



THE BUZZARD BULLETIN

Notes & Information for CREW Trust Volunteers

June-July, 2026

Volume 10, Issue 5

NOTEPAD

Herp research help

The ongoing study of herps (reptiles/amphibians) on CREW lands has three upcoming windows for potential survey dates.

- June 1-7
- July 13-19
- August 3-9

Volunteer help is appreciated, and volunteers are welcome to just tag along. For information, contact Joe Bozzo at joebozzo1963@gmail.com.

CREW numbers

TRAILS (in miles)

- BRS 12.25
- CMT 6.3
- CDT 5.8
- CPP 2.6
- FPS 13.8

SIZE (in acres)

- BRS 8,886
- CMT/CDT 7,330
- CPP 367
- FPS 14,000*

*Includes 10,272 owned by SFWMD plus property owned by Lee County and private individuals

CREW WATERSHED (in acres)

- Total ~60,000
- SFWMD owned 28,910
- Audubon owned 13,450
- Lee Co. owned 5,662
- Collier Co. owned 3,175

WILDLIFE (documented species)

- birds 208
- fish 35
- insects 379
- invertebrates 17
- mammals 35
- spiders 41

DATES

- 1989 - CREW Trust formed
- 1994 - CMT trail opened
- 2008 - CDT trail opened
- 2011 - BRS trail opened
- 2018 - FPS trail opened

Summer learning opportunities for volunteers

Volunteer learning opportunities at the In-town Lecture Series are listed below. Each program is free for CREW Trust volunteers. Reserve a spot in Track-it-Forward.

Wednesday, June 10: Valuing the Water Quality Protectors in South Florida. Learn about ongoing research aimed at improving water quality and ecosystem health by conserving and restoring beneficial plant and animal communities in coastal watersheds and estuaries. (6:30-8 PM at the Estero Recreation Center).

Tuesday, June 30: The World of Mycology. Learn the what, where, and how of these diverse fungi and mushrooms and their ecological roles (5:30-7 PM at the Bonita Springs-Estero Realtors office).

Wednesday, July 22: Owl Pellet Dissection. Learn about the remarkable adaptations of owls and take a deeper look at the contents of their diet through hands on pellet dissection. (5:30-7 PM at the Bonita Springs-Estero Realtors office).

Wednesday, August 5: Fire in Florida. Learn about Florida's history of fire, impacts and restrictions from development, and the necessity of prescribe fire for the betterment of Florida's ecology (3:30-5 PM at the Estero Recreation Center).

Thursday, August 20: Life of an Alligator Biologist. Discover the ecology and biology of American alligators and different research topics and techniques that have been used to study these amazing reptiles (10:30 AM-noon at the Estero Recreation Center).

Saturday, September 12: Nature: Medicine for the Mind. Three researchers from FGCU will highlight the diverse ways natural environments can support psychological health, promote restoration, and strengthen human-nature connections (10:30 AM-noon at the Estero Rec. Center).

Winter freeze affected native orchid project

A brief check at the end of May of native orchids on the CREW trails located 266 of the 380 orchids that were reintroduced in June, 2025.

In the sheltered areas of CMT and CDT, 90% of CMT and 72% of CDT orchids survived the freeze.

Only one-fourth of the orchids that were placed in FPS's more open areas

survived the winter freeze which also killed all of the more exposed Coco Plum plants.

Survival rates of the restored orchids were Clamshell, Mule Ear and Spider (all 100% and all in CMT and CDT); Butterfly (78%); Night-scented Epidendrum (70%); Vanilla (45%); and Cigar (25%).



Plaque honoring Rick Skrivan installed

A memorial plaque honoring veteran CREW Trust volunteer Rick Skrivan was installed on a bench along the pine section of the southwest part of the FPS purple trail.

The plaque reads, "His happiest moments were spent in nature, surrounded by trees and the friends he loved."

Skrivan was instrumental in promoting the idea of expanding the purple trail between FPS and BRS and helped plan the layout for the additional part of the route. He was a regular member of the Trail Work Tuesday group maintaining the trails.

First aid tip

Bee sting reactions range from mild to severe

Buzzing bees, marching ants, and swarming mosquitoes are as much a part of Southwest Florida summers as are afternoon thunderstorms.

For most people, stings are minor annoyances, and most simple bee or wasp stings in a nonallergic person require no more than first aid at home.

About 3% of the population may develop serious allergic reactions: rash, hives, or swelling. Should a severe reaction occur, especially difficulty breathing or swallowing, call 911 and seek emergency care immediately.

For bee stings there are simple steps to alleviate a mild reaction:

- Remove the stinger. Use a credit card or similar device to sweep across the site to remove the stinger. Do not use a tweezers or squeeze or pinch the skin because that can cause more venom to be released.
- Apply a cool compress or ice; place a cloth between the ice and skin to avoid freezing the skin.
- Apply a hydrocortisone cream to relieve redness and pain.
- Consider taking a pain reliever and antihistamine to relieve itching.

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.

Kites, martins have successful nesting seasons

Swallow-tailed Kites and Purple Martins are nearing the end of their nesting seasons in CREW preserves, both species with greater success rates than last year.



At press time, eight kite nests, four each in CMT and CDT, were expected to fledge 11 chicks. The chick at the left is exercising its wings in preparation for fledging, which it did during the week of May 23.

As of May 18, Purple Martins in FPS's 18 nesting gourds had fledged 35 individuals with 11 more eggs, three chicks, and one almost fledged martin still in the gourds.

Last year was the first for the nest gourds and 15 martins fledged.

The bottom left photo shows three of the chicks in gourd 11 on May 18 and the photo below has one martin that's ready to fledge in gourd 2.



Birds see a colorful world people can't begin to imagine

Bird photos and images in field guides are wrong. Well, at least the way that birds could see the images.

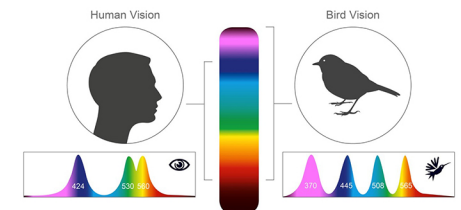
A bird checking how it looked in a field guide would be surprised how the sexes look alike in so many species when they are so obviously different in the real bird world.

That's because birds see a range of colors that people can't even come close to imagining. They see colors in the ultraviolet spectrum beyond the rainbow colors people can see.

Some of what people are missing was revealed in a 2007 study that reported a color analysis of 166 North American songbird species whose sexes look alike. The sampling of more common sex look-alike species found that 92% of of the species where people think males and females look alike showed distinct color differences that birds can see.

The graphic in the next column (*credit Klaus Schmitt*) compares the spectral field of human vision vs bird vision. People are trichromats who can only see three colors: blue, green,

and red. Birds on the other hand are tetrachromats and can see four colors: blue, green, red and UV.



Bear in mind that the violet UV color shown in the graphic has been chosen by a person to make it visible to humans; it is a "false color." UV light has no color that people can see. That's why it's called Ultra Violet — beyond violet.

Images of birds using blacklight or UV light that purport to show their ultraviolet colors are also doctored with colors people can see to show where ultraviolet colors would be.

Until birds learn to tell us what they see and in a language that we can understand, people will never know what the world looks like to birds, or what the world really looks like.

Bird Rookery Swamp updates...

Old boardwalk gone, new boardwalk becoming reality

Construction of the new boardwalk began in earnest the last full week of March with the delivery of 120 22-foot long composite pilings and the start of dismantling the old boardwalk.

Work began at the east end of the boardwalk at the start of the earthen



trail so crews could use the old boardwalk to haul out the debris. After the railings and chain link fence were removed, the actual boardwalk was taken out in ten to fifteen foot sections.

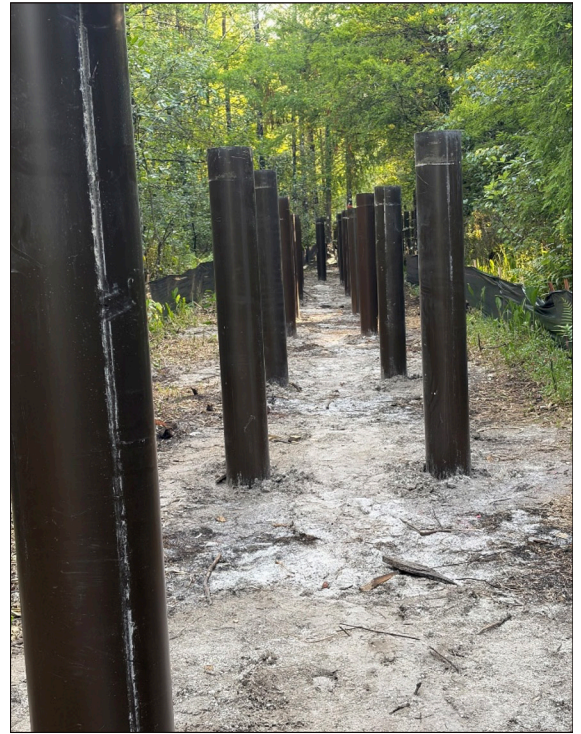
The construction crews used a small track hoe to pile drive the new pilings into the ground. Work progressed section at a time with the new pilings installed as soon as an old section of boardwalk was gone.

The last of the 1500-foot boardwalk had been removed by May 21 and new pilings installed. Thirteen dumpsters full of debris had been removed with more yet to go.

Taller pilings will be for the lean-to shelters along the boardwalk.

By the end of May, 226 pilings had been installed. Pilings were driven between 8 and 15 feet deep into the ground for solid boardwalk support.

The pilings will be shortened and leveled before stringers and joists that



will support the new boardwalk will be attached and the actual composite boardwalk will be added.

The new boardwalk will be two and a half feet higher than the old boardwalk.

Trail maintenance to become faster, easier with access to tools, mower

Improvements at Bird Rookery Swamp go beyond a new boardwalk, an enlarged parking lot, and a large vault toilet.

Maintenance will be faster and easier with the addition of a 20-foot steel container that arrived in January.

The container is located north of the entrance to the boardwalk, a grassy extension of the shell path, and will be home to battery operated hand tools and eventually a UTV with a

mower attachment. This will greatly help volunteers keep the trails in great condition.

The kiosk at the start of the boardwalk was removed so the container could be delivered and set up, but it will be re-installed once the boardwalk construction is complete.

Gasoline for the mower and UTV and batteries for the tools will be stored off-site and taken to the container as needed.



'Hooter' the Barred Owl rescued, released, saved from hawk attack

The first visitor to "use" the new vault toilet in BRS was a Barred Owl that became stuck in a vertical vent

pipe before the structure was installed and vent covers were added.

A North Collier Fire District unit arrived, cut caulking where the vent pipe went through the roof and floor, and raised the pipe enough for the owl to escape, which it hastily did, flying a few feet. It appeared weakened but healthy. The firemen named it Hooter.

Unfortunately, Hooter then walked toward the tree where the Red-shouldered Hawks were nesting and the hawks attacked a known predator.

Not yet strong enough to defend itself or fly away, it was in danger until CREW volunteer Sean Hunt stepped in, picked Hooter up, and moved it across the road to a safer spot.