

# Artifact of the Month

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

April 2022

Florida is home to several different species of bird, most of which, tourists do not get a chance to see unless they visit a zoo on their travels. Larger species of bird such as sandhill cranes, great blue herons, and wood storks are rapidly losing their nesting grounds to the high influx of people moving in droves to Florida. In fact, none of the Collections staff have ever seen a Wood Stork in the wild, and most of us thought the bird wasn't even native to the state.

Wood storks (bottom) are the only native stork to North America and use Florida's cypress swamps for nesting areas; a practice that was significantly diminished with the draining of the Everglades and disruption of water flow into south Florida. This month's artifact highlights the bird's tibiotarsus (middle) bone. This bone is situated within its very long legs and is sturdy enough to keep them upright for long periods of time.

However, the tibiotarsus bone we have in our Collection is a fraction of its actual size because unfortunately bird bones are easy to break. Why? Because they are practically hollow. Bird bones are incredibly light with only struts running through them for structural purposes (see below). This helps them to fly, allowing for air sacs to attach to hollow areas within their bones.



Ornithology Course. Gary Ritchison



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All About Birds

