



Southern Bee Killer



Viceroy



Passionvine mimic

See <https://plantmimicrybz2820.blogspot.com/2015/04/the-passiflora-genus>.