

TOUR DESTINATIONS for HMANA FLORIDA BIRDING TOUR FEBRUARY 5-12, 2012

BABCOCK WEBB WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Babcock-Webb in Punta Gorda is among the last undeveloped expanses of wet pine flatwoods in Southwest Florida. It is a premiere birding hot spot and is home to numerous resident as well as migrating birds, including peregrine falcon, bald eagle, wood stork, Bachman's sparrow, burrowing owl, and brown-headed nuthatch. Babcock-Webb's open stands of slash pine flatwoods are also home to colonies of the federally endangered red-cockaded woodpecker. Major habitat types include freshwater marshes, seasonal ponds, hardwood hammocks, and prairies are interspersed throughout the flatwoods. <http://myfwc.com/recreation/WMASites/BabcockWebb/index.htm>

BIG CYPRESS NATIONAL PRESERVE

Protecting over 720,000 acres of this vast swamp, Big Cypress National Preserve contains a mixture of tropical and temperate plant communities that are home to a diversity of wildlife, including the elusive and endangered Florida panther. Birdlife within Big Cypress is diverse and includes a variety of wintering landbird migrants, including many types of warblers. Barred owl, pileated woodpecker, and typical south Florida wading birds are common here.

<http://www.nps.gov/bicy/index.htm>

DEVIL'S GARDEN

Devil's Garden is a privately-owned working farm and ranch – and, having just been opened to the public, one of Florida's newest birding hotspots. It is billed as a birding park. Located in a largely inaccessible and vast north Everglades ecosystem, it is made up of several habitat types, including lakes, swamps, and meadows. Guided tours are given by golf carts and offer guests a chance to see loads of snail kites, as well as crested caracara, least bittern, common moorhen, wood stork, barn owl, black-bellied whistling duck, and glossy and white ibis, among others.

Their website is still in the works but some info can be found at: <http://floridawildbirds.com/>

DING DARLING NATIONAL WILDLIFE AREA

The J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge is located on the barrier island of Sanibel. The refuge is part of the largest undeveloped mangrove ecosystem in the United States. It is world famous for its spectacular migratory bird populations, in addition to resident wading birds including roseate spoonbill and reddish egret, and it is a renowned location for bird photography.

<http://www.fws.gov/dingdarling/>

EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK

Everglades National Park is the 3rd largest in the lower 48 states and covers 2500 square miles in southern Florida. This "River of Grass" is the only such ecosystem of its kind in the world. With a bird list of over 400 species and locations such as Anhinga Trail and Snake Bight Trail, it's a birder's and photographer's dream. The mosaic of habitats found within the Greater Everglades Ecosystem supports an assemblage of flora and fauna not found anywhere else on the planet. While nine distinct habitats have been identified, the landscape remains dynamic and is in a constant state of flux. <http://www.nps.gov/ever/index.htm>

LOXAHATCHEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

The Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, located on the east coast near Boynton Beach, is the northernmost portion of the unique Everglades. With over 221 square miles of Everglades habitat, the Loxahatchee Refuge is home to the American alligator and the critically endangered snail kite. Up to 257 species of birds may use the refuge's diverse wetland and forested habitats. <http://www.fws.gov/loxahatchee/>

NATIONAL AUDUBON'S CORKSCREW SWAMP

Located in Naples, Corkscrew Swamp is an 11,000-acre National Audubon Sanctuary and probably their most famous. We will walk a 2-mile boardwalk trail which winds through the various habitat types including flatwood, wet prairie, pond cypress, marsh, lettuce lakes, and the largest remaining virgin bald cypress forest in North America. <http://corkscrew.audubon.org/>

WAKODAHATCHEE WETLANDS

Wakadahatchee Wetlands, located in Delray Beach is 50 acres of unused utilities land have been transformed into a wetlands ecosystem by the Palm Beach County Water Utilities Department. More than 140 different species of birds have been located at the site. Some species include black-bellied whistling-duck, least bittern, Wilson's snipe, and king rail. The zones were designed for a mixture of habitat types including open water, emergent march, shallow shelves, islands and forested wetlands. www.pbcgov.com/waterutilities/wakodahatchee

GREEN CAY WETLANDS

The Green Cay Wetlands and Nature Center are located in Boynton Beach. This area includes a 1.5-mile boardwalk that winds through a wide expanse of marsh habitat, intermittent tree islands and cypress hammocks that harbor a wide range of wetland bird species (bird list similar to Wakodahatchee) and much more.

http://www.pbcgov.com/waterutilities/waterfacts/green_cay.htm

More Resources for Birding in South Florida:

Great Florida Birding Trail: <http://floridabirdingtrail.com/>

Tropical Audubon: <http://www.tropicalaudubon.org/specialty.html>



OUR MISSION

To advance scientific knowledge and promote conservation of raptor populations through study, enjoyment, and appreciation of raptor migration