

Skimmer



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The Francis M. Weston Audubon Society

Laurel Wilt Reaches Bay County Slowing the Progression of an Invader

by Carole Tebay

Redbay trees (*Persea borbonia*) shimmer with dark green, leathery leaves and reddish bark. They are found in hammocks, sandy hills and scrub areas, and are well adapted to ornamental use. The dried aromatic leaves are considered a necessary ingredient in Southern gumbos, and the wood used in barbecues produces an aromatic smoke.

For those of you unaware of the lethal threat to redbays, let me give you some history of laurel wilt. In 2002 three specimens of the very small Asian redbay ambrosia beetle (*Xyleborus glabratus*) were caught in traps near Port Wentworth, Ga. It is believed they came into the country in wood-packing material. By 2003, significant numbers of redbays were dying at Hilton Head Island, SC. The redbay ambrosia beetle and an unknown wilt fungus were found in these trees. The fungus was identified as a potent wilting agent for trees in the laurel family (Lauraceae) which includes redbay, avocado, pondspice, sassafras, spicebush and camphor. The beetle carries the fungus in pouches near the base of the mandible and as it bores into the tree, the fungi are introduced into the water conducting tissue of the tree, clogging the vascular system and causing the tree to wilt. The beetle lays its eggs in the bore and the larvae feed on the fungi, or ambrosia.

The fungi left by one beetle reproduces and is enough to kill a tree. Nearly all mature trees in a stand can be killed within three to five years. The beetles can expand their range about 20 miles per year and can be transported in firewood and infested plants. Their range has expanded into Georgia and South Carolina and down the east coast to south Florida's avocado groves. Laurel wilt has now arrived in a five-acre site in a neighborhood in the panhandle's Bay County where residents noted 20 infected trees dying during the past year.



Photo by Sharon Weaver

Adult Palamedes Swallowtails feed on flowers such as this Glory Bower (Clerodendron), but the larvae feed exclusively on redbay leaves.

Within the laurel family, pondspice and spicebush are uncommon. But redbay with its conspicuous leaf galls are numerous throughout Florida. The fruit is eaten by many songbirds, quail and turkeys. The fruit is held on the tree making it a good winter food. Schaus and Spicebush Swallowtail butterfly larvae feed on redbay leaves. More troublesome, redbay is the exclusive host for the larvae of the Palamedes Swallowtail, which could have a disastrous effect on this butterfly's population.

You can help slow the progression of laurel wilt. In addition to avoiding transport of wood and trees in the laurel family, be on the lookout for infected trees so they can be destroyed. In the early stages, foliage droops and has a red or purple cast. The leaves eventually brown and may remain on the tree for a year or more. Toothpick-like tubes produced as the beetle bores may

Continues on page 3

Field Trips

■ Saturday, October 9, Ft. Morgan Birding.

Merilu Rose will lead us to look for migrants at one of the best places along the upper gulf coast. We plan to spend some time at the Sargent's bird banding station. Expect some moderate walking in sand. There will be a small entrance fee to the fort. Bring a picnic lunch and drinks for the day. Insect repellent is a very good idea. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the Big Lots parking lot located on the east side of Navy Blvd. south of Highway 98 in Warrington. We plan to return by mid-afternoon.

■ Saturday, October 23, Bay Cliff Nature Preserve Native Plants.

James Burkhalter will lead us on a walk to observe native plants and fall wildflowers along a nature trail in Gulf Breeze. The nature trail is in upland oak forest and adjacent to swamp forest. A boardwalk allows access to the edge of Pensacola Bay. Expect easy walking. Insect repellent may be needed. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the north end of the Pensacola Bay Bridge at Wayside Park near the Pensacola Visitor Center. We plan to finish by noon.

■ Saturday, November 20, Taminco/Air Products Wildlife Sanctuary Birding.

Dana Timmons and Bruce Furlow will lead us through the wildlife sanctuary. Expect some moderate walking, possibly in wet conditions. Due to safety and security restrictions, participation will be restricted and reservations will be required. Reservations must be received no later than November 8 by Dana at 850-934-4521 or email at timmons.dana@gmail.com. A list of participant names will be submitted for visitor clearance and all adult participants will be required to sign a liability release and children under the age of 18 will have to have a release signed by their parent or legal guardian. Company rules require that long pants, shirts with a three inch sleeve, and closed toe shoes be worn at all times. Also, cameras are not allowed on the property without prior approval. Meet in the main parking lot at 8 a.m. To reach Taminco/Air Products from Pensacola, travel east on Highway 90 through Pace and watch for the entrance to the plant on the south side of the road. We plan to finish around noon.

■ Saturday, December 11, Coastal "December Surprise" Birding.

Bob and Lucy Duncan will lead us to look for wintering birds at one or two of the following optional locations: Naval Live Oaks, Navarre Beach, Ft. Walton Beach, and/or Opal Beach. They will scout out the locations prior to the field trip and will decide which areas to visit during the field trip based on expected bird activity and weather conditions for that morning. Expect moderate walking in beach sand. Bring a picnic lunch and beverages for the day. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the Office Depot shopping center parking lot located across Highway 98 from the Gulf Breeze Hospital entrance. We plan to return by early afternoon.

■ Saturday, January 15, Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge.

Morris Clark and Doug Hunt, Refuge Ranger, will lead us on a winter birding tour of the Refuge. Expect some moderate walking in wet conditions. Bring a picnic lunch and beverages for the day. Meet for car pooling at 6:30 a.m. in the Publix parking lot on the corner of Nine Mile Road and Pine Forest Road or at 8 a.m. at the Refuge Headquarters. We plan to return by late afternoon. Refuge vehicles will be used, so please sign up before January 5 by sending Morris Clark an email at morrisclark@cox.net or call 968-5498 and leave your name, telephone number and email address.

■ Friday thru Sunday, February 11-13, Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, Alabama. Peggy Baker will lead us on a long weekend birding trip to Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge in north Alabama, a great place to see a wide variety of wintering birds, especially waterfowl. If you are interested and would like to see the itinerary which will be available in early December, email Peggy Baker at pbaker@ksinc.net or call 934-3242 and leave your name, telephone number and email address.

Chapter Meetings

Pensacola State College, (formerly PJC), Main Campus, 7 p.m., Baroco Science Center, Room 2142, unless otherwise noted. Guests are welcome!

■ October 28, 2010. Dr. Philip Darby of the University of West Florida will present a talk entitled "A tale of two snails and their effects on the endangered Snail Kite."

He will discuss how water management influences density of the native apple snail, *Pomacea paludosa*, and how this in turn influences foraging behavior in Snail Kites. Darby will also describe the invasion of the non-indigenous apple snail, *Pomacea insularum*, and how it has affected snail kite foraging. Coincidental declines in native snails in the Everglades, and expansion of exotic snails in central Florida lakes has impacted the distribution of Snail Kites in peninsular Florida.

■ December 9, 2010. Membership Holiday Meeting. Our holiday gala will feature members showcasing their nature photography. We will also enjoy a few extra minutes of socializing and eating! To get into the holiday spirit, please bring a snack or a sweet to share. If you would like to show some of your nature photos, contact Larry Goodman at 433-5135 or lrgoodman@bellsouth.net by December 1.

■ January 27, 2011. "The fight for swimmable, fishable, drinkable water" presented by Chasidy Hobbs, Coastkeeper, from Emerald Coastkeeper, Inc.

■ February 24, 2010. To be announced

Board of Directors Meetings

■ Thursdays, 7 p.m., Nov. 4, Dec. 2, Jan. 6, and Feb. 3 at the Baskerville-Donovan Building, 449 West Main Street, Pensacola. Open to all members.

Other Events

■ Saturday, October 9. Fall Bird Banding session at Fort Morgan. Open to the public with the last date tentatively set for October 21 or 22.

■ Saturday, October 16, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Roy Hyatt Environmental Center OPEN HOUSE. See details on page 5.

■ Saturday, December 18, Christmas Bird Count. Join us to census the birds in the Pensacola area on this annual CBC. See details on page 5.

FROM FMWAS PRESIDENT JIM BRADY

CHALLENGES REMAIN FROM BP BLOWOUT

In the last issue of our newsletter, I wrote of the challenges that face both our chapter and the birds this autumn. Reports of oil found on the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico near the blowout rig and local reports of myriad small tarballs found in the Santa Rosa Sound still give us concern for the impact, both long and short term, on birds that use the Gulf and its margins.

AUDUBON NATURALIST CONTRACT RENEWED

We are pleased to report that our Audubon Naturalist, Jennifer Butera, has been rehired to teach environmental education at the Roy Hyatt Environmental Center. Jenn conducted a week-long Environmental Encounters summer camp and two weekend environmental seminars over the summer that brought many young students to RHEC, broadening our role at that delightful site.

FMWAS WEBSITE MAKEOVER

As a result of your feedback about our website, www.fmwaudubon.org, we are doing a makeover of the site this fall. We apologize for the disruption while it is under renovation, but I assure you that it will be a user-friendly holiday present for our membership and visitors when completed.

THIS AND THAT IN A NUTSHELL

Your Board of Directors and Committee chairs have been industrious in implementing a variety of plans for the rest of the year. We are scheduling a series of monthly programs and field trips that will entice your attendance; considering a whole new face to the May membership meeting; setting in place a variety of fundraising activities to support our operations; dealing with proposed changes in the production and scheduling of the newsletter, *The Skimmer*; supporting the educational programs at Roy Hyatt Environmental Center; continuing our multi-year survey of birdlife in Blackwater River State Forest; evaluating the programs of Audubon of Florida as they pertain to the western panhandle of Florida; and so much more.

We welcome your participation, involvement, comments and suggestions, ask you to encourage new members.

Good Birding.

A Day Like No Other

My husband Dan and I fished the Gulf of Mexico the morning of September 3.

We had never seen so many huge schools of fish nor so many birds after them. The main bait fish were Yellowtail. The predators were Spanish Mackerel, Skipjacks, Bluefish, and Redfish. The biomass was staggering, and encouraging on the heels of the oil spill. I personally caught the biggest fish I have ever caught. There were 125 yards of 20-pound test line on my reel and the fish took 110 and towed the boat. I finally got it stopped when I could see the metal spool. I reeled in for a while and it took off again taking every inch gained. This went on more than thirty minutes. The line would go slack and I was sure I had lost it, then wham...off again! I finally got it up to the boat and it was an enormous redfish...way too long to keep.

From Ann Forster

Dan poked the net and mercifully it threw the lure out and took off. It was tired but will live again to fight another day. After that we watched an Osprey family learning to fish. They may never have another day like that one, and we won't either.

How to Become a Member of FMWAS

Fill out the form on page 8 to become a member of the National Audubon Society. With membership you will receive *Audubon Magazine*, the *Florida Naturalist* and the *Skimmer*. Mail your check to Francis M. Weston Audubon Society, P.O. Box 17484, Pensacola, FL 32522. Thank you.

Laurel Wilt from page 1.

be seen on the bark. Report diseased Lauraceae trees, or those suspected to harbor the fungus, to the Division of Plant Industry at 1-888-397-1517. Contact your local University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service for removal recommendations.

To conserve the genetic variability of redbays and related species, the USDA Forest Service National Seed Laboratory has started a seed collection and storage effort. For additional information on laurel wilt or on contributing seeds to the collection, visit www.fs.fed.us/r8/foresthealth/laurelwilt/index.shtml.



Base of a diseased redbay, where females of *Xyleborus glabratus* (smaller holes) and *Xylosandrus crassiusculus* (larger holes) have initiated their galleries. The discoloration above and below the attacks are a host response due to the wounding and colonization by the respective fungal symbionts.

Photo and caption from the USDA Forest Service.



F I E L D N O T E S

by Bob Duncan

■ **FALL MIGRATION IS IN FULL SWING.** Warbler migration typically peaks the last two weeks in September. The best spots to find these feathered jewels are Ft. Pickens, Ft. Morgan and Dauphin Island. Look for other migrants moving down as well throughout October. The first strong front of the season, usually in early October, is the time to maximize your birding for the season. That's when the odds of finding a real rarity spike, my favorite time of the entire birding year.

■ **SHOREBIRD FEAST**—It was a good season for shorebirds. The peak for these long-distance fliers is late July and August. Once Peregrine Falcons start migrating along the outer beaches, shorebirds get scarce. Can you blame them? The best spots are the Ft. Walton Beach Spray Fields, Opal Beach and the old Ivan "cut" on Ft. Pickens road. Opal Beach and the cut's tidal pools can dry up without rain or when tides are too low. Conversely, too much rain or abnormal high tides can spread the birds out making them hard to find. But just the right conditions makes for some fine shore birding. Some of the species seen this season were **Marbled Godwits, American Avocets, Buff-breasted Sandpipers, Wilson's Phalaropes** and all the species of plovers we can expect.

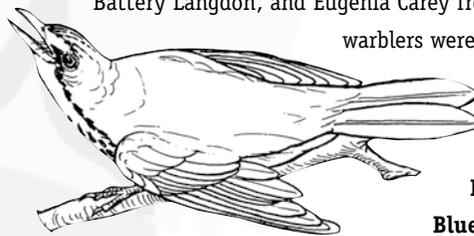
■ **TAMINCO/AIR PRODUCTS SANCTUARY**—Bruce Furlow, Les Kelly and Larry Goodman's trips to this limited-access sanctuary have produced great finds. Among the interesting species they have seen were a very early **Northern Harrier** and **Tree Swallow**. **Purple Gallinules** bred there this summer, one of the few nesting sites in the Panhandle. Many **White Ibis** were found. This sanctuary, named the C. W. Milmore Wildlife Sanctuary in honor of the late Bill Milmore, is a series of freshwater holding ponds, woodland, and bay front. Bill monitored this facility for many years, establishing baseline data for several area species.

■ **RARE BIRDS**—Researchers involved in the oil spill spotted the area's third **Red-billed Tropicbird*** 150 mi south of the AL-FL line just inside Florida waters on 4 August. Birds are considered in state waters if they are within 200 miles of the coast. On 13 August Bob and Lucy Duncan observed 6 shearwaters from the beach at Ft. Pickens, too far out to ID. Establishing the earliest date of arrival for our area by three weeks, James Pfeiffer found a **Palm Warbler** 15 August at Ft. Pickens. Ninety-six **Yellow Warblers** in 80 minutes passing through the Duncan's neighborhood in Gulf Breeze 22 August established a new maximum daily high count. A **Dickcissel*** 22 August at Ft. Pickens seen by James Pfeiffer was the third ever local August record. Rare any time of year a **Magnificent Frigatebird** was spotted by Heidi Moore on 2 July.

Sixteen **Solitary Sandpipers** 17 August found by Patrick James at the Blackwater Fish Hatchery was a good count. Peggy Baker, Carol Ascherfeld and Jere French found two **Philadelphia Vireos*** in Blackwater SF on 14 September. Dave Sparks photographed a rare **Baird's Sandpiper*** at Ft. Pickens on 14 September. I flushed a **Nelson's Sparrow***, the earliest ever for the area by 2 days, at Opal Beach marsh on 16 September. David Sparks photographed a **Yellow-headed Blackbird***, a western stray, at Ft. Pickens on 16 September.

■ **GIFTS OF 4 – 5 SEPTEMBER**—The first noticeable front of the season brought in cooler, drier air on northerly winds, and with it came the first wave of fall migrants. Taking advantage of it, birders Alex Harper, Alicia Gerrety, James Pfeiffer and Patrick James went to Naval Live Oaks and Ft. Pickens and were rewarded with 11 species of warblers. Alex spotted a very rare **Bell's Vireo*** at Naval Live Oaks and all saw several handsome **Lark Sparrows** at Ft. Pickens. The Duncans stayed home and tallied 11 species of warblers around their house. Among the more notable found between the two parties on 5 September were **Chestnut-sided, Blackburnian, American Redstart, Northern Waterthrush, Wilson's** and **Prairie Warblers**. Also seen were **Blue Grosbeaks** and **Baltimore Orioles**.

■ **WARBLER BONANZA**—It rained heavily the night of September 26 as a front moved through, then rained warblers the next morning in Gulf Breeze. Nineteen of the 20 species of warblers seen visited the Duncans' small pond. Sam Taggatz reported from Battery Langdon, and Eugenia Carey from Dauphin Island that



warblers were dripping off the trees there as well. Among notable species were **Golden-winged, Blackburnian, Canada, Blue-winged, Black-throated Green, Wilson's** and

Kentucky Warblers. That's why birders watch the weather. We hope you watch the weather and get in on some great birding.

*Species with asterisks require documentation so that they may be processed to become part of the ornithological record. The *Skimmer* welcomes reports of noteworthy birds. If you have something to report, please call Bob or Lucy Duncan at 932-4792.



Federal “Duck Stamps” protect Wetlands!

Did you know that you can help save critical habitat for birds and other wildlife by purchasing a Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, commonly known as a “Duck Stamp”? The \$15 stamp is a vital tool for wetland conservation. Ninety-eight cents of every dollar goes to the purchase or lease of wetland habitat for protection in the National Wildlife Refuge System. You can purchase the stamps at many U.S. Post Offices. Your stamp will also be a pass into National Wildlife Refuges where admission is charged. Visit www.fws.gov/duckstamps .

Christmas Wreaths and Greenery Make this Fund-Raiser a Win-Win Situation

The fresh scent of pine, cedar and fir can deck your halls, while greenery of another sort will feather the chapter’s nest when you order a wreath, garland or door swag. Contact any board member to place an order (phone numbers are on page 8). Orders are due no later than November 4 and delivery will be during the first week of December. The holiday greenery brochure and price lists are online at <http://www.fmwaudubon.org/> .



EAGLE OPTICS

FMWAS has partnered with Eagle Optics to help fund chapter projects. Any purchase from Eagle Optics (www.eagleoptics.com/) will earn a 5% rebate for FMWAS if you remember to mention our chapter’s name and the rebate program.

111 YEARS

VOLUNTEERS WELCOME TO COUNT BIRDS

The Pensacola Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will be held Saturday, December 18. We will try to record every bird within our 15-mile diameter circle. Hundreds of CBCs with volunteers take place all across the United States December 14-January 5. This year is the one hundred eleventh CBC conducted by the Audubon Society, a tradition started in 1900. When data gathered during these counts are analyzed, they show species’ declines, gains or stabilization.

Every volunteer is very welcome. If you would like to participate, please contact our compiler, Bill Bremser at 934-3395 or billbremser@gmail.com. There will be a compilation at 6 p.m. at Bill and Greta Bremser’s home with Chef Greta’s famous buffet and refreshments for all volunteers.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR RHEC OPEN HOUSE

The Roy Hyatt Environmental Center Open House Saturday, October 16 will offer many children’s activities, crafts, educational displays and demonstrations from organizations like Francis M. Weston Audubon Society, Wildlife Sanctuary of Northwest Florida, Dauphin Island Sea Lab with their touch tank of live sea life, the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, Florida Turtle Conservation Trust, Diamondback Terrapin Working Group, Washington High School Marine Science Academy, Escambia Amateur Astronomy Association, and Cantonment Rotary.

■ Family activities will excite and delight both children and adults. Presentations will feature the Sea Lab and animals from the Wildlife Sanctuary. The Farm House, School House, Bird Bus, all classrooms and trails will be open for self-guided tours.

■ A Silent Auction will include hotel stays, restaurant gift cards, art work, a bracelet from Beré Jewelers, and more. Proceeds will enhance programs offered at RHEC.

—by Molly O’Connor

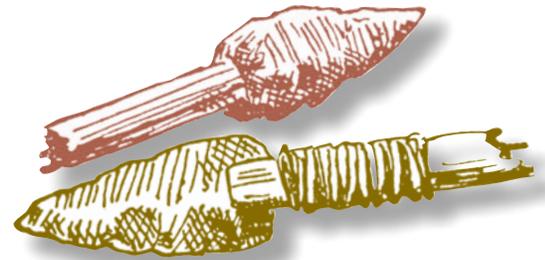
AUDUBON ADVENTURES is the environment’s *Weekly Reader*. Children and teachers love studying this bright, comprehensive newspaper. With donations from our membership and friends, every child who visits the RHEC will be able to take home a copy of this award-winning educational newspaper (see <http://education.audubon.org/audubon-adventures>).

Audubon Adventures teaches children about nature, and fosters a lifelong stewardship ethic. Thank you to all of our members who have already made contributions this school year. If you have not, please send a donation to FMWAS at the return address on page 8 of this *Skimmer*. The August-September issue of the *Skimmer* has more details.

A FLORIDA HYBRID ADVENTURE

By Ann Forster

Several of us visited the Yucatan last spring, calling it a birding/archaeology hybrid. As we thought about the success of the trip, we realized that Florida has the same resources for a similar combination. We got our information together and worked out an itinerary and did it. We followed the general plan we used in Mexico...birding in the mornings, traveling in the heat of the day, and visiting archaeological sites in the afternoons.



We began the trip in Gainesville starting the first evening at the famous bat houses. At dusk, 60,000 bats poured out in a long column around the trees and over nearby Lake Alice. It was a spectacular beginning. The next morning we birded around the lake and, typical of August, the songbird pickin's were slim with towhees, cardinals, and the like.

We then went to the Florida Museum of Natural History concentrating on the beautiful butterfly house. Young and old butterfly fans were fascinated by the array of butterflies and plants that support them. There were Lepidoptera from South America, Asia, and Africa flitting by with the Blue Morphos getting our vote for most spectacular. After lunch we headed across state to the St. Petersburg area to look for migrating shorebirds. Mullet Key and Fort DeSoto State Park are always reliable and we weren't disappointed. We were most happy to see several groups of the seriously diminishing Red Knots.

The next day we concentrated on archaeology with visits to the Weedon Island and Safety Harbor Museums. These two important Native American sites have exceptional interpretive displays of the

culture and artifacts and are well worth a stop. Next we went to Crystal River Archaeological site where we combined birding with visiting the mounds. Later in the morning we took the park's boat trip down the river seeing birds and a manatee snout. After stops at Cedar Key and Steinhatchee, we spent the night in Perry.

The next morning we visited our very favorite places in the St. Marks NWR area: Hickory Mounds Impoundment, Goose Pasture, Aucilla Sinks, and the St. Marks Lighthouse Road. While the tide was too high for good shorebirding, the Lighthouse Pond was full of Tricolored Herons and other long-legged waders. On the way out of the refuge, we had the highlight of our trip. We looked down the road to see a large dark object, and as we drew closer realized it was a Black Bear. Not only that, but a Black Bear with two cubs! Mama stood up and glared at our car and the three of them crossed the road with one more standing warning. A seafood dinner at Posey's Steam Shack in Panacea rounded out an excellent hybrid trip.

We planned the trip with these websites: www.floridabirdingtrail.com and www.trailoffloridasindianheritage.org.

YOU CAN HELP——A PRICKLY SUBJECT



Invasive cactus moth caterpillars devour prickly pear cactus and threaten wildlife and agriculture. Photo used by permission of the Joint FAO/IAEA Programme.

The Mexican government is actually helping to pay the USDA to monitor prickly pears (*Opuntia* species) for an invasive moth (*Cactoblastis cactorum*). If the moth spreads to western U.S. desert ecosystems and Mexico, the heart of prickly pear diversity, over 80 native *Opuntia* species could be affected, threatening important sources of food, medicine, and emergency fodder. In arid regions, the *Opuntia* cacti play key roles in ecosystem processes and soil conservation.

Infected prickly pear plants were detected at a Wal-Mart in Pensacola in 2002, and there is great concern that the Cactus Moth could be accidentally spread in infected plants from the Gulf Coast Region to Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, or California.

Dr. Stephen Hight, USDA- Agricultural Research Service at FAMU, would like to hear from you about any infestation in your area or if you know of the location of prickly pear cactus stands that could be checked. Contact him at 850-656-9870 or hight@nettally.com. For further information on this alien invader, see http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/cactoblastis/downloads/idcard.pdf

Living in Joan's Jungle



The leopard slinks across the table top, eyeing the boy who sits in the shade of the palm tree. The boy is trying to remove a thorn from his foot, oblivious to approaching danger. A zebra, secure on his own high grassy plane, watches the drama playing below. Nearby, a papier-mâché alligator is showing his teeth and carved bears are catching fish while other fish swim past. Shore birds and ducks look on and hummingbirds flutter in the breeze of the air conditioning, while below them an appalling ménage of Oaxacan beasts claw the air. A painted snake, made from a Mexican bean pod, rattles a warning and bares its fangs, while glass frogs of every size peer out from here and there. This is Joan's jungle.

It may seem safer outside where Felicity, our forest nymph, reigns over a more restrained wilderness jungle, in which the animals are obliged to maintain a degree of order, if not congeniality. Each would seem to know his place in this garden, and that includes, as I've taken count of them, box turtles in varying sizes, lizards, skinks, geckos and snakes, armadillos, tree frogs and toads, squirrels, the occasional fox, and 151 bird species at last count. Felicity watches over things for us as she awakens each morning, a jay sometimes perched on her outstretched arm. She has such a way with critters.

My job is to manage the boundaries, keeping the paths open, removing plant litter, avoiding confrontations with squirrel families, and so on. Amateur gardener and author

Michael Pollan would shudder at such an untamed habitat. His garden dictum, learned from a stern grandfather, allows no weedy interlopers, no volunteer trees, wildflowers, or bushes—and no animals of any kind. Hear that, bugs? Every shrub and bulb grows only where his hand has pre-ordained its presence, and thus affixed it grows to the size and a shape that he commands. Well yes, to be both logical and realistic, even wild gardens require some sense of management, and order—depending on one's preferences. But we should never forget that nature has a preference too, a design plan of her own, which is to cast seed to the winds in repetitive cycles, resolved as it were, that whatever lands in the right place at the right time under the right conditions, will produce the right results.

Trees and lawns in a garden are eternal enemies, forced by gardeners to accommodate one another in a fixed and static state, of which neither is very happy. Left alone one of them eventually prevails. Nature, we concede, is all about change, and the garden that is not permitted to grow and evolve as time and conditions dictate is in conflict with its destiny. Failure to observe these basic dynamics may find a gardener at cross purpose, toiling with one hand to keep an unhappy, emaciated exotic alive, while the other hand uproots a willing, healthy volunteer. We can bend the natural laws, like making water spray and burble and even run up hill in a garden, as long as we remember, in the end, water must always run back down again.

Meanwhile in Joan's jungle the leopard will continue to stalk the unsuspecting boy with the thorn in his foot, and the zebra will maintain his vigil.

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**CHRISTMAS WREATH
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See page 5 for details.

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The National Audubon Society occasionally makes its membership list available to carefully selected organizations whose mailings you might find of interest. To have your name omitted from this list, please check here .