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plete with signage and verbiage that points out features of interest.

The club has also partnered with the Conservancy of Southwest Florida in assessing aquatic fauna community composition along the water features of the golf course, with funding for the study provided to the Conservancy via a matching grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s Wildlife Links Program.

“Raptor Bay’s success can be contributed to the design and focus on sustainable resource management. If we were to build this course again we would not change a thing.”

— Jason Brod, Raptor Bay Golf Course

The purpose of the study is to investigate the community characteristics of water dependent animals, such as aquatic insects, fish and frogs in the ponds and wetlands of the golf course, with an eye on determining how differences in physical characteristics may or may not influence the habitat value of various ponds.

The public and hotel guests are thrilled by the efforts Raptor Bay has taken in regards to habitat preservation, says Superintendent Jason Brod. “The natural layout and abundance of wildlife are two of the most surveyed answers we get from our resort guests,” Brod says. “Raptor Bay’s success can be contributed to the design and focus on sustainable resource management. If we were to build this course again we would not change a thing.”

Raptor Bay’s success, he says, has led to an increase in similar efforts at courses in the area. “The fact that there are now many Certified Gold Signature golf courses in Southwest Florida is a testament to the benefits of this program.”

Speaking to water conservation, always a crucial issue for southeastern U.S. courses, Raptor Bay has a remarkably low total, only 60 acres of irrigated turfgrass, compared to a typical golf course that has over 100, Brod says. “This reduction in acreage has had a huge impact on the amount of water required to maintain the golf course,” he says.

John Torsiello is a freelance writer based in Torrington, Conn., and a frequent GCI contributor.