



Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership



Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership

Uniting Central and Southwest Florida to protect water and wildlife

CHNEP COMMITTEE MEMBERS













































































































ABOUT US

Formed in 1995, the Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership (CHNEP, formerly the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program) was designated by Congress to protect the exceptional estuaries and water resources in a 5,416 square mile area that includes the Peace, Myakka, Caloosahatchee, and Estero Rivers and the coastal waters of Dona and Roberts Bays, Lemon Bay, Charlotte Harbor, the Caloosahatchee, Pine Island Sound, and Estero Bay. CHNEP is a non-regulatory, science and consensus-based organization, and is strongly supported by the state and local governments within its boundaries.

PURPOSE OF CHNEP

- To protect and restore water quality to swimmable and fishable standards in the CHNEP area
- To restore healthy abundant fisheries and shellfish harvesting for commercial and recreational use
- To foster public-private partnerships between diverse stakeholders, including industry, governmental, and nongovernmental organizations for restoration purposes
- To protect federal resources in our study area including National Wildlife Refuges and numerous federally endangered species
- To leverage limited federal dollars with state and local funds, as well as private contributions, to implement more projects
- To provide environmental education experiences to youth, adult, and underserved populations
- To support local economies tied to our water resources





Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership

1050 Loveland Blvd. Port Charlotte, FL 33980 941–833–6580 www.CHNEP.org



January 2024



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY		3 PLAST QUARTER		5	6
7	8	9	10	11 • NEW MOON	12	13
14	15 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY	16	17 FIRST QUARTER	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 OFULL MOON	26	27
28	29	30	31			Left: Dragonfly at Harns Marsh Barbara Morris Right: Atala Butterfly in Sarasota County Gary Walker



February 2024



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Left: Graysby grouper and invertebrates Offshore Ledg James Dougla	at ge ass LEARN AB chnep.w	OUT YOUR WATERS ateratlas.usf.edu	1	2 PLAST QUARTER	
4	5	6	7	8	9 • NEW MOON	10
11	12	13	14	15 SHOREBIRD NESTING SEASON BEGINS	16 FIRST QUARTER	17
18	19 PRESIDENT'S DAY	20	21	22	23	24 OFULL MOON
25	26	27	28	29		Left: Spoonbills at Myakka River State Park Steve Maple



March 2024



S	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		VISIT CHNE		Right: Dolphins in Dona Bay Sarina Weiss		1	2
3) LAST QUARTER	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	NEW MOON DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	(FIRST QUARTER	18	19 VERNAL EQUINOX	20	21	22 WORLD WATER DAY	23
24	31	25 OFULL MOON	26	27	28	29	30



April 2024



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14	15 FIRST QUARTER	16	17	18	19	20
21	22 EARTH DAY	23 OFULL MOON	24	25	26 NATIONAL ARBOR DAY	27
28	29	30			Bu CH Rigat Re	ft: White Peacock atterfly in Englewood aris Chandras ght: Purple Gallinule the Circle B Bar aserve aonda Paprocki



May 2024



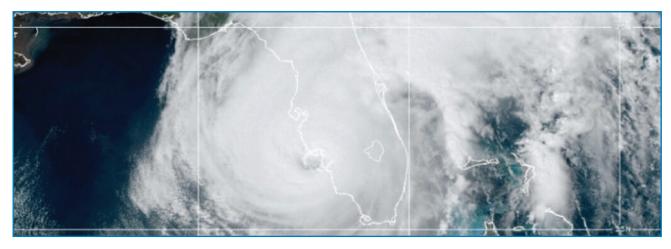
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		Left: Sunning Turtles at Lake Morton Steven G. Richardson Right: River Otter in Fort Myers Sue Christensen	1 DLAST QUARTER SEA TURTLE NESTING SEASON BEGINS	2	3	4
5	6	7 • NEW MOON	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 FIRST QUARTER	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23 OFULL MOON	24	25
26	27 MEMORIAL DAY	28	29	30 PLAST QUARTER	31	CALENDAR OF CHNEP EVENTS chnep.org/events

THE MAGAZINE OF THE COASTAL & HEARTLAND NATIONAL ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

HAPPENINGS

Uniting Central and Southwest Florida to protect water and wildlife

Why Hurricanes like Hurricane Ian are Becoming More and More Destructive



Hurricanes are massive storm systems that derive their energy from warm ocean waters. As the Earth's climate warms due to the accumulation of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, the oceans absorb more heat. This increased ocean heat provides hurricanes with a greater source of energy, leading to more intense storms such as the devastating category 5 Hurricane lan (pictured above). Below outlines why hurricanes are becoming more frequent, severe, and impactive in a warming world.



A Note from our Executive Director

We have experienced unprecedented heat, record ocean temperatures, and extreme storm and rainfall events this past year - making it clear that climate changes are already underway here. These changes pose serious threats to public health, our environment, and our economy. Hurricane lan was the third costliest disaster in US history, resulting in the loss of homes, jobs, and tragically, even significant loss of life.

In the immediate days after the storm, once communication was restored and CHNEP was able to confirm the safety of its staff, we promptly reached out to partners both inside and out of the affected area. Despite some of our staff being unhoused by the event, they worked

Increased Intensity: Warmer ocean temperatures result in higher evaporation rates, providing hurricanes with more moisture to fuel their development. This leads to the potential for stronger and more powerful hurricanes, capable of causing greater damage to coastal areas.

Higher Storm Surges: Rising sea levels caused by the melting of glaciers and thermal expansion of seawater exacerbate the impact of storm surges during hurricanes. Elevated sea levels allow storm surges to penetrate farther inland, flooding coastal communities and causing significant damage to infrastructure.

Altered Storm Tracks: Climate change can influence the paths that hurricanes take. While Florida has always been a hurricane-prone region due to its geographical location, warmer ocean temperatures can affect the steering currents that guide hurricanes. This could lead to changes in the tracks of hurricanes, potentially exposing different areas of the state to higher risks.

Understanding how and why these storms are becoming more severe helps us to take actions to try to lessen those drivers and mitigate their impacts. For more information on Hurricane Ian, go to https://www.chnep.org/hurricane-ian.

to organize coordination calls, obtain sampling supplies and donors for lab testing, and went out on boats to help collect samples. This allowed us to inform local leaders about the water quality conditions of the waters that people were needing to wade into for recovery efforts. We created a Hurricane lan page on our website, as well as organized a federal interagency recovery team to come directly meet with local natural resource managers and elected leaders.

Our recovery work has only begun, as we kick off dozens of projects this year that aim to both inventory climate change vulnerabilities in our region and to address them.

Thank you to all who are working to make our region more resilient,

Sennifer Hecker

Climate change not only affects hurricanes but also disrupts traditional rainfall patterns in Florida, which affects our water supply, flood protection, waterbodies, wetlands and other natural areas that we enjoy swimming, boating, hiking, and fishing in.

- Extreme Rainfall: Warmer temperatures can lead to increased evaporation rates, which in turn can result in more moisture being available in the atmosphere. This excess moisture coupled with faster precipitation rates is leading to heavier or even extreme rainfall amounts, increasing the potential for flooding in both urban and rural areas.
- Drought and Water Scarcity: Paradoxically, while some areas experience heavier rainfall, others may face drought conditions due to changing atmospheric circulation patterns. These shifts can disrupt water supply systems, impact agriculture, and threaten the availability of freshwater resources.
- Ecosystem Impact: Altered rainfall patterns can disrupt delicate ecosystems, such as wetlands and marshes, which play a crucial role in flood mitigation and provide habitat for various species. Excessive rainfall can lead to soil erosion and nutrient runoff, altering water quality and the health of aquatic ecosystems.



Strengthening Our Collective Water and Wildlife Stewardship

Every three years, the Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership hosts a Watershed Summit centered around how to better protect and restore our region's water and wildlife habitat. On June 21 & 22, 2023, scientists, natural resource managers, and the public came together to discuss recent research, restoration, and environmental issues in Central and Southwest Florida. Most notably were recent natural resource impacts from Hurricane Ian.

Dylan Yakich with the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, shared data on the rising impact of marine pollution on the endangered smalltooth sawfish in the Aquatic Habitat Research panel. Ball-bungee cords that secure boat lift covers have come off and dropped into the water by the hundreds during large storm events such as Hurricane Ian. Biologists have found several sawfish with these wrapped around the base of their mouths, creating wounds and inhibiting their ability to eat and survive. Underwater cleanups and safer alternatives for ball-bungee cords will be needed to reduce sawfish injuries and deaths.



Environmental Education in Schoolyards). TREES uses schoolyard learning time to teach students how to collect and analyze data.

Mr. Jon Dinges, on behalf of the City of Winter Haven, presented on achieving watershed resiliency through a "One Water" approach in the Hydrology panel. The idea of "One Water" is to manage all water resources collectively in a way that positively impacts communities and the environment. The City of Winter Haven's plan involves restoring 500 acres of historic wetlands, recharging the aquifer, upgrading operations to generate more reclaimed water, and reusing water more efficiently. The plan can be an example for other growing communities in the future.

The final session was devoted to Hurricane Ian Impacts. Ms.
Stephanie Erickson, Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve Manager,
presented long-term trends and hurricane impacts on colonial
wading and diving bird nesting on the islands in Estero Bay.
Several mangrove rookery islands that are deemed Critical
Wildlife Areas suffered moderate to severe impacts from
Hurricane Ian, including a loss of nesting habitat from defoliation

Dr. Chris Anastasiou with the Southwest Florida Water Management District briefed participants during the Water Quality panel on the relatively sudden shift from seagrass to macroalgae seen in recent years following major red tide events. He explained that the seagrass loss and macroalgal proliferation was likely not a direct result of red tide, but rather a result of its aftermath in which massive amounts of nutrients were released from the dead and decaying organisms killed by the red tide – dubbing it "the hangover effect".

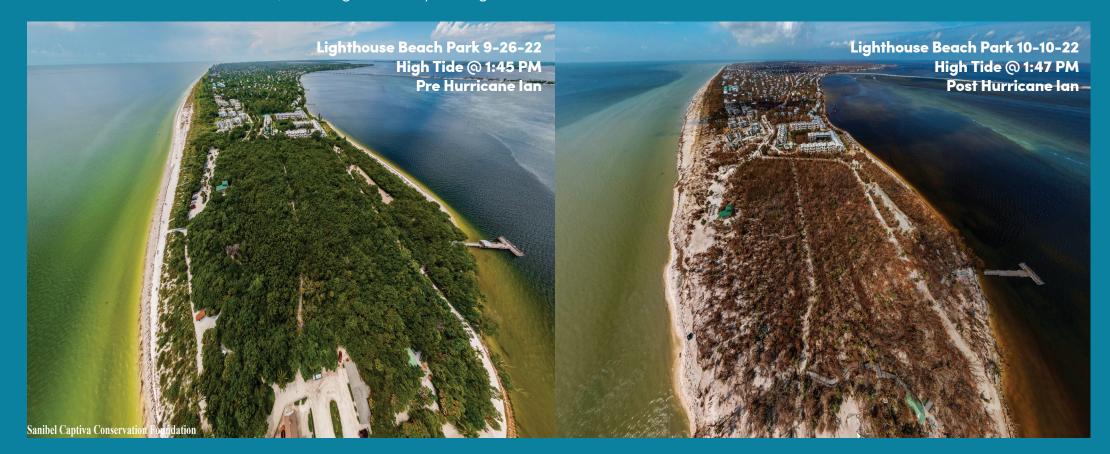
In the Public Engagement panel, participants learned about several programs and opportunities to get students and the public involved in efforts to protect Florida's natural resources. FGCU Environmental Education Coordinator Regina Bale introduced a new curriculum called TREES (Teaching Resiliency through

and breaking of mangroves, as well as from marine debris. Fortunately, colonial wading and diving bird nesting actually remained stable, even increasing in some rookery islands in Estero Bay in 2023.

Participants left this year's event more inspired and informed. CHNEP will be hosting the next Watershed Summit in 2026.



To watch Watershed Summit presentations, go to: https://www.chnep.org/2023-watershed-summit







Illuminating Climate Science and Solutions

On March 15 & 16, 2023, experts, local leaders, and the public came together to hear and discuss the latest climate change science as it pertains to Central and Southwest Florida. Opening remarks were offered by Senator Marco Rubio, Florida's Chief Resiliency Officer Dr. Wesley Brooks, and Assistant Secretary Shannon Esternoz from the US Department of the Interior. The two-day event featured leading scientists from agencies such as the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL), US Geological Survey (USGS), South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), University of Florida, and many more, presenting the latest research and participating in interactive question and answer sessions with the audience.

Climate science is rapidly evolving and expanding in our region. Dr. John Stamm from the USGS provided some surprising information. With higher heat, there is usually higher evaporation from open water sources like the Gulf of Mexico and evapotranspiration from plants when they release moisture through their leaves. However, evapotranspiration data analyzed by Dr. Stamm showed that it is not increasing yet, despite temperatures and evaporation rates

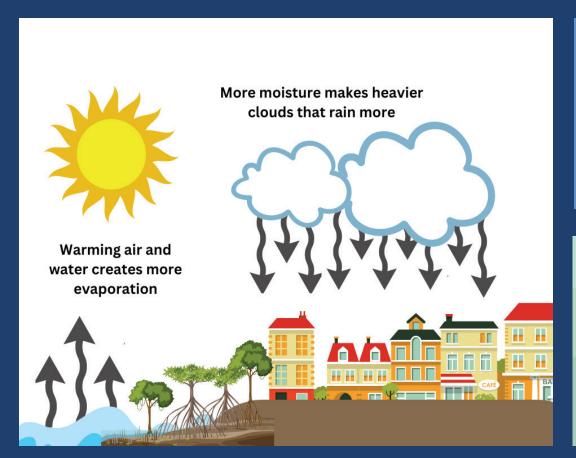
what would have otherwise occurred with these storms prior to the warming of the atmosphere. The researchers determined that climate change increased Hurricane lan's precipitation by approximately 18%. This is a significant amount and explains the unprecedented level of inland flooding that flowed out to the coast and caused widespread devastation in flooding homes, roads, and even Interstate 75.

Dr. Carolina Maran of the SFWMD, who is leading the effort to drill into the details of rainfall changes expected in our region, presented a recent analysis of rainfall data. This data focused on wet season averages and determined an upward trend. Also based on the District's modeling, rainfall is projected to increase in this region by another 20% in the next 50 years. Dr. Maran noted that rainfall is already becoming more variable as well, with extreme rainfall events resulting in wetter wet seasons and drier dry seasons. Since our region struggles to store and supply enough freshwater in the dry season for our communities and natural systems already, this poses additional challenges for water managers. In order to provide for an increasing population

increasing. Based on the latest science, in spite of the higher temperatures, plants are adapting thus far to try to hold more moisture in their leaves. They are doing this by their pores in their leaves getting smaller (called stomata). It is important for natural resource professionals to understand how climate change will affect environmental lands and vegetation so they can manage them properly to prevent wetlands and other areas from going dry and lessen potential wildfires and other impacts.

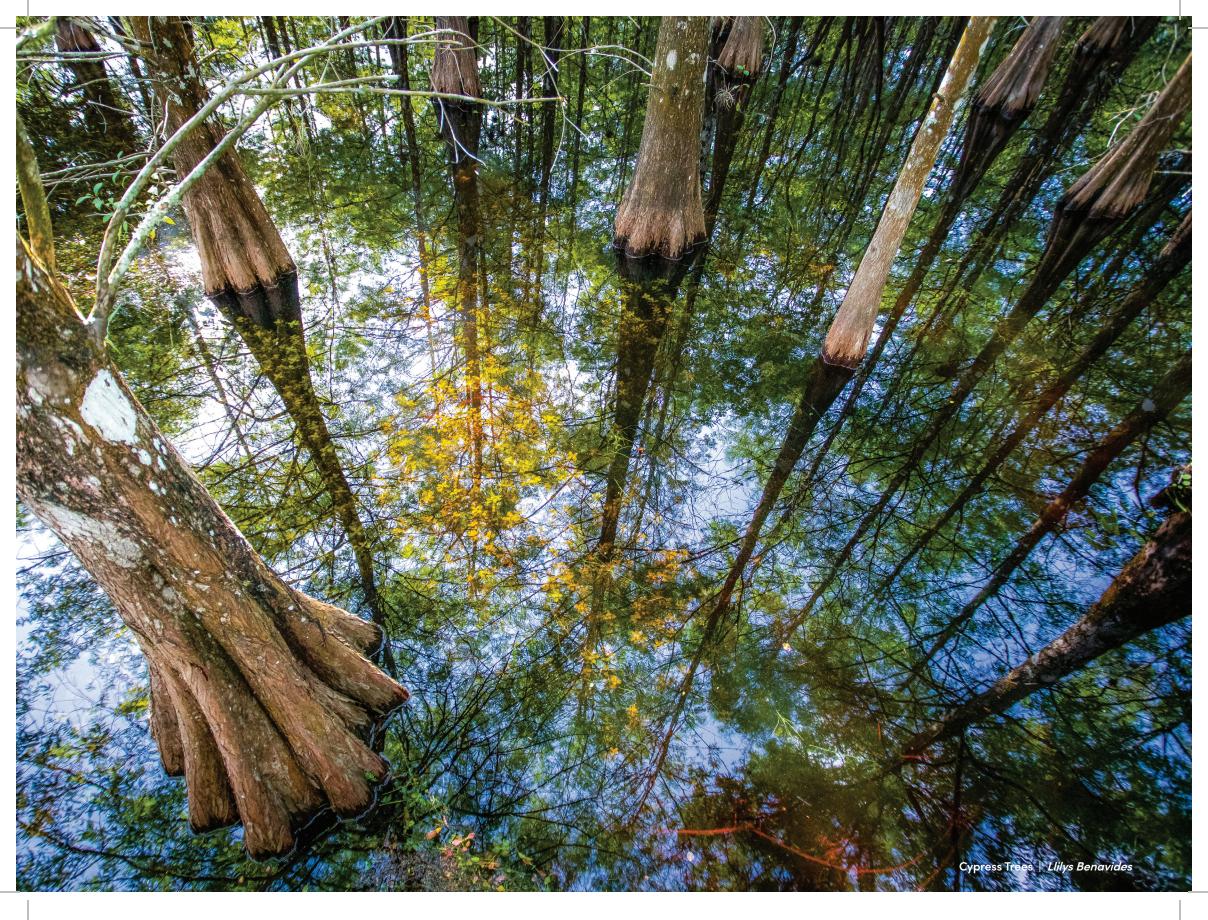
In a presentation by Dr. Michael Wehner from the LBNL, attendees heard how climate change is contributing to more extreme rainfall events. The Laboratory has been focusing on larger storms and hurricanes around the country and determining exactly how much additional rainfall occurred as a result of climate change, versus and for the changing environment, there will need to be more water storage projects, upgraded stormwater systems with more capacity, and more hydrological restoration to keep our wetlands, rivers, and estuaries healthy.

These are just a sample of the important presentations at this year's event, which also covered impacts to our economy, food supply, and cultural resources, as well as current federal/state/local resiliency efforts. Because of continued climate science advances and the need to build more climate collaboration and action in our region, the CHNEP will continue to organize and hold the Southwest Florida Climate Summit annually as an event open to the public. We hope you will join us at next year's Summit!





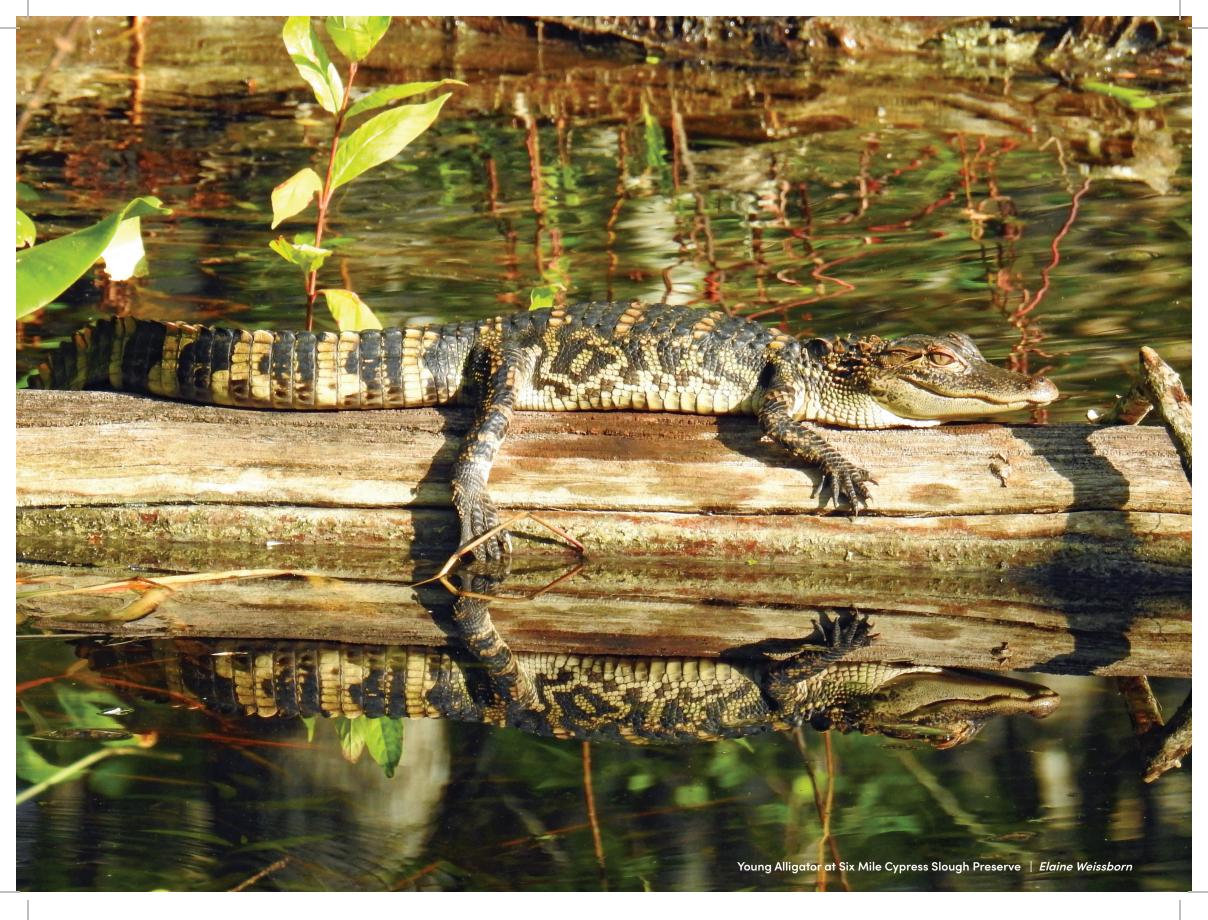




June 2024



	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Th	ursday	Friday	Saturday
C.						Left: Leopard Frog at h Hammock State Park Colin Lewis Middle: Raccoon in Ve Sarina Weiss Right: Black-Crowned	nice	1 HURRICANE SEASON BEGINS
				FACE		Heron on Pine Island Kathleen Colligan		
2		3	4	5	6	● NEW MOON	7	8
S)	10	11	12	13		14 FIRST QUARTER	15
1	6	17	18	19 JUNETEENTH NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE DAY	20	SUMMER SOLSTICE	21 OFULL MOON	22
	30	24	25	26	27		28 CLAST QUARTER	29



July 2024



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday		_
2025 CALENDAR IMAGE DEADLINE visit chnep.org for details	1	2	3	4 INDEPENDENCE DAY	5 • меш моом	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13 FIRST QUARTER
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 OFULL MOON	22	23	24	25	26	27 CLAST QUARTER
28	29	30	31		G 5	Left: Marsh Rabbit at Harborwalk Debra Peterson Right: Eastern Screech Owl in Punta Gorda Cheryl McClure



August 2024



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			Left: Gopher Tortoise in Sanibel Lee Martin Right: Doe and Fawn at Babcock Webb WMA Josh Olive	1	2	3
4 • NEW MOON	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 FIRST QUARTER	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 OFULL MOON	20	21	22	23	24
25	26)LAST QUARTER	27	28	29	30	31



September 2024



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 SHOREBIRD NESTING SEASON ENDS	2 • NEW MOON LABOR DAY	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 FIRST QUARTER	12	13	14
15	16 NATIONAL ESTUARIES WEEK	17 OFULL MOON	18	19	20	21 INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEANUP DAY
22 AUTUMNAL EQUINOX	23	24 CLAST QUARTER	25	26	27	28
29	30			Left: Sandhill Crane Co in Sarasota County Sheri Nadelman	BEC	DME A

Right: Red-Shouldered Hawk at Myakka River State Park *Susan Smart*

SIGN-UP AT CHNEP.ORG



October 2024



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Left: Sunset at Dog Beach Ryan Scofield	1	2 • NEW MOON		4	5
6	7	8	9	10 FIRST QUARTER	11	12
13	14 COLUMBUS DAY	15	16	17 OFULL MOON INTERNATIONAL SAWFISH DAY	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 CLAST QUARTER	25	26
27	28	29	30	31 SEA TURTLE NESTING SEASON ENDS		Left: Monarch and Milkweed at Lakes Park Cindy Jones



November 2024



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday		Saturday
		Lake Morto	<i>Richardson</i> st Crab		1 • NEW MOON	2
3 DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS	4	5	6	7	8	9 FIRST QUARTER
10	11 VETERANS DAY	12	13	14	15 OFULL MOON	16
17	18	19	20	21	22) LAST QUARTER	23
24	25	26	27	28 THANKSGIVING DAY	29	30 HURRICANE SEASON ENDS



December 2024



Sı	unday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	● NEW MOON	_	3	4	5	6	7
8	C FIRST QUARTER	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	O FULL MOON	16	17	18	19	20	21 WINTER SOLSTICE
22) LAST QUARTER	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26	27	28
29		30 • NEW MOON	31				Left: Painted Bunting John Courtney Right: Scarlet Rosemallow at Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park Leeza F. Fox

Calendar Image Contributors

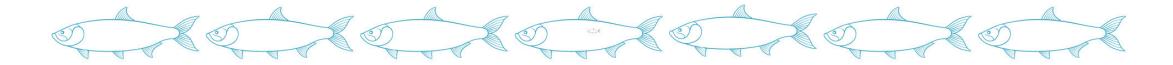
Names of those who submitted images within the CHNEP area include: Theresa Baldwin, Maryle Barbé, Zoe Bass, Al Begin, Llilys Benavides, Jenna Biggs, Denise Blough, Tim Brusoe, Fred Burson, Robert Campbell, Wallace Campbell, Chris Chandras, Sue Christensen, Kathleen Colligan, John Courtney, Jonathan Crossman, Cara Czecholinski, James Douglass, Jean-Louis Dumaine, William Evoy, Eileen Fonferko, Guy Fox, Leeza Fox, James Frye, Kay Frye, Eva Furner, Steven G. Richardson, Stan Glowacki, Stephen Griffin, Connie Griglin, Judy Heck, Michael Herms, Coco Hibbitts, Sally Hodgson, Susan Hoffman, Alison Horton, Ken Hubley, Jan Jackson, Nicole Jensen, Kimberlee Jolly, Cindy Jones, Julie Jones, Kenneth Jones, Pamela Jones-Morton, Robert Kraft, Bert Leon -Saunders, Colin Lewis, Ron Lindensmith, Mary Lundeberg, Steve Maple, Lee Martin, Stacey Mazza-Gilkison, Cheryl McClure, Priscilla McDaniel, Gary Mett, Robin Mett, Rob Mills, Christie Moreau, Linda Moreau, Barbara Morris, Art Nadelman, Sheri Nadelman, Josh Olive, Rhonda Paprocki, Edward Pelegrino, Jennifer Pelegrino, Debra Peterson, Anita Petruzzi-Ella, Mark Proch, Alberto Ramos, Amy Rea, James Redmond, Lisa Rogers, Geraldine Roy, Roger Roy, Steve Russell, Debi Scholtes, Robert Scholtes, Caroline Schwaner, Erin Schwaner, Ryan Scofield, Peyton Scudera, Susan Smart, Jeff Spence, Doreen Steinhauser, Herbert Taylor, Gerald Thompson, Sarah Vessey, Gary Walker, Lakshman Watawala, Sally Weigand, Sarina Weiss, Elaine Weissborn, Donna Whalen, Linda Wroble, and Marianne Wroble.

CHNEP Donors

Donors who contributed \$50 or more in 2023 and whom are amenable to being acknowledged include the following: Marda Atkins, Stephanie Bayne, James Beever III, Sylvia S. Chatterton, Paulette Chernack, Jim Crilly, William Cyzewsk, Todd G. Dary, Gene L. Duncan, Gayle Edwards, Ed & Georgia Elms, Joseph Galipeo, Gloria Hansen, Judith Harvey, Dorothy Kenyon, Linda King, Carolyn Lawson, Jennifer Malinowski, Sheree Marlow, Vickie McCann, Hewitt B. McCloskey, JR., Shannon McGinnis, Nancy Mitchell, Judya & Arthur Moles, Monta J. Montgomery, Carolyn & Terry Perrone, Susan Sosbe, Yvonne Stevens, Sharon Taylor, Liza Van Horn, Ray & Marilyn Wagoner, Leslie Wander, M.S. Weisman, Dwight Whittaker, and Marilyn Wolf.

CHNEP Volunteers

Thank you to those who volunteered in 2023 including: Craig Bossinas, Steve Bramlage, Tonya Bramlage, Scott Chaplen, Mike Evans, Linda Garvey, Hanna Grimm, Tim Grimm, Dianne Lomas, Patrick Maley, Susy Maley, Beth Ovsianik, Edward Pelegrino, Jennifer Pelegrino, Riley Scudera, Philip Stevens, Larry Stuhlmiller, Bonita Stuhlmiller, Sue Wills, Kevin Wills, Deb Woods, and Terry Woods.



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SUBSCRIPTION ONLY —

If you are currently receiving CHNEP Harbor Happenings magazine by mail, you are already subscribed and will receive the annual calendar.

Please fill out this form if you would like to subscribe to receive free CHNEP calendar and magazines in the future.

Email Address	
First Name	
Last Name	
Phone Number	
Street	
City	
State/Province	
Zip Code	

Return in enclosed pre-addressed envelope to the CHNEP.



Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership

2025 CALENDAR

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DECEMBER

SUPPORT THE CHNEP

WAYS TO DONATE

BY MAIL



Return the donation envelope to: **CHNEP** 1050 Loveland Blvd Port Charlotte, FL 33980

ONLINE



www.chnep.org Click on the donate button at the top of the web page.

8

new features added to the CHNEP Water Atlas

300

attendees and 27 presenters at the triennial Watershed Summit

14,800+

native plantings put in at restoration site in the Myakka River Basin

6,400+

subscribers to CHNEP educational publications

2,000+

second graders receiving environmental education at event in Polk County

9,025

pounds of trash collected from CHNEP-funded coastal water clean-ups 120

attendees and 22 presenters at the 3rd Southwest Florida Climate Summit

540

CHNEP-funded water samples collected

2023 CHNEP BY THE NUMBERS