# THE BUZZARD BULLETIN

**Notes & Information for CREW Trust Volunteers**

June-July, 2025 Volume 9, Issue 5


## NOTEPAD

### Welcome

Welcome to new CREW Trust volunteers **James Bunch** and **Bill Rattne**r.

### Lightning detector

The best way to reduce the odds of becoming a lightning casualty is to be aware of an approaching storm. To that end, volunteers can borrow a lightning detector from the office for use on the trails. These detectors can warn of a lightning strike up to 12 miles away.

### Eat weeds & more

The 2025 summer lecture series features monthly presentations open to the public. Links to information and registration are on the CREW website under "CREW Trust Programs, Register."

- June 22: Eat the Weeds
  Gore Nature Center, Naples
- July 15: Fern Diversity
  Bonita Springs Library
- July 30: Owls & Pellets
  The Collaboratory, Ft. Myers
- Aug. 11: Frogs in Our Wetlands
  Bonita Springs/Estero Realty
- Aug. 21: Understanding Mosquitoes
  Estero Recreation Center

### Purple Martins

The nine new Purple Martin nesting gourds in FPS are a big success. As of May 22, the martins had laid 46 eggs with 20 already hatched. Four of those hatchlings had already fledged and flown.

## *Summer safety:* Lightning awareness

With the onset of the summer rainy season, volunteers need to be alert for thunderstorms and lightning while on the trails.

The best advice is to not be on the trails during a thunderstorm. However, storms may unexpectedly pop up while people are already on the trails.

If caught outside in a storm, always look for appropriate shelter. Do not take chances – lightning will use people as a path to the earth just as easily as it will any other object.

Appropriate shelter would be a building or a car. If none are close by, then avoid taking shelter under trees. Most trees attract lightning.

If there's no shelter, assume the *lightning crouch:* put your feet as close together as possible and crouch down with your head as low as possible without touching the ground.

By making the body as low to the ground as possible and minimizing the amount of body in contact with the ground, the possibility of a lightning-related injury is greatly reduced.

If on a trail and there is no shelter close by, stay on the trail. Don't try to get lower by standing in water or damp mud next to the trail.

**Lightning myth:** Lightning never strikes twice in the same place.

FALSE: Lightning often strikes the same place repeatedly, especially if it's a tall, pointy, isolated object.

**Lightning myth:** If there are no clouds or rain overhead, lightning won't strike.

FALSE: Lightning can strike up to 10 miles from a thunderstorm, well away from the rain or clouds. The sun may even be shining at the time of the strike. Listen for thunder.

**Lightning myth:** Wearing a rubber raincoat or rubber-soled sneakers decreases the chances of being hit.

FALSE:If lightning has burned its way through a mile or more of air, which is a superb insulator, a few millimeters of any insulating material isn't going to be a deterrent.

**Lightning myth:** If outside during a thunderstorm, the best way to stay safe and to stay dry is to seek shelter under a small tree but not a tall one.

FALSE: Being under any tree or trees is the second leading activity leading to lightning casualties.

## *First aid tip:* Dealing with Poison Ivy exposure

The first line of defense is to avoid poison ivy whenever possible. Past immunity is no guarantee. Some people develop the allergic reaction later in life while others outgrow it.

All parts of the plant – leaves, stems, roots – are fragile and exude urushiol (the oil that triggers the allergic reaction) when touched.

When exposed, act within 10 minutes to minimize a reaction. After that, the urushiol will have been on the skin long enough to trigger the rash.

The rash is not contagious, so touching it won't spread the reaction. Areas where the exposure was the greatest develop the rash first. Less exposed areas develop the rash later.

In the field, rinse the affected area well with available cool water, but watch out for alligators. It's better to have an arm that itches than to not have an arm.

At home, first cleanse the exposed area with rubbing alcohol. Next, wash the exposed area with cool water only (no soap yet, since soap can spread the urushiol around on the body and make the reaction worse). Finally, take a shower or wash the area with soap and warm water.

Lastly, put on gloves and wipe anything that might have touched the plant with rubbing alcohol, including shoes, tools, and clothes. The urushiol can linger and infect for days.

## What are cypress knees? What good are they?

Common questions visitors ask upon seeing cypress knees for the first time is "What are those? Do they turn into trees? What good are they?"

Cypress knees are vertical extensions of the root system and will never be anything other than knees.

Three theories exist about their purpose None has been definitely proven, but one is most likely.

Cypress trees are shallow-rooted (no tap root) and should be susceptible in hurricanes. But a projection (knee) growing up through a tangled mat of shallow roots provides extra stability, enabling the tree to remain upright in hurricanes and not topple over.

The other two theories, disproved, are that the knees may store starch or nutrients for the trees, or that they somehow help with oxygenation since cypress roots are under water.

However, experiments have failed to detect any sort of gaseous exchange, and trees with knees removed do not suffer any loss of starch or nutrients.

## Staying connected

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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…*

# When do birds sleep?

If Barred Owls are active day and night, and if Mockingbirds forage during the day and sing at night, when do they all sleep?

No one has ever actually proven that sleep is physiologically necessary for birds because sleep patterns in birds are challenging to measure scientifically. Laboratory experiments can't duplicate the varied conditions birds must face in their natural environments, and even the smallest sound or movement in a lab would disrupt the natural patterns the scientists are trying to study. But there are theories.

A main benefit of sleep/rest for birds may be that standing still helps conserve energy. Resting motionless, during day or night, with eyes open or closed, reduces the need to be 24-hour feeding machines in order to maintain a high metabolism.

So birds will nap lightly off and on day and night rather than sleep soundly. There are advantages to that strategy.

Smaller birds must be concerned with predators both during the day and during the night. If they're sound asleep, they can't hear or see a potential predator hovering above or lurking below, and they can't do anything about it. Not good for the bird!

Birds have two sleep phases: quiet sleep when they open their eyes and peek every three to six seconds, and active sleep when their eyes stay shut.

Birds that are most active during the day catnap more frequently at night; birds that are more active at night nap more frequently during the day.

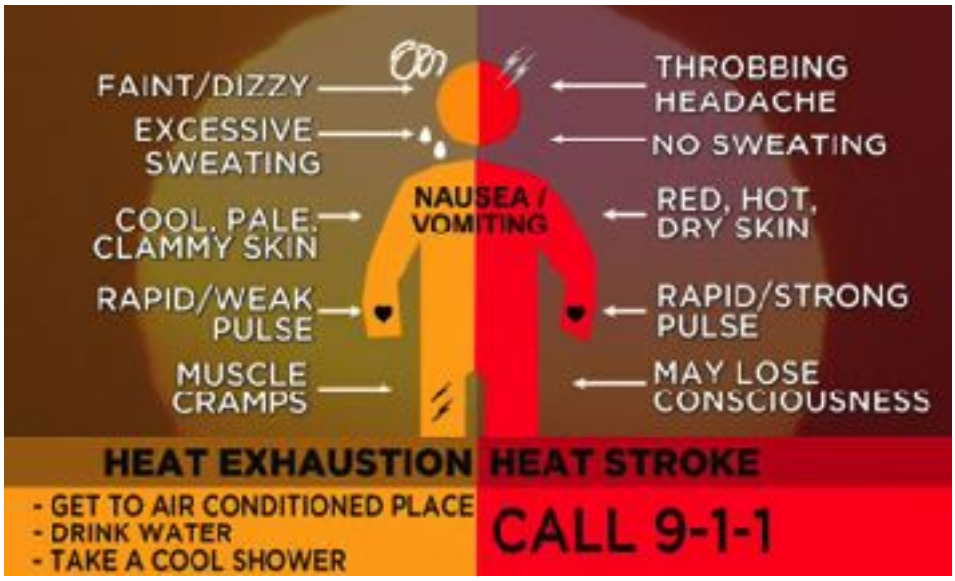
Communal roosting increases the amount of time available for active sleep because at any time there will always be some birds awake who will be alert for possible predators.

Younger less dominant birds that must roost at the edges of the colony have less active sleep because their location makes them more vulnerable to predation.

# Stay safe in summer heat, humidity

Take precautions in summer's high heat and humidity to avoid heat-related illnesses.

- Bring water, drink plenty of fluids.
- Take frequent breaks in the shade.
- Protect against sunburn.
- Wear loose fitting, lightweight clothing.
- Bring a hand towel to dip in water that can be used to cool down.



*What warblers are here in the summer?*

# Four warbler species stay all year, five nest in Southwest Florida

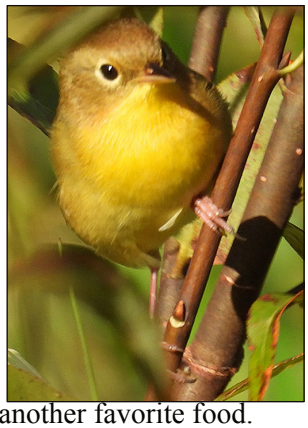
While most of the warblers seen in the winter season in Southwest Florida migrate north for the summer to nest, four warblers and sometimes a fifth are year-round residents of Southwest Florida and nest here.

The Prothonotary Warbler typically nests in northern and central Florida but will occasionally stay and nest in Southwest Florida.

Most are heard less frequently during the summer when they are not courting, and they are seen more often during the colder months when both the male and female will be foraging and not nesting.

**Common Yellowthroat**

The Common Yellowthroat is found wherever there is ample ground cover, usually in a wet area. It is mostly seen around coastal and freshwater marshes and around low moist vegetated areas in woodlands and prairies. It mostly eats insects, especially bees, ants, and wasps, but it will also eat caterpillars, beetles, grass-hoppers, and various insect larvae. Spiders are another favorite food.



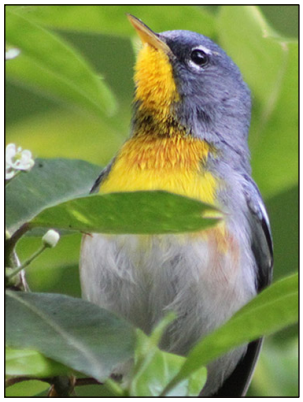
**Appearance:** The male has a black mask while the female does not.

**Nest:** bulky, loosely made of weed stems, grass 1-3 feet above ground; lined with fine materials

**Most often seen:** October through March

**Northern Parula**

The Northern Parula inhabits hardwood forests, pine-oak woodlands, and cypress and hardwood swamps wherever Spanish Moss thrives. It nests in the Spanish Moss. It forages from low shrubs to treetops, hovering at the tip of a branch or hanging upside down to secure prey. Ants, bees, and wasps are its primary prey, but it will eat caterpillars and other insects



**Appearance:** The male has a dark 'necklace" above the orange band on its throat that the female lacks.

**Nest:** pocket hollowed in hanging lichens; when lichens not available, may be in hanging clusters of twigs

**Most often seen:** March through May

**Pine Warbler**

The Pine Warbler is found in pine flatwoods. So partial is it to pines that it seldom is seen in other types of trees. Primarily a treetop species, it forages frequently at the very tips of pine branches. . Mainly an insect eater, it also eats wild fruit and berries, pine seeds, and grass seeds.

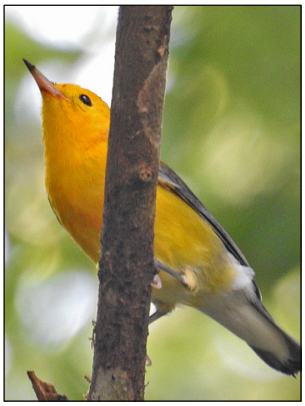
**Appearance:** In winter, males and females are a drab yellowish-brown. During nesting season, the males turn a bright yellow.

**Nest:** often far out on limb in pine trees, 25-40' from ground; concealed from below with leaves

**Most often seen:** January and February

**Prothonotary Warbler**

The Prothonotary Warbler inhabits bottomland swamps with standing or slow-moving water. Typically, it forages on or near the ground, even on floating debris.It eats insects and spiders. It is seldom far from water and wetlands.



It spends winters in the tropics and mostly nests in Central and Northern Florida, but it sometimes nests in Southwest Florida.

**Appearance:** Males and females are similar in appearance.

N**est:** cavity nester, sometimes in stumps; 5-10' above water or ground

**Most often seen:** August and September

**Yellow-throated Warbler**

Yellow-throated Warblers inhabit hardwood and pine forests and cypress and hardwood swamps with luxurious growths of Spanish Moss. Creeping somewhat like a Black-and-white Warbler, it forages from mid story levels to the tree-tops and from the trunk to the tips of branches. It also forages in the tops of Cabbage Palms. Its diet is insects and spiders but will will eat seeds.

**Appearance:** Males and females are similar in appearance.

**Nest:** typically on horizontal branch of pine tree, 20-50' up, buried in Spanish Moss

**Most often seen:** January and February