

## 2007 Avian Ecology Workshop

### Background

Sustainable Ecosystems Institute (SEI) is an organization of dedicated and ethical scientists committed to using their technical expertise to help solve ecological issues. The Institute does not attempt to make value judgments concerning land use or resource policy; instead, we seek to educate society, to provide the scientific and technical know-how which is necessary to predict the consequences of possible decisions or actions, and to guide communities, governments, and the public in efficiently and effectively protecting and conserving the environment.

All of SEI's work must meet three criteria:

Be scientifically sound.

Directly benefit the communities which are affected by the ecological issue in question.

Be carried out in a non-partisan manner which fosters cooperative problem solving.

### Workshop

Sanctioned by the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force, (SEI) convened an Avian Ecology Workshop at FIU on August 13-15<sup>th</sup> 2007. At the workshop the avian/ecosystem review group addressed the ecology and management of federally listed endangered Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow, Everglades Snail Kite, and Wood Stork, and the state listed Roseate Spoonbill, particularly in relation to Everglades restoration. There were 21 presentations and several scientific discussion panels, as well as time for public questions. Additionally, SEI and the panel worked during the evenings and met for an additional two days after the workshop to review the information presented and begin deliberations on findings.

All of us were very impressed by the quality and quantity of new information that has been gathered since the previous workshop. We appreciate the great efforts and thoughtfulness of the many scientific presenters, researchers, and individuals who commented during the meeting.

SEI has made the scientific presentations available on its website at <http://sei.org/everglades/presentations.htm>.

There is much new scientific information to analyze and discuss. Currently panel members are actively reviewing that information, deliberating, and working on a report that will be released in December. We'll keep you posted so that you know when the report is being issued.

For those who may be unfamiliar with science processes and may wonder what is happening and how to interpret what you heard at the workshop, we'd like to provide you with some information on the process:

Scientific review is a time honored part of the scientific profession. It consists of reviewing information, asking questions, deliberating, as well proposing ideas or initial hypotheses that are discussed and frequently rejected. That debate is an essential part of the scientific process. Often it takes place behind closed doors with scientists talking among themselves. SEI makes this process public, so that the science underpinning conclusions is available and clear to everyone. But although it is public it is still a scientific process. The presentations and dialogue that took place at the Avian Forum at Florida International University constituted the initial part of the process that consists of "gathering information, discussions, proposing ideas, and questions around the information presented". In keeping with a professional scientific process, the panel's scientific conclusions have not yet been finalized and deliberation is currently underway. Those conclusions will form the basis of the report.

We look forward to the report and the next phase. Again our deep appreciation to the scientists, managers, policy makers and interested groups who attended and providing important input.

Sustainable Ecosystems Institute.