

Myakka River Management Coordinating Council Meeting, April 15, 2011

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Biologist's Report

River Inspection Highlights

January 27, 31 - USGS Park gauge read 2.25 feet.

- Large flocks of 75 Sandhill Crane were seen in Lower Lake and Deep Hole.
- 33 Mottled Ducks, 22 Blue-winged Teal, and 4 Green-winged Teal were seen in Lower Lake
- Palm Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Swamp Sparrow, Eastern Phoebe, and Marsh Wren were seen in the marsh north of Lower Lake
- Over 100 White Pelican were observed on Lower Lake
- 2 immature Bald Eagle were seen at the southern end of Lower Lake
- 4 white-tailed deer were seen on Lower Lake, a 4-pt buck was seen between Deep Hole and Downs' Dam, and a doe and a 6-pt buck were seen below the dam.
- The collapsed bank in Venice Myakka Park was covered with jute mat.
- A native species of submerged, aquatic vegetation believed to be spiny hornwort (*Ceratophyllum echinatum*) is becoming established in Lower Lake.
- 2 river otters were seen below Downs' Dam before the houses
- A total of 157 Ring-billed Gulls and 22 Laughing Gulls were seen. In addition a Forsters Tern, 34 Killdeer, 36 Black-bellied Plover, 160 Western Sandpiper, and 6 Greater Yellowlegs were observed. This was the first observation of yellowlegs on the river in 2 years
- 3 mature Bald Eagles were seen together on Deer Prairie Creek north of US 41 and 1 immature eagle was seen near Ramblers Rest.
- A large flock of over 500 Tree Swallows were seen just south of US 41
- 2 raccoon were seen from Snook Haven to US 41
- 1 Sharp-shinned Hawk was seen south of Ramblers Rest and a Northern Harrier was seen south of the Rookery
- Approximately 110 Lesser Scaup were seen near Charlotte County.

February 7, 10 - USGS Park gauge read 2.75 feet.

- 5 Bald Eagles (2 immature) were seen from Lower Lake to Snook Haven
- 6 turkeys were seen south of Downs' Dam near Rocky Ford
- 2 otters were seen in the marsh north of Lower Lake
- 11 Caspian Tern were seen in Lower Lake and Deep Hole
- 30 Cedar Waxwings were seen in the marsh north of Lower Lake.
- Wood Storks and Great Egrets on the rookery island were seen courting
- 84 Ring-billed Gull and 9 Laughing Gull were seen from US 41 to Charlotte County
- 1 Bald Eagle was seen near Ramblers Rest
- 145 Lesser Scaup were seen near Charlotte County
- 109 crab traps were counted on this trip which was an increase from the 71 observed on the lower river last month

March 17, 22 - USGS Park gauge read 1.8 feet

- 135 alligators were observed from Deep Hole to Downs' Dam

- 58 Mottled Duck were seen on the trip as well as 49 American Coot, 15 Common Moorhen, and 12 Blue-winged Teal in Lower Lake, and 4 Wood Duck south of the Downs' Dam
- Approximately 500 White Pelican were seen along the eastern shoreline of Lower Lake.
- 1 pig frog was heard at Deep Hole
- 6 Bald Eagles (2 immature) were seen from Lower Lake to Border Road
- Killdeer, Least Sandpiper, Yellowlegs, Dowitcher, Western Sandpiper, Caspian Tern, Forester's Tern, and Black-necked Stilt were observed in Lower Lake and Deep Hole.
- 3 turkeys seen near the SR 72 Bridge
- Several (10-20) large snook were observed feeding in deep pools with many snags near the Island and approximately 20 tilapia were guarding their spawning beds
- 2 dead pigs were butchered and bloated in the river near Rocky Ford
- A total of 7 gators were seen during the trip. On the return trip one gator was seen with an arrow protruding from both sides of its upper back just behind the head. Law enforcement was notified
- The rookery wasn't busy and no Wood Storks were present. A total of 25 Great Egrets (5 nests), 2 Great Blue Heron (2 nests) 16 Anhinga were observed. An immature eagle harassing several birds that were on their way back to the rookery with fish. The eagle made birds drop their prey.
- 205 crab traps were counted on this trip which was an increase from the 109 observed on the lower river last month

Permit Program (62D-15, F.A.C.)

- Shoreline stabilization project in Myakka River State Park

Incidents (62D-15, F.A.C.)

- January 2011– Illegal pumping from river by homeowner south of I-75. Courtesy letter was sent to notify the property owner.

Ongoing Projects

- Rule Review Exercise
- Unit Management Plan Revision
- Imperiled Plant Mapping
- Wildlife Database
- Herbicide treatment of invasive/exotic species in river