

https://www.midfloridanewspapers.com/highlands_news-sun/today-at-archbold/article_ee337176-966d-11eb-9793-bfc4b7dd4f7f.html

Today at Archbold

By ARCHBOLD BIOLOGICAL STATION

Apr 7, 2021



Kerry Sanders of NBC's Today Show with a banded Florida Scrub-Jay.

DEBORAH POLLARD PHOTO

It is not every day a national news network broadcasts from Highlands County.

Last week, Archbold hosted NBC Today show correspondent Kerry Sanders. Sanders checked in live with Savannah Guthrie and Hoda Kotb to cover the weekend's 'March Madness' activities, then spent the day filming in the Florida scrub at Archbold, learning about Florida Scrub-Jays and how wildlife and other environmental issues have been impacted by the global pandemic. Joining Sanders was Archbold Board member Dr. John Fitzpatrick, who is the executive director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Archbold's Executive Director, Dr. Hilary Swain, and Director of Philanthropy, Deborah Pollard, also joined Sanders and crew for the episode focused on scrub-jays that will air this month as part of the 'Today Goes Green' series, honoring Earth Month and focusing on the environment, climate change, and changes you can make to help. Dr. Swain shared, "The issues our planet faces are extremely challenging, and I was impressed that the NBC Today Show have recognized that these complex issues are deserving addressing over 'Earth Month' rather than a traditional one-day Earth Day."

Sanders's mission was to see the charismatic Florida Scrub-Jay, a highly regarded study of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and one of Archbold's flagship research programs. One curious jay took quite a liking to Sanders as the reporter learned how scientists have been studying the scrub-jay population at Archbold for more than 50 years. Sanders learned how jays are dependent on low and open scrub habitat maintained by fire and are the only species of bird found only in Florida.

The story will highlight how the Florida Scrub-Jay's threatened status means we must work hard to protect habitats like Florida Scrub that support this iconic species and so many others like it. Habitat loss and fragmentation and lack of appropriate fire management are the primary threats to Florida Scrub-Jays. The loss of intervening scrub habitat that once provided connectivity leaves jay subpopulations isolated and living on disconnected 'islands' of Scrub. Florida Scrub-Jays, and other wildlife dependent on the Florida scrub, require connectivity among public and private conservation lands.

Be sure to watch Kerry Sanders on Today with John Fitzpatrick and Hilary Swain this April (currently scheduled for April 12). Follow Archbold's social media (Facebook/Instagram/Twitter) for more details. And remember, help protect the future of wild Florida by protecting wildlife corridors: networks of functionally connected lands and waters. Share #OneGreenThing on Archbold's social media so we can all learn from one another as we celebrate Earth Month.



L-R: Kerry Sanders, Dr. John Fitzpatrick, and Dr. Hilary Swain prepare for filming Archbold's Today Show segment. Photo by Deborah Pollard.

A Moody