



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

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MEDIA ADVISORY

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Document Feathered Friends at 2012 Great Backyard Bird Count

Everglades water treatment wetlands are popular bird-watching spots



(Photo provided by Ken Corregan/Hendry-Glades Audubon Society. Click on the picture for a larger version.)

WHAT: Join the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), the Hendry-Glades Audubon Society and thousands of avian enthusiasts across the nation for the 15th annual Great Backyard Bird Count.

Each year, “citizen scientists” submit checklists to help researchers at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in Ithaca, N.Y., and the National Audubon Society study and protect birds.

Florida has ranked first among participating states and provinces in reporting the most birds. Clewiston, just south of Lake Okeechobee, was among the top 10 localities in reporting the greatest number of individual birds during the last 5 years. During one count, participants turned in more than 97,300 checklists online, observed 603 species and 11.2 million individual birds in the overall count.

While anyone can join the count from their own backyard or park, the SFWMD and Hendry-Glades Audubon will take birders on three separate days to an Everglades Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) in Hendry County that has become nationally known as a bird watching spot. STAs are the water-cleaning workhorses of Everglades restoration. They have also become renowned havens for wildlife and outdoor enthusiasts alike.

The South Florida Water Management District provides a variety of recreational opportunities at the STAs while continuing to manage them to support environmental restoration, water supply, water quality and flood control missions. At present, the District actively manages 621,000 acres of public land. Many of these properties are in their natural state or have enhancements, such as picnic tables, informational kiosks, campsites and hiking trails.

For more information on recreational opportunities throughout the District's 16-county region, visit www.sfwmd.gov/recreation. Also visit, [The Great Backyard Bird Count](#).

WHEN: February 18-20, 2012

TIME: 8:30 a.m. each day

WHERE: The gate at STA-5 is located on Blumberg Road in Hendry County, 12 miles south of the intersection of Blumberg and County Road 835. Blumberg Road ends at the gate after 10 miles of asphalt and 2 miles of dirt.

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About the South Florida Water Management District

The South Florida Water Management District is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state – 16 counties from Orlando to the Keys. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts. The agency mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply. A key initiative is cleanup and restoration of the Everglades.