

# ***The Great Florida Birding Trail Update***

*Fall 2005*



## **Manager's Note**

Greetings fellow birders! It's great to be here in Florida (especially now that hurricane season is finally winding down). In August my wife Selena and I moved here from Austin, Texas, where we worked with bats (yes, those other winged vertebrates) for the past nine years. We've also been involved with bird conservation projects, and made numerous birding trips to the Sunshine State for our vacations. We're glad so many of our favorite places are now much closer to home! Not to mention that birds are definitely easier to watch than bats.

I'm thrilled to be a part of the Great Florida Birding Trail, helping to complete the last of the four sections, South Florida! As you know, this region offers some of the best birdwatching in the Western Hemisphere. There are 116 spectacular sites in 12 counties in the new guide for you to visit. In addition to famous destinations like Everglades National Park and Ding Darling NWR, there are some fabulous, little-known gems out there just waiting for you to explore. See you at the dedication ceremony at Corkscrew Swamp and out there on the Trail!

*Mark*

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FL Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission  
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## **DEDICATION CELEBRATION FOR SOUTH FLORIDA!**

Here's the big news you've all been waiting for! The fourth and final section of the Trail, South Florida, will be completed in January! A big thank you to Julie Brashears Wraithmell and Michael Welch for all of their hard work in making this section a reality. Thanks also to all the site managers for their input and comments on the new guide.

Please join us for the big dedication ceremony on January 14, 2006, at the National Audubon Society's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary near Naples, one of the two new gateway sites. Corkscrew Swamp is a "must" destination for birders everywhere, with good reason—the habitats and birds are amazing!

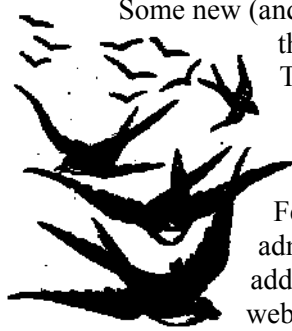
Join us for guided tours, wildlife presentations (including wood storks, swallow-tailed kites, butterflies, and backyard wildscaping), children's activities, and more! The new South Florida Birding Trail guide will debut there, where you can get your copy hot off the press. You can also request one from our website, by e-mail at [GFBT@MyFWC.com](mailto:GFBT@MyFWC.com), or give Zach a call at 850/488-8755. Visit [www.floridabirdingtrail.com](http://www.floridabirdingtrail.com) for a schedule of events, admission prices, and for more information. See you there!



## **GFBT WEBSITE AND HURRICANE UPDATES**

The Birding Trail staff have been working hard to improve our website! Each Trail section now has a list of individual sites with counties, web links, and phone numbers. Before heading out on your next trip, remember to visit [www.floridabirdingtrail.com](http://www.floridabirdingtrail.com) for current information on damage and temporary closures. We'll be updating the list to help you avoid the frustration of finding Trail sites unexpectedly closed.

## New Arrivals!



Some new (and old) faces now grace the Great Florida Birding Trail offices:

*For Trail website questions:* Adrienne Ruhl joined us in

February, bringing her administrative expertise, in addition to her excellent web skills. Although new to

the Birding Trail, Adrienne Ruhl has been with the FWC for four years.

*To order guides and merchandise:* Zach Clay, our staff veteran, is an MBA student at Florida A&M. Zach coordinates, fulfills, and tracks our publication requests and Trail "goods" orders.

*For everything else Birding Trail:* Mark Kiser has stepped in as the new Birding Trail Manager, coordinating the ever-growing Trail duties. Drop Mark a line at 850-488-9478 or at [mark.kiser@myfwc.com](mailto:mark.kiser@myfwc.com)

*For other wildlife viewing:* Julie Brashears Wraithmell, former coordinator of the Wildlife Viewing Section, is now with Audubon of Florida. We hope to have a replacement on board soon.

We will miss Julie's and Michael Welch's many years of service and expertise on the Trail and wish them all the best!

\*\*Note: All FWC email addresses now follow the formula: [firstname.lastname@myfwc.com](mailto:firstname.lastname@myfwc.com)

## News from the Field...

### West Florida

At long last, those gorgeous, swallow-tailed kite signs are being installed! The southernmost counties in the West section are already done, and the rest should be completed in December. These highway signs will guide visitors to all the spectacular birding sites in the region. Thanks go out to Traffic Services, Inc. and the Genesis Group for getting the job done!

### The Panhandle

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) provided grant assistance to eight Panhandle sites to develop "birding trunks" complete with loaner optics, field guides,

*Birdwatching Basics*, Junior Birding materials, and more. Three sites also received funding for improvements, interpretive signage, and brochures, including Three Rivers State Park, which built two wildlife viewing blinds. Thanks NFWF! Highway signage for all the Panhandle sites will be coming later in 2006. Stay tuned!

## GFBT Merchandise!

All of our T-shirts, with two great styles to choose from, are back in stock!

Our natural colored, short-sleeved shirt has a front breast pocket featuring the Trail's swallow-tailed kite logo and a four-color image of an American oystercatcher on the back. Adult sizes available: S-XXL.

For those of you that like to stand out in a crowd, with a little more splash of color, our fabulous purple gallinule shirts are also available in all sizes, in either green or yellow!

Either of these designs can be yours for only \$17! Proudly wearing your t-shirts helps communities recognize you as a birder and conservationist, and sale proceeds benefit the Birding Trail!

Color images of both of these splendid shirts are on our [website](#), along with ordering instructions. No internet access? Give Zach a call to place your order by phone!

### GFBT Hats!!

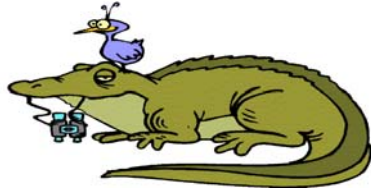
Keep that Florida sun out of your eyes while you bird in style! These pigment-dyed Pacific blue baseball caps are adorned with the Trail's elegant swallow-tailed kite logo. All this can be yours for only \$20!



### OTHER IDEAS?

We need your input! Are there other GFBT products you're dying to see? Patches, pins, front license plates? If you have an idea, please drop us a line at [GFBT@myfwc.com](mailto:GFBT@myfwc.com).





# FLORIDA BIRDING FESTIVALS WINTER 2005 / SPRING 2006

November 16-20	<i>Space Coast Birding &amp; Wildlife Festival</i> <a href="http://www.nbbd.com/fly">www.nbbd.com/fly</a>	Titusville 321/268-5224
January 14	<i>South Florida Birding Trail dedication</i> <a href="http://www.floridabirdingtrail.com/">www.floridabirdingtrail.com/</a>	Corkscrew Swamp 239/348-9151
January 20-22	<i>2nd Annual Southwest Florida Birding Festival</i> <a href="http://www.rookerybay.org/bird_fest_06.htm">www.rookerybay.org/bird_fest_06.htm</a>	Naples 239/417-6310
January 27-29	<i>Big "O" Birding Festival</i> <a href="http://www.bigobirdingfestival.com">www.bigobirdingfestival.com</a>	Moore Haven 863/946-0300
February 4	<i>6th Annual Charlotte Harbor Nature Festival</i> <a href="http://www.chnep.org/Events/CHNF06/chnf06.htm">www.chnep.org/Events/CHNF06/chnf06.htm</a>	Port Charlotte 866/835-5785
February 18	<i>Burrowing Owl Festival</i> <a href="http://www.ccfriendsofwildlife.org">www.ccfriendsofwildlife.org</a>	Cape Coral 239/772-7332
February 18	<i>Orlando Wetlands Park Festival</i> <a href="http://www.nbbd.com/festivals/OrlandoWetlands/">www.nbbd.com/festivals/OrlandoWetlands/</a>	Orlando/Titusville 407/568-1706
February 24-26	<i>Everglades Bird Trek</i> <a href="http://www.browardaudubon.org/birdfest.htm">www.browardaudubon.org/birdfest.htm</a>	Fort Lauderdale 954/963-2428
May 11-14	<i>Florida's First Coast Birding &amp; Nature Fest</i> <a href="http://www.visitoldcity.com/interests/nature/festival/">www.visitoldcity.com/interests/nature/festival/</a>	St. Augustine 800/653-2489

Information on birding events for the entire year can be found on our Festival page at  
[www.floridabirdingtrail.com](http://www.floridabirdingtrail.com)

## GET YOURS NOW!

Request your FREE South Florida Birding Trail guide, hot off the press! 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!* Please fill out and return the following form, e-mail us at [GFBT@MyFWC.com](mailto:GFBT@MyFWC.com) 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](http://www.floridabirdingtrail.com) by Spring.

South Florida Birding Trail Guides will be mailed in late January.

Please also send me the following trail guides:

- East  West  Panhandle

Please send my free South Section Guide to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_