

The Great Florida Birding Trail Update Spring 2004



Coordinator's Note

The Birding Trail is finally coming to the Panhandle, on the heels of migration! April and May are some of the best months to bird this part of the state.

For those of you who have never experienced it, the Panhandle's beaches and tree-lined barrier islands make for excellent fallouts of spring migrants making landfall after long nonstop flights across the Gulf. Brown-headed nuthatches are common in this region's pinewoods and the largest breeding population of red-cockaded woodpeckers calls the Apalachicola National Forest its home. Mississippi kites, broad-winged hawks, Kentucky warblers, snowy plovers and wood thrushes also breed here, making spring and summer an exciting time to visit the region.

I hope you'll join us for an introduction to this gorgeous part of the state at our groundbreaking in Pensacola on May 22!

Julie Brashears, Birding Trail Coordinator
FL Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission
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The latest on the ground in...

South Florida

The Birding Trail has opened nominations for its final section, South Florida. [Forms](#) are available on the Birding Trail's Web site (or by request to Bev) right now! Anyone can nominate a site—birders, tourism professionals and land managers—and sites can be many things—quick stops or all-day affairs, public parks or private ranches. A series of public meetings were held in South Florida in January to kick-start this section. Questions or comments? [Contact us!](#) Nominations are due May 15.

West Florida

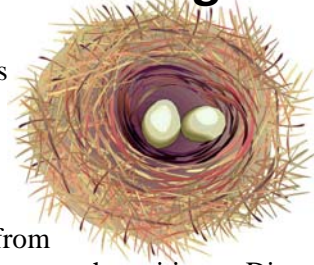
If you see surveyors in your birding area, there's a chance they're plotting the location for Birding Trail signs! Know that the highway signage for this section is in development. Keep watching, the signs can't be far behind!

GFBT Team Changes

Michael Welch replaced Joni Ellis as Birding Trail Assistant

Coordinator on Dec. 1. He comes to the Trail team from

a peregrine falcon research position at Dinosaur National Monument in Colorado. Michael brings a wealth of experience in conservation and birding to this position. In fact, he's already heading up the nomination process for South Florida! Welcome Michael at (850) 488-9478 or michael.welch@fwc.state.fl.us.



*The Great Florida Birding Trail is a project of the
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.*

*Its mission is to conserve and enhance Florida's bird habitat by promoting
birdwatching activities, conservation education and economic opportunity.*

Panhandle Opening Celebration!

The Panhandle Florida section of the Trail is almost here! The guide to this section will detail 78 birding sites from Jefferson Co. west to the Alabama border. And you're invited to its debut this **May 22nd**, at [Big Lagoon State Park](#) in **Pensacola**! Free and open to the public, this celebration will include birding trips, children's activities, educational seminars, interactive displays, food, music and more! Tours of Pensacola-area Birding Trail sites will provide a sampler of this newest Birding Trail section.

Come out and join us for this historic celebration, and be the first birder on your block to get the new guide!

For more information call Bev at (850) 488-8755 or Big Lagoon State Park at (850) 492-1595, or visit our website for a schedule of the day's events.

New GFBT T-shirts: Now available!

Our newest birder apparel features a vibrant painting of a purple gallinule on the front and the Trail's swallow-tailed kite logo on the left sleeve.

These short-sleeved, pocketless shirts come in your choice of butter yellow or sage green. Adult sizes S-XXL are available, \$17 each.

Proudly wearing your t-shirt not only helps communities recognize you as a birder and conservationist, but sale proceeds benefit the Birding Trail program!

[Order online](#) or if you don't have internet access? Call Bev at (850) 488-8755 to place your order by phone!



MANY THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS,

Gulf Power and the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation!

The Trail Team would like to acknowledge the **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation** and **Gulf Power** for their generosity in helping make the Panhandle Florida Birding Trail a reality. Funding granted to the GFBT through NFWF's **Power of Flight Grant Program** will allow the Trail to assist with improvements on several sites in this region such as bird blinds, loaner optics and much-needed map kiosks. These

funds will also help get those beautiful highway signs in Panhandle communities! Thanks so much to these two entities for their ongoing efforts to fund bird-related conservation programs throughout the southeastern U.S. Both will be honored at the groundbreaking event, May 22nd, in Gulf Power's hometown, Pensacola. Join us in thanking them publicly for their commitment to northwest Florida.



Florida Birding Festivals

Spring 2004



April 15-17 Tallahassee
Wakulla Wildlife Festival 850/561-7278
<http://www.wakullacounty.org/festival/wakulla04/index.htm>

April 22 Sebastian
Free Guided Bird Walks 772/562-3909
at Pelican Island NWR
<http://pelicanisland.fws.gov/visiting/birding.html>

April 24 Brooksville
Welcome Back Songbirds 352/754-6722
Festival
<http://floridaconservation.org/festivals/wbschinsegut.htm>

May 13-16 St Augustine
Florida's First Coast Birding 800/653-2489
& Nature Festival
<http://www.visitoldcity.com/interests/nature/festival/>

May 22 Pensacola
Panhandle Florida Birding 850/488-8755
Trail Groundbreaking @ Big Lagoon State Park
www.floridabirdingtrail.com



YOU KNOW YOU WANT ONE...

Get your request in for a FREE Panhandle Florida
Birding Trail guide, hot off the press!

If you would like to receive a copy of the new Panhandle section guide, you need to request it! We will be updating our mailing list from the requests we receive, so *even if you are on the list already, we need to hear from you!* E-mail us at GFBT@fwc.state.fl.us or call 850/488-8755 and leave a message with your name, mailing address, and which guide(s) you're requesting. The new guide will also be available for you to download from www.floridabirdingtrail.com in June.