



Creek Environment

MOST NATURAL CREEKS NEAR THE COAST IN SOUTH FLORIDA ARE LINED BY MANGROVES, A SPECIALLY ADAPTED TREE THAT CAN SURVIVE IN BOTH SALT AND FRESH WATER.

RED MANGROVES TYPICALLY BORDER THE SHORELINE EXTENDING THEIR PROP ROOTS OUT INTO THE WATER. SINGLE MANGROVES THAT TAKE ROOT IN SHALLOW OPEN WATER CAN EVENTUALLY FORM THEIR OWN ISLANDS BY TRAPPING AND STABILIZING SEDIMENTS. INSIDE A MANGROVE FOREST HABITAT YOU MAY OFTEN SEE A VARIETY OF ANIMALS INCLUDING:

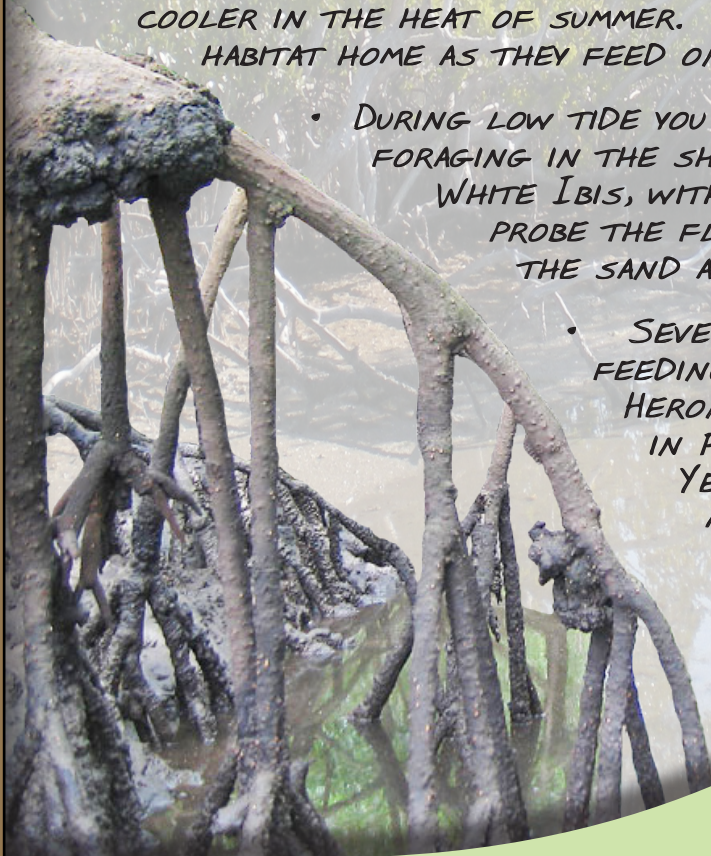
- FISH SPECIES SUCH AS: SNAPPERS, SHEEPSHEAD, AND MULLET THAT ARE OFTEN FOUND HIDING IN THE MANGROVE ROOTS WHERE THEY ARE SAFE FROM OTHER LARGER PREDATORS, AND WHERE WATER TEMPERATURES ARE COOLER IN THE HEAT OF SUMMER. REDFISH AND SNOOK ALSO CALL THIS HABITAT HOME AS THEY FEED ON THE ABUNDANCE OF SMALLER FISH;



NEW MANGROVE SPROUTS

- DURING LOW TIDE YOU ARE ALSO LIKELY TO SEE WADING BIRDS FORAGING IN THE SHALLOW WATER AND EXPOSED FLATS. WHITE IBIS, WITH THEIR UNIQUE LONG, CURVED BEAKS PROBE THE FLATS FOR SMALL CRITTERS THAT LIVE IN THE SAND AND MUD; AND

- SEVERAL TYPES OF HERONS CAN ALSO BE SEEN FEEDING IN THE CREEKS. THE GREAT BLUE HERON IS THE LARGEST OF THE HERONS FOUND IN FLORIDA. THE GREAT BLUE AND THE YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON ARE MUCH MORE COMMON SIGHTINGS THAN IS THE MORE ELUSIVE GREEN HERON.



POINT OF INTEREST





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*PINUS ELLIOTTII -
FLORIDA SLASH PINE*

SLASH PINES ARE THE DOMINANT TREE SPECIES IN THE MOST COMMON HABITAT IN FLORIDA, THE PINE FLATWOODS.

- *THEY CAN LIVE UP TO 200 YEARS.*
- *THEY PROVIDE COVER AND FOOD FOR MANY ANIMALS SUCH AS:*
 1. *BIRDS AND SMALL MAMMALS WHICH EAT THE SEEDS;*
 2. *DEER WHICH EAT THE SEEDLINGS; AND*
 3. *PROTECTED SPECIES SUCH AS THE BALD EAGLE AND RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER THAT MAKE THEIR NESTS ON AND WITHIN THE TREES.*

BEFORE YOU IS ONE OF THE OLDEST SLASH PINES IN OYSTER CREEK REGIONAL PARK. IMAGINE HOW MANY ANIMALS IT HAS BEEN HOME TO OR HAS FED THROUGHOUT ITS YEARS.



FLORIDA SLASH PINE BARK WITH A NATIVE BROMELIAD



Migratory Songbirds



POINT OF INTEREST



PRAIRIE WARBLER

CAN YOU SPOT THESE
SONGBIRDS?



GRAY CATBIRD



YELLOW-RUMPED
WARBLER

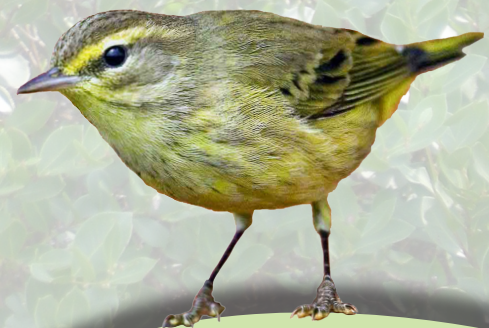
SOUTH FLORIDA'S WINTER WEATHER IS ENTICING TO "SNOWBIRDS" BUT LET'S NOT FORGET WHERE THE TERM CAME FROM. MANY SPECIES OF BIRDS, PARTICULARLY SONGBIRDS, FIND REFUGE HERE IN THE WINTER.

SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT WINTERING SONGBIRDS:

- DUE TO ABUNDANT FOOD IN THIS WARM CLIMATE THESE BIRDS DO NOT DEFEND A TERRITORY;
- FOR THIS REASON YOU WILL OFTEN FIND THEM FORAGING IN MIXED-SPECIES FLOCKS AS WELL;
- THEY PREFER THIS SHRUBBY EDGE HABITAT DUE TO THE DIVERSITY OF FOOD OFFERED INCLUDING A VARIETY OF BERRIES, SEEDS AND INSECTS.

BIRDWATCHERS SEEK OUT AREAS LIKE THIS SINCE THEY CAN OBSERVE SEVERAL SPECIES OF BIRDS IN ONE SPOT.

PALM WARBLER





Osprey

POINT OF INTEREST

OSPREYS ARE OFTEN SPOTTED SOARING OVER HEAD OR PERCHED NEAR THE CREEK IN A TALL TREE WAITING FOR THE NEXT OPPORTUNITY TO CATCH A MEAL. SOME KEY POINTS ABOUT OSPREYS TO CONSIDER ARE:

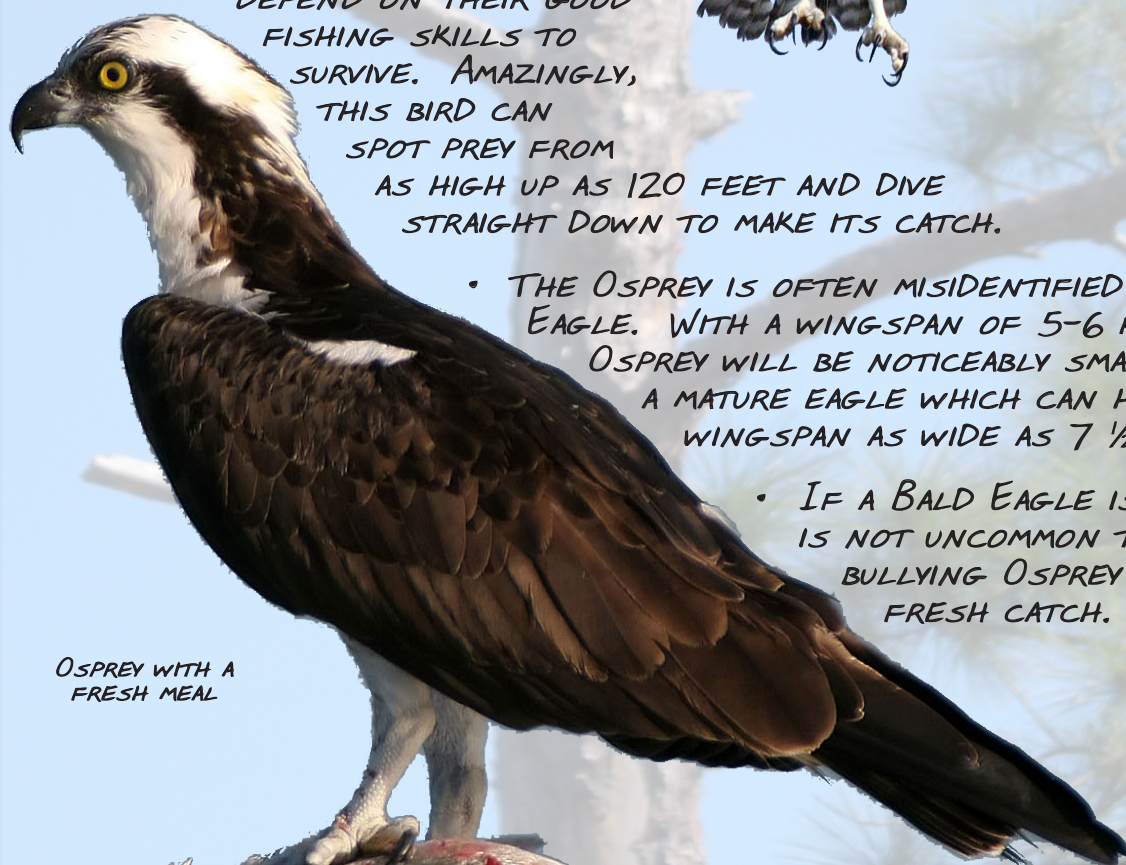
- FISH IS THE PRIMARY COMPONENT OF AN OSPREY'S DIET, SO THEY DEPEND ON THEIR GOOD FISHING SKILLS TO SURVIVE. AMAZINGLY, THIS BIRD CAN SPOT PREY FROM AS HIGH UP AS 120 FEET AND DIVE STRAIGHT DOWN TO MAKE ITS CATCH.

- THE OSPREY IS OFTEN MISIDENTIFIED AS A BALD EAGLE. WITH A WINGSPAN OF 5-6 FEET THE OSPREY WILL BE NOTICEABLY SMALLER THAN A MATURE EAGLE WHICH CAN HAVE A WINGSPAN AS WIDE AS 7 1/2 FEET.

- IF A BALD EAGLE IS AROUND IT IS NOT UNCOMMON TO SEE THEM BULLYING OSPREY FOR THEIR FRESH CATCH.



AN OSPREY IN FLIGHT



OSPREY WITH A FRESH MEAL

