



Audubon | FLORIDA

State of the  
**Everglades**

Spring 2026



Snail Kite on Lake Okeechobee.  
Photo: Sydney Walsh/Audubon

As Audubon's new senior manager of Everglades policy, I am honored to join this work at a time of real momentum and possibility for the River of Grass. Across South Florida, we are seeing the results of decades of commitment to restoring the Everglades, and the forward motion is tangible.

This year's State of the Everglades report highlights both meaningful progress and the work still ahead. Restoration efforts under the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan are beginning to reconnect water flow, improve habitat, and strengthen resilience against rising seas. Investments are growing, projects are advancing, and communities are coming together around the shared vision of a healthy, flowing Everglades that supports both wildlife and people.

But progress, while real, is not the same as completion. There is much work to be done and the gains we see today depend on sustained momentum. Success depends on collaboration across federal, state, Tribal, and local partners, working together to ensure priorities remain aligned and focused. Projects designed to restore natural water flow and revive critical habitats cannot become secondary priorities.

Everglades restoration remains one of the nation's most consequential environmental commitments, one that protects both a unique ecosystem and South Florida's future. We must work together at all levels to ensure that restoration efforts move forward with the urgency they demand, and that

progress is not overshadowed by shifting priorities.



**McKee Gray**  
*Senior Manager of  
Everglades Policy*



Senior Policy Director Beth Alvi moderated a panel about Lake Okeechobee at the Everglades Coalition Conference in January. Photo: McKee Gray/Audubon Florida

## Everglades Strong: “All In For Restoration” at this Year’s Everglades Coalition Conference

The Everglades community started 2026 off strong with the annual Everglades Coalition Conference, held in Southwest Florida this year.

A diverse coalition converged in Naples from January 28-30 to celebrate and learn from each other as we continue to restore and protect the Everglades. The conference is the largest annual forum focused on Everglades restoration — a time to exchange knowledge and align priorities within the community.

The Audubon team was a major force at the event. The team ran an Audubon-hosted lunch with remarks from Vice President of Habitat Conservation and Water Conservation Julie Hill-Gabriel, as well as a keynote address by Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz. Senior Everglades Policy Manager McKee Gray served as an expert panelist on the opening session, “Restoration in the Shadow of Sprawl,” focused on the impacts of last year’s Senate Bill 180. While intended to assist in disaster recovery, Senate Bill 180 limits local governments’ ability to strengthen land use and environmental protections, thereby undermining coordinated, long-term efforts needed to restore and protect the Everglades. On day two, Senior Policy Director Beth Alvi moderated a lively discussion on the “Beyond CERP: Fixing Lake Okeechobee’s Future” panel. The panel highlighted the critical need for restoration north of Lake Okeechobee in order to capture, store, and clean water before it flows south. Without these upstream projects, excess nutrient pollution and erratic water releases continue to disrupt ecosystems downstream, undermining the broader goals of Everglades restoration.

Additional panels at the event focused on improving water quality and reducing harmful discharges to estuaries through the BMAP program, protecting critical habitat for the Florida panther, and strengthening resilience in the face of climate change and sea level rise. The conference proved to be a success and reinforced the importance of transparency, science-based decision-making, and public engagement in Everglades restoration.



McKee Gray (left) and Everglades Action Day coordinator Caitlin Newcamp marshalled advocates for Everglades restoration in the Florida Capitol February 18. Photo: Erika Zambello/Audubon Florida

## Everglades Action Day Brings the River of Grass to Tallahassee

Advocacy took center stage in the State Capitol during Everglades Action Day on February 18, 2026. Organized by the Everglades Coalition during Florida's legislative session, the event brought nearly 40 advocates from across the state face-to-face with lawmakers from 47 offices to deliver a clear, unified message. Driving that impact was Everglades Policy Specialist Caitlin Newcamp, who led and energized the effort from start to finish. Under her leadership, advocates from Audubon Florida, partner organizations, chapter members, and supporters showed up informed, coordinated, and ready to engage. Newcamp not only organized the event — she built a strategic, statewide advocacy push to ensure restoration remained front and center for decision makers.

Together, the participants emphasized:

- The importance of full and sustained Everglades funding.
- The need for balanced water management decisions.
- Investments in resilience and storage projects, particularly in vulnerable regions.
- Protection of critical habitat and support for land acquisition programs.

## Audubon Urges Corps to Accelerate Construction Schedule

In January, Audubon weighed in at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Draft Integrated Delivery Schedule (IDS) workshop — pushing to accelerate construction that will deliver more water where and when it is needed while urging continued progress on the Paradise Run component of the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Plan. The final IDS draft was released in late May.

### WHAT IS THE IDS?

The IDS is a document that guides how and when Everglades restoration projects move from idea to construction. It tracks the timing, sequencing, and success of restoration. At its core, the IDS serves as a shared roadmap between state and federal partners, aligning timelines and funding across the vast network of restoration efforts. It brings all restoration projects together in a coordinated schedule. In doing so, it attempts to answer an important question: Are we restoring the Everglades as quickly and effectively as possible?

The significance of the IDS lies in the interconnected nature of the Everglades system. Restoration is not a collection of isolated projects, but a complex, interdependent effort to reestablish the natural flow of water from the Kissimmee Basin to Florida Bay. The timing of one project can determine the effectiveness of another: storage must come online before harmful discharges can be reduced, conveyance must be in place before water can move south, and more.

### WHAT IS THE PARADISE RUN PROJECT?

Paradise Run is a relatively intact stretch of the Kissimmee River's historic channel and floodplain wetlands near Lake Okeechobee that was excluded from the main restoration project. Water flow to this area is now isolated by the C-38 canal. Restoring it could reconnect about 4,000 acres of riverine habitat and expand the overall success of the Kissimmee River restoration by up to 20%.





## Water Managers Chose Immediate Harm for Caloosahatchee, Rather than Risk Future Water Rationing for Agriculture

The Caloosahatchee Estuary is a vibrant, brackish system, the primary westward outlet for Lake Okeechobee water. It is also an example of one of the most pernicious challenges of Everglades Restoration: too much water when it isn't needed, and too little water when it is. Oysters, seagrasses, and other estuarine species depend upon a healthy range of salinity.

Lake Okeechobee releases during times of high rainfall rapidly force salinity levels harmfully low, and during droughts, like those experienced this year, the opposite problem occurs. Reduced freshwater flows allow salinity levels to spike, and when those conditions persist, the system sustains lasting damage.

In the long term, this will be addressed by expanding water storage and treatment capacity to hold water when there is too much for the estuary and deliver more when it needs it.

In the short-term, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) struggle to balance the water needs of agricultural interests south of the lake with the water needs of the Caloosahatchee Estuary. The lake's water management plan, LOSOM, prescribes flow levels aimed to balance both interests. Unfortunately, this spring the Corps, at the request of the SFWMD, did not provide the flows to the Caloosahatchee prescribed by LOSOM. Instead, fearing prolonged drought that might



Tricolored Heron. Photo: Ryan Shean/  
Audubon Photography Awards

reduce water availability for agriculture, the agencies implemented harmful flow reductions, causing the estuary to suffer a “Minimum Flow exceedance” — harm that will require years of recovery.

As we approach the end of the dry season, the water shortage feared by the agencies has not materialized, and the harm to the Caloosahatchee and its ecology was for naught.

Audubon continues to call for water for the environment to receive equal consideration with agricultural use, ensuring that ecological systems are not forced to bear harmful reductions unless other water users are also required to cut back their use.

Until the system can store and move water more naturally, and until agencies prioritize water for environmental stewardship equally to human needs, our natural systems will continue to bear the consequences of this imbalance.

## Army Corps Streamlining Initiative Sparks Concern Over Unintended Risks

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In 2026, efforts by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to streamline projects nationwide through its “Building Infrastructure Not Paperwork” initiative have brought new urgency and new risk to Everglades restoration. While the effort is intended to accelerate timelines by reducing procedural delays and expediting reviews, it also makes clear that federal priorities are shifting: Projects that deliver the greatest national economic return and community safety benefits will come first, often ahead of those focused primarily on ecological restoration. For the Everglades, that tradeoff raises real concerns.

The initiative directs the Corps to prioritize and accelerate projects tied to infrastructure resilience and public safety, while ranking — and potentially deauthorizing — lower-priority efforts. It shortens study and construction timelines, tightens cost and schedule limits, expands reliance on mitigation banking and non-federal funding, and streamlines permitting, including Section 408 reviews to approve changes to infrastructure projects. Increased oversight from the assistant secretary of the Army is intended to ensure projects align with these national priorities. Taken together, these changes are designed to deliver infrastructure projects faster — but not necessarily to advance ecosystem restoration at the same pace or priority.

Everglades restoration does not lend itself to shortcuts. It depends on careful planning, rigorous modeling, and science-based safeguards to ensure that water is moved, stored, and treated in ways that actually restore the system. These steps are not bureaucratic hurdles, they are what prevent costly mistakes and unintended ecological harm. As streamlining moves forward, the key question is not just how quickly projects can be delivered, but which projects rise to the top and whether critical restoration efforts are sidelined in favor of those with more immediate economic or safety returns.



Snowy Egret. Photo: Kira Henderson/  
Audubon Photography Awards

# Florida Legislative Session Brings Everglades Funding and a Slew of Bills

The Legislature considered a wide range of environmental and land-use policies, many of which carry significant implications for Florida's natural systems.

## FEDERAL FUNDING

On the federal level, the President's budget was released in April 2026 and includes allocations for Everglades restoration. Audubon continues to advocate for full funding as the federal appropriations process moves forward.

## STATE FUNDING

Florida lawmakers approved a \$114.5 billion state budget for 2026–27 — slightly smaller than last year's budget. State leaders framed the lower spending plan as a way to keep taxes low, pay down debt, and prepare for the future. The Agriculture and Environment budget totals about \$8.9 billion and includes major investments in clean water infrastructure, restoration work, and conservation programs across the state.

The good news for conservation advocates: The budget continues strong support for Florida's environment and water resources, including full funding for Everglades restoration and the Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir. The final budget includes a total of \$645 million for Everglades restoration projects. These investments are critical to improving water quality, restoring natural water flow, and protecting the Everglades for future generations.

The bad news: The final budget includes no funding for Florida Forever, the state's premier land conservation program responsible for protecting future state parks, state forests, wildlife habitat, and critical water resources. Even worse, the budget sweeps existing Florida Forever funds into the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program (RFLPP).

Audubon is deeply alarmed by this outcome, and we thank our members and supporters who made their voices heard throughout budget negotiations.

## CONCERNING STATE BILLS

Several bills that passed raised concerns about the long-term protection of conservation lands and water quality. One of the most notable, the 2026 Florida Farm Bill, included provisions that could allow certain conservation land acquired after 2023 to be evaluated for agricultural use and potentially sold, shifting them out of permanent public ownership and into easements. While safeguards were added to protect lands needed for Everglades restoration, the broader policy raises questions about the future integrity of Florida's conservation framework.

Other measures focused on accelerating development and streamlining permitting processes. Legislation affecting local land planning and development shortens review timelines and expands the use of private contractors in permitting decisions, reducing the time available for local governments to evaluate environmental impacts. Similarly, changes to septic system permitting could allow construction to move forward before full environmental review is complete, increasing the risk of nutrient pollution to groundwater and waterways.

Growth management legislation further limited local government authority in land-use decisions, raising concerns about the ability of communities to address infrastructure capacity, habitat protection, and environmental constraints as development continues. While some of the most far-reaching proposals, such as efforts to override local protections for rural and environmentally sensitive areas, were ultimately defeated, the broader trend toward faster approvals and reduced oversight remains a concern.

## POSITIVE BILLS PASSED

Despite these challenges, the session also produced meaningful progress. Legislation was passed to increase transparency in conservation land transactions. New restrictions on the land application of lower-treated biosolids represent another step forward in protecting water quality and reducing pollution risks.

Coastal resilience also received attention, with legislation supporting nature-based solutions such as living shorelines while strengthening protections for sensitive aquatic preserves. These efforts reflect growing recognition of the need to prepare for climate impacts while preserving the ecological integrity of Florida's coastlines.



Roseate Spoonbill.  
Photo: Marti Phillips/  
Audubon Photography Awards

## BBSEER and Southern Everglades Studies Push Restoration Forward in South Florida

The Biscayne Bay and Southeastern Everglades Ecosystem Restoration (BBSEER) project continues to move forward as a major planning effort under the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). Led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) in partnership with the South Florida Water Management District, BBSEER aims to restore freshwater flows into southern Miami-Dade County. As a result, BBSEER should directly lead to improvement of nearshore conditions of Biscayne Bay, Biscayne National Park, and nearby freshwater and coastal wetland communities.

### BACKGROUND

Historically, freshwater flows into Biscayne Bay spread across the landscape, filtering through wetlands before reaching the bay. Decades of development and canalization have led to freshwater pulses from canals, leading to unnatural volumes, timing, and distribution of water that negatively impact the coastal ecosystem. BBSEER seeks to improve the timing and distribution of freshwater flows into southern Miami-Dade County through numerous proposed features, including canal modifications, water storage and treatment areas, and seepage management.

Restoring freshwater flows in this area is critical to rehydrate wetlands that buffer against the detrimental effects of sea level rise and saltwater intrusion. Without timely implementation of BBSEER, coastal communities and the Biscayne Aquifer remain increasingly vulnerable, threatening drinking water supplies, coastal ecosystems, and mangrove communities that protect Miami-Dade County from storm surge.

### BACKFILLING THE C-111 CANAL

A critical component of BBSEER is the backfilling of the C-111 canal in southern Miami-Dade County. South Florida relies heavily on the Biscayne Aquifer, a shallow groundwater source that is highly vulnerable to saltwater intrusion. Canals like the C-111 drain fresh water away too quickly, lowering groundwater levels, which allows salt water from the coast to move inland and threaten our drinking water. Backfilling of the C-111 would not only rehydrate and connect wetland habitat, benefiting numerous plant and animal species, but also slow or prevent saltwater intrusion farther inland.



Biscayne National Park. Photo: Shaun Wolfe/NPS

### MOVEMENT IN THE SOUTHERN EVERGLADES RESTORATION PROJECT

The Southern Everglades Restoration Project kicked off in January of this year, with the first public meeting held in early April as part of the Corps' initiation of the National Environmental Policy Act assessment. The Southern Everglades Study seeks to use a series of water management features, particularly the use of seepage walls along western Miami-Dade County, to improve the quantity, quality, timing and distribution of freshwater in Water Conservation Area 3B and eastern Everglades National Park. The project will also include an evaluation of recharge opportunities within the Bird Drive Basin, an area that Audubon has consistently advocated for as critical to Everglades restoration. Despite the phasing out of the Bird Drive Basin under BBSEER, Audubon is encouraged to see the basin's inclusion in the Southern Everglades Study.

### WORKING TOGETHER

BBSEER and the Southern Everglades Study represent critical next steps in advancing Everglades restoration in the southeastern portion of the system, a highly urbanized and complex region. Both projects are tackling long-standing water challenges that have disrupted freshwater flow and degraded coastal and estuarine ecosystems.

**BBSEER and the Southern Everglades Study are not just environmental restoration initiatives, but long-term risk reduction and resource protection for South Florida's population.**

Audubon will continue to advocate for these projects to move forward with the most effective strategies.



Wetland Restoration Specialist Danielle Ivey explains how to use WET at the Landowners Assistance Expo. Photo: Paul Gray/Audubon Florida

## WET Expands to Southwest Florida

Audubon's Wetland Evaluation Tool (WET) is an interactive, GIS-based mapping tool that identifies locations for passively storing surface water and opportunities for wetland restoration and/or aquifer recharge. Based on the WET's demonstrated utility in identifying priority locations in the Central Florida Water Initiative and Lake Okeechobee watershed, Audubon is excited to announce the expansion of the tool into the southwest region of Florida. Like other regions of the state, Southwest Florida faces increasing development pressure and needs ways to more effectively manage stormwater in an increasingly constricted landscape.

Historically, Florida's wetlands, floodplains, and soils were expansive enough to buffer dry periods. But development has replaced many of these systems with roads, pavement, and drainage infrastructure designed to move water off the landscape quickly. This reduces our ability to retain water during wet periods and carry it into dry periods, making drought impacts more immediate and severe. Furthermore, pulse rapid water releases through drainage infrastructure (like culverts) can cause severe environmental damage by abruptly altering salinity levels, introducing high nutrient loads, and triggering harmful blue-green algae blooms.

With increased coastal flooding events coupled with more extreme wildfires, the identification of areas in Southwest Florida for storing water on the landscape becomes increasingly urgent, particularly given the estimated loss of over 30,000 acres of wetlands in Collier and Lee counties since 1996. By expanding the WET into this region, Audubon will be able to better assist local governments, water management districts, and landowners in pinpointing opportunities for surface water storage, wetland restoration, and aquifer recharge. Furthermore, expansion of the WET here will play a critical role in the development of the Corkscrew Watershed Initiative restoration plan by ensuring that the substantial restoration investment is spent on projects that will deliver the greatest benefits to the watershed, including Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary.

## Roseate Spoonbill Nesting Improved Over Last Year in Florida Bay

Across Florida Bay, the **Audubon Everglades Research Station\*** team kayaked, boated, and hiked through mangroves to monitor 244 Roseate Spoonbill nests in 22 active colonies.



\*Did you notice our name change?  
The Everglades Science Center is now the Audubon Everglades Research Station! New name, same commitment to the study of the River of Grass.

## Have you seen a banded spoonbill?

Spotted! Wading Bird Research Specialist Shauna Sayers caught sight of an elusive band on the leg of a Roseate Spoonbill — a critical piece of data that brings their movement, behavior, and population into focus.

Have you seen a banded spoonbill? Audubon collects data from birders and interested naturalists via an online form. Let us know at: [audubon.org/florida/spoonbills](https://audubon.org/florida/spoonbills)

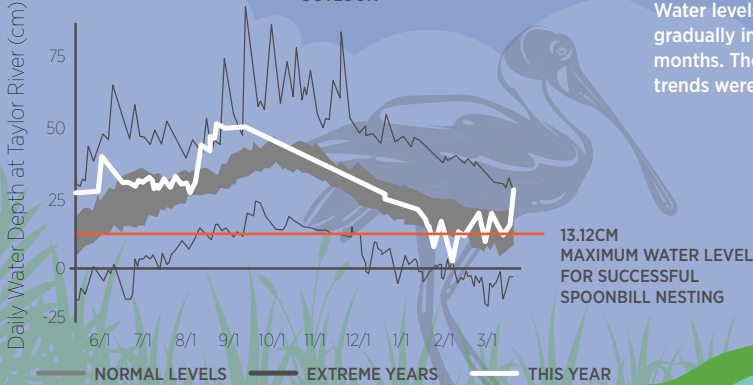


Roseate Spoonbill with leg band. Photo: Shauna Sayers/Audubon Florida

At the southern end of Everglades National Park, a series of sloughs conveys fresh water to the Florida Bay estuary. Audubon researchers track these freshwater deliveries (or lack thereof) and their impacts on the ecology of Taylor Slough and the Bay.

## WATER LEVEL

ROSEATE SPOONBILL OUTLOOK



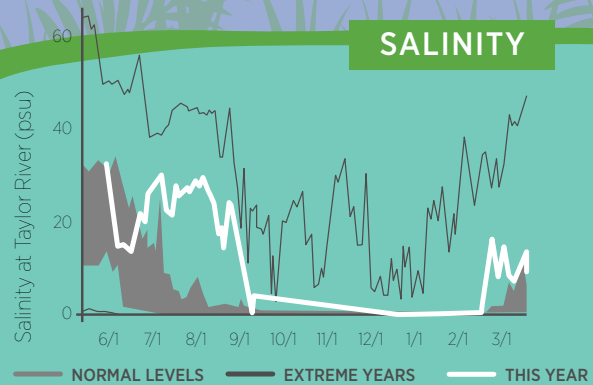
The 2025-2026 water year began with above average water levels in June and average water depths of more than 30 cm (compared to the historic average of below 25 cm). Water levels followed a similar seasonal pattern as previous years, with water depth gradually increasing through September and October, before declining over the winter months. There were no major hurricanes this season, suggesting depth and salinity trends were due to local weather rather than major storm events.

Winter water levels fell to unusual lows this past season. Evidence points to drought-like conditions, with the lowest water levels recorded in February. At that time, the Audubon team observed exposed sediment at Taylor River. Water levels rose again in March but remained below the historical average for that period. These low-water conditions are likely to have important environmental consequences, including reduced growth of underwater plants.

Florida Bay used to receive four times more fresh water from the Everglades ecosystem than it does today. Audubon uses science to accelerate Everglades restoration projects to deliver much-needed fresh water to Florida Bay.

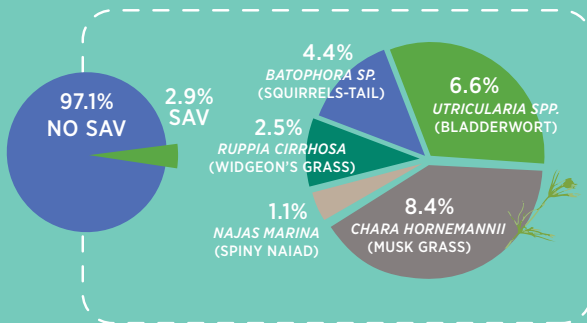
Taylor Slough

## SALINITY



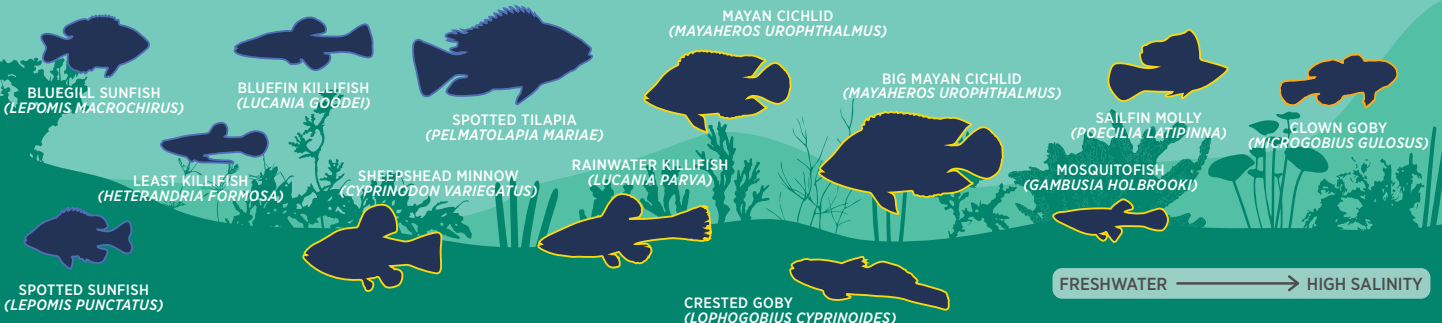
Salinity levels (or the amount of salt in the sea water) were relatively elevated at the beginning of the water year but declined rapidly, transitioning to freshwater conditions around August. Freshwater conditions persisted through the winter and into the spring. This pattern is generally favorable for freshwater fish, including bluefin killifish and least killifish, which prefer low salinity conditions. Other species documented at Taylor River included gobies and invasive Mayan cichlids, although their abundance was down from 2024 numbers.

## SUBMERGED AQUATIC VEGETATION (SAV) COVERAGE



Submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) provides important habitat for the prey fishes that comprise wading birds' diets. This water year, SAV declined from 8.4% to 2.9% at Taylor River overall, indicating a reduction in total SAV coverage compared to 2024. This decrease is not ideal and moves us farther away from the desired restoration condition; however, there were notable shifts in community composition. Musk grass, a freshwater algae that is historically associated with productive SAV conditions at Taylor River, increased from 1.1% to 8.4% indicating persistence of key freshwater SAV communities. Other algae species including bladderwort (*Utricularia* sp.) and squirrel's tail (*Batophora* sp.) also increased over the past year. Notably, widgeon's grass (*Ruppia maritima*), which was not documented in 2024-2025, reappeared this year, another positive indicator in SAV recovery. The return and persistence of native freshwater SAV species are particularly important, as they contribute structural habitat and foraging resources for fish that wading birds and other predators need to survive.

## FISH SPECIES CAPTURED THIS YEAR AT TAYLOR SLOUGH



Taylor River supports many different fish species. In total, the Audubon Everglades Research Station team recorded 951 individual fish, dominated by species adapted to slightly to moderately brackish conditions and comprising approximately 63% of individuals. Freshwater species also represented a substantial portion of the group, accounting for roughly one third of all individuals (n = 323), consistent with the extended period of low-salinity conditions observed throughout much of the year. Species associated with high-salinity or near-marine environments were rarely encountered, collectively making up less than 1% of the total catch.



**CERP PROJECT SHOWCASE:**  
The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) has a lot of moving parts — numerous separate projects with a dizzying array of acronyms! Here we showcase one of these projects: CEPP 1.0

## Central Everglades Planning Project Operation Plan: A Mouthful, but a Critical Step Forward for Long-Term Everglades Health

In 2000, Congress passed the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan — a blueprint to return health and resilience to the River of Grass. With such a vast territory of overlapping restoration initiatives, long-term planning with partners across the ecosystem is critical. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in cooperation with the South Florida Water Management District, continues to move forward with one plan to operate the lower part of the system: the Central Everglades Planning Project Operational Plan. We call it CEPP 1.0.

### WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF CEPP 1.0?

CEPP 1.0 supports the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan through gradual improvements to the quantity, quality, timing, and distribution of water that flows from the northern estuaries, Water Conservation Areas, Everglades National Park, and Florida Bay. At the same time, CEPP 1.0 aims to increase water supply for municipal, industrial, and agricultural users.

### GIVE ME THE DETAILS!

CEPP 1.0 will implement updated operating criteria for Central Everglades Planning Project infrastructure, including the Tamiami Trail, while integrating planning criteria from the updated Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual. One of the goals of CEPP 1.0 is to raise the acceptable water levels in the L-29 Canal, which will allow more fresh water to flow from the Central Everglades and into Everglades National Park.

### SO WHERE ARE WE EXACTLY?

**Modeling Work:** Complete

**Implementation:** Spring 2027

**Future Planning:** As major projects come online (like the Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir), CEPP 1.0 will continue to be refined and implemented.

**Overall Significance:** CEPP 1.0 is an example of adaptive management, as it builds on previous planning initiatives. Audubon hopes its successful implementation will lead to cleaner, more natural water flows across the Everglades system.

# Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary Celebrations

## SPURLINO FOUNDATION DISCOVERY CENTER OPENS

Something exciting has been brewing at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary in Naples: The new visitor experience, which opened on February 4, 2026, immerses all ages in swampy goodness.

With exhibits like “Life Beneath the Surface,” “Protecting Migratory Birds,” and many others, the new Spurlino Foundation Discovery Center shines a spotlight on the Sanctuary’s animals and plants, from charismatic wading birds to ghost orchids, like never before.

The renovated exhibit space is in the Blair Visitor Center, which welcomes 80,000+ annual visitors to this remarkable, 13,000-acre wildlife sanctuary and serves as a gateway to the Western Everglades. With a generous gift from the Spurlino Foundation, Audubon has updated the original 1,600 square-foot discovery center with new interactive exhibits illustrating the history and ecology of the Sanctuary while inspiring curiosity and a conservation ethos in all visitors. The immersive learning experience is the perfect complement to a walk along the renowned 2.25-mile boardwalk.

The opening of the Spurlino Foundation Discovery Center marks the completion of the first phase of construction for a visionary Capital Campaign campus transformation. This phase included other visitor experience enhancements, such as new navigational signs for the parking lot, a new campus entrance, and 95 new wayfinding, interpretive, and educational signs on campus and along the boardwalk.

## BREAKING GROUND ON PHASE TWO

Strategic investments in the Sanctuary’s mission-critical facilities will improve efficiency and broaden our conservation impact. Sustainably built with nature and people in mind, the planned campus infrastructure improvements will expand our team’s capacity to conduct innovative science and research, protect vulnerable wildlife, educate and inspire people of all ages, and connect conservationists with nature in new and meaningful ways.

The capital improvements will maximize our leadership with new, state-of-the-art facilities to support the important collaborations between our research and land stewardship teams, and the policy and restoration decisions they inform across the state. Located at the site of the Chickee classroom, the Corkscrew Commons (which will include the Western Everglades Research Center, the Land Stewardship Operations Center, and more) will bring our education and conservation teams together in a centralized, public-facing space to bolster collaboration and raise awareness of our work beyond the boardwalk.



Sanctuary Director Keith Laakkonen and Joanne Spurlino cut the ribbon on the new visitor experience in February. Photo: Jeff Boyle



In April, Audubon Florida’s board of directors met with the Corkscrew sustainability board for a backcountry tour of the Sanctuary, a boardwalk tour, and a “golden shovel” groundbreaking event to celebrate the upcoming construction of these new facilities. Photo: Kim Pause Tucker/Audubon Florida

To date, we have raised nearly \$17 million of the \$20 million needed to complete these improvements. Learn more about the campus refresh and support the effort at [Audubon.org/corkscrew/vision](https://Audubon.org/corkscrew/vision)

## Visit the Sanctuary

Visitors can explore the new exhibits and boardwalk daily from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. with the last admission at 1 p.m. Admission is \$17 for adults, \$6 for kids 6 to 14, and free for members and children under 6.

Get tickets at [Audubon.org/corkscrew/visit](https://Audubon.org/corkscrew/visit)

Rendering of the John "Jack" Hayworth Western Everglades Research Center at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary.



As the gateway to the Western Everglades, the 13,000 acres of wild Florida habitat within Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary hold the key to studying, and saving, Florida's vanishing wetlands. The new John "Jack" Hayworth Western Everglades Research Center, about to break ground in Naples, will provide lab space for Audubon scientists studying ecology and wildlife while also providing space to host and collaborate with visiting researchers from around the world.

The campus transformation underway offers a unique opportunity to invest in preserving the Everglades while also creating your legacy as a conservation champion. Recognition opportunities for areas like the new Outdoor Wet Lab and an interpretive wetland for children's programs, as well as many others, can be reviewed here: [Audubon.org/corkscrew/vision](https://Audubon.org/corkscrew/vision)



We are working to raise the final \$3 million needed to complete this \$20 million campaign. Will you join us?

Roseate Spoonbill. Photo: Peter Aronson/Audubon Photography Awards



**LEND YOUR VOICE**

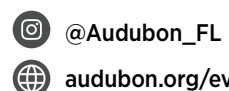
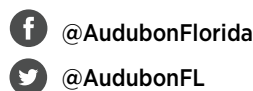
Sign up to receive Audubon Florida's electronic newsletters and action alerts for opportunities to advocate for Florida and our Everglades. [audubon.org/florida/advocate](https://audubon.org/florida/advocate)

**DONATE**

Audubon's efforts depend on you. Learn more about giving by contacting Sarah Sauerland at [sarah.sauerland@audubon.org](mailto:sarah.sauerland@audubon.org)

**LEARN**

Explore Everglades conservation and our efforts: [audubon.org/everglades](https://audubon.org/everglades)



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