



Gator Gazette

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Welcome New Board Members

February was a busy month with two of our five Board Members moving on to other projects. Bruce Allen and Bob Monica founded the club way back in 2020, and both have served since inception. But Bruce is actively assisting in raising funds for his dear church, which cause him to step away. Dorothy Schwartz has also been a staple from the very beginning. But, ever the busy lady with so many projects brewing, she too asked to be relieved of her duties as Secretary.

And so, after solicitation for volunteers the members present at our February meeting voted for Rick McKelvey to serve as our new Vice President and Joanne Bonziony as Secretary. Both are longtime members and supporters of SWA. Additionally the Board created a new sixth position of Director, appointing Vivian Aber. Viv has been a major contributor to the success of the club with her photography and various other social related contributions. We welcome all three to our team and look forward to their long term service.



RICK MCKELVEY, VICE PRESIDENT

JOANNE BONZIONY, SECRETARY

VIVIAN AVER, DIRECTOR



DATE: March 4, 2025
TIME: 4:00 — 7:00 PM
PLACE: Mardis Gras Parade
PRICE: Village Drive
PLACE: Across from the Bistro
DELICIOUS HOME BAKED COOKIES!



LIVING SAFELY IN FLORIDA WITH (YIPES) SNAKES!

This year SWA sponsored another informative presentation by Jenna Noel Palmisano who introduced us to a group of her reptilian pals. Snakes are part of life here in Florida, playing a critical role in our ecosystem. Snakes help control rodent populations which destroy crops and carry diseases. Non-venomous snakes also consume the poisonous kind, which helps to maintain a balance. Snakes are very colorful, beautiful, and soft to the touch. Your SWA celebrates snakes and urges all to respect their place in our world.



CAN DRONES HAZE WOLVES? CONDENSED FROM THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY 02/04/25

Wildlife managers are turning to the sky to keep wolves from livestock, scaring the predators away with drones equipped with speakers.

“We were able to effectively haze wolves away from cattle—and in one case—even stop an attack in progress,” said Dustin Ranglack, Predator Project leader at the U.S. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service’s Wildlife Services National Wildlife Research Center.

This technology could become an effective, affordable and time-saving method to limit wildlife conflict without resorting to culling, Ranglack said.

Wolf drones

As a pilot test, Ranglack and his colleagues turned to drones to help them haze wolves in the Rogue Pack found in southwestern Oregon during the summer of 2022.

During their night watches, the team would go to areas where they expected wolves based on a combination of radio telemetry data from some collared individuals, reports from the public, and areas with documented wolf howls. When the team detected wolves or cattle behaving skittishly the pilot would fly the drone over to investigate. If wolves were present, the pilot would immediately start hazing the wolves away from the cattle. As the drone arrived, the wolves immediately made themselves scarce, and the cow only needed minor medical attention the next morning.

A voice from above

The drones didn’t always work effectively, though. During one interaction, the drone approached a wolf, and it dropped into a play bow, thinking the device was a toy. As a result, the team added speakers to the drones, which they used to shout at the wolves. The human voices were more effective than having no sound—the wolves turned tail and ran in these cases.

This study was only a preliminary test to see if the idea worked. Ranglack said his team is currently assessing what kind of noise might be most effective, such as the sounds of gunshots or AC/DC music.

One drawback to the drones was the short flight times—the team needed to change batteries often, for example. The researchers also needed licensed drone operators because the UAVs were not the cheap commercial types. The technique may also be less effective in areas that have a lot more forest cover.

“Now, we are more thoroughly evaluating it because it’s not a silver bullet,” Ranglack said.

However, he thinks the method is promising, especially as artificial intelligence gets better at identifying individual species like wolves and making autonomous flights. But determining the best way to employ them will require a lot more testing, he said.





MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY CLUB MEETING

Club President, Bob Monica called the meeting to order on February 17, 2025 at 5:00 pm at Palms Amenity Room. Board members present: Bob Monica, president, Leo Mills, treasurer, Dorothy Schwartz, secretary and Barbara McDonald, program director.

- Deferred until January 20th meeting. Full annual report at that time.
- We have 215 members.
- Minutes of January Meeting were accepted by the group.
- Treasurers Report:
 1. Total Income \$2,915.26
 2. Total Expenses \$758.29
 3. Surplus \$2,156.97
 4. Cash Available \$4,853.61
- 2025 Dues deadline was January 31, 2025. \$15.00 per person.
- Future meeting dates are - March 17, 2025 (St. Pat's Potluck Dinner with Corned Beef and Cabbage included for free.
- Future dates now always available on the SWA website.
- The gator report for the end of January 2025 indicates no gators has been removed.
- Program Director, Barbara McDonald, reported Jenna Palisano will present Snakes in Florida in the Ballroom on 2/20. She is bringing some "friends." There will be a tour for Central Florida Animal Reserve on either 3/22 or 29 for \$25. Lunch can be included for an additional \$25. Gatorland will revisit on April 23, 2025. \$5 for non-members. All kids free.
- Fishing regulations are under consideration by the PCDD, as are additional wood duck boxes.
- Gator season has started early. Bob to send out notice to community.
- Election of officers was conducted.

FEEDING ALLIGATORS OF SAND HILL CRANES IS DANGEROUS AND ILLEGAL. You can report someone feeding alligators or sandhill cranes to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). Call the FWC's Nuisance Alligator Hotline at (866) 392-4286 OR by using the FWC Wildlife Alert app, texting 847411 (Tip411) with the keyword "FWC", or submitting a tip at [MyFWC.com/WildlifeAlert](https://www.MyFWC.com/WildlifeAlert).



FIRST FLORIDA PANTHER DEATH OF 2025

On January 10th, 2025, a 1.75-year-old male Florida panther was struck and killed by a vehicle on Immokalee Road—the first recorded panther fatality of the year. This loss comes on the heels of one of the deadliest years for the species, with 36 panther deaths reported in 2024.

This tragedy occurred in Collier County near the route of our recent "Strand to Slough" Expedition, reinforcing the urgent need for connected habitat. As roads and development continue to fragment the panther's habitat, solutions like wildlife crossings, land conservation, and planning with the Corridor in mind become more important than ever.

You can support Florida Panther research and management by purchasing a ["Protect the Panther"](#) license plate featuring a photo by Carlton Ward Jr. from the "Path of the Panther" documentary. Fees from license plate sales are the primary funding source for the FWC research and management of Florida Panthers.

You can also donate to the Fish and Wildlife Foundation's [Panther Fund](#) which supports the rehabilitation and release of injured panthers and helps FWC locate and protect panthers and their kittens.



Manatees

Manatees need access to water warmer than 68 degrees Fahrenheit to survive prolonged cold weather. As temperatures drop, Florida manatees make their way to springs, power plant discharge areas and other warm-water sites. When viewing manatees as they congregate at warm-water sites, it is important to give them space. Disturbing manatees at these sites can cause them to swim out of protected areas and into potentially life-threatening cold water. Manatees are a protected species, and it is illegal to harass, feed, disturb or harm them.

During colder months, seasonal manatee zones require boaters and personal watercraft users to reduce speed in or avoid certain areas to prevent collisions that can injure or kill manatees. Manatee protection zones are marked by waterway signs; maps of these zones are available online at MyFWC.com/MPZ.

Prolonged exposure to lower water temperatures causes manatees to lose body heat and inadequately digest their food, which can lead to a condition known as "cold stress" that eventually can be fatal. If you see an injured, distressed, sick or dead manatee, report it to the FWC's Wildlife Alert Hotline at 888-404-FWCC (3922) so that trained responders can assist. More information about manatees and how people can help with their conservation is available

FEBRUARY'S FEATURED WILDLIFE RESCUE PROVIDER



BACK TO NATURE WILDLIFE REFUGE & EDUCATION CENTER

IF YOU FIND AN ANIMAL PLEASE CONTACT US AT: **407-568-5138**

Our Mission

The mission of the Back to Nature Wildlife Refuge is to rescue, raise, rehabilitate, and release injured or orphaned Florida native species and to provide education about respecting and preserving the environment through our non-releasable permanent residents known as "educational ambassadors".



COMING TO SOLIVITA

APRIL 23 ~ 10 AM

STARLITE BALLROOM

ADMISSION \$5.00



GATORLAND will have several "reptilian visitors" on hand. Bring your grandkids!

Open to ALL RESIDENTS. FREE for SWA Members, Non-Members only \$5.00.

SWA Membership fee \$15 per year. Tell your friends... Don't miss out.