



Rachel Wadleigh

ARCHBOLD APRIL 2017 NEWS for curious minds



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Lepidoptera by Night



St. John's Wort Moth (*Schinia scissa*) caterpillar feeding on Edison's St. John's Wort (*Hypericum edisonianum*) at night.

Lepidoptera includes a fluttering contingent of butterflies by day and less understood moths by night. **Jeffrey Slotten visits Archbold 3-4 times each year on a scientific quest to better understand the life histories of moths associated with the Florida scrub.** He said, 'There are particular species or subspecies that occur only in the scrub at Archbold whose life histories still need to be worked out with potentially new species hidden within already named species.' **Slotten and Dr. Mark Deyrup, [Archbold Entomology](#) Director, uncovered the fascinating life history of the Florida endemic St. John's Wort Moth (*Schinia scissa*)** (forthcoming in [Southern Lepidoptertists' Society News](#)). This moth appears dependent on flowers of a single host plant, in this case Edison's St. John's Wort (*Hypericum edisonianum*) (State Endangered), which lives in temporary ponds in a few places in Florida. The caterpillar refuses to eat anything but flowers. This flower moth went unseen for many years, and its caterpillar and host flower were unknown. Turns out it was living inconspicuously on plants 50m behind the Archbold Research building. Deyrup said, 'Even after 34 years at Archbold, there's so much I don't know about the vast world of local insects. Often it takes an outside expert like Jeff Slotten to see the significance of what seemed a simple observation. We welcome such experts here!'



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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

Cracker Cows Put on a Show



Laurent Lollis, Buck Island Ranch staff, rounds up the Cracker Cows during the demonstration at Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park.

It was a lovely, breezy day at the 54,000-acre Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park that protects imperiled Florida Dry Prairie along the Kissimmee River. Locals joined visitors from around the world for a special celebration: **'Prairie Days and Prairie Nights' organized by the [Friends of Kissimmee Prairie](#). Gene Lollis, Archbold Ranch Manager, accompanied by Andy Yates, Ranch Foreman, talked with visitors about ranching in Florida.** Andy grew up on the Norman Ranch just south of Kissimmee Prairie. He shared stories from his granddaddy of running cattle east to Stuart and west to Punta Rassa long before there were fences or so many Floridians. Then it was time to saddle up for a brief demonstration cattle drive with five of the original heritage breed Florida Cracker Cows shipped over for the day from [Archbold's Buck Island Ranch](#). Gene and Laurent Lollis opened the pen gate and, no doubt unsettled by the many folks and dogs, **the five lady cows abandoned the demonstration heading off in the opposite direction towards the prairie!** The demonstration got real as cows, dogs, and horses reeled across the prairie. No worries, the lady cows will be returning soon to Buck Island Ranch after their exciting Prairie Days and Prairie Nights.

Public Events

April 6: 3:30 pm-4:30 pm

Seminar: Restoring Wetlands at Buck Island Ranch, A Success Story?

Greg Sonnier, Archbold

April 13: 3:00 pm-4:30 pm

Seminar: The Interface Between Basic and Applied Ecology in the California Tiger Salamander

Chris Searcy, University of Miami

April 13: 3:00 pm-4:30 pm

Seminar: Surprising Effects of Plant-Microbial Mutualisms at Scales Ranging from Genes to Communities

Michelle Afkhami, University of Miami

April 15: 9:00 am-11:00 am

Plants of Florida Scrub & Sandhill

Public Walking Tour

Eric Menges, Archbold

Special Scrub Volunteer



Linda briefly holds an Indigo Snake under the supervision of [Archbold Herpetology](#) staff studying this Federally Threatened species.

It took three years, but Archbold volunteer Linda Gette finally got to meet a wild Indigo Snake. Linda said, 'What a wonderful day! I have been wanting to see an Indigo for so long. **Snakes amaze me in general – the way they move, hunt, eat.** The Indigo is a huge (up to 8' long and thick-bodied), blue-black, smooth animal that moves more slowly than many snakes. It is so calm – almost seems friendly.' **Linda just finished her third winter volunteering with Archbold Education** where she 'loves sharing her excitement about the natural world with the kids'. But also, she said, 'I so love getting out into the field learning from Archbold staff and interns whether searching for scrub-jay nests, or tracking tortoises, or measuring pond depths, or counting Florida rosemary stems. The work is fascinating, and the people here just fill me with awe.' Thank you for sharing your experience Linda and your infectious enthusiasm with us all. See you next winter!

April 27: 3:30 pm-4:30 pm

Seminar: Behavioral Flexibility and Brain Size in Birds

Corina Logan, University of Cambridge

May 6: 9:00 am-11:00 am

Scrub Bugs

Public Walking Tour

Mark Deyrup, Archbold

[Archbold Facebook Event Calendar](#)



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The Florida Nobody Knows About



Pace University documentary film students and Dr. Maria Luskay (blue poncho) enjoy a windy swamp buggy tour of our "big ranch" at Buck Island with driver and educator, Dustin Angell.

The Pace University Environmental Film class led by Dr. Maria Luskay moved into Archbold Biological Station for one busy week of film production in March. Their mission? Tell the story of human encroachment on wildlands in Florida. Preproduction fact-finding revealed nearly 1,000 people move to Florida each day with unsustainable population projections by 2050. Dr. Hilary Swain advised the group, who were mostly unfamiliar with Florida, first via Skype ([watch snippet](#)) before arrival at Archbold, then in person on a buggy ride, and finally a film interview. Swain got the students, and their cameras, into the precious Archbold scrub, ranchlands, and wetlands with expert Archbold scientists. One student blog reads, 'Inspired by a Dr. Swain quote, "Ridge to Ranch to River to Reef: Florida's Conservation Connections" is the final agreed-upon title for this year's doc.' [The Pace Doc](#) will premiere at the [Jacob Burns Film Center](#) in New York on May 10th. The documentary will feature insightful interviews from the ridge at Archbold all the way downstream to the southwest Florida coast including [Archbold](#), [Florida Gulf Coast University](#), [Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program](#), [Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation](#), and [Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge](#). We look forward to learning more about how 'Florida's upsurge in infrastructure is impacting the state's natural habitats'. Check out the Pace Docs impressive social media [here](#) detailing the whole process.

JOBS

Assistant Data Manager

Archbold seeks a bright, intellectually curious person to fill this technical support position reporting to GIS/Data Manager. Reviewing applicants will begin April 10 and continue until position filled. Click [here](#) for full description.

Development Assistant

Archbold seeks a person enthusiastic about nature and people to support the Development Director in a part-time position. Click [here](#) for full description.



Check out our Youtube Videos!

Shifting Tides of Indigo



Eastern Indigo Snake at Archbold.

The public response to the 'Special Scrub Volunteer' story above on social media was overwhelming. Folks expressed awe for this respectful human-snake encounter. **Does this positive response to the Eastern Indigo Snake (*Drymarchon couperi*), a Federally Threatened species due to habitat loss, signal a shifting tide in public perceptions of snakes? We hope outreach with snake advocates like Linda Gette showing admiration rather than fear does some good for snake conservation.** From 2010 to 2013, researchers with [The Orianne Society](#) led by Javan Bauder partnered with Archbold to investigate the seasonal movement patterns and habitat selection of Eastern Indigo Snakes. Dr. Betsie Rothermel, a co-author of the studies and [Archbold Herpetology Program](#) Director, said one of the interesting patterns to emerge was how 'the home ranges of males and females overlapped significantly more than individuals of the same sex. The same type of pattern—low male-male overlap and high male-female overlap—is seen in other top predators, like mammalian carnivores.' **Click [here](#) to explore volunteer opportunities at Archbold or [here](#) to report sightings of three upland snakes of concern to the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission.**

Directions to Archbold Biological Station

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



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