



# The Buzzard Bulletin

Notes & Information for CREW Trust Volunteers

June-July, 2024

Volume 8, Issue 5

## Notepad

### Welcome

Welcome to new CREW Trust volunteers **Christina Miller** and **Kirk Sowry**.

### Summer lecture series returns

The summer lecture series returns with more options and more programs. Dates, times, and places are yet to be determined, but all will be indoors in air-conditioning.

Information and registration will be posted in Track-it-Forward.

The lectures are free and open to the public. The following topics and speakers are already confirmed.

- “Swallow-tailed Kites” with *Angel Kelly*
- “Southern Critical CREW Land Restoration” with *SFWMD*
- “Entomology” with *Joyce Fasbender*
- “Bees & Pollinators,” with *SFWMD*
- “Land Management” with *Julie Motkowicz*
- “Research at CREW” with *Piper Jones*

### CREW Logging

Please log in to Track-it-Forward regularly to keep up to date on entering volunteer hours.

## Mosquitoes don't bite, drink blood

### How do mosquitoes bite?

Mosquitoes don't really bite, nor do they really sting in the sense of a hypodermic needle piercing the skin.

Females saw their way in. The female mosquito proboscis (long tubular mouth parts used for feeding) consists of six different shafts. Four are cutting and piercing tools, a fifth transports saliva to the host, and the sixth transports blood from the host.

When a female mosquito pierces the skin, she ejects a small amount of saliva into the wound before drawing blood. The saliva makes penetration easier, acts as somewhat of an anesthetic on the host, and prevents the blood from clotting in her food canal.

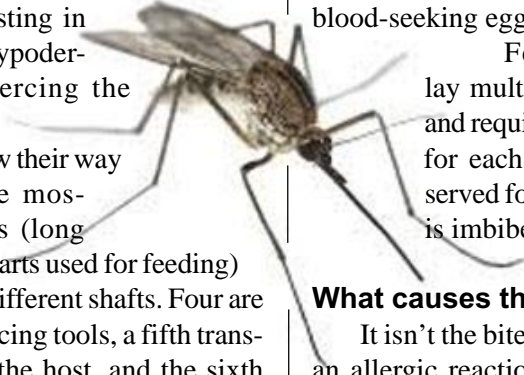
### Why do mosquitoes bite?

Both male and female mosquitoes feed on plant nectar, fruit juices, and liquids that ooze from plants. The sugar is burned as fuel for flight and is replenished on a daily basis. Mosquitoes do not “feed” on warm-blooded hosts.

Mosquitoes belong to a group of insects that require a protein in blood for their fertile eggs to develop. Since

males do not lay eggs, male mosquitoes do not attack. Females are the blood-seeking egg producers.

Female mosquitoes lay multiple batches of eggs and require a fresh blood meal for each batch. Blood is reserved for egg production and is imbibed less frequently.



### What causes the welt and itch?

It isn't the bite or loss of blood. It's an allergic reaction to the mosquito's saliva. That is why some people who are more allergic are more affected by mosquito bites than other people.

### Four mosquito myths

1. *Bug zappers are effective against mosquitoes.* Bug zappers do not control mosquitoes and can reduce the populations of beneficial insects. Don't use them.
2. *Electronic repellents will keep mosquitoes away.* They don't. Save your money.
3. *Some mosquitoes can grow to be two inches long.* They don't get that big. It was probably a harmless crane fly.
4. *Mosquitoes nest in vegetation.* Mosquitoes do not nest.

## It's bug season: Insect repellent tips, suggestions

Products containing DEET (25% is adequate), Picaridin, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus have been approved by the EPA as reasonably long-lasting protection when applied to skin.

Certain repellent products that have permethrin in the ingredients are effective for use on clothing, shoes, and camping gear.

- Apply repellents only to exposed skin and/or clothing. Do not use repellents under clothing.
- Do not apply repellents to the eyes or mouth and apply sparingly around the ears.
- When using sprays, do not spray directly on the face – spray on the hands first and then apply to the face.

## Trail questions answered...



## Are any Southwest Florida snakes territorial?

Yes, no, maybe, sort of.

As a general rule, a snake will travel as little as possible. If it can find everything it needs (food, water, hiding place, basking area, mate during season) in one area, it would likely never leave. But that hardly ever happens.

To refer to an animal as territorial means it patrols and defends an area that it marks out as its territory. That rarely applies to any snake species.

For most snakes, it would be more accurate to use the phrase *home range* rather than *territory*.

That said, some species do seem to have very defined home ranges. Rattlesnakes are familiar with their own rocks, scents, and denning spots. Their behavior becomes very erratic if they are relocated to an unfamiliar area.

Water Moccasins have much more loosely defined areas and move around frequently as the water levels change. They will, however, rigorously defend the areas where they currently are from all intruders.

Most snakes have confined ranges, and they make slow circuits. They'll stay in one spot for several days and then move to another spot.

Home ranges can change with circumstances. Snakes may periodically travel in search of new resources such as food, water, and mates. They may move during periods of drought or heavy rains, or when a particular prey source changes such as when nestling birds fledge or tadpoles metamorphose.

Snakes exploring new areas will usually leave within a day or two if they

are unable to find favorable food and shelter.



Top: Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake crossing the green trail at Cypress Dome. Above: juvenile Water Moccasin in the purple trail at Flint Pen Strand near the BRS junction.

## 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: Did I see marijuana growing along the boardwalk in Bird Rookery Swamp?



Scarlet Hibiscus

Marijuana

Buckeye

No, you didn't.

It is a native plant, Scarlet Hibiscus (*Hibiscus coccineus*), that produces large, showy red flowers that bloom in late spring, summer and fall.

Look closely at the leaves. Scarlet Hibiscus leaves have five parts on each leaf although the out-



side two leaves are often divided, so on first glance there may appear to be seven parts.

Marijuana leaves have seven distinct parts.

Leaves of Buckeye trees in the north also have five parts but the outside leaves are not separated.