



The Islander

July 2014

A Publication of the St. George Island Civic Club

Florida Fish and Wildlife specialist Speaks about Florida Black Bears at June Civic Club Meeting

Kaitlyn O'Connell, a Specialist from FWC, made a presentation at the June meeting on the Florida Black Bear and how to behave around them.



Kaitlyn O'Connell

Florida's black bear population has recovered from historically low numbers in most areas of the state, while at the same time the number of people has increased in and around where bears live. As a result, bears and people encounter each other more than ever.

Bear-related calls to the FWC increased from about 1,000 in 2001 to more than 6,000 in 2013.

Human-bear conflicts are preventable. Most conflicts result from people feeding bears either intentionally or unintentionally, even though feeding is illegal in Florida. Bears are attracted to neighborhoods that allow access to food sources – such as garbage, pet food and birdseed – and will quickly learn to

associate homes and businesses with getting an easy meal. This behavior becomes more evident in fall when bears eat up to 20,000 calories a day to bulk up for winter. Bears that become too comfortable around people are more likely to be killed by collisions with vehicles, by someone taking illegal actions or by FWC to address a public safety risk.

It is illegal to intentionally place food or garbage out that attracts bears and causes conflicts. Anything that attracts dogs, cats or raccoons also will attract bears!-Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Black bears are the only species of bear in Florida and once roamed the entire state.

- FWC biologists estimate at least 3,000 black bears roam Florida today, compared to as few as 300 bears in the 1970s.
- Florida bears generally have black fur with a brown muzzle and sometimes a white chest patch called a blaze.
- Adult black bears typically weigh between 150 to 400 lbs, with males often twice the size of females.
- Female bears have their first litter at about 3 ½ years old and usually have one to three cubs every other year.

(See Speaker, Page Two)

Mason Bean Home from Surgery



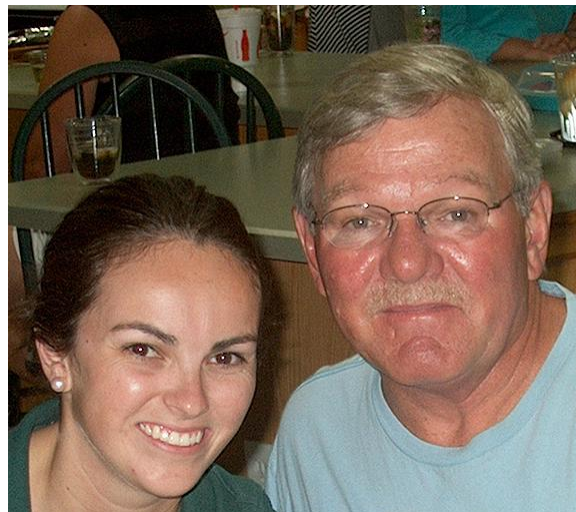
Former Civic Club President and unofficial mayor of St. George Island, Mason Bean, is home after undergoing knee replacement surgery on both knees. He is recuperating at home and undergoing rehabilitation in Apalachicola. He hopes to return to calling Bingo soon and thanks all who visited, sent cards or otherwise inquired about the operation.

(Speaker, from Page One)

- In Florida, bear breeding season runs from June to August, with cubs born in late January or early February.
- Bears have the best sense of smell of any land mammal, seven times better than a bloodhound.
- 80% of a black bear's diet comes from plants such as fruits, nuts and berries, 15% from insects like termites and bees and 5% from meat such as opossums, armadillos and carrion.

Kaitlyn recommended that if you are hiking or hunting in the woods to carry bear spray and learn how to use it properly. Make sure you buy one that is specific for use on bears

and always plan an escape route if you meet a bear.



Kaitlyn and Uncle Mike O'Connell, SGI Civic Club Treasurer

Other tips are:

- Never approach or surprise a bear. Keep as much distance between you and the bear as possible.
- If a bear changes its behavior because of your presence, you are too close.
- When walking dogs, keep them close and be aware of your surroundings. Report any bear threatening the safety of humans, pets or livestock, or causing property damage to FWC at 850-265-3676.
- If you do encounter a bear at close range, remain standing upright with arms raised, back up slowly and speak to the bear in a calm, assertive voice.

(Thanks to the FWC for the information above. For more bear facts, visit MyFWC.com/bear.)

Remember Summer Bingo each Tuesday this summer at the Firehouse

Sunset/Full Moon Climb



Climb to the top of the Cape St. George Lighthouse to view the sunset and full moonrise. The Sunset/Full Moon Climb will take place on July 12 from 8:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Admission is \$15 (\$10 for SGLA members) and includes snacks and a sparkling cider toast to the full moon. After sunset, additional climbers can view the full moon as time and space allow. Because space is limited, reservations are recommended. For reservations please contact the Lighthouse Gift Shop at 850-927-7745.

Upcoming Events

Sea What I Made! Summer Art Classes

Join art instructor Emily Friedman this summer beginning Monday, May 26 through Thursday, July 31 at 32 Avenue D. All supplies are included, ages 5 to 15, \$50 per class, book 5 classes for the price of 4. Tuesday-Friday 2:00-4:00 and Tuesday-Friday 4:30-6:30.

For reservations please call (850) 653-1424. Located at The Green Door at 32 Avenue D in Apalachicola.

Apalachicola Independence Day Celebration



Historic Apalachicola Main Street Presents Apalachicola Independence Day Celebration - Thursday, July 3

Seafood in the Park - 12 noon - 10 pm
Firecracker fried shrimp & low country boil, live music, refreshments and silent auction.

Red, White & Blue Parade - 6:30 pm
Meet at Lafayette Park at 6:30. Decorate your golf cart or bike and parade down Avenue B to Riverfront Park on Water Street.

Ice Cream Social - 7 pm
Free old fashioned ice cream social.

Live Auction - 7:30 pm

Veterans Tribute - 8:30 pm

Independence Day Fireworks!

Apalachicola - Gather along the river for a spectacular finale at 9 p.m. on July 3.

Carrabelle - Watch the harbor for fireworks at dark-thirty on July 4th. Around 9 p.m.

(See *Fireworks*, Page 4)

(Fireworks, From Page 3)

St. George Island - Everyone is welcome to join in the annual St. George Island July 4th festivities including a parade, festivities on the beach and fireworks around 9 p.m.

Painting the Head in Oil with Dawn Whitelaw



Teaching basic principals of portraiture by painting from a live model. This class from July 9-12 will include lecture, power point presentations, demonstration, and critiques. The emphasis will focus on good sound starts - not on completion of a finished portrait during the class. The class will be at the Apalachicola Center for History, Culture and Art. For more information, go to: apalachicolaschoolofart.com/

C-Quarters Youth Fishing Tournament

Kids from all over the South are invited to attend the 9th Annual Youth Fishing Tournament on Saturday, July 19. The tournament is open to all kids 16 and younger. Registration is required on-site at 501 St. James Ave., Carrabelle. Sponsored by Jimmie Crowder of C-Quarters Marina,



FishFloridaTag.org and local businesses.
For more information, call (850) 697-8400

Riverkeeper Paddle Trip

Join the Apalachicola Riverkeepers July 26 for their monthly paddling trip in the Apalachicola watershed. The trips, hosted the 4th Saturday of every month, are free to Riverkeeper members and \$30 for non-members. Local expert guides accompany paddlers to educate about the Apalachicola ecosystem, its floodplain, creeks, sloughs, and tributaries. Explore one of the many creeks or tributaries of the mighty Apalachicola River, and sometimes the mighty Apalachicola River itself.



Most of these trips are suitable for paddlers of many different levels of skill and experience. Just let us know what your level is, and we'll almost always be able to accommodate you. On those rare occasions that require more skill, we'll suggest a future trip that's more suitable.

(See Paddle, Page 5)

(Paddle, From Page 4)

Kayaks available on “first-reserve, first-get basis.” Each one-person kayak includes a PFD (personal floatation device) and paddle. If you bring your own kayak, don’t forget your own paddle and PFD, which must be worn at all times while on the water. Please plan to reserve your space (and your kayak, if needed) at least two days in advance.

Reservations for 4th Saturday Paddle trips can be [requested by email](#) or by calling the Apalachicola Riverkeeper office at 850-653-8936. Prior to the paddle, the trip organizer will contact paddlers and provide them with additional details (time, point of departure, weather uncertainties, etc.).

Paddle trips are FREE to members, and \$30 each to non-members (which gives you an annual membership for your family, so any other trips are free for 1 full year).

St. George Island Sizzler 5K Race & One Mile Run

The 17th Annual St. George Island Sizzler 5K Race & One Mile Fun Run – Saturday, August 9 - A Tate's Hell Track Club production benefitting the Franklin County Humane Society.

On-site registration & packet pickup begins

at 3:00 p.m. at St. George Lighthouse Park. The One Mile Fun Run begins at 5:30p.m. and the 5K Race begins at 6:00p.m. The Post Race Party and awards will be at the St. George Lighthouse Park at 6:30p.m. For more info and pre-registration information visit: www.stgeorgeislandsizzler.com or call 850-509-2191.

Thanks to the Franklin County Tourism Council for Upcoming events.

2014 Board of Directors

Steve Childers **President**
schilders1946@hotmail.com

Chris Jensen **Vice-President**
jensenchris@me.com

Mike O’Connell **Treasurer**
poconnell1414@gmail.com

Linda Thurman **Secretary**
sgibeach1@gmail.com

Directors:

Fred Stanley
Fred_stanley3@yahoo.com

Lon Wilkens
pennywilk@charter.net

Immediate Past President
Newt Colston
newtcol@gmail.com

The next Club Meeting will be July 17

Please visit our website:

www.sgicivicclub.org for the latest news from St. George Island and the surrounding area. Email us at sgicivicclub@gmail.com

Dues are \$20 per person and can be mailed to SGI Civic Club, P.O. Box 451, Eastpoint, FL 32328.

The Islander is edited by Eric Roberts
(egrob2@fairpoint.net)

