



UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA

EXTENSION

Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences



AT THE WATERS EDGE

Miami-Dade County

Florida Sea Grant



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Upcoming Events

February 16 –20, 2006

Miami International Boat Show & Strictly Sail

Miami Beach Convention Center
<http://www.miamiboatshow.com/>

February 28, 2006

Melapaleuza 2006

Workshop on management of Melaleuca.
Broward Co. Extension, Davie, Fl
8am—4:30pm. Register on-line at <http://tame.ifas.ufl.edu/html/Melapaleuza.htm>

March 25, 2006

MIAMI RIVER DAY

JOSE MARTI PARK, SW 4 ST. & SW 4 AVE.
11A M– 5PM.

Students Learn about Florida's Wetlands

Eleven students are preparing to become Master Naturalist of Florida's wetland environments. They are registered within the University of Florida Master Naturalist Program to learn more about wetland habitats, wildlife and to become skilled naturalists.

The class consists of interactive presentations on Florida's wetlands systems, fascinating videos on marshes, swamps, and permanent wetlands, and trips to natural areas such as the Everglades. Recently, the group went canoeing on the Oleta River to observe the wading birds, native plants, and to learn about some of the historical significance of the area.

To learn more about this program and others related to Florida's natural environments, please visit <http://masternaturalist.org>.

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Photo by: David Lotker, FMNP Oleta River Canoe

Slow Down for Sea Cows



During the winter months in Florida, many manatees can be found taking refuge in south Florida's waterways. Manatees live in shallow, slow-moving coastal and estuarine areas. They are mammals like us, so they breathe air to survive. Manatees come up for a breath of air every three to five minutes. They feed on aquatic plants such as seagrass and can weigh up to 3,000 pounds!

In south Florida, manatee signs are posted throughout the waterways to alert boaters to slow down for slow moving sea cows. In 2005, 72 manatee fatalities occurred from watercraft collisions in Florida. Boating speed zones can be easily missed and are hard to read along the waterways. It's best to observe the area and keep lookout for wildlife, other boaters, swimmers or obstructions.

To find manatee speed zones in your boating area, visit the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission website at:

<http://floridaconservation.org/psm/gis/mapref.htm>

Florida sails ahead to No. 1 with more registered boats

After years of trailing Michigan and California, Florida now is No. 1 in the number of registered boats.

Florida's 2004 registrations were up slightly from 940,000 in 2003, according to a report released this week by the National Marine Manufacturers Association. Michigan ranked second with 944,800 registered boats, about a 1 percent drop from the previous year. And California was third at nearly 895,000 vessels, a 7 percent decline from 2003.

The Chicago-based manufacturers association has been compiling the annual ranking since 1996, with Michigan and California jockeying for the top spot each year. But Florida has always been a close third, even surpassing California once for the No. 2 spot in 2002.

But over the past five years, Florida's boat registrations have grown by 12 percent, while Michigan's have dropped 5 percent, the association's figures show. California's registrations have spiked and dropped, with a net loss of about 1 percent during that time. Nationally, there were nearly 12.8 million registered boats in 2004, a drop of less than one-tenth of 1 percent from 2003. The top 10 states account for more than half of the nation's boat registrations. Michigan and California require registration for more types of vessels than Florida, and a countless number of boats that moor in Florida for part of the year are not registered here.

Florida's population has also soared in recent years which can be linked to its growth in boats. However, while the number of boats has continued to climb, the number of boat ramps, dock slips and other public access points to the water have stalled under the pressure of rising land prices.

The recent onslaught of hurricanes isn't likely to curb Florida's boat registrations next year, marine leaders say. The vast majority of the state's boats are on trailers and not kept along the susceptible coastlines.

Source: Miami Herald, posted 1/21/2006

BY LORI BECKER
Palm Beach Post

Keep our Waterways Tangle-free

Citizens For a Better South Florida and Florida Sea Grant worked with volunteers to have successfully placed nine outdoor recycling bins for anglers to discard used fishing line. Fifteen Boy Scout volunteers constructed bins and installed recycling stations at local parks where anglers like to fish. Boy Scout, Cedric Jerabek, led the project to earn his Eagle Scout badge. These bins can be seen at Morningside Park and Legion Park located in North Miami Beach, and Tropical Park near south Miami.

In conjunction with the outdoor bin program, anglers can take their unwanted fishing line to bait and tackle shops who are participating in the recycling program. To locate these shops, contact the Sea Grant Extension office or visit the programs website at www.fishinglinerecycling.org.

Florida Sea Grant is also looking for enthusiast and dedicated volunteers to help collect line from recycling stations. It is a great way to help reduce the amount of discarded line in the environment and help keep our waterways tangle-free. Please contact the Sea Grant office if interested in supporting the program.



Boy Scouts install fishing line recycling bins. Photo by: Alex Montalvo and Marella Crane

Miami River Day Sat. March 25, 2006 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM Jose Marti Park , SW 4 Street and SW 4 Avenue



The free festival will feature riverboat tours, water taxi rides, environmental education booths, development displays, a marine exhibit, local food vendors, live music, children activities and much more. For more information, please contact Miami River Commission staff at 305-644-0544.

The working waterfront of the Miami River is 5.5 miles long and was the central location for the City of Miami. It was the main source of drinking water until 1910. The Tequesta Indians referred the word "Miami" as a term for "sweet water" which initiated the river. The first inhabitants occurred around 1500 B.C. as a location for hotels, tourist attractions, and trading posts. The Miami River is home to several historic sites such as Miami Circle, Brickell Park, Miami River Inn, and Flagler Workers House.

Who's Who?



American Anhinga or Snake-bird

Bird-watching is a hobby enjoyed by thousands people. However, it is first important to identify the different types of species. Let's have a look at two common Florida birds who share many similar features.

The top image is an Anhinga, sometimes called the "snake bird" from its tendency to swim with its head and neck above the water. It is an excellent diver and fast swimmer. They can be seen in open freshwater, cypress swamps, wet prairies and marshes. They mostly eat fish, but also amphibians and large invertebrates. They make a noise that sounds like a low grunt that is similar to the cormorant.

Anhingas are frequently seen spreading out their feathers to dry after diving into the water. They also do this to create more body heat by capturing the sun's energy rays. You might spot their nest on high platforms made of twigs, sticks, and leaves.

The Florida Cormorant, (image below) also known as the Double-crested Cormorant and are closely related to Pelicans than ducks. They prefer to eat small fish and invertebrates underwater. However, similar to the Anhinga, it must spread its wings to dry their feathers.

Looking at the bill of the Cormorant helps to identify this species. It has a narrow, hooked bill which probably aids in grasping fish for food.

The distribution of Cormorants can be seen from Alaska south to the Bahamas and Mexico. Usually they tend to nest near large bodies of water, coasts, mangroves, and estuaries. Often, when seen flying, the flock forms a "v" shape like geese.

Remember to bring the binoculars next time you go out bird-watching in Florida!



The Florida Cormorant

Images by: Audubon Society

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Editor:

Marella Crane

Marine Extension Agent



**4600 Rickenbacker Cswy.
Miami, FL 33149
Voice (305) 421-4017
Fax (305) 421-4674**

E-mail: mgcrane@ifas.ufl.edu

Websites:

<http://www.flseagrant.org>

<http://miami-dade.ifas.ufl.edu>



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