



ARCHBOLD MAY 2015 NEWSLETTER

for curious minds

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Caracara Old Timer



Band numbers were visible on the photo of this oldest documented wild Crested Caracara; looking good at 24 years of age! See more beautiful Caracara photos [here](#).

Our story begins with Brian Schmidt, a [dedicated bird photographer](#) based in central Florida, submitting his photo of a banded Crested Caracara, a Federally Threatened species, to the [Bird Banding Laboratory](#) (BBL) for ID. The BBL contacted [Dr. Joan Morrison](#) who has studied Caracara habits for two decades. Morrison could only read 3 of the 9 number string but suspected it was a very old band. She contacted Schmidt to get additional photos of the bands which he did. Morrison subsequently emailed the BBL: **'This**



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definitive photo by Brian confirms a new longevity record for Crested Caracara! This male is at least 24 years old. I banded him as a breeding adult in a cattle pasture in March 1994!' Schmidt commented, 'My love for this bird goes beyond anyone's imagination. The Caracara is such a smart bird, most people have no idea!' Morrison sure knows. She even remembers capturing this particular male in 1994, commenting, 'This Caracara's home territory has not changed at all which might explain why he is still successfully nesting there. **It is really great to have Brian as a citizen scientist partner in our Caracara work along with the ranchers who maintain pasture habitat preferred by Caracaras**'. Morrison plans to write-up an article about the Caracara's lifespan with Schmidt as co-author. View earlier video interview with Morrison [here](#).



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From Scrub Camper to Scientist



Tyler Beck near a Stormwater Treatment Area between Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades.

Today, Tyler Beck often travels by airboat in Lake Okeechobee and surrounding wetlands as Snail Kite Conservation Coordinator for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. His earlier graduate work was recently featured in the prominent journal BioScience entitled '[The Ecology of Artificial Wetlands](#)' by Sharon Levy. As a graduate student with Dale Gawlik at [Florida Atlantic University](#) studying birds in Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) south of Lake Okeechobee, **Beck found 'bird density in the**

"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

artificial marshes was 38 times greater than in nearby natural wetlands and species richness was 4 times higher'. STAs are constructed marshes that filter out most upstream pollutants before the water flows into the Everglades. Before graduate school, **Beck was an intern in the Archbold Avian Ecology Program** with Dr. Reed Bowman, who reintroduced him to Gawlik. And before that, Beck was a high school counselor for Archbold's Scrub Camp. Even earlier, **he was a Scrub Camp attendee with his first trip to Archbold at just 10 years of age!** Beck said, 'Being the son of a Lake Placid High School Biology teacher, I have always been interested in natural things and local ecology. Archbold has many great minds. Everything from Scrub Camp to my internship absolutely paved the way for my future.'



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

Native South Floridians



Eastern Indigo Snake, a Federally Threatened species, in the Florida scrub at Archbold.

Upcoming Public Events

No less than 81 native amphibians, reptiles, turtles and crocodiles make a living in the biodiverse landscape between Archbold, MacArthur Agro-ecology Research Center, and the Everglades. Former Archbold Director of Research (1967-1976) and Executive Director (1976-1985), Dr. Jim Layne, and former Archbold graduate student and post-doctoral biologist, Dr. W.E. Meshaka Jr., now Senior Curator of Zoology and Botany at the State Museum of Pennsylvania, just published '[The Herpetology of Southern Florida](#)', a comprehensive work initiated in the mid 1990's to provide an ecological progress report for the regionally distinct 'herp' (amphibian and reptile) community of South Florida. This seminal work incorporates a huge amount of field data including herp arrays, personal observations, long-term studies in addition to literature and collection specimens. Beginning with the Two-toed Amphiuma and ending with American Crocodile, this publication is a phenomenal contribution to herpetofauna conservation during a time of rapid habitat alteration, development and climate change.

May 16: 8:45 am-12:00pm

May 17: 1:15 pm-4:30 pm
Tortoise Tracker Family Event
Hands On Activities & Field Demonstrations

Must pre-register [here](#)
Dr. Betsie Rothermel,
Archbold

[Archbold Facebook Event Calendar](#)

Scrub Pyroecology



A recent fire of [long-unburned Florida scrub](#) at Archbold.

Dr. Eric Menges, Archbold [Plant Ecology Program Director](#), presented a Station seminar 'Playing with Fire: Pyroecology in Florida and Around the World' on April 16. Menges painted a detailed portrait



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of his fire ecology research in the Florida scrub and placed this research in a global context. For example, most scrubby flatwoods plants recover from fire by resprouting while most plants specializing in rosemary scrub are killed by fire and recover from a persistent soil seedbank. Resprouters like palmettos and oaks are extremely resilient with high root to shoot ratios (e.g., 7x more plant belowground than aboveground), and show little sensitivity to high fire frequency or intensity. Many endemic plants in rosemary scrub depend on gaps in the vegetation, which grow larger with fire. Menges concluded by **recommending a varied fire regime to increase pyrodiversity and landscape heterogeneity**. Watch footage from Archbold's most recent scrub fire [here](#).

School. View full description [here](#).

Roof Restore



The Austin Rand Building with restored roof.

Life is tough on buildings in Florida especially when tropical hurricanes visit. There was Hurricane Donna in 1960 and who can forget the 2004 season (Charley, Frances, Jeanne). Archbold has [five buildings on the National Register of Historic Places](#). So, anytime repair is needed, the goal is to restore them to their original state. **The third (and final!) phase for Archbold's roof restoration was just completed for the Rand Building (former Roebling Garage) and the Generator House.** The new roofs feature Ludowici hand-crafted clay tiles and flat-seamed copper squares modeled after the 1930 construction but using tiles with a grooved back for additional strength. 'It took a team effort on the part of the architect ([Parker Mudgett Smith](#)) and the staff who prepared and submitted the grant application to the [Florida Division of Historical Resources](#) along with support from the community and local legislators for this project. **We are very appreciative for the support we received,**' said Hilary Swain, Executive Director. All three phases of

Directions to Archbold Biological Station

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



Archbold's historic roof restoration have been managed by [Old World Craftsmen, Inc.](#) of Lake City.

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