

On the Cover: **Common Gallinule** N

- Also called Common Moorhen. Grows up to 14". Often seen in small family groups.
- Forages on the surface of ponds by picking up small bits of vegetation.
- Adults have bright red beak and forehead.

About the Freshwater Wetlands:

- Historic photos show us that much of the Wildflower property was originally low-lying areas that flooded seasonally. When the golf course was built in the early 1970's, the land was re-contoured and ponds were dredged for fill. Many of the ponds were interconnected with underground pipes. In high water conditions, the water drains eventually into brackish Lemon Creek and from there into Lemon Bay.
- Lemon Bay Conservancy is working to restore more natural wetland conditions in the preserve.

Write-in additional species you observed:

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N = native    E = exotic

Lemon Bay Conservancy gratefully acknowledges the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program for providing grant funding to support development of the safari walk programs at Wildflower and to print this brochure.



[www.CHNEP.org](http://www.CHNEP.org)  
 The CHNEP is a partnership working to protect the natural environment from Venice to Bonita Springs to Winter Haven.

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 Photos by Eva Furner and Bill Dunson.  
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# WILDFLOWER PRESERVE

## Freshwater Species



Common Gallinule adult and chicks (*Gallinula galeata*)

**Take a Nature Safari:** Use this brochure to take a “safari” walk around the freshwater ponds at Wildflower Preserve. On a safari, travelers take note of the species they see. You can do that too! As you spot the various species mentioned in this brochure, use the checkboxes next to the pictures to mark the animals and plants you see. You may want to write a date in the checkbox and save your brochure from visit to visit to mark additional sightings on later walks. The descriptions below each picture will tell you a little about the species that you are observing.

Wildflower is open to Lemon Bay Conservancy members daily. The public is invited to visit the preserve during regularly scheduled walks and public events. LBC membership information and the schedule of walks are available on the Lemon Bay Conservancy website and at the entry kiosk.

All visitors must review and comply with all posted preserve rules. Visitors to Wildflower Preserve do so at your own risk.



941-830-8922  
[www.lemonbayconservancy.org](http://www.lemonbayconservancy.org)

N

**Cattail**  
*Typha spp*  
 Grows 3' - 10'

- Grows in fresh water to depths of 3'. Serves as valuable animal habitat.
- Can be highly invasive in nutrient-rich water and out-compete other native species.

N

**Duckweed**  
*Lemna spp*  
 Individual plants less than 1/4"

- A very tiny flowering plant that floats on the surface. Heavy growth of Lemna minor indicates nutrient-rich water. Dense mats can shade out submerged aquatic species.

E

**Primrose Willow**  
*Ludwigia peruviana*  
 Grows up to 6'

- A subtropical exotic that thrives along the shallow edges of nutrient-rich fresh waters.
- Although considered invasive, it has a beautiful flower that attracts insects.

N

**Pickerel Weed**  
*Pontederia cordata*  
 Grows up to 4'

- Grows densely in shallow waters just offshore where it may be the only species.
- Profuse and ever blooming purple-blue flowers are attractive to many insects.

N

**Water Hyssop**  
*Bacopa monnieri*  
 Grows as a low mat

- A creeping green mat with white flowers that grows on damp soil.
- Serves as larval food for caterpillars of the White Peacock butterfly.

N

**Duck Potato**  
*Sagittaria latifolia*  
 Grows up to 4'

- Grows as scattered individual plants along the edges of ponds, streams and swamps.
- Flower stalks extend above leaves. Flowers are white with three petals.

E

**Scarlet Skimmer**  
*Crocothemis servilia*  
 Avg. Length: 1.7"

- An exotic dragonfly introduced to Florida from Asia. Prefers disturbed habitats.
- Adult males are bright red with females and juveniles colored yellowish tan.

N

**Common Green Darner**  
*Anax junius*  
 Avg. Length: 3"

- A large, common and widespread dragonfly. Adult males are a distinctive blue and green.
- Patrols along the edges of ponds and migrates south from the eastern US during winter.





## White Peacock

*Anartia jatrophae*

Wingspan: 2" - 2.75"

- A very beautiful and common butterfly that flies close to the ground and often lingers or stops with its wings open.
- Caterpillars feed on Bacopa (water hyssop).



## Mosquitofish

*Gambusia holbrooki*

Size: up to 1.5"

- Provides food for many other species.
- Can survive in harsh conditions by using its upturned mouth to breath high-oxygen water near the surface.



## Warmouth Sunfish

*Lepomis gulosus*

Length: 6" - 8"

- Has a huge mouth and red eyes. Will attempt to eat anything it can swallow.
- Can change from light to dark brown for camouflage.



## Blue Tilapia

*Oreochromis aureus*

Avg. adult size 12"

- Outcompetes native bass and sunfish for areas to make nests in the bottom sediment.
- Adults have blue-gray coloring that shades to white on the belly.



## Pig Frog

*Rana grylio*

Length: 3.3" - 5.5"

- The southern equivalent of the bullfrog is more aquatic with a call somewhat like a pig's grunt.
- A very predatory species. Eats anything that will fit in its mouth, including small alligators.



## Green Tree Frog

*Hyla cinerea*

Size: about 2.5"

- Can change colors between dark and light green.
- Its call sounds like a series of metallic honks or a barking dog.

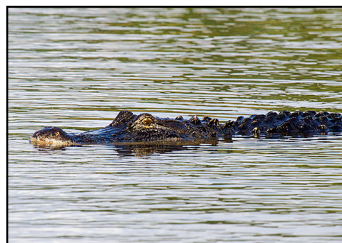


## Cuban Tree Frog

*Osteopilus septentrionalis*

Size: 1.5" - 5"

- Largest tree frog in North America. It is an invasive, non-native species.
- Enormous toe pads. Bumpy skin on the back. Skin on top of head is fused to skull.



## Alligator

*Alligator mississippiensis*

Adult males avg. 11'

- Young have yellow stripes on their tails while adults have darker stripes.
- Rarely attack humans unless provoked, particularly when protecting their eggs or young.



## Peninsula Cooter

*Pseudemys peninsularis*

Length: up to 13"

- Dark carapace (top of shell) and light plastron (bottom of shell). Striped head and neck.
- Digs an unusual 3-hole nest with one deep center hole and side holes to confuse predators.



## Florida Softshell

*Apalone ferox*

Females up to 24" long

- A voracious predator with a huge mouth. Swims fast under water using its fully webbed feet.
- Often seen with only its tubular snorkel nose and bug eyes sticking out of the water.

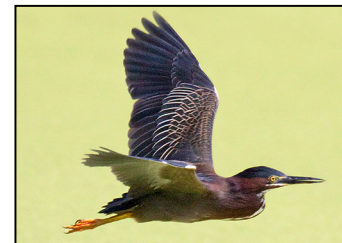


## Black-crowned Night-Heron

*Nycticorax nycticorax*

Length: 25"  
Wingspan: 45"

- Adult males and females are similar in color. Juveniles are brown-streaked.
- Found almost entirely in fresh water. Feeds on a wide variety of small prey.



## Green Heron

*Butorides virescens*

Length: 17"  
Wingspan: 26"

- Both sexes are colored the same with very little green showing.
- Typically feeds by standing on branches on the shoreline and squawks when flushed.



## Little Blue Heron

*Egretta caerulea*

Length: 25"  
Wingspan: 40"

- Juveniles are white and then transition through a speckled phase to the all dark-bluish adults.
- When feeding, leans over and searches for small prey on the surface of vegetation.



## Great Blue Heron

*Ardea herodias*

Length: 47"  
Wingspan: 74"

- The largest of the local herons. Often nests in pine trees in small colonies.
- Forages by standing still for long periods looking for fish, amphibian or reptilian prey.



## Anhinga

*Anhinga anhinga*

Length: 34"  
Wingspan: 43"

- Often seen swimming with only head and neck visible, leading to the name "snake bird".
- Commonly rests with wings open to dry out and warm up after foraging in the water for food.



## River Otter

*Lutra canadensis*

Length: 26" - 42"

- Primarily feeds on fish. Very active and playful.
- River Otters have five toes, but occasionally only four show in their tracks. Heel pad tends to be somewhat "horseshoe" shaped.