



**FLORIDA BIRDING  
& NATURE FESTIVAL**

*Fall 2021*

Hosted by





# Welcome

Hello Nature Festival Attendees,

Welcome to Hillsborough County and the natural areas of the Tampa Bay Area! During the course of the Festival, you will visit well-managed lands preserved to protect key habitat sites, in our six regional counties: Hillsborough, Pasco, Polk, Pinellas, Manatee and Sarasota. We are very proud that leaders and voters have taken action to protect significant regional open space and landscapes. These areas provide superb habitats for wildlife and wonderful natural areas for our human visitors and residents as well.

In Hillsborough County alone, 63,000 acres have been purchased by the County to protect the natural landscapes, the clean air and water they provide, and the birds, animals, and plants that live there. In addition, our region has National Wildlife Refuges, State Parks, Aquatic Preserves, county preserves, city parks, and private lands that offer migratory stop-overs for birds, and conservation corridors for mammals and reptiles.

Our residents and visitors have the opportunity to see Old Florida in a region undergoing remarkable growth and development. The natural landscapes are managed to protect the wetlands which provide storm-water retention and reduce down-stream flooding. Clean air and water are generated as a result, benefiting our residents. Nature preserves provide habitat for our native plants and animals with an emphasis on securing a future for state and federally listed species. Intelligent acquisition projects have connected larger preserves with wildlife corridors. These areas are open to the public, providing wild-land opportunities for bird-watchers, but, also, boaters, fishermen, canoe and kayakers, bikers, horse-back riders, and so many other recreationists. We all know that getting out in nature gives emotional comfort to humans, especially our children, and especially in this time of the pandemic.

While more work for land conservation by a consortium of agencies is needed, the Florida Birding and Nature Festival highlights these natural lands and the wildlife they harbor. As you would expect, the Festival has been designed to allow participation while being sensitive to coronavirus concerns. All activities are open-air or by Zoom.

Expert speakers share their knowledge about the wildlife of Florida in our series of fourteen Zoom Seminars. Land managers and naturalists provide insights and share regional wildlife and landscapes that are truly of national significance. The Nature Expo provides opportunities to purchase binoculars and optics, nature art and merchandise, and agency and environmental booths offer nature and wildlife education.

Come and explore with us. We think you will enjoy the adventure!

Mariella Smith

Hillsborough County Commissioner

District 5, Countywide





# Welcome



**FLORIDA BIRDING  
& NATURE FESTIVAL**

We are delighted you have joined us! We are celebrating the wonders of the birds, wildlife, and natural lands that we enjoy in West Central Florida. We hope that you will see new birds, find new places to go, and learn new things about our area and its wildlife as you participate in this Festival.

## FIELD TRIPS

Our field trips showcase some of the best natural areas of our counties, protected as national wildlife refuges, public parks, or nature preserves, or private lands. There are trips to search for birds, butterflies, dragonflies, turtles and wildflowers. Most trips are on foot, but some are by boat, kayak/canoe, or driving.

## SEMINARS

All Seminars are included with Festival registration and offered by Zoom. This means that you can watch them during their presentation time, or later, at your leisure – you can go on a Field Trip and still see ALL the Seminars! There are talks about birds, highlighting some of Florida's most beautiful and iconic species – Crested Caracara, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Roseate Spoonbills, Swallow-tailed Kites, and Burrowing Owls. Seminars about larid identification and an intimate discussion about behaviors of Common Gallinules will be fascinating. Seminars about our other Florida animals include Florida butterflies and bees, coyotes in the state, gopher tortoises, rattlesnake behavior, frog calls, and horseshoe crabs. It's an amazing series, and we know you'll enjoy every talk by Florida's leading experts!

## KEYNOTES

Two Keynote talks include sumptuous appetizers and talks in a note-worthy open-air breezy facility at dusk. Friday evening's Keynote is Craig Pittman, environmental and investigative reporter for the Tampa Bay Times and author of *Cat Tale: The Wild, Weird Battle to Save the Florida Panther*, *Oh Florida* - winner of the 2017 Florida Book Awards, *The Scent of Scandal*, *Paving Paradise*, and *Manatee Insanity*, which was endorsed by the Florida's Humanities Council. Saturday's Keynote speaker is Clay Taylor, renowned birder and nature photographer. Clay is an expert also on bird binoculars and other optics and is Naturalist Market Manager for Swarovski Optik. Self-described as obsessed by birds, he will share his passion for birds and nature and some excellent photographs, while describing how photographs can promote bird science.

## NATURE EXPO

Our Nature Expo is an event in itself, hosted by the Manatee Viewing Center in Apollo Beach on Friday and Saturday. Open-air, shaded booths are sited under the raised MVC's buildings. The Expo is free and open to the public. Two companies selling binoculars and other optics will present a selection for you to hold, focus, and "test drive". Artist Peter R. Gerbert will be present selling his nature masterpieces. Other nature-related art and merchandise will be available. Agency staff and environmental groups will present environmental education materials and exhibits. The MVC's snack bar will offer lunch and refreshments and the boardwalks and MVC's store will also be open.





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# Keynote Events

Keynote Events will all be held in the Clean Energy Demonstration Center, 321 Noonan Branch Rd, Apollo Beach. Doors open at 6:00 pm, just south of the Manatee Viewing Center in Apollo Beach.

FRIDAY October 15, 2021 | Doors Open 6:00 pm

## The Festival's Friday Kickoff

### Craig Pittman, Award-winning Author

Since 1998, Craig Pittman has covered environmental issues for Florida's largest newspaper, the Tampa Bay Times, winning state and national awards. Craig is the author and will speak about his latest book, "*CAT TALE: The Wild, Weird Battle to Save the Florida Panther*," hailed by Lauren Groff as "witty and passionate." Craig has been named a Florida Literary Legend by the Florida Heritage Book Festival. Craig will also be signing his books, so bring your copy. Books will be available for purchase.

Full event admission includes a reception with hors d'oeuvres and a beer and wine cash bar.



Craig Pittman



Clay Taylor

SATURDAY October 16, 2021 | Doors Open 6:00 pm

## Clay Taylor, Master Birder & Nature Photographer

### "Birding, Birds, and Cameras"

Clay has been photographing birds since 1985 and has used his photography to learn about birds and bird behavior, including distribution and other life-history facts. He will share insights into what birding means to him, how nature photography can lead to learning, and some spectacular bird photographs. As a professional "birder" for Swarovski Optic North America, Clay travels the country giving workshops on optics and bird photography.

Full event admission includes a buffet reception with hors d'oeuvres and a beer and wine cash bar.



# Zoom Seminars

## AT-A-GLANCE

- 9 am Coyotes (*Canis latrans*) in Florida, Angeline Barker
- 10 am Florida Butterflies, Dr. Marc Minno
- 11 am The Horseshoe Crab in Florida, Berlynn Heres

### FRIDAY

- 1 pm Roseate Spoonbills - Canary in a Coal Mine, Dr. Jerry Lorenz
- 2 pm Swallow-tailed Kite: The Communal Kite, Gina Kent
- 3 pm Crested Caracara: The Extraordinary Clever Caracara, Adam Kent
- 4 pm Red-cockaded Woodpecker: The Wild Woodpeckers of the Withlacoochee, Jon Hoch

### SATURDAY

- 9 am Gopher Tortoises, George Heinrich
- 10 am Diamondback Rattlesnakes, Berlynn Heres
- 11 am Frogging by Ear, Dave Sumpter
- 1 pm Florida's Native Bees, Laura Zurro
- 2 pm Ecology & Family Life of the Common Gallinule, Dr. Jerry Jackson
- 3 pm Wings on the Wind - The Gulls of Florida, Michael Brothers
- 4 pm Florida Burrowing Owls & Conservation, Jean Hall

### Welcome to the 2021 Florida Birding & Nature Festival!



We are delighted that you've chosen to come share our fantastic birding areas with us. Tampa Bay's surrounding counties have such a wealth of habitats, from saltwater marshes to pine flatwoods, and we are happy to show off the birds and wildlife they support. We've rounded up our best local experts, brought in others from across the state, and put together a line-up of field trips to help you find your wish-list birds. The seminars range from coyotes to birds to butterflies, tortoises to spoonbills, and plenty more. And we hope you won't miss any of the great keynotes, they're both so good. If you have questions, please find someone at the Registration table or the Tampa Audubon table. And most of all, have a great time!

*Mary Keith, Co-Chair, Florida Birding & Nature Festival*



# *Zoom Seminars* And KEYNOTES

Zoom seminars and Keynotes can be viewed “live” during their presentations by our speakers, or later, so that you can attend your field trips but not miss out on these engaging talks. Registration gives you access to all the seminars and Keynotes by Zoom, and the ability to watch them more than once. Learn about the wild animals and birds from the experts who know them best.

## INSTRUCTIONS

**To view the the talks LIVE:** On the day of the event, click the link provided with your registration ([https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_mrwwU0m3TTKjrwhAHBApIQ](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mrwwU0m3TTKjrwhAHBApIQ)) and/or you can click the link that will be emailed out on the morning of the event. You should have Zoom downloaded and installed prior to the event, so it works faster.

**To view the talks after the event:** Each talk will be uploaded to YouTube and a link to each individual talk will be delivered via a private link that no one else can access.

## Keynotes

Both Friday's and Saturday's Keynotes will begin at 6:00 pm, and are being held at the Clean Energy Demonstration Center, located at 321 Noonan Beach Rd, Apollo Beach, FL.





# Seminars

## FRIDAY

### **Coyotes (*Canis latrans*) in Florida**

*Angeline Barker*

**9:00 am**

Angeline Barker, Senior Wildlife Assistance Biologist for South Florida, will present a broad discussion about the recent range expansion of coyotes into Florida, their biology and behaviors, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's regulations on management issues, and how the public in Florida can act to live with the coyotes that occur in our state.

### **Florida Butterflies**

*Dr. Marc Minno*

**10:00 am**

Marc Minno, an expert on endangered butterflies and their habitats, has literally written the books on Florida's Butterflies. He will share fascinating facts about these beautiful insects, including which ones we can see here, what they do and how we can interpret their behaviors, where they live, what their caterpillars eat, how they are doing in Florida, and how we can invite them to share our world. He loves butterflies, and his engaging talk is inspirational and highly informative. Marc will be at the Nature Expo from 11:30-12:30 signing his books on Florida butterflies and caterpillars. Bring your copy or buy one from Marc. And then head into the field for some great butterfly, dragonfly, and other wildlife viewing at the Fred and Idah Schultz Preserve field trip with Marc, John Lampkin, and Rob Epstein!

### **The Horseshoe Crab in Florida**

*Berlynnna Heres*

**11:00 am**

The Horseshoe Crab in Florida: Using Citizen Science to Answer the Big Questions. Horseshoe crabs are some of the most ancient and interesting animals on the planet. They are found throughout the Florida coast and provide a major food source to shorebirds. Learn how public reports of horseshoe crab sightings, and the citizen science based Florida Horseshoe Crab Watch are helping managers better understand Florida's horseshoe crab population.

### **Roseate Spoonbills - Florida Bay's Pink Canary in a Coal Mine**

*Dr. Jerry Lorenz*

**1:00 pm**

Roseate Spoonbills, Florida Bay's pink canary in coal mine. Florida Bay, located at the downstream end of the Everglades has been heavily impacted by multiple anthropogenic activities such as urbanization, drainage and water management projects and climate change. Audubon has studied Roseate Spoonbill populations in Florida Bay since 1935 and has found that these birds are an indicator for the ecological health of Florida Bay. This talk will demonstrate why they are considered to be an indicator and what spoonbills are telling us about Everglades restoration activities and climate change.

### **The Communal Kite**

*Gina Kent*

**2:00 pm**

Unlike many raptors, Swallow-tailed Kites are social throughout their annual cycle, in all aspects of their behavior. By nesting and roosting in neighborhoods, forming large pre-migratory communal roosts, and foraging in large aggregations, they assist each other in locating ephemeral food sources, detecting predators, and synchronizing departures for their long, dangerous migratory flights. Learn just how important this distinctive sociality is to Swallow-tailed Kites, and how vital the undisturbed persistence of a pre-migratory roost is to the survival of these amazing raptors.

### **The Extraordinarily Clever Caracara**

*Adam Kent*

**3:00 pm**

The Extraordinarily Clever Caracara. Learn about these fascinating and beautiful falcon relatives and why they are considered some of the most intelligent birds of prey.

### **The Wild Woodpeckers of the Withlacoochee**

*Jan Hoch*

**4:00 pm**

The federally endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) is an endemic of Southeastern pine forests with a unique life history and story of successful interagency cooperative management making strides toward recovery. Discussion will present an overview of RCW ecology, management and translocation efforts, and current status with an emphasis on the Withlacoochee State Forest populations.



# Seminars

## SATURDAY

### Gopher Tortoises

*George Heinrich*

9:00 am

Gopher tortoises (*Gopherus polyphemus*) are ecosystem engineers that create extensive burrow systems and disperse seeds, significantly contributing to upland habitat biodiversity. This presentation will examine the value of gopher tortoise conservation on small public lands, as well as address the challenges of managing natural areas bordered by urban interface.

### Diamond-back Rattlesnakes

*Berlynn Heres*

10:00 am

Eastern diamondback rattlesnakes (*Crotalus adamanteus*) are important ambush predators in the ever-disappearing longleaf pine ecosystems of the southeast. Within these ecosystems seasonal crops of berries and nuts occur. This presentation examines how the influx of fruits and nuts influence site selection in eastern diamondback rattlesnakes.

### Frogging by Ear

*Dave Sumpter*

11:00 am

Like birds, each frog species has a unique chorus and call. On a rainy night in Florida, you can easily survey a marsh or swamp within minutes. Frogs are easier to survey than birds because only a couple dozen species occur in any particular area. No one is more qualified to survey for frogs than birders who often bird by ear!

### Florida's Native Bees

*Laura Zurro*

1:00 pm

Florida is home to more than 300 of the 4,000 bee species found across North America — including 29 species found nowhere else in the world. Unlike the highly social but non-native honey bees that live in hives, most native bees live solitary lives, and the majority of them nest in the ground. Learn more about why native bees are critical to local ecosystems and how you can provide the habitat they need to survive.

### Ecology & Family Life of the Common Gallinule

*Dr. Jerry Jackson*

2:00 pm

Daily visits for more than a year to a local pond occupied by a pair of Common Gallinules revealed incredible aspects of the ecology, behavior, and family life of these birds. In a little over a year this pair produced seven broods of young, the female producing the next brood while chicks from the previous brood were still small and down-covered. The male defended his family against much larger adversaries; chicks from earlier broods helped parents care for new chicks.

### Wings on the Wind - The Gulls of Florida

*Michael Brothers*

3:00 pm

The gulls are abundant and conspicuous inhabitants of our beaches, lakes and even parking lots and yet many birders find identifying gulls to be a great challenge. The changes in the appearance of gulls according to the time of year and the age of the bird adds complexity to the ID. Thus, accurately aging a bird is critical to accurately identifying the species. This lecture will introduce the 21 species of gulls that have been found in Florida and provide an overview of how to identify each species and age the individuals.

### Florida Burrowing Owls & Conservation

*Jean Hall*

4:00 pm

Jean will give a history of the Burrowing Owls on Marco Island, from a handful in 1999 to 500 in 2018. Despite rapid build out and habitat fragmentation, these charismatic owls have survived and bred. Through her photography, Jean will share some owl biology and natural history, as well as the efforts of Audubon of the Western Everglades' Owl Watch Project. This Project is partnered with the University of Florida IFAS to conduct research on Burrowing Owls in south Florida.





# NATURE EXPO





# Vendors & Exhibitors



Hillsborough  
County Florida



EAGLE AUDUBON SOCIETY



- MANATEE COUNTY -  
AUDUBON SOCIETY



FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



# Field Trips

## FRIDAY

### Cross Bar Ranch, Spring Hill, Pasco County

*David Adams, David Gagne*

**8:00 am – Noon**

**Fri-CB | \$25**

Cross Bar Ranch is managed as a wellfield by Pinellas County Utilities. With wetlands, oak hammock, pine flatwoods and open pastures, it offers prime birding but is not normally open to the public. Accompanied by the site managers, you will carpool out to check the wetlands for waders, and the pastures for Burrowing Owls. Florida Scrub-Jays, Barred Owls and even coyotes are possible sightings. Preferably drive a vehicle with AWD that can handle rough roads. Bring snacks and beverages, as there is nothing available at the site.

### Circle B Bar Reserve, Polk County

*Bob Snow*

**8:30 am – 1:00 pm**

**Fri-CBB | \$25**

Circle B Bar Reserve is one of the very best birding spots in the area. A series of shallow wetlands intersected by raised levees for walking supports Purple Gallinules, Black-Bellied Whistling-Ducks, Sora, bitterns and more. The resident pair of Bald Eagles patrol the area, and previous trips have enjoyed both Peregrine Falcons and Merlins. Of course the gators peer at you from the water, and marsh rabbits go swimming past too. Wintering White Pelicans still leave room in the deeper lakes for ducks.

### Outback Key Preserve, Pinellas County – Boat Trip with Tampa Bay Watch

*Eric Plage*

**8:00 – 11:15 am**

**Fri-OK | \$60**

Wear shoes that can get wet so that you can walk part of the Key. This boat trip will go out to a barrier island on the Gulf that is a prime birding spot. You will ride out, then walk parts of the island scanning for shore birds, including marbled godwits, willets, long billed curlews and plenty of peeps. Depending on time, you will probably then boat back into the bay and circle some of the islands of Pinellas National Wildlife Refuge, especially the one known to harbor the colony of Magnificent Frigatebirds! Your leader is one of the experts on identifying shorebirds, so you'll get not only names but plenty of tips on how to distinguish one from another. Be sure to bring sunscreen, water, snacks, hat and anything you will want on the boat or island walk.

### Shell Key Preserve, Pinellas County – Boat Trip

*Pam Leasure, Eric Teitelbaum*

**8:00 – 11:15 am**

**Fri-SK | \$60**

Shell Key is a barrier island in the Gulf, well known by local birders for all the shorebirds that use its sand. After a short boat ride you'll walk parts of the island looking for resident Reddish Egrets and migratory shorebirds, such as Long-billed Curlews, Marbled Godwits, and the whole range of gulls, terns and peeps. Some migratory sparrows have also been known to use its backwater marshes, and Magnificent Frigatebirds can be seen soaring overhead riding the winds. Be sure to bring sunscreen, water, snacks, hat and anything you will want on the boat or island walk. There is no shade on the island. Use the restroom at the parking lot, there are NO facilities on the island.





# Field Trips

## FRIDAY

### Se7en Wetlands, Polk County – Van Tour

*Greg Schrader, Doug DeNere*

**7:30 am – Noon**

**Fri-7W | \$30**

Se7en Wetlands is an old mining area, reclaimed and reused as a wetland water treatment area for Polk County, and thoroughly enjoyed by thousands of birds. In the Spring it hosts a large breeding colony of Wood Storks, many of which continue to roost on the various islands in the lakes. The whole range of wading and water birds, including the possibility of wintering ducks and migrating warblers, use the marsh areas and waterside willows. Raptors of course survey the area as well. This trip will be by tram, so you will be accessing areas further afield than a walking trip would allow. You will get off to bird wherever the leaders see or hear something of interest. You may bring lunches to enjoy on the picnic tables in the park after the tour ends if you want. Bring water, snacks. You will be sharing a roofed tram, please do not bring large carry-on items.

### Leffis Key Preserve, Bradenton Beach, Manatee County

*Cathy Davis, Kathy Doddridge*

**8:00 – 11:00 am**

**Fri-LK | \$25**

This tiny peninsula Preserve bordering on Sarasota Bay holds multiple habitats. The trail crosses a tidal stream several times, giving multiple opportunities for night herons, egrets, ibis and more feeding in the stream or the overhanging mangroves. The constructed hill in the center has dune and marsh vegetation with a few taller trees. There are 4 boardwalk overlooks into the Bay, for viewing shorebirds on the beach or gulls, terns and pelicans in the Bay. They connected by a trail and boardwalk which goes through mangroves as well as along a saltern area. The Preserve is notorious as a migrant trap and several rarities have been found here over the years. Warblers, both Yellow-billed and Black-billed cuckoos, as well as shorebirds all move through. It's a very short walk, the full loop is under 1 mile, but the variety of habitats and easy viewing make this one of the top birding spots on Sarasota Bay.

### Weedon Island Preserve, Pinellas County – Canoe Trip

*Dr. Bill Fehring, Carol Cassels*

**8:00 – 11:30 am**

**Fri-WI | \$60**

Weedon Island Preserve is an expansive 3,190-acre natural area located on Tampa Bay. This coastal system, comprised of aquatic and upland ecosystems, is home to numerous species of native plants and animals, an educational facility and a rich cultural history. Weedon Island Preserve is also a well-known birding and fishing site. The trip starts early to take advantage of the high tide and get you into the amazing mangrove tunnels. Besides the usual wading birds, the less easily seen night herons are good bets, and migrating warblers, vireos and more use the mangroves as well. The birds are so habituated to kayakers that very close approach is possible, "close enough to define the feathers!" The canoe trail winds through mangrove tunnels, across open ponds and out to open water with gorgeous views across the bay.

### Honeymoon Island State Park, Pinellas County

*Dan Larremore*

**8:30 am – Noon**

**Fri-HI | \$25**

Honeymoon Island State Park is well known for the migrants it attracts and the many shorebirds that use its beaches. Your leader is the Environmental Specialist for the park, and shorebirds are his specialty, so this should be a great walk! Besides all the plovers and sandpipers, godwits and willets, Reddish Egrets and oystercatchers along the beaches, Merlins patrol the edges looking for an unwary breakfast, Great Horned Owls nest in the pine forest on the island and the Osprey Trail is well named. This trip will focus on shorebirds, with Dan explaining how to distinguish them in their winter drab and by their shapes and postures. The back lagoon will probably have the waders who prefer quieter waters. After the walk you can enjoy lunch on the beach or at the picnic tables near Osprey Trail at the north end of the park road.





# Field Trips

## FRIDAY

### TECO Manatee Viewing Center Nature Trail

*Stan Kroh, Lillian Saul, Doug Wassmer*

**9:00 – 11:00 am**  
**Fri-MVC | \$25**

This easy 2 mile walk will leave from the TECO Manatee Viewing Center. The trail is gravel and shell as it winds through the trees, then along a saltern area. A boardwalk leads between the mangroves of Newman Creek and the saltern out to the observation tower. Several flights of steps to the top of the tower will give you great views of the estuary, the mangroves below, the lagoon, Apollo Beach Nature Preserve, and across the bay. The return takes a slightly different route through the hammock. Of course there are plenty of birds too! Egrets, herons, ibis roost in the mangroves and feed in the lagoon and inlets. Prairie Warblers might still be present after breeding in the mangroves, and migrant goldfinches, warblers and more use the scrub habitat. Be sure to scan the hot air above the smokestacks because eagles and migrating raptors use the rising heat as thermals to boost their soaring. The resident kestrels may show up too. Once back at the TMVC a short walk out to the jetty will take you through a mangrove belt where night herons roost and out to view the canal where manatees, skates and fish own the water, gulls and terns patrol the air, and spotted sandpipers often feed along the edge. American Oystercatchers often roost at the far end of the jetty too!

### Cockroach Bay Aquatic Preserve – Wagon Ride

*Charlie Fisher, Mary Barnwell*

**8:30 am – Noon**  
**Fri-CBW | \$30**

The Cockroach Bay Ecosystem Restoration Project represents one of the largest, most complex coastal ecosystem restoration projects ever developed for Tampa Bay. Named for the abundant horseshoe crabs ('roaches') in the nearby waters, after 20 years the Preserve is a model of habitat diversity. On arrival in the parking area look east to see a night roost for many of our wading birds. A few may still be just leaving. You'll ride a wagon up 'Mount Cockroach' for a view of the tidal and freshwater wetlands and search for gallinules, Limpkins and egrets, scan the treeline for the eagles' nest, and ride through grasslands that harbor everything from nighthawks to sparrows and Common Yellowthroats. Both White and Glossy ibis frequent the freshwater ponds and wetlands, as do Black-bellied Whistling-ducks. The area is close enough to the bay that gulls and terns will sail overhead. Gull-billed Terns nest nearby and often continue in the area year-round. Spoonbills use the tidal lagoon, and passerines forage in the old oaks. The freshwater pond to the south is well-known for the wintering ducks to be found there.

### Fred & Idah Schultz Preserve, Hillsborough County

*John Lampkin, Rob Epstein, Dr. Marc Minno*

**1:00 – 4:00 pm**  
**Fri-SP | \$25**

Formerly used to deposit dredge material, the Schultz Preserve was restored to mangrove forest, coastal and freshwater marsh, coastal dunes and uplands. The diverse habitats make it THE place for a wide variety of butterflies and other pollinators, and the preserve hosts the northernmost colony of Julia Butterflies. Plenty of birds possible too! Enjoy the nice walk through varied habitats, but please note that the walking paths will be rough in places, and possibly not suitable for some. There is some shade but most is sunny, and there are no facilities.

### TECO Youth Conservation Center Nature Trail

*Stan Kroh, Lillian Saul, Doug Wassmer*

**2:00 – 4:00 pm**  
**Fri-YCC | \$25**

This easy 1 mile loop trail will leave from the Suncoast Youth Conservation Center, just south of the Manatee Viewing Center. The trail is gravel and shell as it winds through the trees, then along Newman's Creek and a canal. It is not generally open to the public, so you'll be among the early users. The first part of the path passes through a palm grove then crosses Newman's Creek. Scan the mud banks and oyster bars for waders and migrating shorebirds. The canal can have ducks and waterbirds, and the small wetlands may hold sparrows and gallinules. Further along the trail loops through an oak hammock, so watch for woodpeckers as well as seasonal passerines. The TECO Environmental Services manager will be along to answer any questions about the new solar farm on the north edge of the property after you scan for raptors over the fields.



# Field Trips

## SATURDAY

### Fort De Soto County Park, Pinellas County

*Laura Packard, David Simpson*

7:30 am - 1:00 pm

Sat-FD | \$25

Fort De Soto County Park is a premier birding destination in Florida. More than 250 species of birds have been recorded in the park over the years. Fall migration brings neo-tropical migratory species to the park as well as occasional wanderers from the Caribbean and the western United States. The island's shorebird diversity is one of the best on the Florida west coast. This trip is intended for advanced birders, and will be offered on both Saturday and Sunday. You will meet at the flagpole, then drive or walk to the hotspots of the day. Short easy walking at all times. If you care to bring your spotting scope, it will be handy for studying the shorebirds along the beach. If there's a passerine fallout you'll be in the wooded areas finding warblers, thrushes and buntings. There's never a bad day birding at Ft D!

### Bullfrog Creek Mitigation Area, Riverview

*Dr. Mary Keith*

7:30 - 11:30 am

Sat-BC | \$25

Bullfrog Creek is 1,620 acres in southern Hillsborough County. It is composed of 2 separate sections, both of which are managed as mitigation areas. The western half is a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Gopher Tortoise Mitigation Park whereas the eastern half is managed by Hillsborough County as a Upland Habitat mitigation bank. This trip will drive through the eastern section, where meadowlarks, kestrels and more are often sighted then will walk through part of the western area. It is a flat walk along forest road, across the creek and out to the pine flatwoods area, about 2 miles total distance. Along the forest road is a lovely area of mixed hardwood, with warblers, vireos and other passerines, Barred Owls, and Wood Ducks possible in the creek. The flatwoods hold woodpeckers, great horned owls, eastern bluebirds and more. Bring water, snacks, hat, insect repellent. Flat walking, mostly shaded. DO NOT ARRIVE LATE. WE MUST ALL ENTER AND LEAVE THROUGH LOCKED GATE AT ONE TIME!



**PORT TAMPA BAY.**  
REROUTE YOUR THINKING™

### TAKING CARE OF TAMPA BAY

From collaborative restoration projects, to key environmental partnerships and award-winning initiatives, Port Tampa Bay is committed to the integrity of Tampa Bay.

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TAMPA BAY'S ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS  
[www.baysoundings.com](http://www.baysoundings.com)



# Field Trips

## SATURDAY

### Gibbons Preserve, Hillsborough County

*Dan Savercool, Pam DeNere, Rene Brown*

9:00 am - Noon  
Sat-GP1 | \$25

The Myron and Helen Gibbons Preserve is a small patch that has not been logged. Long in the Gibbons family as a personal family retreat, it is now under the care of the Tampa Bay Conservancy. It is a 60-acre site with about a 1/2-mile of Alafia River shoreline. The trail crosses Bell Creek through oak and mixed hardwood and cypress wetlands before circling along the edge of the Alafia River and looping back to the parking area. As one of the few remaining natural tracts of land on the lower Alafia River, it a refuge for wildlife and contributes to the protection of water quality in the Alafia River. Access to the Preserve is currently limited, so there have not been many bird reports on it, but the area catches warblers, vireos, woodpeckers and more in the hammocks, and waders may be along the river's edge. The total trail length is just over a mile, but it is a gorgeous walk through old Florida riverine habitat with plenty of birdlife. This is a 1.5 mile loop in a mostly shaded area. The trail is narrow, and there may be roots. While most is flat there are some steep spots up or down the banks near the river, and spots may be wet, depending on recent rains.

### TECO Manatee Viewing Center Nature Trail

*Stan Kroh, Bo Felthe*

9:00 - 11:00 am  
Sat-MVC | \$25

This easy 2 mile walk will leave from the TECO Manatee Viewing Center. A boardwalk leads between the mangroves of Newman Creek and the saltern out to the observation tower. Several flights of steps to the top of the tower will give you great views of the estuary, the mangroves below, the lagoon, Apollo Beach Nature Preserve, and across the bay. The return takes a slightly different route through the hammock. Of course there are plenty of birds too! Egrets, herons, ibis roost in the mangroves and feed in the lagoon and inlets. Prairie Warblers might still be present after breeding in the mangroves, and migrant goldfinches, warblers and more use the scrub habitat. Be sure to scan the hot air above the smokestacks because eagles and migrating raptors use the rising heat as thermals to boost their soaring. The resident kestrels may show up too. Once back at the TMVC a short walk out to the jetty will take you through a mangrove belt where night herons roost and out to view the canal where manatees, skates and fish own the water, gulls and terns patrol the air, and spotted sandpipers often feed along the edge. American Oystercatchers often roost at the far end of the jetty too!

### Circle B Bar Reserve, Polk County

*Gina Kent, Adam Kent*

8:30 am - 1:00 pm  
Sat-CBB | \$25

Circle B Bar Reserve is one of the very best birding spots in the area. A series of shallow wetlands intersected by raised levees for walking supports Purple Gallinules, Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, Sora, bitterns and more. The resident pair of Bald Eagles patrol the area, and previous trips have enjoyed both Peregrine Falcons and Merlins. Of course the gators peer at you from the water, and marsh rabbits go swimming past too. Wintering White Pelicans still leave room in the deeper lakes for ducks.



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Tampa Bay Estuary

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# Field Trips

## SATURDAY

### Hillsborough River – Canoe Trip

*Connie Anderson, Dave & Sandy Townsend*

8:00 – 11:30 am  
Sat-HR | \$60

Enjoy a leisurely 4 mile trip along the Hillsborough River through a diverse and fascinating ecosystem. The river is of great ecological importance to the Tampa Bay area, and is excellent for wildlife watchers, both of birds and reptiles. Herons, egrets, Roseate Spoonbills, ibis and many more are all probable, and a morning paddle makes it more likely you'll find them all. Paddle from Sargeant Park to Morris Bridge Park for great birding and spotting an abundance of wildlife! And yes, you may bring your own canoe or kayak if you prefer (but no discount is offered). Participants will be required to wear a PFD.

### Alafia Bank Bird Sanctuary – Boat Trip

*Mark Rachal, Jeff Leichty*

9:00 – 11:30 am  
Sat-AB | \$60

Join us aboard the Florida Aquarium's *Bay Spirit II* for a 2 1/2 hour trip down Hillsborough Bay to an Audubon sanctuary island considered to be one of the most important nesting colonies in Florida. Each year up to 10,000 pairs of birds of 16 different species nest on this island, including a third of the state's Roseate Spoonbills and a very large White ibis and Brown Pelican colony. Although October is not nesting season we will see a variety of birds, including Brown Pelicans, wading birds, shorebirds and ducks. On the trip out to the islands we might glimpse Atlantic bottlenose dolphins too! Trip hosted by Port Tampa Bay, the Florida Aquarium, and Audubon Florida.

### Rock Ponds North Restoration Site

*Mic McCarty, Brandt Henningsen, Jacqueline Bilello*

8:30 am – Noon  
Sat-RP | \$25

The ponds are both tidal and freshwater, with islands constructed in each for roosting and nesting birds. Black-necked Stilts and Gull-billed Terns are known to have nested there. Many shorebirds, sandpipers, plovers and more use the islands, gulls and terns feed in the ponds, gallinules and ducks venture in and out of the reeds and grasses along the edges, and American White Pelicans spend the winter months visiting the ponds. Hawks and Ospreys patrol the grasslands surrounding the ponds. Bring water, snacks. This trip will drive around the ponds stopping where leaders see or hear something interesting. Everyone must enter the locked gate at the same time so please arrive a little early. There are no facilities on site - restroom at the Circle K.

### Sawgrass Lake Park, Pinellas County

*Julie & John Stocksdale*

9:00 am – Noon  
Sat-SL | \$25

Note: this trip is wheelchair accessible. Sawgrass Lake Park, 400 acres in size, allows people to walk through one of the largest maple swamps on the Gulf Coast of Florida. The board walk is 1 mi long, plus a half mile of dirt and paved path, all providing plenty of great birding. Eastern Screech-Owls nest in the area and sometimes observe visitors from their nest holes. Besides plenty of 'gators the canal and its wetlands support winter warblers, vireos and occasionally Yellow-billed Cuckoos. The lake feeds terns and Ospreys, and Common Gallinules putter around the edges. An observation tower provides shade, or a higher view of the lake. Back near the entrance, the other arm of the boardwalk continues over wetland through the maples and mixed woodlands, with a diversity of migrating passerines. Keep one eye in the trees and the other looking below the boardwalk. Circling back at the end of the boardwalk, the path allows observation of kingfishers, herons, egrets, ibis, anhingas and gallinules in the canal, and at least one Red-shouldered Hawk will probably scream at you. Rarities often put in appearances in this haven of woods and wetlands in the city. There are benches along the boardwalk and several covered gazebos as well.

### Gibbons Preserve

*Dan Savercool, Pam DeNere, Rene Brown*

1:30 – 4:30 pm  
Sat-GP2 | \$25

The Myron and Helen Gibbons Preserve is a small patch that has not been logged. Long in the Gibbons family as a personal family retreat, it is now under the care of the Tampa Bay Conservancy. It is a 60-acre site with about a 1/2-mile of Alafia River shoreline. The trail crosses Bell Creek through oak and mixed hardwood and cypress wetlands before circling along the edge of the Alafia River and looping back to the parking area. As one of the few remaining natural tracts of land on the lower Alafia River, it a refuge for wildlife and contributes to the protection of water quality in the Alafia River. Access to the Preserve is currently limited, so there have not been many bird reports on it, but the area catches warblers, vireos, woodpeckers and more in the hammocks, and waders may be along the river's edge. The total trail length is just over a mile, but it is a gorgeous walk through old Florida riverine habitat with plenty of birdlife. This is a 1.5 mile loop in a mostly shaded area. The trail is narrow, and there may be roots. While most is flat there are some steep spots up or down the banks near the river, and spots may be wet, depending on recent rains.



# Field Trips

## SATURDAY

### TECO Youth Conservation Center Nature Trail

*Stan Kroh, Bo Fethe*

2:00 - 4:00 pm

Sat-YCC | \$25

This easy 2 mile walk will leave from the TECO Manatee Viewing Center. A boardwalk leads between the mangroves of Newman Creek and the saltern out to the observation tower. Several flights of steps to the top of the tower will give you great views. Egrets, herons, ibis roost in the mangroves and feed in the lagoon and inlets. Prairie warblers might still be present after breeding in the mangroves, and migrant goldfinches, warblers and more use the scrub habitat. Be sure to scan the hot air above the smokestacks because eagles and migrating raptors use the rising heat as thermals to boost their soaring. The resident kestrels may show up too. Once back at the TMVC a short walk out to the jetty will take you through a mangrove belt where night herons roost and out to view the canal where manatees, skates and fish own the water, gulls and terns patrol the air, and spotted sandpipers often feed along the edge. American Oystercatchers often roost at the far end of the jetty.

### Birding & Banding in Hammock Park, Dunedin

*Steve Aversa, Cuneyt Yilmaz, Jim McGinity*

8:00 am - Noon

Sat-BB | \$25

Come learn about bird banding, observe how ornithologists use it to learn about and conserve migratory birds and enjoy our fall migratory birds while birding this 100-acre city park. You will observe the banding station action, seeing some of the local migrants up close while researchers measure, weigh and band them. Participants will get a chance to help release banded birds! You will also walk sections of the park and boardwalk to see what else is lurking in the bushes, along the stream or zipping through the trees overhead. Warblers, vireos and thrushes are all good bets in the bushes, while herons, egrets and night herons will wade the tidal stream. Raptors scan for the unwary over the open fields. The walk is easy, flat, not more than 2 miles.

## Looking for That Missing Piece?



## Great Birding Starts Here!





# Field Trips

## SUNDAY

### Fort De Soto County Park, Pinellas County – Extreme Birding

*Laura Packard, David Simpson*

**7:30 am – 1:00 pm**  
**Sun-FD | \$25**

Fort De Soto County Park is a premier birding destination in Florida. More than 250 species of birds have been recorded in the park over the years. Fall migration brings neo-tropical migratory species to the park as well as occasional wanderers from the Caribbean and the western United States. The island's shorebird diversity is one of the best on the Florida west coast. This trip is intended for advanced birders, and will be offered on both Saturday and Sunday. You will meet at the flagpole, then drive or walk to the hotspots of the day. Short, easy walking at all times. If you care to bring your spotting scope, it will be handy for studying the shorebirds along the beach. If there's a passerine fallout you'll be in the wooded areas finding warblers, thrushes and buntings. There's never a bad day birding at Ft D!

### Egmont Key National Wildlife Refuge/State Park, Hillsborough County – Boat Trip

*Barb Howard, Adam Kent, Gina Kent, Mic McCarty, Joyce Kleen, Dave Howard*

**8:00 am – Noon**  
**Sun-EK | \$60**

Join the Friends of the Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuge for a special boat cruise to Egmont Key National Wildlife Refuge/State Park in Pinellas County. Established in 1974 to protect migratory birds, the island is situated at the mouth of Tampa Bay and is also the site of historic Fort Dade. Three hundred soldiers served at the fort from 1898-1923 and the restored guardhouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The lighthouse, built in 1858, is still used for navigation. A key migratory bird fall-out site in fall migration, the island hosts a large seabird and pelican colony during the spring nesting season. We expect to see warblers, other songbirds, raptors, gulls, terns, and other seabirds. You can walk on the beach and the inland paths of the island are paved or brick, so the walking is easy.

### Celery Fields & Sarasota Audubon Society Nature Center, Sarasota County

*Jeanne Dubi*

**8:00 – 11:00 am**  
**Sun-CF | \$25**

This 400-acre storm water retention area in eastern Sarasota County is one of the Gulf Coast's best birding hot spots. The site has been restored to a meandering stream with wetlands and grasslands nestled among the curves. A hill with walking and equestrian trails overlooks the area, and two boardwalks allow access to the stream and marsh. With 220 species recorded at the site, the swamp and open water environment is a haven for limpkins, biterns, rails and herons. The Least Bitterns do not know that they are 'shy and retiring' here, Peregrine Falcons sail overhead, and variety of Fall sparrows spend the winter. Depending on water level, shorebirds, waders and ducks may be abundant. Sarasota Audubon provides volunteer Bird Naturalists at each of the two boardwalks to help visitors identify birds and plants. The nature center with native plant gardens is also available for visitors to enjoy. Walks are on even paths or short boardwalks, but there is little shade and only a few benches. On your way in scan the ponds on either side of Coburn/Apex Rd for waterbirds as well.

### Lower Green Swamp, Hillsborough County

*Charlie Fisher*

**8:00 am – Noon**  
**Sun-LGS | \$25**

Lower Green Swamp Preserve was once a working cattle ranch, now being gradually restored to native habitat. You will visit only a tiny portion of the 12,800 acres of this preserve, but they are glorious! From the parking area the trail crosses a grassland where Eastern Towhees whistle and bobwhites scurry in the early hours, Loggerhead Shrikes snag grasshoppers, and eagles perch on the power poles. Eastern Bluebirds and Red-headed Woodpeckers share the open wooded and pine areas with vireos and Common Yellowthroats. After crossing Itchepackesassa Creek you'll enter an open pine flatwoods where Sandhill Cranes, turkeys, and Bachman's Sparrows rule the roost. At the far end there is a large wetlands with Purple Gallinules, Anhingas and Wood Ducks. The trail loops back and follows the creek along an oak hammock dripping with Spanish moss to return to the bridge and then the parking area. Barred Owls and Wood Ducks are sometimes seen along the creek, and of course any migrating warbler will enjoy the insect life it offers.



# Field Trips

## SUNDAY

### Rock Ponds Central Restoration Site, Hillsborough County

*Doug DeNere, Jaime Swindaz, Nancy Norton*

**8:30 am – Noon**  
**Sun-RPC | \$25**

The trip will drive around ponds, lagoons, grasslands and some tree-lines created as part of a Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) property reconstructed from old farming land to improve the quality of the water entering Tampa Bay. Officers of SWFWMD will be with you to explain the hydrology of the restoration efforts of this area. Gull-billed Terns, Black-necked Stilts and more nest on the islands in the lagoons and often remain through the winter. The whole range of herons and egrets, plus White and Glossy ibis and avocets feed in the lagoons. Wintering ducks, from shovelers to teal and more use the ponds. Sparrows, as well as kestrels and hawks, frequent the grasslands. A caracara shows up occasionally too! Resident and migrant passerines use the trees and shrubby areas for feeding and evading predators. It's a huge area, you won't get into all of it, but your leaders know it well and will take you to the best birding spots. They will have walkie talkies to point out birds or points of interest while you drive, and you'll stop at interesting places to get out and scan or observe.

### Terra Ceia State Park Uplands, Restoration & Ecology, Manatee County

*Tracy Muzyczka*

**8:00 – 10:00 am**  
**Sun-TCE | \$25**

Terra Ceia Preserve State Park is one of the largest restoration projects ever initiated along Tampa Bay. Once ditched farm land, it is now a living example of the biological diversity that estuaries can support and a birder/naturalist's paradise. Over 100 species of birds and other abundant wildlife from turtles and gators to bobcats and deer; the list keeps growing as this restoration site matures. It is also an example of many of the challenges that land managers face in restoring communities that have been so drastically altered by historic land use practices. Learn what makes the preserve so special in a guided walk by the park's Environmental Specialist, whose primary responsibility is its resource management. Note that this and the Terra Ceia Restoration and Ecology trip are starting at the same location. We might need to park up the road and shuttle some people down to Frog Creek if there is not enough parking space, so please try to park compactly when you arrive.

### Terra Ceia State Park Uplands, Frog Creek Birding, Manatee County

*Dr. Mary Keith*

**8:00 – 10:00 am**  
**Sun-TCR | \$25**

Terra Ceia Preserve State Park is one of the largest restoration projects ever initiated along Tampa Bay. Once ditched farm land, it is now a living example of the biological diversity that estuaries can support and a birder/naturalist's paradise. Over 100 species of birds and other abundant wildlife from turtles and gators to bobcats and deer; the list keeps growing as this restoration site matures. This walk will skirt Frog Creek in a lovely old oak hammock, circle through pinewoods, then out to an area under restoration with replanted pines, past freshwater wetlands, and down to the mangroves on a back loop of Frog Creek again. With that diversity of habitat, anything is possible! Eastern Pewees, Cedar Waxwings, myriad passerines spend the winter, Peregrine Falcons and American White Pelicans circle overhead, and all the local residents enjoy the riches of such a diverse habitat. Note that this and the Terra Ceia Restoration and Ecology trip are starting at the same location. We might need to park up the road and shuttle some people down to Frog Creek if there is not enough parking space, so please try to park compactly when you arrive.

### Terra Ceia Aquatic Preserve, Manatee County – Canoe/Kayak Trip

*Randy Runnels*

**9:00 am – Noon**  
**Sun-TCC | \$60**

Tampa Bay has few relatively natural, unobstructed tidal creeks left, and Frog Creek is one of the least developed and most species-rich. In a leisurely-paced paddling trip of a little over 2 miles, participants will experience a dramatic change in biota over a gradient from freshwater, with overhanging oaks, leather ferns, etc. to saltwater, with mangroves and oysters. This is an excellent foraging area for a variety of coastal bird species. Participants will need to paddle for a little over 2 miles, but it is at a leisurely pace. It will be a combination of canoes and kayaks, and you are welcome to bring your if you prefer (but no discount is offered). Sunscreen, bug spray, and bottled water will be supplied. A few binoculars will be available. After you register you will be asked if you intend to paddle solo or with someone else in your canoe.



# Field Trips

## SUNDAY

### Emerson Point Preserve, Manatee County

*Andy Rabin*

**8:00 am – Noon**  
**Sun-EP | \$25**

Come walk back in history! This trip begins at the Visitor Center near some of the ancient mounds left by the occupants of this coastal point hundreds of years ago. Now covered by huge oaks draped with Spanish moss, the mounds and view of the river they provide are ideal spots for viewing today's birds. Warblers and vireos feed in the vegetation, herons and terns search the river. From this start you'll drive short distances further onto the point. A small pond usually has ducks, gallinules, often a spoonbill or several, and sparrows zip through the grass around the edges. Trails lead through the mangroves to an observation tower, where you may be stalked by hungry night herons. At the tip of the point another renovated mound offers a raised view of the mouth of the Manatee River and out across the entrance of Tampa Bay. Rafts of scaup, lines of pelicans, squadrons of gulls and terns enjoy the waters. Closer in, the small beach and lines of sand bars off the point will be feeding plovers, sandpipers, oystercatchers and more. Depending on where birds have been reported, you'll walk at most 2 miles. Some might be sunny, but most will be at least partly shaded.

### Weedon Island Walking

*Ken Spiliotis*

**8:00 am – Noon**  
**Sun-WI | \$25**

Weedon Island was once the home of early peoples in the Bay area. A whole style of ancient pottery is named for their culture. But most of their mounds were used for road fill, and their island was ditched for farming. Now a preserve that is slowly returning to mangroves and upland pines, the park has several miles of paved and/or boardwalk trails. Its over 3000 acres of mangroves, pines and open grasses attract migrating birds, and it has been known to harbor nesting mangrove cuckoos in season. The boardwalks cross a saltern area, lead through mangroves above or alongside the kayak trails, and circle back to the visitor center area. Side branches offer views of Tampa Bay, inland waterways and small lakes encircled by mangroves. Herons, egrets, spoonbills and more will search for food in the shallows. Night Herons perch in the mangroves. Migrants, from blue winged warblers to indigo buntings move through the trees, gulls and terns wheel overhead. This walk is intended to be wheelchair accessible along the boardwalks, so anything within sight of an elevated boardwalk will be fair game!

### Duette Preserve, Manatee County

*Zach Holmes*

**8:00 am – Noon**  
**Sun-DP | \$25**

Bring water, snacks, hat, insect repellent, wear long pants. Please bring appropriate clothing including boots (you may get muddy in one spot). No facilities on the trails, last restroom is in Wimauma or Parrish. This is a limited access area, so please do not be late! Come take a walk on the wild side at Manatee County's largest preserve! Duette Preserve is located in eastern Manatee County and hosts a wide variety of habitats including xeric oak scrub, pine flatwoods, mesic hammocks, and plenty of creeks and rivers. This trip is for those who aren't afraid of the Florida wild. Three miles round trip through dirt trails will lead us through three different habitats and end in xeric scrub for a chance to see Florida Scrub-Jays! Other highlights include American Kestrels, Bachman's Sparrows, Northern Bobwhite, and Red-headed Woodpeckers.

### Circle B Bar Reserve, Polk County

*Lillian Saul, Doug Wassmer*

**8:00 am – 1:00 pm**  
**Sun-CBB | \$25**

Circle B Bar Reserve is one of the very best birding spots in the area. A series of shallow wetlands intersected by raised levees for walking supports Purple Gallinules, Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, Sora, bitterns and more. The resident pair of Bald Eagles patrol the area, and previous trips have enjoyed both Peregrine Falcons and Merlins. Of course the gators peer at you from the water, and marsh rabbits go swimming past too. Wintering White Pelicans still leave room in the deeper lakes for ducks.







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## Welcome to the Florida Birding & Nature Festival!

Tampa Electric is very proud to host this event and we hope you enjoy the venue. There are many exciting projects in the works and we're happy to give you a "sneak peek!"

Did you know TripAdvisor rates our Manatee Viewing Center as the No. 1 thing to do in Apollo Beach? That makes our snouts smile! But besides providing a sanctuary for the gentle giants, we've got other giant - and clean and green - happenings in the Tampa Bay area.

- We're modernizing our Big Bend Power Station (winter home of the manatees) to drastically reduce our coal use.
- On November 1st we'll open the Clean Energy Center to the public. The center, near the Manatee Viewing Center, is the venue for the festival's keynote presentations. It will feature interactive games to help teach kids about clean energy.

- At a Lennar community in Hillsborough County we're piloting a revolutionary "BlockEnergy" system that serves up clean and reliable energy to homeowners, powered by the Florida sun.
- At our Big Bend solar site, flocks of grazing sheep make a very cute (and environmentally-friendly) alternative to lawn mowers. By 2023 more of our energy will be generated from solar than coal.

We hope you enjoy the festival and we look forward to meeting you!



Learn more about our clean energy advances at  
[tampaelectric.com/environment](https://tampaelectric.com/environment)



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*Share your Festival experience  
on our media channels!*

We encourage you to post photos and videos from field trips and seminars to our Facebook page (Florida Birding and Nature Festival)

or tag us on Instagram

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