
Preface

MY GUIDING LIGHT

In the end, we conserve only what we love. We love only what we understand. We understand only what we are taught.

Baba Dioum

Senegalese conservationist

THE FIRST EDITION

The first edition of this book was published by St. Lucie Press in May 1994. It had been conceived in 1982 as a large-format color photographic book on the Everglades. The intent of the text was not only to accompany the excellent Everglades wildlife and habitat photographs by Robert Hamer, with whom I had conspired since 1971, but was also to provide a more comprehensive coverage of the Everglades than available in other "coffee table" publications. Bob and I both enjoyed "escaping" to the Everglades for photography and wildlife observation, so the project initially was much more play than work. The effort to find a publisher for the large-format book failed, but through the several years in that effort, I continued revising the text. Then, at the Everglades Coalition meetings in Tallahassee in early 1993, I took a suggestion from friend, Pete Rosendahl, to move ahead and publish the text (requiring extensive revision) as a service to the environmental community for its understanding of the ecosystem, which was needed for the growing momentum of Everglades restoration. I heeded the suggestion, revised the text accordingly, and approached St. Lucie Press, because it was then publishing the monumental book *Everglades: the Ecosystem and Its Restoration*.¹⁷³ Dennis Buda at St. Lucie Press immediately undertook my text and suggested the name, *The Everglades Handbook*. I accepted on the condition that it be subtitled *Understanding the Ecosystem*—my driven intent.

THE SECOND EDITION

It surprised me when the first edition was widely used as a college-level ecology text. Initially, I identified about a dozen university orders that indicated such use, including several northern universities that conducted spring-break field trips to South Florida. By chance encounters, I signed many copies of the first edition for such students at Mrazek Pond and other locations in Everglades National Park. In 1998, I was invited to teach South Florida ecology at Florida International University, where *The Everglades Handbook* was in regular use (as subsequent editions have been). I agreed to a limited schedule, mostly out of the desire to see how the handbook could be improved as a course text. An immediate revelation was the need for many more pictures of plants and animals than could be accommodated in the book's scope. To fulfill that need, I initially carried slides and a projector to class. But I soon found the *National Audubon Society Field Guide to Florida*, and I used it as a supplemental text, which the students obviously appreciated. I still recommend it, and the availability of works of this kind guided my decision not to include significantly more pictures in the second edition I had agreed to do for CRC Press, which by then had taken over St. Lucie Press. The second edition was expanded for use as a college text and for the environmental community's interest in ecosystem restoration. There was considerable added material on geology, and three new chapters: The Big Cypress Swamp, Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades Headwaters, and Syntheses, a chapter on succession and food chains. The final chapter on human impacts was expanded with Native American history, invasive biota, and Everglades restoration.

THE THIRD EDITION

The Everglades Handbook had done well in the environmental community and in academic use for South Florida ecology courses in advanced high school and introductory college levels. Based on this success, I was approached by John Sulzycki of CRC Press in 2008 to undertake a third edition, which would be hard cover and all-color. I accepted, not realizing that the requested short time frame, continued expansion in the scientific literature, and conversion of all figures to incorporate the additional dimension of color was a huge undertaking. In addition, we conspired on the potential market and identified that the region's coastal ecosystems were poorly covered in academic texts. With *The Everglades Handbook* already covering the interior Everglades region from Orlando south, the coastal systems would be an obvious area for expansion. And so revisions were launched to include the Caloosahatchee/Charlotte Harbor, the St. Lucie River/Indian River Lagoon, the Loxahatchee Slough and River, Lake Worth Lagoon, and Biscayne Bay, in addition to updates throughout.

NEW IN THE FOURTH EDITION

The major advancement in recent years has been the application of computer modeling to South Florida environments. Accordingly, and by request, I have added to Chapter 21, now called Syntheses: Ecological Relationships, Processes, and Models for the Everglades, and have sprinkled applications into other chapters. The field of ecological modeling and its applications to South Florida environments is the biggest advancement in Everglades science literature. It deserves an entire book on its own, so my exploration into the field is small but is hopefully an adequate introduction for those inclined to explore further.

The fourth edition also presents four major improvements in our understanding of the Everglades and its restoration. First is the recent and now quantified role of water flow in shaping the Everglades landscape (Chapter 3). Second is the origin and evolution of fixed tree islands (Chapter 4). Third is a greatly expanded explanation of sulfur and related mercury as wetland pollutants (Chapter 22). Fourth is a summary of the now quantified economic benefits of restoration, shown to be far in excess of its cost (Chapter 22). All of these improvements are in addition to many updates in the saga of Everglades restoration, sprinkled throughout several chapters but concentrated in Chapter 22.

REFERENCES AND CITATIONS

As an aid to readers' quest for more detailed information, citations (indicated by superscript numbers) are provided throughout the text and listed in the references at the end of the book. While such referencing helps support facts and theories, the larger intent is for guidance to more detailed sources. References that apply to entire topics are indicated with the chapter or section headings. More specific citations are indicated in the text. With the huge attention to restoration, and the dollars poured into it, the scientific literature has grown to an enormous size, dwarfing what was available when I started. I have tried to be selective with additions and have eliminated many older, superseded studies.

ABOUT THE INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EDITION

Out of professional honesty, I have to admit that, although I wrote the introduction to the first edition—that is, my hand put the words on paper—the actual words were dictated by Marjory Stoneman Douglas (also included in this edition). Our agreement included my assisting in order to accommodate her failed eyesight, and necessitated reading the entire draft text aloud to her prior to embarking on the introduction. It was the summer of 1989, when she was “only” 99 years old. We spent numerous weekends working in her combination living room and office. During one

particularly long session of my reading, I noticed her tap her "speaking" clock. It announced the time, and upon my next pause she interrupted, "I usually have a drink at 5:00. It's 4:30 now, and that's close enough." So we put papers aside and drank some scotch.

Her attentiveness during my reading was extraordinary. Some sessions lasted nearly 3 hours, with short breaks only for suggested changes or incidental comments. She appeared to show nothing but fascination with an admittedly lengthy text, and initially I had wondered how much she retained. Then, upon beginning the third reading session, she said, "I don't believe you mentioned the harlequin snake (her vernacular for either of the Florida scarlet snake or the scarlet kingsnake) in your reptile chapter last week. I once saw one in my woodpile. I want you to include it." And so it was done, and my question of her comprehension was rested. Actually, she suggested several additions to the text, always wanting more details to satisfy her own curiosity. For whatever apprehension I had at the outset—whether we would have unpleasant disagreements, difficulty in communicating, and so forth—I now look back at those weekends with confidence; there was nothing less than friendship and lots of fun.

In the years following the initial writing, I visited Marjory numerous times. Among other things, I asked her about the statement of her age in the first sentence, as it was getting out of date. With her concurrence, the first change was merely from 99 to 100, with a sense of pride in both of us (see Figure 1). But as time advanced without publication, she joked that I should skip directly to 102—which I did! Our final meeting to discuss the book was on March 21, 1993, just a few weeks prior to her 103rd birthday. Following that meeting, however, I realized that there was really no need to obscure those enjoyable days when we actually worked over the details of the text, and I elected to return to the original "99 years."

The last time I visited Marjory was March 6, 1997, when she signed my personal copy of the first edition at her house. Her ability to hear and to recall details of her marvelous life had faded considerably, but she still affectionately recognized my voice. Marjory died in May 1998 at the age of 108.

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