# One Water Symposium

Tuesday, October 10, 2023
Waterbird Society Annual Meeting
Fort Lauderdale, FL, USA

## Schedule

1000 – 1010: One Water Introduction (Juliet Lamb, TNC)

1010 – 1020: BirdReturns – An Adaptable Habitat Implementation Program (William Abbott, TNC)

1020 – 1030: Wetland's Protection: An inclusive risk-based systems approach to policy analysis in Jamaica (Emme Christie, SUNY-ESF)

1030 – 1040: Water: Sustaining bird life (Sue Bonfield, Environment for the Americas)

1040 – 1050: Birds Tell Us: Everglades Restoration Works for Wading Birds (Kelly Cox, Audubon Florida)

1050 – 1100: Humans & Birds, Creating A Balanced Ecosystem (Betty Osceola, Miccosukee Tribe of Florida

11:00 – 12:00: Panel Discussion: Emme Christie, Sue Bonfield, Kelly Cox, Betty Osceola, & Pete Lebeouf

## Panelist Biographies



**Susan Bonfield** (she/her) works to broaden engagement with conservation and is a passionate advocate for diversity and collaboration across borders in conserving our natural heritage. She has developed global programs building on the miracle of bird

migration to promote human connections across the Western Hemisphere. In 2007, with a desire to make stronger connections between science, conservation, and youth, she founded Environment for the Americas and is its Director. The organization was built on the foundation of its keystone education program, World Migratory Bird Day, a global celebration that connects people in partnership with the United Nations through the phenomenon of bird migration. Susan has over 30 years of experience managing research and educational collaborations across the Western Hemisphere and in Europe, leading multi-organizational research projects, and mentoring youth. She holds a Master's in Natural Resources from the University of Michigan and a PhD in Human Dimensions of Natural Resources from Colorado State University. She is a founding member of the Diversity Joint Venture, serves on the Society for Conservation Biology's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, and is Coordinator of the trinational Western Hummingbird Partnership.



**Emme Christie** (they/them) is a queer, trans, Fulbright and transdisciplinary environmental activist-scholar who works along the contours of queerness and environmental identity. They are also a Ph.D. Candidate at the State University of New York's College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY-ESF). Their current research involves an inquiry into the formation of a national environmental identity through a mixed-methods survey of environmental history and present practices of environmental discourse and governance. Through this work, they hope to make an impact as a justice, equity, diversity, access, and inclusion (JEDAI) scholar by centering the voices of historically marginalized groups in environmental decision-making. As a

critical environmental sociologist, they are focused on assessing environmental policy and development from the lens of historically marginalized populations such as Indigenous peoples, women, LGBTQ+, and disabled individuals. Their work addresses injustice and power relations in environmental research, policy, data management, and decision-making. They are also the Associate Director for the Jamaica Climate Change Youth Council and are intimately engaged in advocacy for environmental protection and climate change through improved policy and access to sustainable livelihoods for marginalized and vulnerable Jamaicans.



**Kelly Cox** (she/her) is an environmental attorney and advocate. As director of Everglades Policy, Cox oversees Audubon's Everglades work by coordinating efforts in public policy, advocacy, and science in the Greater Everglades Ecosystem. In 2022, Cox was elected to serve as Co-Chair of the Everglades Coalition—an alliance of nearly 60 non-profit organizations dedicated to advancing Everglades restoration. Based in South Florida, Cox is heavily involved in restoration efforts that benefit Florida Bay, Biscayne Bay, and Everglades National Park. Cox also serves on the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) Advisory Council as a voting member in the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Seat. She is a member of the FKNMS Connectivity Team and assists in coordinating efforts for the Florida Keys Restoration Partnership—a coalition of environmental non-profit organizations working to advance protections for natural resources of the Florida Keys.



**Pete LeBeouf** (he/him) is a member of the Pointe-au-Chien Indian Tribe located in South Louisiana. He is a graduate of Southeastern Louisiana University with a concentration in Environmental Biology, Ecology, and Evolution. He is an experienced field guide of the lower Mississippi River Delta and coastal waters of the Gulf South.



**Betty Osceola** (she/her) is an enrolled member of the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida. Betty utilizes her upbringing in the Greater Everglades and the indigenous traditional ecological knowledge of Miccosukee and Seminole people in their connection to the environment to educate and advocate for environmental conservation. Betty is an Airboat Captain and owns and operates Buffalo Tiger Airboats Tours utilizing her experience to educate the public about the Miccosukee and Everglades ecosystem. She also serves on the Miccosukee Tribe's Everglades Advisory Committee.

**Abbott, William**[1], Golet, Greg

[1]The Nature Conservancy California, 830 S Street , Sacramento, California USA. william.abbott@tnc.org

**BirdReturns – an adaptable habitat implementation program**

The BirdReturns Program (Program) was started in 2014 with the goal of financially incentivizing private landowners, for providing needed wetland habitat, at a critical time for waterbirds in California's Sacramento River Valley. Since its inception BirdReturns has continued to grow. Supported by the Migratory Bird Conservation Partnership (MBCP; The Nature Conservancy, Point Blue Conservation Science, Audubon California) as well as the California Rice Commission and California Department of Fish and Wildlife, BirdReturns now provides important habitat throughout the Central Valley. The benefits to birds are undeniable. Over the life of the BirdReturns project, it has been demonstrated that waterbirds, and shorebirds specifically, are found in greater abundance and diversity in BirdReturns fields than in other farmlands. The Program has since expanded beyond agriculture, now enrolling privately owned wetlands as well. During early fall and in years of drought, times when wetland habitat is in especially short supply, the flexibility of the BirdReturns program allows for creation of additional habitat.

The benefit of the Program is not just enjoyed by birds. Since its launch private landowners enrolled in the BirdReturns Program have supplied over 150,000 acres of drought and shoulder season habitat, and for their efforts they have received over $10M dollars in direct payments. It is not just payments that benefit people. Practices required by BirdReturns aid in aquifer recharge, reduce flooding risk, increase soil carbon storage, provide low cost weed control and crop residue decomposition, increase air and water quality, and create recreational opportunities.

The work of BirdReturns is far from finished. Recently TNC received a large public funds award to support scaling the program to meet the ambitious 2030 habitat goals set by the MBCP. Scaling the Program has come with growing pains (e.g., maintaining low enrollment costs, attracting new grower interest, providing habitat during the most critical times, and reducing implementation costs) that present unique challenges as BirdReturns expands into new communities. But, by continuing to collaborate with our partners and the people who live and work these lands, we're optimistic that we can succeed in providing the habitat California's migratory waterbirds need to thrive.

**Christie, Emme**

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**Wetland's Protection: An inclusive risk-based systems approach to policy analysis in Jamaica**

As a small island developing state, the health of the natural environment  is inextricably linked to economic freedom and success of Jamaica. The natural environment also adds to and preserves the cultural richness, identity and heritage of many Jamaican groups and subcultures and supports the country's sustainable development goals. This paper looks at the wetlands protection in Jamaica, with a goal to influence the development of a policy framework that is built on equity and inclusion as much as it centers ecological health. For example, about 770 hectares of mangrove wetlands in Jamaica have been lost in two decades (1996 – 2016), primarily due to tourism, road and industrial infrastructure. Yet, the government continues to declare the importance of the protective and economic services of coastal wetlands. Additionally, since 2003, there has not been any systematic studies of the health of inland wetlands in Jamaica and as such, no data is available on the current state of inland wetland resources. Concomitant with this gap, policies of this nature do not center the needs of vulnerable populations that depend on them for material and cultural benefits.

I propose an inclusive risk-based systems approach to analyzing Jamaica's wetland's policy using Greenberg's (2008) and Loomis' & Helfand's (2006) policy analysis criteria: Biophysical/scientific/technical effects (Human and ecological health), Economic Benefits and Costs, Distributional Equity (Moral Imperatives), Acceptability (Non-Government stakeholders), Feasibility (Government Stakeholders), Uncertainty (time and flexibility), and Legality. This approach can provide a thorough picture of the challenges and context relative to a singular approach that focuses primarily on any single criteria. Such an approach includes, not just biophysical systems, but also social and diverse knowledge systems. It also provides opportunities for the inclusion of both Indigenous and local experiences in policy development due the direct analysis of advantages and vulnerabilities of each selected policy criteria as well as the strengths, weaknesses, and exclusions of selected policy analysis tool(s). This methodological framework embodies a regenerative approach which encourages rethinking the purpose and role of policy, the types of questions asked during the policy development process, whose voices and experiences are engaged throughout the policy life cycle.

**Bonfield, Sue**

Environment for the Americas, 5171 Eldorado Springs Drive, Boulder, Colorado USA. sbonfield@environmentamericas.org

**Water: Sustaining Bird Life**

Water: Sustaining Bird Life is the conservation theme of World Migratory Bird Day 2023, highlighting the pivotal role water plays in the lives of birds. As researchers, scientists, and conservationists, it is imperative that we enhance our efforts to actively involve the

public in gaining a deeper understanding of birds and the challenges that impact their survival. World Migratory Bird Day is an annual campaign that serves as an ongoing call to action, directing attention towards the challenges migratory birds face, while also urging individuals and communities to engage in safeguarding migratory birds through actions at home, locally, and more broadly. The program celebrates the spectacle of bird migrations and serves as a catalyst for collective action. It also provides a versatile framework and a wealth of educational materials suitable for diverse age groups and applications. Coordinated by Environment for the Americas from Canada to Argentina and the Caribbean, the program also extends across all flyways as an awareness raising campaign with the support of other partners.

**Cox, Kelly**

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kelly.cox@audubon.org

**Birds Tell Us: Everglades Restoration Works for Wading Birds**

Wading birds are important indicators of ecosystem health in the Everglades, and each year agencies and organizations synthesize wading bird survey data from across the Everglades to examine system-wide trends. When wading birds nest in large numbers and fledge chicks most years, they tell us that our efforts to improve the hydrology of South Florida ecosystems are successful. A healthy Everglades ecosystem is resilient and maintains the capacity to support exceptionally large populations of nesting wading birds. If water levels are right, success is possible and delivers multiple bottom-line benefits for fish, wildlife, ecosystems, and people. Indicator bird species, like Roseate Spoonbills and Wood Storks, help us to “get the water right” and inform policy actions to safeguard water supply, build resilience and climate defenses, and restore the River of Grass.