

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE BALLENSLES WILDLIFE FOUNDATION



# NATURE MATTERS

Fall 2016

Zebra Longwing Butterfly  
(*Heliconius Charitonius*)



See page 3 for Featured Article: **Zebra Longwing Butterfly**

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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

By now, many snowbirds have returned to BallenIsles to begin the 2016/2017 season alongside our full time residents. And so it is for the BallenIsles Wildlife Foundation. BIWF's dedicated, hard-working board of directors recently attended our annual all day strategy meeting to review our accomplishments from last season and determine how to fulfill the BIWF mission and foundation goals for the upcoming season.

When all is said and done, the measure of our success will be how well we educate our residents so that wildlife, domestic animals, and humans can live safely and in harmony within the magnificent environment that is BallenIsles. Your contributions and support provide the fuel we need to achieve that success

*"In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks." —John Muir*

Naturally yours,  
Marianne Guerra

**DONATE NOW**

### Mission Statement and Foundation Goals of BallenIsles Wildlife Foundation

BallenIsles Wildlife Foundation (BIWF), a nonprofit 501©(3) charitable organization, is a group of volunteers who love and respect animals. Our inspiration comes from Mona Roberts, a resident of Bermuda Bay, who during her 18 years in BallenIsles devoted herself to the rescue and rehabilitation of animals in need.

#### BIWF MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of BallenIsles Wildlife Foundation is to preserve, foster, and respect all animal life in the BallenIsles community.

#### BIWF FOUNDATION GOALS

- Aid and assist injured animals, stray animals, and lost pets found in BallenIsles.
- Maintain a feral cat TNVR (trap, neuter, vaccinate, return) program for the BallenIsles community to avoid overpopulation.
- Educate and inform BallenIsles' residents about wildlife/animal/flora matters.
- Maintain and establish working relationships with, assist, and endorse wildlife and animal organizations that help BallenIsles Wildlife Foundation achieve our mission and foundation goals.

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# ZEBRA LONGWING BUTTERFLY

*(Heliconius Charitonius)*

by Jeff Nurge\*

**In 1996 the Florida state legislature designated the zebra longwing as the official state butterfly.** The zebra longwing butterfly is found throughout Florida, although it is more common in south Florida, particularly in the Everglades National Park.



This black and yellow-white striped butterfly with long elliptical wings can't be confused with any other butterfly because of its distinct appearance and slow graceful flight pattern. Gliding through and under dense lightly shaded woods and shrubs, this mostly shade-loving butterfly is right at home in South Florida's warm and temperate climate. Zebra longwings are social butterflies, gathering in small to large groups by nightfall and hanging right side up on small branches or twigs to avoid predators. When disturbed, they make a creaking sound by wiggling their bodies. They are also an intelligent species. Practicing what is called trap lining, they return for nectar to the same plant and place over a long period of time. I have removed plants only to find zebras circling around and around above the bare ground looking for them.

The majority of butterflies only live 8 to 12 days. One of two exceptions is the zebra longwing. Its unusual ability to dissolve pollen with its saliva enables it to extend its life cycle from a couple of months to as long as 6 months. Along with the monarch butterfly, the zebra longwing is one of the longest lived butterflies we have in South Florida.

The caterpillars have a white body with black spines and a yellow head. Contrary to popular belief, you can carefully pick up butterfly caterpillars without being stung to examine them up close. Just be sure they are butterfly larva. Some moth caterpillars look similar but have the tell tale long hairs that will sting!



Flowering native nectar plants of all shapes and sizes will ensure a visit from the zebras, but if they are to stay year round in the yard, they must be provided with a host plant on which the female can lay her eggs (typically five to 15). One such native plant, the corky-stem passion vine (*Passiflora suberosa*), will do the trick. The photos on the next page show progression from pupation to mating. Corky-stem is the most versatile vine in the landscape. I prefer to plant it in and around medium sized bushes in semi-shade as this is the ideal location for the females to lay their eggs. The vine will climb inside the bush, and when eaten by the caterpillars, it will not be so noticeably defoliated. The vine will regenerate new growth readily and will not smother the bush it is planted under. As a bonus, Mockingbirds and Cardinals also eat its purple berries and spread them around the yard, ensuring a new crop of plants for future generations of zebra longwings.

Zebra longwings begin mating as soon as they emerge from their chrysalis. In ideal weather conditions, a zebra can go from egg to butterfly in a little more than 3 weeks. Zebras have three or more broods a year—a guarantee that they will be flying year round!

*(continued on page 4)*

\*Jeff is a Master Gardener, native plant expert, and owner of Native Choice Nursery ([NativeChoiceNursery.com](http://NativeChoiceNursery.com)). After he converted his own yard to mostly native plant species, "the increase in number and variety of birds and butterfly species was dramatic."



When a caterpillar is ready to pupate, it crawls to a surface where it can hang. It deposits silk at its posterior end and hangs for about a day. Then it quickly begins its transformation, which takes about a minute, into a chrysalis.



Eventually the chrysalis wriggles out of the caterpillar skin, which then falls to ground. The chrysalis skin hardens and remains hardened for almost 2 weeks, during which time it cannot feed.



In about 12 days, the chrysalis becomes transparent and the adult butterfly, wings folded, emerges.




Female mating several minutes after release. Note that the male has tattered wings.

Photographs and descriptions by Susan Leach Snyder. To read and see more, click on <http://susanleachsnyder.com/Conservancy%20Butterfly%20Garden/ZebraLongwing.html>

## DONATE TO BALLENSLES WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

Your tax-deductible donation will help us implement our mission to preserve, protect, foster and respect the wildlife in BallenIsles and to educate and inform our residents.

- 1. Gifts by check** can be made by sending a check payable to the BallenIsles Wildlife Foundation (BIWF) to 303 BallenIsles Circle, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418.
- 2. Gifts by credit card or PayPal** can be made by [clicking here](#).
- 3. Tribute Cards** to recognize a special person or life event can be requested in any financial increment by emailing BIWF at [info@balleniseswildlifefoundation.org](mailto:info@balleniseswildlifefoundation.org). BIWF will send an acknowledgement card to your designee. A charitable donation to honor your designee is a thoughtful gift.
- 4. Click on ** and select BallenIsles Wildlife Foundation as the organization you support. Amazon will then donate 5% of your eligible Amazon Smile purchases to BIWF.

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To learn more about the BallenIsles Wildlife Foundation, visit our website at [BallenIslesWildlifeFoundation.org](http://BallenIslesWildlifeFoundation.org) and our Facebook page at [facebook.com/BallenIslesWildlifeFoundation](https://facebook.com/BallenIslesWildlifeFoundation).

For additional information about BIWF, email us at [info@balleniseswildlifefoundation.org](mailto:info@balleniseswildlifefoundation.org).



# ARE ELEPHANTS THE NEW DINOSAURS?

by Charles Beren



I was in grade school when I saw my first elephant. Toledo, where I grew up, has a nationally recognized Zoo that at the time promoted “Amber,” the safety elephant. I remember to this day seeing her during a class trip. I also recall watching my first Tarzan movie at a Saturday matinee and being mesmerized when seeing him ride an elephant through the jungle. I have always been fascinated by this beautiful and intelligent animal.

Flash forward to 2008 when on a safari in East Africa, my wife Kerry and I had the rare good fortune of seeing a large herd (70+) of elephants in the Serengeti come out of the woods and cross through the open plains to the next heavily wooded area. This sight was not replicated during the rest of our African safari. Why? Probably because of the rapidly declining numbers of elephants in the wild.

I am by nature, no pun intended, an optimistic person, but when it comes to the future of elephants, be they in Africa or Asia, sadly it is increasingly difficult to remain hopeful ([cnn.com/2016/10/26/world/wild-animals-disappear-report-wwf/index.html](http://cnn.com/2016/10/26/world/wild-animals-disappear-report-wwf/index.html).) The declining numbers are staggering. Africa, in the 1930s and 1940s had an estimated elephant population of 3 to 5 million. Their numbers declined to 1.3 million in the 1980s; by 2014 they were down to 600,000. Between 1973 and 1989, the African elephant population of Kenya declined by 85%. In Chad, the population declined from 400,000 in 1970 to about 10,000 in

2006. The population in the Tanzanian Game Reserve, once the largest of any reserves in the world, dropped from 109,000 in 1976 to 13,000 by 2013. Approximately 85,000 elephants were lost to poaching throughout all of Tanzania between 2009 and 2014 (1).

The World Wildlife Foundation states that the two threats that impact African elephants the most are the demand for ivory and to a lesser extent hides and meats (poaching) and changes in land usage (habitat destruction). The majority of the ivory leaving Africa, primarily out of Tanzania, continues to be acquired and transported illegally, and over 80% of all the raw ivory traded comes from poached African elephants.

Asian elephants were never as abundant as their African cousins, and today they are even more endangered than African elephants. Fewer than 100 years ago there were an estimated 200,000 Asian elephants. Today there are probably no more than 35,000 to 40,000 in the wild (2). Recent numbers indicate that Asia’s elephant population has shrunk from 100,000 to 3500 to 2000 in Thailand alone and to fewer than 100 in Vietnam (2).

We can save elephants by implementing stronger protection policies for wild elephants at both local and international levels of government, stronger enforcement and legislative measures against the poaching and illegal trade of ivory, better management of natural elephant habitats, better education about the vital role of the elephant in ecosystems, more viable alternative economic opportunities for those whose livelihoods depend on elephants, improved treatment for captive elephants, and, where appropriate, reintroduction of captive elephants into protected sanctuaries that allow a natural replenishing of endangered populations. These are just some of the goals that numerous elephant conservation organizations are focusing on around the world to prevent the exploitation of wild elephants and the destruction of their habitat and to improve the quality of life for those elephants in captivity (3).

Kerry and I contribute to BLES in Thailand ([blesele.org](http://blesele.org)). BLES is passionately devoted to creating a safe and natural

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home for Thai elephants. They care for rescued and retired elephants, allowing them to interact freely within 500 acres of forested land. There are no performances—just elephants. I encourage you to join us by donating to a program of your choice. Some of the other worthwhile organizations whose primary goal is the preservation of the elephant species are listed below; all are respected by the philanthropy community.

[African Parks](#)

[Big Life Foundation](#)

[Elephants Without Borders](#)

[Environmental Investigation Agency](#)

[Friends of Hwange](#)

[PALF](#)

[Save the Elephants](#)

[Wild Aid](#)

[Wildlife Conservation Society](#)

Scientists speculate that dinosaurs were wiped from the face of the earth from a cataclysmic incident millions of years ago. The ultimate fate of elephants is in the hands of we humans. What a tragedy it would be if these marvelous creatures were to become extinct because of the selfish acts of man.

1. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elephant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elephant)

2. [voices.nationalgeographic.com/2013/12/05/the-silent-crisis-vietnams-elephants-on-the-verge-of-extinction/](http://voices.nationalgeographic.com/2013/12/05/the-silent-crisis-vietnams-elephants-on-the-verge-of-extinction/)

3. [bagheera.com/inthewild/van\\_anim\\_elephant.htm](http://bagheera.com/inthewild/van_anim_elephant.htm)

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO HELP BIWF FULFILL ITS MISSION AND FOUNDATION GOALS

### RESCUE

1. Learn how to implement any or all functions of our TNVR program for feral cats found in BallenIsles.
2. Foster abandoned kittens rescued in BallenIsles.
3. Assist in finding forever homes for our rescued, fostered, and socialized kittens.
4. Provide veterinary care.
5. Transport injured wildlife to Busch Wildlife Sanctuary for rehabilitation or, if needed, humane euthanasia.

### NATURE MATTERS MAGAZINE

1. Soliciting articles
2. Writing articles
3. Proofreading articles
4. Submitting photos

### COMPUTER SKILLS

# Featured PET

## MEET MR T

by Sandra Mendelson

When my Pomeranian Nikka, who had been my constant companion for 16 years, died in 2010, it took me 4 years to recover. After I moved to Florida, I wanted to adopt another dog, but none of the adorable dogs I encountered through my rescue work felt like the right one for me.

Then in early February 2016, I had a session with an amazing medium who told me that Nikka had already reincarnated. I wondered if she (or he) would ever find me. A few nights later, I crawled into bed, closed my eyes, and saw a black furry face with white on the chin float by. The next day my daily “dogs for adoption” email from Rescueme.org included a small black dog with white on his chin and the face, ears, and markings of a border collie wrapped into a 15-pound body. All the other dogs were listed with a \$250-\$350 adoption fee; this ad only asked for \$25...so my first thought was “what’s wrong with this dog?” I did nothing.

The next week the ad was reposted: “My landlord will only let me keep this dog for 2 more weeks.” I hit the phone at 6 a.m. and reached the dog’s rescuer—an incredibly sweet and kind young man named Chance; his voice cracked as he fought back tears, describing how special this dog was and that he need to find the best person for him...that it wasn’t about the



money. Chance had found the dog by the side of the road in Tampa in May 2015. He kept him in his apartment with his other dogs and cats until his landlord told him he had too many animals. I knew he was telling the truth, and as I stared at the picture he texted me of “Mr T,” I heard a loud voice in my head saying “What took you so long? We have work to do.” Chance and I traded pictures, and when I told him about the alternative therapies I was involved in, wondering if it would make him uncomfortable, he simply said “Oh no, not at all; I pray and I meditate and I saw in a dream the woman who would adopt Mr T, and it was you.”

The morning-of greeted me with one flat tire, a tow, and installation of four new tires, delaying my arrival at Chance’s house by 4 hours. I was fighting the sense of urgency that was churning away in my stomach. As I pulled up the driveway, the small black dog with white on his chin called Mr T trotted down the driveway to me, tail wagging, and licked me on the nose. Ten minutes later he fell asleep with his head resting on my leg. As we drove home in silence—Mr T riding shotgun as if he had done this a thousand times before—I caught a glimpse of his deeply contented smiling face.

From day one, my neighbors and friends were shocked at how “well trained” he was, how he understood and responded to absolutely everything I asked of him. When I asked him to please stay close to me whenever a car approached, he shifted his behavior and did so. If I asked whether he preferred to eat or take a walk first, his answer was always crystal clear by how intensely he wagged his tail. It seemed as if we had been together forever. He was friendly and laid back with everyone we encountered, but when I brought him to meet my family members, his demeanor could only be described as that of an old friend at a reunion. He went immediately up to my mother and sister-in-law, put his head in their hands, melted into their head rubs, and stretched out in total trust and familiarity as if to say “it is so good to see you again.”

# Growing Green

## Grayleaf (*Melochia tomentosa*)\*

by Lucy Keshavarz



Grayleaf is a superb accent shrub/small tree for our urban yards, growing up to 8 feet tall. Its branches are long and supple, which creates a graceful overall shape. It grows one-half to almost as wide as it is tall. The arching branches are covered with small fuzzy green-gray leaves and pink flowers. The flowers have a light, pleasant fragrance and bloom year round but are more abundant from late autumn through early spring. Butterflies and beneficial insects love the nectar and pollen provided by the flowers. Its color, shape, and texture create a wonderful and interesting contrast in a yard, especially if installed in front of plants with medium to dark green foliage.

Grayleaf is native to south Florida's pine rocklands and coastal savannas but has become extirpated (extinct) in the Florida natural habitat because of habitat loss. In Florida, only 1% of pine rocklands remain. Therefore, it is even more

important to include it in our urban environments. Despite its delicate leaves and flowers, once established it is extremely resilient and drought tolerant. Plant Grayleaf in full sun and well drained soil. This plant will look best if planted in a space that will allow for its natural growth pattern. If thinning is necessary, prune select branches, but do not shear or "cut back." Propagation is by seed or cuttings.

There are other *Melochia* species native to the west coast of Florida, so make sure to use the complete scientific name when asking for this particular species. Plant in an area with room to spread out, and you will soon have many butterflies to watch as they flock to nectar on *Melochia tomentosa*'s abundant pink flowers.

Photographs below by Susan Lerner



\*Also commonly known as Teabush, Broomwood, and Wooly Pyramidflower



# KIDS' NEST

by Judy Grace

## AN ELEPHANT LIMERICK

I'm the biggest animal on land,  
Weigh up to 14,000 pounds, and  
Up to 13 feet tall,  
Heavy logs I can haul,  
And my trunk I can use like a hand.

My trunk is my very best feature.  
If something's up high, I can reach, or  
Pick up from the ground,  
Something small which I found.  
I'm a most amazing creature!!

I can walk soon after I'm born.  
Stay with mother from earliest morn,  
'Til I'm all on my own,  
Munching plants while I roam,  
Eating branches and leaves, even corn.  
About 4 miles an hour is fine  
For walking along in a line.  
But if there's a need  
I can pick up some speed,  
And run quickly a very short time.

I make noises—I grunt or I squeal,  
And it there's excitement I feel  
Trumpeting's what I do—  
It's quite loud, so that you  
Would know that my feelings are real.

With my huge ears I hear very well,  
And I have a great sense of smell,  
With my eyes, which are small  
I don't see well at all,  
With my feet, ground vibrations, I can tell.  
Of my teeth, at one time I have four  
When they're worn out, I'll get some (or  
four) more  
Six sets there will be—  
There'll be no more for me.  
In my lifetime I'll have twenty-four.

I'll be 70 years when I die  
If predators don't win when they try  
To kill me by gun  
Or for food or for fun  
When my teeth are all gone, so am I.



How many **MORE** words  
can you make from the  
word elephant?

help, heal, heel, leap, peal,  
ant, pant, lent, hat, pat, pelt,  
plant, plan

## WHEN AN ELEPHANT DREAMS...

She dreams of a long, happy life, of 50 years or so, wandering with her children and herd through forests and grasslands, eating hundreds of pounds of yummy plants and drinking 40 gallons of water a day.

She dreams of rolling in the mud for her daily mud bath to cool herself off and protect her delicate skin from sun and insects.

She dreams of swimming, diving, and playing in the water.

She dreams of playing with her children and friends, chasing birds, leaves, and climbing over her resting friends.

Sometimes she has nightmares, when.....

She dreams of being bitten by ants and bees,

of mourning the death of beloved elephant friends and relatives,

of fearing animals like tigers and lions harming her children.

And the worst nightmare of all is of humans who shoot her fellow elephants for their ivory tusks and destroy the lands where they have roamed and foraged for centuries.

*(She thinks—those humans, what gives them the right to kill us—they think they're so smart—well, their children can't walk until they're about one year old while our babies walk soon after they're born!! She wonders if the humans will miss them when they're gone.)*

There are 2 kinds of elephants—here are some of the differences

### AFRICAN ELEPHANTS

1. Live in Africa, south of the Sahara
2. Larger—big ears
3. Shoulder and hump the same height
4. Dark gray skin
5. Trunk has ridges
6. Have long tusks
7. Have 2 fingers at tip of trunk

### ASIATIC-INDIAN ELEPHANTS

1. Live in parts of India & Southeast Asia
2. Smaller—small ears
3. Arched back
4. Lighter gray skin
5. Smooth trunk
6. Short tusks or none
7. Have 1 finger at tip of trunk