



ARCHBOLD FEBRUARY

2017 NEWS

for curious minds



In This Issue:

1. Sunfish Rule Scrub Wetlands
2. Exploring the Florida Scrub Video
3. Growing Plant Scientists
4. The Art of Life
5. Florida Defense Support Task Force

Sunfish Rule Scrub Wetlands



African Jewelfish (*Hemichromis letourneuxi*) in Highlands County, Florida.

African Jewelfish (*Hemichromis letourneuxi*) were first detected on the Archbold Reserve in 2008 by Archbold Restoration Ecology Director Dr. Betsie Rothermel ([full article](#)). This was the first record of African Jewelfish in Highlands County. It was not a surprise since the range of this non-native "beauty" was expanding beyond south Florida. The jewelfish living in wetlands on the agriculturally modified [Archbold Reserve](#) are near wetlands embedded in the Florida scrub at the Station. Rothermel wondered whether above-average rainfall during the 2015-2016 El Niño could facilitate dispersal of jewelfish into the hundreds of seasonally inundated wetlands in the Florida scrub. To find out, Archbold intern Ethan Royal (Stetson University B.S., now



[Donate Now](#)

[Archbold Biological Station Website](#)

[Subscribe to our Monthly News](#)

a University of Arkansas graduate student) investigated patterns of fish distribution and abundance in 2016. Rothermel said, 'Fortunately, jewelfish were found in only 5 of the 30 ponds sampled by Ethan. **Most scrub ponds seem resistant to colonization by African Jewelfish. The most common fish species encountered (17 of 30 ponds) was the native Everglades Pygmy Sunfish (Elassoma evergladei).**' This small sunfish is no bigger than 3.4 cm and prefers shallow, vegetated wetland habitats. 'Elassoma' is from the Greek word Ellasson which means smaller.

"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

Exploring the Florida Scrub Video



Go to [Archbold's Facebook page](#) this weekend on February 11 to watch the full ten minute video '[Exploring the Florida Scrub: Archbold's Nature Trail](#)'.

Archbold opened two new nature trails in 2012 near the Learning Center: The Discovery Loop (30 minute, less than 1/4 mile walk) and the Explorers Loop (over 1/2 mile and 1 hour walk). **What if you could experience Archbold anytime, no matter where you are? Now you can. Our new video '[Exploring the Florida Scrub: Archbold's Nature Trail](#)' will grab you by the hand for a unique virtual overview of the Florida scrub experience. [Watch the video trailer here](#) or view the full video on [Archbold's Facebook page](#) on Feb 11.** The video does not follow the trails step-by-step, but rather immerses you, as if you are walking along sandy trails where anything can happen including real surprise encounters with Gopher Tortoises, Florida Scrub-Jays, Ant Lions, palmettos, recently-burned scrub, and more. Hilary Swain, Archbold Executive Director, narrates the beginning and ending saying, 'You will need to be alert with all senses on deck to appreciate the sights, sounds, and wonderful plants and animals. Be on the lookout from way up in the pine tree tops to the sand beneath your feet'. This beautiful ten minute sensory experience,

Upcoming Events

Feb 26: Starts at 1:30 pm

Amphibious Adventure

Betsie Rothermel,
Archbold

Mar 16: 3:30 pm-4:30 pm

Documentary Photography
Talk: Saving the
Endangered Florida
Grasshopper Sparrow

Dustin Angell, Archbold

made possible in part by generous support from Lewis and Kathleen Crampton, and produced by [Into Nature Films](#) captures the interpretive spirit of Archbold. Then, come visit the [trail](#) for yourself! If you prefer a guided trail tour, check our Facebook page and [website](#) for upcoming tours. Or, if you like a self-guiding experience, start at the Learning Center and grab a trail guide. The trails are open to the public every day from dawn to dusk.

Mar 25: 8:00 am-10:00 am

Natural History of the Florida Scrub-Jay

Walking Tour

Reed Bowman, Archbold

Growing Plant Scientists



Interns Michael Blaha, Kaitlin Griffith, and Emma Sass measure the sizes of Florida rosemary (*Ceratiola ericoides*).

'How are scientists made?' begins the 'Growing Plant Scientists' story by Dr. Eric Menges and Stacy Smith in a recent [Palmetto](#), the official magazine of the Florida Native Plant Society. Menges and Smith continue, 'We work in the Plant Ecology program at Archbold Biological Station, where our research focuses on plant population biology, fire ecology, and conservation of rare and endemic plant species. **Our internships provide one of the most in-depth research internship experiences available anywhere.**' They paint a picture of the rich internship experience had by over 120 young plant ecologists over the years. They share inspiring stories of past interns like Orou Gaoe Gande. Gande, who left his native Benin (West Africa) to study at Archbold in 2003. 'Gande co-authored a publication on the endangered scrub mint (*Dicerandra frutescens*). He later obtained his Ph.D. and is now a professor at the University of Hawaii specializing in sustainable harvest of non-timber forest products. The success that Dr. Orou Gande enjoyed is representative for many former interns'. Click [here](#) for more information on Plant Ecology internships.

Restoration Ecology Internship

Unique opportunity: An internship in restoration ecology at Archbold. Internship begins May 2017. Applications due March 6. Click [here](#) for full description.

The Art of Life



'Bright Morning' painting by Sean Sexton is featured at the MOFAC exhibit ['The Art of Life: Works by Sean and Sharon Sexton'](#).

Sean Sexton, a rancher, artist and writer, was guest of honor for a Buck Island Ranch buggy tour with a group of art students from South Florida State College led by faculty Megan Stepe on January 20th and hosted by Hilary Swain and ranch staff Steffan Pierre. The day before, the students met with Sean at the opening of his exhibit ['The Art of Life: Works by Sean and Sharon Sexton'](#) at the Museum of Florida Arts and Culture (MOFAC) in Avon Park. **Sean's oil paintings of ranch scenes were familiar to some students and presented another world to others.** And, his ceramics of Florida ranch life, an art form he started only 5 years ago, were a revelation. Artwork and ceramics by Sean's wife Sharon are also featured in the exhibit. Sean said, 'I am as interested in the small inconsiderable things as I am in the grand things, so I feel like I am, in a sense, giving a kind of expression to the land. I have taken up the habit of drawing and drawing books. It's a kind of an accommodation to my life and the fact that I can't always be doing art, because I am working on a cattle ranch for a living, but I've always got that book'. No surprise that many of the students arrived for their ranch tour armed with sketch pads and powers of observation primed to see the land through new eyes. **Last chance to go visit the exhibit [open until February 9th. It is a treat!](#)**



Check out our Youtube Videos!



Connect with us on Facebook!

[Archbold Facebook Event Calendar](#)

Florida Defense Support Task Force



Hilary Swain speaking to the Florida Defense Support Task Force. Screenshot from the [Florida Channel](#).

Members and consultants for the Florida Defense Support Task Force convened for their monthly meeting on January 19th at the Avon Park Air Force Range (APAFR). The mission of the Task Force is to preserve, protect, and enhance Florida's military missions and installations. Archbold Trustee Barbara Stewart has served on the Task Force for five years. Stewart arranged for Archbold's Director Hilary Swain to make a presentation as part of a local welcome for the meeting. **Swain said, 'It was a wonderful opportunity to highlight Archbold's 27-year close working relationship, led by Dr. Reed Bowman, with the US Department of Defense at APAFR.'** Swain emphasized the important ecological and conservation values of the 106,000-acre APAFR, which supports a huge array of rare plants, animals, and natural ecosystems that are well-managed and secure. She explained Archbold's critical role facilitating regulatory requirements for listed species such as Florida Scrub-Jays, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, and Gopher Tortoises. She concluded by extolling the synergy between military training and nature conservation at APAFR and its importance in providing vital ecosystem services for all Floridians that live in the Everglades watershed. **Watch a video of Hilary Swain's presentation from minutes 13:00 to 23:00 on the Florida Channel [here](#).**

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 Biological Station](#) | [MacArthur Agro-ecology Research Center](#) | [Archbold Reserve](#)

We are a publicly supported organization exempt from income taxes under the Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3).

[Archbold](#)

123 Main Drive, Venus, FL 33960