



ARCHBOLD MARCH 2015 NEWSLETTER for curious minds



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Dung Beetle Mystery



A dung beetle *Canthon vigilans* rolling a ball.

Christen Steele ([University of Central Florida](#)) began exploring dung beetle communities at the [MacArthur Agro-ecology Research Center](#) (MAERC) after an inspiring conversation with Ranch Manager Gene Lollis. Lollis wondered why dung pats in the pastures seemed to be degrading slower these days. One explanation is the adverse impacts of Ivermectin wormer for cattle. However the plot thickened when Steele submerged dung pats in water to assess the beetle fauna and discovered large numbers of non-native fire ants. Steele said, 'Not only do the beetles eat and bury dung, which enriches the soil, but they also suppress gastrointestinal parasites of cattle by preventing them from completing their life cycle in the dung pat. With funding from an EPA STAR graduate fellowship, **I developed a research project to experimentally test the impact of fire ants on**



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dung beetle activity and two of the ecosystem services that dung beetles provide: Dung degradation and gastrointestinal parasite suppression. The results from this study are expected this fall.'

Archbold Needs YOU



Lee Andrus leads a local [Memorial Elementary School](#) group through the Florida scrub.

Do you like sharing nature with others? Do you have tech skills to share or library management experience? Are you good at repairing vehicles and fences? If so, Archbold could use your help. Come to our **Volunteer Open House on March 10th from 3-5 pm** to learn more with Dustin Angell, Archbold Education Coordinator. Angell asked current volunteers why they volunteer. Linda Gette said, '**Not a minute passes that I'm not learning something interesting** about insects, birds, or tortoises. Fascinating stuff!' Lee Andrus added, 'We take the kids out on field trips and I'll mention to them to keep their eyes open, and they will see stuff that I won't see. I enjoy being outside and sharing it with them.' Ed Cunningham, who volunteers with Dr. Reed Bowman in the Avian Ecology Program, commented 'It will probably take a couple of years to catalogue all the mammal skins, bird skins and bones so that will keep me busy until I'm older!' Contact [Dustin Angell](#) for more information.

Making a Living in Scrub



Connect with us on
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Check out our Youtube
Videos!

"Archbold Biological Station is one of America's iconic centers of continuous research and education in field biology. It is a prototype of what we need all across America."
— Edward O. Wilson

Upcoming Public Events

Mar 10: 3:00 pm-5:00 pm
Volunteer Open House
Dustin Angell, Archbold

Mar 14: 10:00 am-11:00
am

Visitors walk and talk among the plants and animals of the scrub with Dr. Reed Bowman.

With a few loud pishes, the stars of '[At Home in the Florida Scrub](#)' made their entrance. Dr. Reed Bowman, [Archbold Avian Ecology Program](#) Director, led a group of 40 curious members of the public on February 28th into the fascinating world of the Florida Scrub-Jay. Dr. Bowman asked, 'How do the jays live where food is scarce, predators abundant and cover to hide sparse, and fires frequently sweep through the neighborhood'?

Drawing on 46-years of Archbold data from studying Florida Scrub-Jays, Dr. Bowman described the amazing behaviors that enable jays to thrive in scrub. The group observed these behaviors first-hand as jays defended their territory. Bowman emphasized the importance of large territories to ensure adequate resources for the entire group. Bowman said these behaviors break down when fire is suppressed leading to the decline of jay populations and emphasized the importance of appropriate management. Check out the schedule of upcoming events for walks and talks like this!



Audubon's Inspiration

Inspired by [John James Audubon](#), an ornithologist and painter, Colleen Cahill, a biologist and photographer, flew from [Colorado College](#) to Archbold in February for her Senior Independent Photography Project. Cahill commented, 'Everything went fantastically. **My project involved photographing birds in the wetlands of central**

Florida to show habitat relationships such as feeding behaviors and vocalizations like Audubon did in his paintings. I also tried to capture the overall coloration of a specific bird species. I chose similar framing techniques that Audubon used like using tree branches to the lead the eye to a subject or the horizon line. Walking around the Archbold Reserve in the cool, early mornings and looking for birds made for great photographic opportunities as well as wonderful memories!

Funding Fertile Minds

[Pygmy Fringe Tree Wildflower Festival](#)

Walking Tour
Stacy Smith, Archbold

Mar 19: 3:30 pm-4:30 pm
Playing with Fire:
Pyroecology in Florida and
Around the World
Dr. Eric Menges, Archbold

Mar 27: 7:00 pm-8:30pm
Stargazing Telescope Night
Family Activities
Kye Ewing, Archbold
Dustin Angell, Education
Coordinator

[Archbold Facebook Event Calendar](#)



Check out the Archbold Education [Scrub Blog](#)

Directions to Archbold Biological Station

Eight miles south of Lake



Vaughn-Jordan interns Kaitlin Griffith (left) and Susan Deans (right) flank Research Assistant Stephanie Koontz as they measure Florida rosemary.

The Archbold intern class of 2015 continues to grow with the arrival of Kaitlin Griffith and Susan Deans, who join the [Plant Ecology Program](#) thanks to a **second year of generous funding from the Vaughn-Jordan Foundation. The Vaughn-Jordan mission is to further botanical and horticultural science. Griffith and Deans are already engaged in a long-term demography study of Florida rosemary *Ceratiola ericoides* and field germination experiments quantifying the effects of microhabitat on germination of several endangered, endemic plants. **'Working with plants in the dynamic Florida scrub is a dream for any biologist'**, said Griffith. Deans added, 'The satisfaction of progressing what is known about plant ecology at Archbold is what really drives me'. Dr. Eric Menges, said **'This support is crucial in achieving our program goals of enhancing the education of young scientists and accomplishing new research!'****

Placid. Entrance is 1.8 miles south of SR 70 on Old SR 8.



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