

# Young helper thrilled by Keys' birds

Thanksgiving weekend was very busy for our organization. The highlight was a visit from the Leno family of St. Augustine, including daughter Olivia. They were visiting the Leno's parents on Big Pine Key for the Thanksgiving weekend and came to see our wildlife center. I was very impressed with Olivia as she really cares for and loves animals. But it was a very busy day for us because she was asking so many good questions about the birds-- what species they are, what they eat, etc. A rather surprising level of interest in wildlife for a young girl.

We mostly release injured birds after treatment, but we have kept a few birds that we use for education. One is Buddy, a double crested cormorant, who we rescued as a baby and who was very, very sick. We drove Buddy all the way to Miami for treatment by Dr Don Harris as a last hope. We thought he would not make it but he did. However, Buddy can not be released so we trained him for education, mostly for local schools. One note: it is very important that kids do not handle any birds without the supervision of parents and a rehabilitator.

Another education bird is a white rooster name Bobbie, who was dumped on our doorstep in a paper bag on Easter Sunday three

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## Bird's Eye View

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*Director Exotic & Wild Bird Center*

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years ago. I thought someone left trash but when I went to put the bag in the trashcan, a little white chicken jumped out and began to run around. We raised him from a baby to an adult. Olivia fell in love with both Buddy and Bobbie.



Because we had a few recovered birds to release to nature we went all together to the release points. The first one was a Yellow Crown Night Heron who seemed happy to be going back to nature. Olivia was delighted to see him flying away. Then we started to drive to another part of Big Pine to release two Broad Winged

Hawks, but we were delayed because of a Box Turtle in the middle of the road. Olivia got out and moved him to safety. Children are our future -- little Olivia Leno loves all kind of animals. It is very important for our planet to have kids brought up like Olivia to respect and love whatever of nature is left on our planet. We need more kids like Olivia, who is attending Mill Creek Elementary School.