



# Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife

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[www.ccfriendsofwildlife.org](http://www.ccfriendsofwildlife.org)

## The 2009 Burrowing Owl Festival

### Contact Numbers

Cape Coral Friends of  
Wildlife  
(239) 980-2593

CROW  
(239) 472-3644

Florida Wildlife Conservation  
(888) 404-3922

City of Cape Coral Planning &  
Growth Management  
Division  
(239) 574-0589

The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Burrowing Owl Festival will be held on February 21, 2009. Registration is still open for vendors, nonprofit organizations and sponsors. As in previous years, only environmentally friendly groups will be considered.

Sponsors are still urgently needed. Sponsors help pay the expenses for running the festival, and fewer sponsors means diminished profits. If you know of any businesses that would like to help the wildlife of Cape Coral, please contact Pascha Donaldson immediately.

CCFW members are asked to obtain gift certificates from businesses they patronize. In these difficult economic times, we all need to help in this effort.

All members are asked to attend the January meeting. Volunteers will be assigned at that time. The Burrowing Owl Festival is our primary fundraiser, and all members are asked to do their part to help protect the wildlife of Cape Coral. All Hands on Deck! We have a job for everyone!

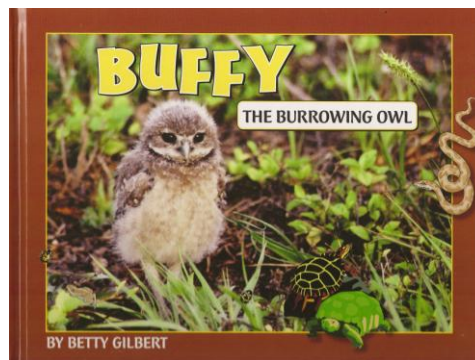
Each year the festival gets bigger and better, and we hope and expect to see that trend continue this year.

### CCFW Meeting

January 13, 2009  
Rotary Park  
6:30 pm

Speaker will be

Cindy Bear  
Environmental Education  
Resource Teacher for  
Lee County Schools



Betty Gilbert, a Florida author and photographer, has written a children's book about Cape Coral's most famous resident, the Burrowing Owl. The story is about a banded owl found off Country Club Boulevard and has wonderful photos of the owls.



Betty Gilbert, Author

Part of the proceeds from the sale of this book will be donated to Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife. Books are available through CCFW, Sip & Send, June's Hallmark, Kindness Animal Hospital West, and other locations. For more information about the book, call 239-980-2593.

## Budding Wildlife Expert



If you haven't met Payton, when you do, you are in for a treat. Payton, a student at Cape Coral High School, loves animals and is often seen with all sorts of wildlife. Michael Orchin, past president of Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife, has taken Payton under his wing, teaching her all about the proper handling of snakes, lizards, frogs and other creatures. Payton enjoys accompanying Michael to the live animal lectures he gives to students on behalf of Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife. The students are amazed at her willingness to handle the animals they bring.

## Bird-Watching Trip Planned

On February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the Caloosa Bird Club will be conducting a birding trip to Northeast Cape Coral. The group will be exploring the 20-20 property off Burnt Store Road and will be looking for Burrowing Owls in the area.

This trip is open to six members of Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife on a first-come basis. If you are interested in attending the outing, contact Beverly Saltonstall @ 549-2254.

## Geckos, Chameleons, Lizards, Komodo Dragons and Dinosaurs

What are those little brown creatures that seem to be everywhere here in Florida? Despite the wide variety of names people have for them, they are actually brown anoles. [a•no•le (ə•nō' [ē])]

As with many things you see in abundance here in Florida, the brown anole is not native to this area.



A brown anole displaying its dewlap, a mating and territorial display.

These lizards have displaced the native green lizard and are expanding their territory to include Hawaii.

Brown anoles are thought to possibly carry salmonella, but are essentially harmless to humans. If you try to catch one by the tail, the tail will fall off, but it will grow back.

Eradication of these lizards is impossible due to their wide range and sheer numbers.

## Bit of Burrowing Owl Trivia

The Umatilla Chemical Depot in Oregon is home to a chemical weapons storage area containing some of the most deadly substances known to humanity. The site is well guarded by high fences and armed guards. Ignoring the high fences and heavily armed guards, dozens of pairs of Burrowing Owls have made a home for themselves in old pipes, badger dens and other holes dug by small mammals and abandoned. These are probably the most protected Burrowing Owls in the world!

### Owls in Aruba



### Stamp of Aruba

The 12.5 square mile Arikok National Park, which makes up 18 per cent of the total landmass of the Dutch Caribbean Island of Aruba, will open a new visitor center in early 2009.

Arikok is home to a number of species found only in Aruba, including the Aruba burrowing owl and the Aruban parakeet. Two species of snakes are also found there – the Aruban rattlesnake, one of the rarest of its type in the world, and the Baker's cat-eyed snake.

Wouldn't it be nice if the City of Cape Coral or a generous benefactor donated some land to protect our Burrowing Owls?

## *When Challenger Flies*

"The link below is a music video featuring a special free-flying Bald Eagle named 'Challenger' (in honor of the lost space shuttle crew), cared for by the nonprofit American Eagle Foundation (AEF). He is an accidentally 'human socialized' bird, raised by the people who rescued him - after being blown from a wild Louisiana nest in a storm as a baby in the late 1980s. Declared 'non-releasable' by federal and state wildlife authorities, he was trained by the AEF to perform educational free-flight demonstrations at high-profile public events.

He's the first Bald Eagle in U.S. history that learned to free-fly into stadiums, arenas and ballrooms during the singing of the Star Spangled Banner. The celebrity eagle has appeared at numerous major sporting events like the World Series, Pro-Bowl, All-Star Game, BCS National Championship, Fiesta Bowl and Men's Final Four, etc. Challenger has also flown before 4 U.S. Presidents! His life story is told in a children's storybook titled *Challenger, America's Favorite Eagle.*"

If you are reading an electronic version of this newsletter, turn on your speakers and click on the link below (you may have to hold the ctrl [control] button while clicking). If not, copy the link and watch it on your computer.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfevfJNDulg&url=http://www.eagles.org/aeef>

## *Audubon Society's 109<sup>th</sup> Annual Bird Count*

On December 15, 2008, Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife teamed up with the Caloosa Bird Club of Fort Myers to participate in the 109<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Bird Count. This bird count was originally a sporting event. Every Christmas Day, while the women were preparing a holiday feast, the men of the household went hunting. They kept a count of all the birds and animals they shot that day, and the hunter with the biggest pile won. Conservationists and members of the Audubon Society were in horror of this practice and started an annual bird census on that same day. With heavy pressure from conservationists, the shooting tradition was eventually discontinued, and the Christmas Bird Count has become an annual event all over the world.

For the past fifty years, Caloosa Bird Club members have scoured the same 15-mile radius for all the birds they could count in one day in the Fort Myers/Cape Coral area. Detailed records of every count are kept by the Audubon Society. Of particular interest is the population of Burrowing Owls in Cape Coral. The first recorded sighting of a Burrowing Owl in Cape Coral was in 1969. The December 2008 count recorded 269 Burrowing Owls -- a Caloosa Bird Club count record and possibly an Audubon record for the year. In all fairness, the count results were a little skewed when compared with the counts of previous years. The Caloosa Bird Club had been using outdated maps (without Veterans Parkway marked on them), and club members coming from as far away as Naples were not familiar with the nightmare navigation of our streets. For the 2008 count, Lori Blydenburgh, Planning Technician for the City of Cape Coral, printed out maps of the city with all the owl sites marked for easy location. The Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife GPS program, spearheaded by member Ruth Parks, was also a tremendous asset to the Caloosa Bird Club for this count.

CCFW members Ruth Parks, Sue Porreca, Tom and Sandy Allen and Beverly Saltonstall participated in the count, helping CBC members navigate and spot the owls. Two Caloosa Bird Club members who participated in the count are in their 90s, and they certainly appreciated Sue's youthful ability to get in and out of the car to check for owls. Caloosa Bird Club members couldn't thank CCFW enough. It was a great experience and a fun day.

## *Oh, dem eyes!*



While Burrowing Owls have extremely acute vision, they are nearly color blind. Their vision has evolved to the point that their eyes are sphere shaped and do not roll very well in their sockets. Thus they are fixed to the skull. Since their eyes do not move, the owls must rotate their entire head to enable them to see around them. With 14 neck bones, one of which swivels, they have extremely flexible necks.

Owls can rotate their necks 180° in each direction, allowing the owls to look directly behind them without turning their bodies. Their field of vision is less than that of humans, and to them it's like looking through a pair of binoculars.

Most people have seen Burrowing Owls with beautiful lemon yellow eyes, but they have been seen with chocolate brown or olive-colored eyes as well. The photo on the left was taken here in Cape Coral by the president of CCFW. This owl clearly has two different-colored eyes. Check out this YouTube video produced by member Karen DeNoto)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rsIMYBDpQmA>

## *CCFW Is a Hit at the Parades*

Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife was a participant in both the 2008 Columbus Day and Veterans Day parades held in Cape Coral.

Mounted on the back of a pickup truck was an oversized owl burrow, with an oversized “live” owl (CCFW President Pascha Donaldson).

The float received a heartwarming enthusiastic response from the crowd. Feedback was that ours was the best float in the parade!

And everyone loved Sal Mellon riding his Segway in an owl costume.



## *Calendar of Events*

<i>Jan</i>	6	Lecture for South Fort Myers Kiwanis Club
	10-11	Cape Coral Art Festival - Book Signing with Betty Gilbert
	11	Board Meeting at the home of President Donaldson, 6:30 pm
	13	General Membership Meeting at Rotary Park, 7:00 pm, 6:30 Social
	17	Farmers Market, Downtown Cape Coral, 7:30 am
	24	Manatee Festival at Manatee Park, N. Fort Myers, 1:00 pm-4:00 pm. Volunteers Needed!
<i>Feb</i>	3	Board Meeting at the home of President Donaldson, 6:30 pm
	4	Sunset Celebration, CC Yacht Club
	10	General Membership Meeting at Rotary Park, 7:00 pm, 6:30 Social
	13	Mangrove Gathering at Rutenberg Park, Fort Myers, 7:30 pm
	20	Setup for Burrowing Owl Festival at Rotary Park (Tentative time - 3:00 pm)
	21	7 <sup>th</sup> Annual Burrowing Owl Festival at Rotary Park, 10:00 am-4:00 pm
	25	Open House at CROW on Sanibel, 10:00 am-4:00 pm

Our postal address is: PO Box 152761, Cape Coral, FL 33915

**Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife is a group of citizens of Cape Coral and surrounding communities who wish to help the area's Burrowing Owls and other wildlife thrive as the community grows. To learn more about Burrowing Owls and our work, go to [www.ccfriendsofwildlife.org](http://www.ccfriendsofwildlife.org).**

### **Join Us!**

Please join us in our effort to protect the wildlife of Cape Coral. For information on membership, visit our Web site at [www.ccfriendsofwildlife.org](http://www.ccfriendsofwildlife.org) or Click [HERE](#).

### **Pass It Along!**

Help spread the word about Cape Coral's wildlife! Please forward this e-newsletter to your family and friends. If you got this message from a friend, sign up to receive our free e-newsletter. Click [HERE](#). Please be sure to give us your name, address and phone number.

### **Questions?**

You can get more Cape Coral wildlife news and information by visiting our Web site at [ccfriendsofwildlife.org](http://ccfriendsofwildlife.org) If you have additional questions, please e-mail us at [contact@ccfriendsofwildlife.org](mailto:contact@ccfriendsofwildlife.org) or call us at 239-980-2593.

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