



## Drumming

The rhythm of drumming is easy for our bodies to take in as was the rhythm of our mother's heartbeat.

That rhythm renews us is no secret. Drumming is the oldest form of music on the planet. Virtually every culture that exists or has existed on earth has practiced some form of drumming. In Africa, the beating of a drum continues to be an important part of significant ceremonies and holiday celebrations.

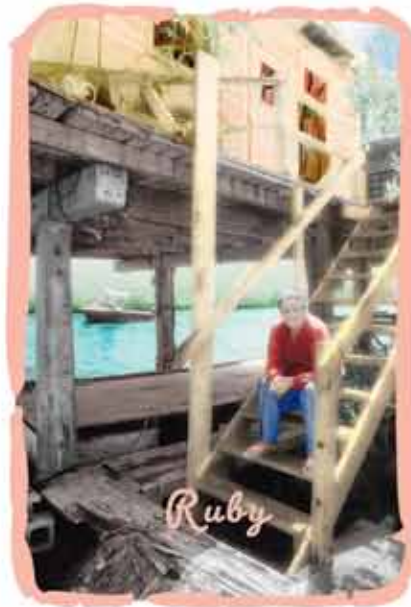
Native American cultures use drumming as a means to reconnect an individual's mental and physical selves. Throughout history, drumming has been a part of performing rituals, marking significant transitions, and celebrating life's cycles. Our lives are infused with rhythm beginning at the very moment we first sense our mother's heartbeat in her womb.

All manner of drumming has the ability to put us in touch with our own natural rhythms, the rhythms of the earth, and the rhythms of the people we choose to drum with. The drum can represent the heart, and drumming awakens the mind while stirring the soul. Drumming can take you to a place deep inside you where you are keenly aware of your mind and your body, as well as the vital bond between the two.

Much like human beings, each drum has its own vibration and voice. Drumming alone can help you release tension, dispel stress and aggressive feelings, and restore your energy. It can also give you an opportunity to reestablish your connection to Mother Earth, as the beat of a drum can represent a crack of lightning, pounding ocean waves, or the tumult of an earthquake.

Drumming with others brings with it many benefits. Taking part in a drumming circle attunes us to the invisible energy that exists between us while uniting us in a common purpose. Drumming can be relaxing as well as energizing. It quiets mental chatter and can create a peaceful meditative state. In Navajo lore, the drum is the Great Spirit's favorite instrument. It is said that this is why all human beings were given a heartbeat. The rhythmic beating of a drum can move us into new realms of consciousness. There is no right or wrong way to drum, and everyone has the innate ability to create rhythm. When you drum with intention, you'll discover the rhythms that move you.

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Ruby Stern known as "Miss Ruby", was the matriarch of Downtown Card Sound. She was a familiar site to travelers across Card Sound bridge.

ORIGINAL LOCAL ARTWORK BY



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On the shirt back is Carol's image of Ruby Stern, matriarch of Downtown Card Sound Road, a place that doesn't exist on any map... yet was home to a community of free spirits, fishermen and independent thinkers who took up residence there. Located on the west side of the road south of Alabama Jack's, and the toll booth, the shack was originally built by workers who constructed the toll bridge around 1968. In 1972 Ruby moved in and lived there for 27 years. She'd sit on the steps of her shack, with an old Colt 44 daring anyone to throw her off the land. She stayed. Not even the destructive forces of hurricane Andrew and the county's condemnation of the shack could send her from her spot on the bay on Card Sound. She moved to a trailer alongside and lived there until 1999 when she had to leave due to illness, and died at age 90.

Dress like a Florida Keys local and be comfortable in the sun in our DRI-FIT shirt designed by Carol Ellis | Little Salt Photography featuring original artwork of the HISTORIC FISHING VILLAGE OF DOWNTOWN CARD SOUND



SCAN CODE WITH YOUR SMART PHONE TO PURCHASE



SPF 50, long sleeve fishing performance shirt in aqua, limeade and white

## The Secret World of Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge

by Karen Beal

When you think of Key Largo, you might think of coral reefs and fishing, but we also have a truly special place on land: Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge, located about two miles north on Card Sound Road.

Established in 1980, this Refuge was created to protect the critical breeding and nesting habitat for the endangered American crocodile, a species that is vital to our ecosystem. Spanning over 6,700 acres, including open water and land, the Refuge is a testament to our commitment to preserving the unique and fragile environment of the Keys.

While the part of the Refuge that is the nesting grounds is generally closed to the public to protect the sensitive habitats within, there's an interesting public visitor station that offers a wonderful glimpse into this sheltered world.

And at that visitor station, you'll find one of the most delightful surprises in

the Upper Keys: the butterfly garden. This isn't just a small patch of flowers; it's a dedicated sanctuary designed to attract and support a variety of butterfly species, including the rare Schaus swallowtail butterfly. As you walk through the garden, you'll be surrounded by vibrant flowers and lush native greenery, all carefully chosen to provide food and shelter for these beautiful insects.

It's a perfect spot for a leisurely stroll or some quiet contemplation. Kids absolutely love it, and it's a fantastic educational opportunity for the whole family to learn about the butterfly lifecycle and the importance of native plants.

The refuge and its surrounding area host occasional educational events, especially during National Wildlife Refuge Week, the second week of October. These events, which might include bird walks or lectures, are a great way to learn more about the wildlife and conservation



The butterfly garden and visitor station provide a perfect window into this hidden world, offering a peaceful and beautiful experience that's a little off the beaten path



Photo: Floridahikes.com

efforts in our area.

The Refuge is a sanctuary for migratory birds, and it's a popular spot for bird-watching and photography, too. It's a reminder that the Keys are home to more than just our marine life; our land is just as important.



Photo: Floridahikes.com

### Tips for Visiting

Crocodile Lake NWR is not open to the public, but you can get behind the scenes:

- Community Butterfly Garden and Kiosk area, open during daylight hours.
- Volunteering- Python patrol, Cleanups, Habitat restoration, RV work-camping and more.
- Special Events- Generally occur during the winter season.
- Research: Scientists must submit USFWS Research special use permit.

Email [crocodilelake@fws.gov](mailto:crocodilelake@fws.gov) for more information.



Schaus Butterflies have few habitats. They can be found at the Crocodile Lakes location.