



# NEWS RELEASE



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## **Big "O" Birding Extravaganza Registration Now Under Way**

**CLEWISTON, FL** - Early registration is now under way for the Hendry/Glades County Big "O" Birding Extravaganza scheduled for April 3 - 6. What organizers envision as becoming the largest bird-themed event in South Central Florida, this year's extravaganza has grown into a three-day festival followed by a daylong eco-tourism seminar. Early registrants can take advantage of deep registration discounts between now and March 6.

"Our goal this year is to introduce birding enthusiasts to what this region has to offer," says festival committee chair Janet Papinaw. "We've received an incredible amount of regional support and hope to make the festival affordable to everyone."

An all-inclusive festival pass, if ordered by March 6, is only \$100.00. After March 6, the same pass is still only \$125.00. Proof of Hendry or Glades County residency will earn you an additional 10% discount regardless of when you register. While the all-inclusive pass EXCLUDES accommodations, it does afford the festivalgoer four full days of birding activities, scheduled meals and transportation to and from the guided tour sites. Here's what's scheduled:

Friday

- Registration and Welcome Reception 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at the Clewiston Inn
- Birding 101 workshop with Mark Kiser, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Bird & Wildlife Photography workshop with Bill Cox
- Digiscoping
- Afternoon birding tour "Off the Beaten Track" with Deen Mountain
- Evening Taste of Florida Dinner & Wildlife Program at Gatorama, Palmdale
- Late night Owl Hoot at Fisheating Creek with Larry Luckey, Palmdale

## Saturday

- "Premier Loop" birding tour with Dr. Paul Gray, Audubon Society
- "Birding by Boat" birding tour on Lake Okeechobee or Caloosahatchee River
- "Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation Boardwalk" birding tour at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum
- "STA5 Wading Birds" birding tour with Margaret England, Hendry-Glades Audubon Society
- Box Lunch & Lecture program in Clewiston
- Afternoon presentation "Audubon's Birds of Prey" with Lynda White and her bald eagle "Paige"
- Keynote Dinner with speaker Dr. Joan Morrison, authority on the Crested Caracara, Clewiston Inn

## Sunday

- Palm Sunday Sunrise Service on the Herbert Hoover Dike at Lake Okeechobee, Clewiston
- Group Breakfast on your own at Scotty's Tiki, Roland & Mary Ann Martin's Marina, Clewiston
- "Bird & Bike L.O.S.T" birding tour with Steve Buczynski, Hendry-Glades Audubon Society, Clewiston to Uncle Joe's Fish Camp and return
- "STA5 Wading Birds" birding tour with Margaret England, Hendry-Glades Audubon Society
- "Dinner Island WMA" birding tour in Hendry County
- "Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest" birding tour in Hendry County
- "Fort Center FWC and Harney's Pond" birding tour in Glades County
- Buffet Lunch and presentation "Florida Time Forgot" with Mark Renz, Clewiston Inn
- Sunset program "Bats are OK" at Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest

## Monday

- Eco Tourism Seminar & Lunch with Anne Glick, FWC Great Florida Birding Trail: "The value of eco-tourists to local businesses."

"We have a full schedule of activities planned, but people can still find time to bird on their own by foot, car, canoe, boat or bike," says Papinaw. "Single day passes and single tour passes are also for sale, including discounts for providing your own transportation. We are very grateful to our planning partners and financial sponsors for helping make this event affordable. We're happy to showcase our natural reserves for the great birding hot spots that they are."

To date, sponsors include: Hendry County Tourism, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum on Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation, South Florida Water Management District, Florida's Freshwater Frontier, Clewiston Inn, Port LaBelle Inn, Hendry County EDC, Glades County EDC, Hendry-Glades Audubon Society, Audubon of Southwest Florida, LaBelle Chamber of Commerce, Family Eye Care, Lykes Bros., Inc., Glades Electric Coop, Glades County Commissioner Donna Storter-Long, Lake Placid Health Care, and FWC Great Florida Birding Trail.

The festival includes free art and photography exhibits at Moore Haven and Clewiston, including the Clewiston Inn and the Clewiston Museum. A vendor expo with birding, conservation and wildlife related products is planned for Saturday. Tours are subject to change depending on participation. For registration and more information, log on to [www.bigobirdingfestival.com](http://www.bigobirdingfestival.com) and download a registration form, or call Hendry County Tourism at 863-612-4783.

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**About the South Florida Water Management District – [Celebrating 60 Years \(1949-2009\)](#)**

*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.*