

News Release

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VERO BEACH COUPLE SHARE LOVE OF BUTTERFLIES VIA EVERGLADES DISPLAY

VERO BEACH, Fla. – Mark and Holly Salvato, of Vero Beach, spend a lot of time chasing butterflies. And they're hoping a butterfly photography exhibit they contributed to at Everglades National Park (ENP) inspires others to share their passion for these winged insects.

Mark, a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Vero Beach, is one of Florida's leading butterfly experts. Holly, works as a financial manager at the Homeless Family Center, also in Vero Beach. For this husband and wife team, both members of the North American Butterfly Association, their "butterfly chase" involves spending most of their weekends in the field gathering information about butterflies and photographing them. Data from their ongoing studies of butterflies within the Everglades was used to update the park's butterfly species list and to help develop the exhibit at ENP, which runs through Jan. 31 at the Ernest F. Coe Visitor Center.

With Mark acting as the primary researcher and Holly doing most of the photography, the two have been conducting a thorough survey of butterfly abundance, diversity and distribution throughout the Everglades for several years. Mark says ENP is currently home to over 90 species of butterflies.

"There's an astonishing diversity of butterflies in the Everglades. When most people talk about the Everglades they envision wading birds and alligators," said Mark. "Hopefully, this display will get

people to start thinking about the spectacular assortment of other types of plants and animals, such as butterflies, that inhabit the Everglades.”

Holly, who calls herself Mark’s official photographer, thinks the display is fabulous. Among the dozens of photographs in the exhibit are pictures she took of a Florida leafwing and southern skipperling. She greatly appreciates the exhibit because she knows how hard it is to get a good picture of a butterfly. “It takes a lot of patience and good timing. You have to get close. When they’re on a flower taking nectar or near water mineralizing...those are good times to move in on them,” said Holly.

After the ENP display ends, the exhibit will be stored away until it’s modified and shown again at Biscayne National Park from September through November, and possibly later at Big Cypress National Park. That’s great news to Holly. “You usually see exhibits about birds and plants, but rarely about butterflies. I’m energized and excited about this,” she said.

“We’re very pleased with how the exhibit looks at the Coe Visitor Center and look forward to it being shown at other venues in the future,” said Mark.

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