

## Audubon Signature Status members

Facilities that have earned full Signature certification:

1. Collier's Reserve, Naples, Fla.
2. Indian River Country Club, Vero Beach, Fla.
3. Stevinson Ranch Golf Club Savannah Course, Stevinson, Calif.

4. PGA Golf Club at the Reserve, Port St. Lucie, Fla.

5. Top of the Rock Golf Course, Ridgedale, Mo.

6. Bonita Bay Club East — Cypress Golf Course, Bonita Springs, Fla.

7. Pinehurst #8 Centennial, Pinehurst, N.C.

## Audubon Int'l scrutinizes Signature Program

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"The general manager said they were going to do certain things and they did not."

"Everything the National Audubon Society claimed about us, this outfit just did it," Dodson said. "They used our name. They used our materials. They waved their arms up and down and said,

'Look at this video, what Collier's Reserve did. We'll do this, too.' I'm not saying they are not going to do a nice job on their golf course. I don't know. But the fact of the matter is, they went to the permitting agency and public hearings with our materials. Whether that had any influence on the decision to permit them, I don't know. But

as soon as they got through the process they decided they couldn't meet our guidelines and are now out of the program."

"I want to brag on people who really do things," said Dodson. "But when somebody doesn't follow through on their commitment, or they let it go, should we just walk away? I'm the guy who keeps getting shot at by the Sierra Club. In the last couple of months there have been a half dozen facilities that we have removed from the Signature Program. We are taking their last \$100 and applying it toward a year's membership in the Cooperative Sanctuary System when they open."

Officials at fully certified facilities say the program is well worth their efforts.

"Good environmental sense makes good economic sense," said Robert Swift, general manager of Indian River Club in Vero Beach, Fla., which in November 1995 became the third course to earn Audubon Signature status. "Just about everything we've done as a participant in the Signature Program has or will have a positive economic benefit at some point as a payback."

"Everything we look at — every project, every capital expenditure, every operational decision — we have to consider on the basis of the payback. Does it enhance the value of the club, the value that our members perceive? Does it make for a better round of golf, pay for itself and bring money back to us? ... The programs we've undertaken have, by and large, demonstrated positive payback — some long-term, some short-term."

"At the end of the day, if you look long-term, I venture to say we're probably saving \$20,000 a year on water, energy, etc.," said George Kelley, co-owner of Stevinson Ranch Golf Club in Stevinson, Calif., which gained Signature status in September 1996. "I'm very surprised more developers have not joined the program. I believe they think it's like getting in bed with the big bad wolf."

"It's ironic that a golf course will irrigate 125 acres of turf, which costs a lot of money to build and maintain, and then say they don't have the money to be in the Signature Program," said Tim Hiers, superintendent at Collier's Reserve in Naples, Fla., the first facility in the country to become fully certified. "People will spend extravagant amounts of money in areas that many times will not have any benefit from Day One or forever. Or, some people will hide behind the statement: 'We don't have an unlimited budget.'"

"But, if you're a public golf

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