

## TURKEY CREEK CELEBRATION

The Turkey Creek Celebration, held March 12-13, 1988, was a fitting tribute to John James Audubon. Turkey Creek Sanctuary Park is a 60-acre Audubon park managed by the City of Palm Bay. The city's annual outdoor art show had been held near the entrance to the park since 1981. Each year, more activities that focused on the sanctuary were added, and each year the public's response was more positive.

This year, two non-profit organizations — the Turkey Creek Sanctuary Committee, Inc. and the South Brevard Society of the Arts — produced the affair under a new name and with the main focus on the sanctuary. In addition to the arts and crafts show, some of the features included art and craft demonstrations, native plant sales, lectures on landscaping with native plants, "critter face" painting for children, and a strong educational program in the sanctuary.

The response was all that was hoped for. Canoe rides organized by the Turtle Coast Sierra Club kept paddlers busy. Guides stationed along the boardwalk were well received, surprising themselves both at how easy it was to talk to people and how much they learned.

Saturday's speakers — Dr. Bernard Yokel, president of Florida Audubon Society, and Henry Swanson, Florida's advocate for water recharge areas — had people coming to the park entrance looking for them.

The committee also printed a small magazine as part of the natural history

focus. The raptor exhibit from Florida Audubon's Madalyn Baldwin Center for Birds of Prey was a big hit. The Turkey Creek Art Competition attracted much attention — all art focused on local flora and fauna.

Even though the show was rained out on Sunday (We could have had canoe rides in the paved parking lot!), we achieved two goals: We brought out enormous crowds (estimated 10,000 on one day) for an event advertised as strictly natural history and arts/crafts (Can't you hear Mr. Audubon applauding?). And we introduced people to an extraordinary park. Our education program can take a gigantic step forward with the contacts we made through the Turkey Creek Celebration.

If you would like to visit Turkey Creek Sanctuary Park, take I-95 to Melbourne, exiting onto 192 (poorly marked). Take 192 east to U.S. 1. Turn south on U.S. 1, go approximately 6 miles to Port Malabar Boulevard (not Malabar Road, which is farther south); turn right and go exactly 2.8 miles. The entrance to the park is at the south end of Santiago Drive: you'll turn left off Port Malabar Boulevard.

For a copy of the plant list, send a legal-size self-addressed envelope with 39 cents postage, along with your request, to Turkey Creek Sanctuary Committee, P.O. Box 175, Palm Bay, FL 32906-0175.

• Marcy R. Bartlett, Education  
Turkey Creek Sanctuary Committee