



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Gabe Margasak

South Florida Water Management District

Office: (561) 682-2800 or Cellular: (561) 670-1245

www.sfwmd.gov/news

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Hendry-Glades Audubon/SFWMD Bird Tours Flying High After 5 Years
*Thousands of outdoor enthusiasts have enjoyed bird watching on public land;
tours continue in 2011*



(Click on the picture for a larger version.)

West Palm Beach, FL — The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and its partners at the Hendry-Glades Audubon Society recently celebrated five years of bird-watching tours in a wetland that cleans water flowing to the Everglades. The popular trips featuring recreation on public land at Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) 5 will continue in 2011.

“Within the massive effort to improve water quality and the environment in the Everglades, there are special places such as STA-5 that allow us to meld restoration with recreation,” said Tommy Strowd, SFWMD Deputy Executive Director of Operations and Maintenance. “Residents benefit not only from cleaner water but by being able to enjoy the outdoors on public land.”

Audubon volunteers, with support from the District, have led 108 individual tours with more than 4,250 birders and photographers from across the world at the site in Hendry County. Stormwater Treatment Areas are the water-cleaning workhorses of Everglades restoration, and many have become renowned havens for wildlife.

More than 187 species of birds – from endangered Everglades snail kites to great egrets – and tens of thousands of individual birds have been documented at STA-5 alone. To enhance the experience at the wetland, the District constructed a multipurpose bird watching platform that is fully accessible to disabled residents and visitors.

“STA-5, ‘the Birding Oasis of South Florida,’ is increasing in popularity with birders and photographers of all ages. Reservations for tours are made by vacationing bird watchers months in advance,” said Margaret England, President of the Hendry-Glades Audubon Society. “On December 4, an American pipit was added to our ever increasing species list of migratory and resident birds observed at the wetland.”

England and a team of volunteers lead the tours two Saturdays a month, with special events in between. They recently hosted Danish birders, and the tours earned a feature in the April 2009 edition of *Birder’s World Magazine*.

The birding experience is not only limited to guided tours. Many Audubon volunteers and tour goers also participate in the Spring and Fall North American Migration Count, the Great Backyard Bird Count, the Big “O” Birding Festival and the Christmas Bird Count.

The latest season of tours has already begun, and trips are scheduled well into 2011.

Upcoming Birding Events:

- February 5 – STA-5 Bird Tour
- February 19-21 – Great Backyard Bird Count
- March 23-26 – Big “O” Birding Festival

[Click here](#) for the full schedule and information on reserving a spot.

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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.