

ARCHBOLD JULY 2016 NEWS

for curious minds



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City-Country Owls



Elizabeth White bands, measures, and takes samples from a Florida Burrowing Owl at a cattle ranch near [MAERC](#).

Long-legged, active day and night, and nesting underground seems counter to being an owl. Not for the Florida Burrowing Owl *Athene cunicularia floridana*, a State-Listed Species of Special Concern. This tiny ground-dweller lives year-round in Florida's pastures, rangelands, native prairie, and urban areas. **'We know very little about the basic biology of rural Florida Burrowing Owls and how they differ from their city-dwelling counterparts'**, says Elizabeth White, PhD student at [UF/IFAS Range Cattle Research Center - Rangeland Wildlife & Ecosystem Program](#). Dr. Raoul Boughton is her advisor. White's research is collecting basic information on owl reproduction, year-to-year reuse of burrows, and habitat use in both rural and urban habitats incorporating tools like GPS tracking. She will also explore whether owls move between urban and rural populations using genetic sampling. Her study sites cover central Florida including the [Archbold Reserve](#) and [MacArthur Agro-ecology Research Center](#) where she has documented 22 territories combined so far. She added, 'They are



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"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

very charismatic and fun to observe. Anecdotally, there seems to be a lot of variation in their personalities.'

Online Islands in Time



Expeditions: Florida Scrub Part 1

Expeditions with Patrick McMillan produced two excellent episodes featuring the Florida scrub that originally aired on PBS in 2014. If you missed these informative shows, you can now watch them online! [Click here for Episode 1: Islands in Time](#). McMillan is the enthusiastic host and producer of the series '[Expeditions with Patrick McMillan](#)' in addition to being Clemson University faculty and Director of the [South Carolina Botanical Garden](#). An expert on Florida botany, McMillan focuses this production around Archbold taking advantage of Archbold scientists who complemented his expertise in all things scrub. The 27-minute video invites viewers to, "**Join Patrick McMillan as he explores the Florida scrub, one of the most unique and endangered habitats in North America.** A place that is filled with bizarre plants and animals found nowhere else, some of which look as though they come straight from science fiction. As we learn about each species' engaging stories and histories the history of Florida itself emerges. The pressures of man have all but erased this precious habitat but hope remains for the Florida scrub." Look out for Episode 2 in the Archbold August Update.

Summer Camp Wild



Beneficial Fire on Red Hill

Archbold Land Manager, Kevin Main, was the Burn Boss for a successful prescribed fire in late June on the top of Red Hill. Watch a video clip [here](#)! Dr. Betsie Rothermel, Archbold Restoration Ecology and Herpetology Director, was part of the burn crew. Rothermel said, 'Since this unit is the core habitat for the Red Hill Gopher Tortoise population, we carefully considered the timing of this burn. By burning in late June, we avoided the peak egg-laying season in mid-April through mid-June and also the period when hatchling tortoises are emerging from the nests.'



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Day one of camp with campers ages 7-9 walking through recently burned Florida scrub.

Archbold's Ecology Summer Camp is off to an exciting start this year reports Dustin Angel I, Archbold Education Coordinator. Angell shared, '**For our very first camp, campers saw rare wildlife that many long-time visitors to Archbold have never seen.** It all began before camp even started. A camper and his grandmother spotted a **Florida Black Bear** from their vehicle as they arrived. Always a treat, but never a guarantee, **Florida Scrub-Jays** greeted campers with both scolds and curiosity in recently burned scrub. While checking our pit-fall traps for frogs and crickets, some campers spotted a non-venomous **Indigo Snake**, one of Florida's largest and rarest native snakes. Observant campers also found several endemic **Scrub Bess Beetles** known for their complex verbal communications with their young. On our last day, campers got a send-off from a large **Gopher Tortoise**. Each year, campers return for the familiar and unexpected. One 9- year old returnee summed it up well: **Camp is kind of like school, but it is outside, so you can learn better.'**

Zippity-Do-Dahs

Check out our Youtube Videos!

[Archbold Facebook Event Calendar](#)

Upcoming Public Events

2016 Archbold Ecology Summer Camp!



A new species (n.sp) of ichneumonid wasp yet to be described from the *Metopius* genus in the [Archbold Arthropod Collection](#).

Elegantly colored and patterned, ichneumon wasps are constantly zipping through foliage and along the ground at the Archbold Biological Station, seeking caterpillars and other prey. **A recent compilation of Archbold specimens revealed an amazing 265 species of these tireless, predatory wasps living on the Station with likely many new species yet to be described.** They are among the legions of little carnivores that help maintain a biological balance. In our eagerness to make our planet more responsive to our needs, we humans risk oversimplifying the rich variety of life that keeps the Earth in balance. Astonishing numbers of species still remain almost anywhere we might care to look. We should look and care. Most ichneumon wasps in the Archbold collection were identified by Dr. David Wahl of the [American Entomological Institute](#). A NSF collections grant is now allowing [Archbold Entomology](#) to image and digitize these specimens to be online in the coming months. In the meantime, **an ichneumon species list may be obtained by emailing [Dr. Mark Deyrup](#).**

Rangers Visit Red Hill



Red-bellied Woodpecker Father's Day Video Post

Watch [here!](#) This Red-bellied Woodpecker father is doing his best to raise the next generation in the pine forest of Red Hill at Archbold Biological Station. Watch the nestling poke its head out and demand a snack. Finally, Dad appears with fresh food for his little one. Then, the ever protective father perches on top of the snag while the nestling looks out the window.

Directions to Archbold Biological Station

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





Hardworking Ridge Ranger crew stands in recently cleared area with dense Sand Pine scrub behind them.

The [Ridge Rangers](#) spent June 25th at Archbold expertly cutting down 350 Sand Pine trees on Red Hill where they are overgrown due to fire suppression. This chainsaw work is a huge contribution to Archbold's restoration and conservation goals to create open sandhill habitat for Florida Scrub-Jays, Gopher Tortoises, and myriad other plants and animals on Red Hill. Ridge Rangers Coordinator Bill Parken said, 'Sand Pine reduction with chainsaws is especially rewarding because they can see the positive impact on the habitat immediately. The Ridge Rangers will tell you that Saturday's work effort in the high heat and humidity was not easy, as chainsaw personal protective equipment is hot to wear even on cooler days. We kept everyone hydrated with cold drinking water and cool with air conditioning breaks in vehicles.' Thank you Ridge Rangers! The Ridge Rangers are a volunteer organization sponsored by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Their mission is restoring wildlife habitat on the Lake Wales Ridge and nearby areas in Central Florida.

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

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