

Sunday, March 06, 2022 8:00am

Barr Hammock – Levy Lake Loop

Meet trip leader Matt Bruce for a walk along the Levy Lake dike trail at Barr Hammock Preserve. You'll have the option to walk the whole 6.5-mile loop, but Matt will announce a good turn-around point for those who don't want to go the whole way. We'll be birding marsh, wet prairie, and woodland edges in search of wintering warblers, wrens, and sparrows. To reach the trailhead, drive south from Gainesville on US-441. Across from Lake Wauberg, turn right onto Wacahoota Road (County Road 18). Go roughly half a mile and, just after the I-75 overpass, turn left on SE 11th Dr. and continue all the way down to the parking area. Difficulty: 1, 2, or 3, depending on how far you walk.

Saturday, March 12, 2022 8:00am (CLEP)

Mill Creek Preserve

Meet trip leader Stephen Hofstetter in the Preserve parking lot. 14505 NW County Road 236, Alachua 32615. The parking lot is off SR 241. This was the first purchase of the Alachua County Forever program – 1,190 acres of deep hardwood forest containing the southernmost stand of beech trees in North America. We'll walk through this beautiful and ecologically valuable tract of conservation land, enjoying its flora and fauna – and birds! Hopefully some beautiful spring weather as well. Difficulty: 2.

Saturday, March 19, 2022 9:00am

Special Beginning Birder's Walk – Sweetwater Wetlands Park

Meet trip leader Jacob Ewert for a specialized stroll around one of Gainesville's best birding locations. This trip is specifically designed for beginning birders. We will slow our pace down and focus on some birding basics and on improving identification skills in a relaxed environment. We'll look at herons, egrets, ducks, and other wetland-dependent bird species. \$5.00 entrance fee per vehicle. Difficulty: 1.

Sunday, March 20, 2022 8:00

Watermelon Pond Wildlife and Environmental Area (WEA)

Meet trip leaders Kelly and Jason O'Connor at the parking corral of the Watermelon Pond WEA on SW 250th Street, approximately 2 miles south of SW 46th Avenue, to experience this interesting "upland wetland" area in southwest Alachua County. We'll be on the lookout for lingering winter and resident species of open country habitats such as American kestrels and various sparrows. We may even get a chance to see an Eastern fox squirrel or two. Difficulty 3.

Saturday, March 26, 2022

Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive

Meet at the Gainesville Target at 06:00am / Apopka Trailhead at 8:00am

Lake Apopka is in the headwaters of the Ocklawaha chain of lakes. It has been the site of significant marsh and floodplain restoration and the creation of a marsh flow-way system that filters Lake Apopka's waters by circulating lake water through restored wetlands. The wildlife drive meanders for 11 miles through the eastern portion of the property.

Meet an AAS volunteer at the Target Parking lot on Archer Rd. at 06:00am to caravan to Apopka. We will meet trip leader Alan Shapiro at 8:00 am to explore this birding hotspot. Gather at the small parking area on the right just before the gate at the Wildlife Drive entrance

Difficulty: 1.

Sunday, April 3, 2022 8:00am

Poe Springs Park

Meet trip leader Tim Hardin in the parking lot of Poe Springs Park, 28800 NW 182 Ave (Poe Springs Road / NE CR 340) High Springs. Poe Springs is a lovely Alachua County park located on the bank of the Santa Fe River. This park can be one of the better warbler spots in the county during fall migration, but can also be impressive during our brief spring migration period. Never any guarantees, but hard to find in-county warblers such as Canada, Golden-winged, Kentucky, and Cerulean Warblers have been recorded here. It can be a bit muddy in places, so waterproof footwear or old shoes are recommended. Park entrance fee \$5.00. Difficulty: 2

Saturday, April 9, 2022 8:00am

Serenola Forest Preserve – Idylwild Trailhead

Opened in 2019 in partnership with Alachua County and the Florida Communities Trust, Serenola Forest Preserve is a 111-acre nature preserve owned and managed by the Alachua Conservation Trust. This preserve is located in the Idylwild neighborhood in southwest Gainesville, and it is in these same woods where the locally infamous Idylwild Cowgirls galloped their ponies from one mischief to another five decades ago. Join AAS and ACT for a joint outing at this preserve - first, a bird walk led by Sue and Darrell Hartman and Debbie Segal, followed by a short book presentation by author Debbie Segal about the gang of Idylwild Cowgirls. ACT's Outreach Coordinator, Lianne D'Arcy, will also describe the ecology and management of the Serenola Forest Preserve. 4706-4798 SW 20th Terrace. Difficulty: 1.

Sunday, April 10, 2022 8:00 am

Powers Park/Palm Point

Meet trip leader Barbara Shea in the parking lot of Earl Powers Park on SR 20 Hawthorne Road. We will explore Newnans Lake from the fishing pier and scan the trees and along the boat channel for migrant warblers and tanagers. Then we'll travel to nearby Palm Point and Lakeshore Drive for more migrants in the live oak and cypress trees. Difficulty 1.

Saturday, April 16, 2022 8:00am

Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park – Bolen Bluff Trail

Meet trip leader Bubba Scales at the Bolen Bluff trailhead on US-441. Bolen Bluff is one of Gainesville's perennial favorite birding locations, especially during spring and fall songbird migration, which should be peaking now. Entry fee \$2.00/vehicle. Difficulty: 2

Sunday, April 17, 2022 8:00am

River Stix by Kayak

Bring your own kayak or canoe for this trip. We'll start out by paddling upstream a short distance through cypress swamp. Next, we'll head south through a network of narrow waterways that transect the expansive marsh that dominates the northern portion of Orange Lake. This can be a very good area to get close views of Prothonotary Warbler and many other wetland bird species. Heading south on US-441 from Gainesville, go about two miles past the main entrance for Paynes Prairie, then turn left onto CR-346. Continue for about three miles before reaching a small bridge over River Styx. Park anywhere along the roadside after crossing over to the east side of the bridge and meet trip leader Matt Bruce. Difficulty: 3.

Sunday, April 24, 2022 8:00am

Turkey Creek Preserve

Officially opened in 2021, this 376-acre preserve with 5 miles of trails gives us a chance to see many ecosystems. These include basin swamp, depression marsh, bottomland forest, hydric hammock, upland hardwood forest, black water streams and sinkholes. The preserve buffers adjacent San Felasco Hammock Preserve State Park and our drinking water. Spring migration should still be active and bringing us a good variety of birds. We will take a casual 2-3 mile walk guided by Tim Hardin. Trails are well-marked, mostly wide and relatively flat. Meet at the main trailhead parking lot at 6300 NW 93rd Ave. Difficulty: 2 (3)

Saturday, April 30, 2022 8:00 am

Chapman's Pond and Nature Trails

Meet trip leader Barbara Shea at the grassy parking lot on the east side of the Pond (behind & east of Veterans Memorial Park). We will start by scanning the pond of this water treatment facility for water birds, swallows, and songbirds. Then we will hike the surrounding 1.5 miles of trail past other water features through dry oak woods and open mowed lawns seeking various passerines and raptors, migrants and returning residents alike. Turn off SW 75th St. (Tower Rd.) onto SW 41 Place. Go east just over 1/2 mile where the road curves and joins 63rd Blvd. and the parking lot will be on the left. Difficulty: 2.

Saturday, May 7, 2022 8:00am

Bell Ridge Longleaf Wildlife and Environmental Area (WEA)

Bell Ridge is a 720-acre property with a 3.1-mile trail winding through what has been described as "one of the highest quality longleaf pine sandhill forest tracts in Florida." Join trip leaders Mary Ellen Flowers and Tedd Greenwald at the trailhead at 108 Four Mile Road, Trenton. We'll be looking for both resident and summer breeders such as Summer Tanagers, Bachman's Sparrows, Red-headed Woodpeckers, American Kestrels, and other longleaf-savannah denizens. Hairy Woodpeckers have been reported here. Difficulty: 2.