

What was I supposed to do? Well, it's on the golf course and interrupting play... so I had to do something.

I received a call from the golf shop last week and was told that there was a bird in the bunker on the 8th hole and he looked sick. The first thing I thought was, "Wait a minute. I'm in charge of the golf course, the clubhouse grounds, all common areas and now wildlife too?" I can't control the animals. What was I supposed to do? Well it's on the golf course and interrupting play so I had to do something.

When I first approached the bird he did not move except to open his beak and kind of snap at me. I moved closer to better evaluate what

was wrong but did so cautiously. If didn't mention it before, this was a very large bird!

My first thought was that it was a juvenile magnificent frigate. Anyway, I was able to get it to waddle out of the bunker but it was not doing any flying. I thought, "let nature take care of itself and

that maybe it's just tired." I called a friend at the Environmental Learning Center and she said that it was very possibly a migrating frigate and that it may just need to rest.

The next day I was met with the same news about the same bird in the same bunker. This time he looked really tired and did not want to move out of the bunker at all when I approached. My assistant, Scott Campbell, and I talked about it and agreed that if we did not do something this bird did not look like he was going to make it. He said he would take the bird to the Treasure Coast Wildlife Hospital about an hour away to see if they could save it. It wasn't easy but we managed to find a box big enough to contain the bird. After some wrangling around

we were able to capture the bird. Fortunately he settled down very quickly and Scott drove it to the hospital.

The next day we were eager to find out how the bird was doing and couldn't wait to call and check up on our feathered friend. To our pleasant surprise it was doing well and it was not a magnificent frigate but rather a northern gannet. The hospital personnel said that gannets dive in the water for their food and sometimes they dive very deep. Evidently on one recent dive, some fish thought the bird was food and bit it in the neck. They also told us that the bird was expected to make a full recovery.

The lesson I learned from this episode is that when golfers and employees alike turn to me about wildlife and the environment, it's a good thing and I should embrace the situation. The fact that they consider me the environmental expert on property is very positive and something that I can build upon.

I'm using this informal vote of confidence and credibility as a platform in our club newsletter to explain the facts about golf courses and water use, pesticides and other regulatory issues that are currently facing our industry. When you are the "go-to" guy at your course, don't miss the opportunity to do some in-house education that can enhance the public perception of our industry.

This is my last *Florida Green* President's Message and I want to say thanks to Marie and Joel for keeping me (us) on schedule. It has been an honor to serve as FGCSA president and thanks to all of you out there who make up the FGCSA through your local, state and national memberships. A special thanks to the officers and board of directors of the FGCSA and to the leadership of the local chapters. Your time and efforts spent in serving our members and supporting our profession have only made us better and help us to grow stronger.

When You are the 'Go-To' Guy



Craig Weyandt
FGCSA President

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