



For Immediate Release

**Enrollment now open for free, award-winning
Tropical Audubon Ambassador Program —
“Solutions for South Florida’s Future”
New this August — *Virtual Sessions en Español!***

[Register Here by August 18](#)

MIAMI, Fla. — South Floridians who love the natural world and would like to foster “conservation through community” can become more engaged, educated and effective environmental advocates by signing up for the 2023 edition of the award-winning *Tropical Audubon Ambassador Program*. The free education series spans August 29 – November 9 and is designed to activate environmental ambassadors who want to beat the drum for South Florida’s unique and increasingly endangered ecosystems. Field trips are back by popular demand, and the fall interactive virtual sessions will also offer the option of participating in either English or Spanish. ([Read the Spanish-language version of this media advisory here / Lea aquí la versión en español de este aviso de prensa.](#))

Participants will receive comprehensive advocacy training from environmental experts and will gain an in-depth knowledge of our region’s cornerstone ecosystems: The Everglades, Pine Rocklands, Tropical Hardwood Hammocks and Biscayne Bay. The end goal is to empower participants to activate their “Tropical Audubon Ambassador” education on behalf of South Florida’s wild places and the indigenous wildlife who inhabit them.

The virtual *Zoom* format allows aspiring ambassadors remote flexibility, and the ease of engaging in Q&A during online sessions. Recorded versions of the meetings will also be available to registered participants.

All virtual sessions will now feature a Spanish-language interpreter to engage and empower our Spanish-speaking community members.

Thanks to the financial support of our **Funding Partners** — **The Miami Foundation, Everglades Foundation, Ocean Reef Conservation Association, and the Audubon Collaborative Grant** — the Tropical Audubon Ambassador Program is free! >

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The 2023 Tropical Audubon Ambassador series is open to anyone 18 and older, newcomers and past graduates.

Program topics will be explored with TAS Education & Advocacy Director Stephanie Clements, who holds a Ph.D. in Biology. (A record 61 Ambassadors graduated under her wing in 2022!) Aspiring 2023 Ambassadors will also benefit from the expertise of regional environmental experts who guest-anchor each session.

Subject matter will include:

- South Florida's history of development and how to ensure a better future for our region.
- How development policy decisions are made, and their impact on water quality, ecosystem health and zoning.
- How development impacts birds, other wildlife, our human communities and water resources.
- How Climate Change impacts South Florida at the local level as an intensifier of our region's existing environmental challenges — from water quality to carbon sequestration.
- Which local conservation efforts are working well and how to enhance them.

Additional program benefits include a monthly virtual action call, field trips to three captivating local ecosystems, action alerts on critical conservation issues, an online toolbox of resources, leadership development opportunities, and access to a Facebook group.

To qualify for a Certificate of Program Completion, participants are required to complete the "Civics 101" and "Campaigns" sessions, and choose at least one, "track" of interest — Everglades, Pine Rocklands/Hardwood Hammocks, and/or Biscayne Bay. Each track is comprised of three in-depth virtual sessions.

Bonus Community Action Calls via Zoom about current issues will be open to all new registrants and veteran ambassadors.

Required Sessions for all Ambassadors:

Civics 101: Gain knowledge and skills to participate more fully in public discourse and advocacy campaigns. Learn about Miami-Dade County's government structure, as well as state and national institutions, and the roles, rights and responsibilities of community members.

Campaigns: Learn how an environmental advocacy campaign works in this introduction to campaign strategy. How to develop a strategy for change, how to involve your community, supporters and detractors, and the power of your personal story are among the topics to be covered. Meet and learn from current campaign strategists from various local organizations and coalitions. >

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Program Tracks (Ambassadors may choose up to 3 tracks)

Everglades: Explore the history and science of the River of Grass, South Florida's most iconic ecosystem in this 3-part track. Learn about development issues, water management and the power struggle over the control of water resources. Gain knowledge about the birds and other wildlife who depend on Everglades habitats. Discover why this ecosystem is so important ecologically, culturally and economically to Miami-Dade County. Hear about the current threats to conserving this vital natural resource, and actions you can take.

Pine Rocklands/Hardwood Hammocks: Discover the complexity of the fire-dependent and globally imperiled Pine Rockland ecosystem, and learn about Tropical Hardwood Hammocks in this 3-part track. Delve into the history of development along the Miami Rock Ridge, which has left less than 2 % of the county's original Pine Rocklands intact outside of Everglades National Park. Gain insights into government, private and NGO programs striving to protect the remaining fragments of these habitats in urban Miami such as the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program. Engage with local experts and get involved with ongoing initiatives such as the Connect to Protect Network.

Biscayne Bay: Learn about local water-quality issues and how you can become a voice for Biscayne Bay in this 3-part track. Gain insights into local, state and federal laws and regulations that affect Biscayne Bay. Discover the economic, cultural and ecological importance of this aquatic ecosystem, the multiple threats it faces, what can be done to address them, and how to take advocacy actions to protect it.

The Tropical Audubon Ambassador Program is designed to complement the TAS Mission and methods: To conserve and restore South Florida ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats, with outreach centered around education and advocacy.

Live Zoom Meeting Session Dates & Topics

Tuesdays, August 29-November 9, 6:30-7:30 pm, unless otherwise noted*

(6:30 - 8 pm on first night of each track)

Civics 101	August 29
Campaigns	September 5
Everglades	September 12, 19, 26
Pine Rocklands/Hardwood Hammocks	October 3, 10, 17
Biscayne Bay	October 24 & *November 2, 9 (Thursdays)

Registration Link: <https://support.tropicalaudubon.org/a/tropical-audubon-ambassador-program-2023>

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