



Curious Residents of Florida

Florida's burrowing owls *Athene cunicularia floridana* dig their burrows in vacant lots and open spaces, and are year round residents. The local population breeds between February and July, but some do rear young outside of these months. Special permits are required for removal or relocation of burrows.

Burrowing owls can be of special benefit in urban settings since they consume insects, including roaches and mole crickets. They also eat amphibians and rodents.

History of Burrowing Owls on Marco Island

When the City of Marco Island began monitoring owls in 2001, only a handful were present.

From 2001 to the present, postings and oversight by the *Owl Prowl* volunteers have helped the island's population grow to over 400 individuals, even with urban development at an all time high.

Audubon of the Western Everglades (AWE) is proud to have taken over this project in 2016 now called **AWE Owl Watch Program** to help protect this charismatic threatened species.



© photo by Jean Hall



Burrowing Owl Facts

- ~ Native to Florida
- ~ Return to same burrow each year
- ~ Only species of owl to nest underground
- ~ Burrows are up to 3 ft *deep* and 5-12 ft *long*
- ~ Once partners are chosen, they mate for life
- ~ About 9 inches tall (the size of a water bottle)
- ~ Diurnal and nocturnal (hunts day and night)

Protection

Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act
Florida Threatened Species
Marco Island Protected Species

**PLEASE REPORT MALICIOUS
DESTRUCTION OR HARASSMENT
OF BURROWING OWLS TO FWC**

1-888-404-FWCC (3922)

Rules of Engagement

- Respect private property.
- Do not enter, lean over, lean against, or reach your camera or phone into the posted areas.
- Move slowly and quietly.
- If you are in a group: Stay together on one side and do not surround the burrow area.
- Stay low or sit when possible.
- Be mindful of owl behavior and back away slowly and immediately if owls appear agitated.
- Never feed the owls.

A photo of a frightened bird is not a good photo



Photos by Jean Hall

Get Involved

~Sponsor the *Owl Watch* volunteers and the maintenance of the burrows by donating to *Audubon of the Western Everglades*.

~Business sponsorships are available.

~Monitor a neighborhood during nesting season as part of the *Owl Watch*.

~Residents can request a starter burrow kit to encourage owls onto their property.

Contact Information

OwlWatch Program

owlwatchmarco@gmail.com

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Supporting Partners:
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Burrowing Owls of Marco Island



Audubon of the Western Everglades