



NEWS RELEASE



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EVENT CONTACT:

Michelle Phillips

Florida's Freshwater Frontier

Phone: (800) 467-4540

E-mail: mphillips@flaheartland.com

www.sfwmd.gov/news

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Big "O" Birding Festival Gets Aloft Today
"Birding Adventures" TV host to address birdwatchers in Clewiston



"Birding Adventures" TV host James Currie with a Florida Scrub Jay

Clewiston, FL – Belize, Costa Rica, Panama, Australia, Clewiston. Clewiston? Yes, Clewiston! "Birding Adventures" TV host James Currie, who has traveled the world on birding adventures, is coming to Clewiston as the keynote speaker during the Big "O" Birding Festival on March 25-28.

"Birding Adventures" is the first birding TV program that focuses on destination and adventure bird-watching. The informative, passionate – and sometimes crazy! – host, James Currie, portrays a unique blend of information and adventure, making bird-watching refreshing, contemporary, interesting and exciting. He'll engage festival goers on Saturday, March 27.

A lifelong birder and native of South Africa, James Currie has many years experience in the birding and wildlife tourism arenas. Currie's passion for birding and remote

cultures has taken him to far corners of the earth from the Amazon and Australia to Africa and Madagascar. Currie's enthusiasm, energy and passion breathe a whole new excitement into the world of birding. During the Big "O" Festival, tickets will be on sale for a chance to dine with him at the Keynote Dinner.

An all-inclusive four-day festival pass is available. While the all-inclusive pass EXCLUDES accommodations, it does afford festival attendees four full days of birding activities, scheduled meals and transportation to and from the guided tour sites. Here's what's scheduled:

Thursday, March 25

- Registration/Welcome at Historic Clewiston Inn
- Hidden Gems of the Great Florida Birding Trail, presentation at Historic Clewiston Inn
- Birding & Wildlife Photography, workshop at Historic Clewiston Inn
- Witherspoon Mine Mitigation Wetlands Tour
- Lunch Buffet at Historic Clewiston Inn
- Birding by Boat on Lake Okeechobee
- A Taste of Florida Dinner and Wildlife Program at Gatorama
- The Almost Famous Owl Hoot at Fisheating Creek FWC WMA
- Sunset Photo Shoot at STA-5, includes a box dinner

Friday, March 26

- Sunrise Photo Shoot at STA-5
- Day Registration/Breakfast Buffet at Historic Clewiston Inn
- STA-5 Tour
- The Premier Loop
- Birding the Boardwalk at Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum on Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation
- Birding by Boat on Lake Okeechobee (the Big "O")
- Friday Lunch Buffet at Historic Clewiston Inn
- Audubon Birds of Prey demonstration at Historic Clewiston Inn
- Bird & Wildlife Photography workshop at Historic Clewiston Inn
- Off the Beaten Track Tour in Glades County
- Birding by Land throughout Hendry County with Dinner and Program at the Seminole Indian Reservation
- Sunset Photo Shoot at STA-5

Saturday, March 27

- Sunrise Photo Shoot at STA-5
- Day Registration/Breakfast buffet at Historic Clewiston Inn
- Outdoor Community Market in the Clewiston City Park
- "Florida Time Forgot" Nature Presentation at the Clewiston Museum
- "Giants in the Stone" Fossil Talk and Exhibit at the Clewiston Museum

- Witherspoon Mine Mitigation Wetlands Tour
- Birding on a Private Ranch Tour
- Birding by Boat on Lake Okeechobee (the Big “O”)
- Birding at Dinner Island Ranch FWC WMA
- Audubon Birds of Prey demonstration at Historic Clewiston Inn
- Wine & Cheese Social Hour at Historic Clewiston Inn
- Keynote Dinner and Program by James Currie at Historic Clewiston Inn

Sunday, March 28

- Day Registration/Breakfast Buffet at Historic Clewiston Inn
- Birding at STA-5
- Fort Center FWC WMA, by Swamp Buggy to Historic Glades Indian burial site
- Birding at Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest
- Birding by Boat on Lake Okeechobee (the Big “O”)
- Bird & Bike the L.O.S.T. (Lake O Scenic Trail)
- Photo Contest Display at Historic Clewiston Inn
- Birding on a Private Ranch
- Nature Based Ecotourism Workshop at Historic Clewiston Inn
- Turkey Calling & Alligator Wrestling Demonstration by Seminole Billy Walker at Historic Clewiston Inn

Many tours are concurrent and subject to change depending on participation. For registration and detailed information, visit www.bigobirdingfestival.com and download a registration form, or call Hendry County Tourism at (863) 612-4783.

“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,” said Janet Papinaw, festival director. “Single day passes and single tour passes are also for sale. We’re happy to showcase our natural reserves for the great birding hot spots that they are.”

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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.