

The Ultimate Guide to Exploring The Great Florida Birding And Wildlife Trail West Section: Discover the Hidden Gems of The Great Florida

The state of Florida is a true paradise for nature lovers, offering a wide variety of landscapes and ecosystems that are home to a remarkable diversity of bird and wildlife species. One of the best ways to explore and experience this natural beauty is by embarking on The Great Florida Birding And Wildlife Trail, and in this article, we will focus specifically on the West Section of this iconic trail.

What is The Great Florida Birding And Wildlife Trail?

The Great Florida Birding And Wildlife Trail is a network of interconnected trails and viewing sites strategically placed throughout the state to allow visitors to observe and enjoy Florida's incredible wildlife in their natural habitats. The trail encompasses a vast range of landscapes, including swamps, forests, prairies, beaches, and marshes, providing endless opportunities for birdwatching, wildlife photography, and outdoor adventure.

Discovering the West Section of The Great Florida Birding And Wildlife Trail

The West Section of The Great Florida Birding And Wildlife Trail covers an area that stretches from the panhandle to the southern Gulf Coast, offering visitors a chance to explore some of the state's most pristine and unique habitats. Let's delve into some of the hidden gems within this section:



The Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail - West Section (The Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail Guide Series Book 4)

by Alasdair Cochrane (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

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1. Big Bend Wildlife Management Area



The Big Bend Wildlife Management Area is a haven for bird enthusiasts, boasting over 24,000 acres of diverse habitats, including tidal marshes, uplands, and tidal creeks. This area serves as an important stopover for migratory birds, making it a prime spot for birdwatching. Keep an eye out for the stunning American Bittern, the elusive Clapper Rail, and the majestic Bald Eagle.

2. St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge



With its prime location along the Gulf of Mexico, St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge is a true refuge for diverse wildlife. The refuge encompasses a vast area of salt marshes, tidal creeks, freshwater impoundments, and pine forests, providing a rich feeding ground for resident and migratory birds alike. Look out for

the endangered Red-Cockaded Woodpecker, the vibrant Roseate Spoonbill, and the iconic American Alligator.

3. Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve



Located on the Gulf Coast, Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve is a hidden gem for wildlife enthusiasts. This reserve is primarily characterized by its coastal scrub habitat, home to unique species such as the Florida Scrub-Jay, the Eastern Indigo Snake, and the Gopher Tortoise. Explore the trails and be amazed by the beauty and diversity of this often-overlooked wilderness.

4. Myakka River State Park



Myakka River State Park, located near Sarasota, is a true paradise where nature flourishes. One of the park's notable features is its expansive wetlands, home to an abundance of wading birds, including the graceful Sandhill Crane, the colorful Rosy Spoonbill, and the majestic Great Blue Heron. Take a scenic airboat tour or hike the trails for an up-close encounter with these magnificent creatures.

5. Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary



Proudly holding the title of Audubon's largest sanctuary in the state, Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary is a haven for birdwatchers. Located near Naples, this unique sanctuary is home to the largest nesting colony of Wood Storks in the United States. Walk along the boardwalk that stretches for miles, allowing you to immerse yourself in the enchanting beauty of this untouched wilderness.

The Great Florida Birding And Wildlife Trail West Section offers an unforgettable journey into the heart of Florida's natural wonders. From the Big Bend Wildlife Management Area to Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, each site along the trail presents a unique opportunity to appreciate and protect the state's exceptional bird and wildlife species. So, grab your binoculars, pack your camera, and

embark on this remarkable adventure where discovery and natural beauty await at every turn.



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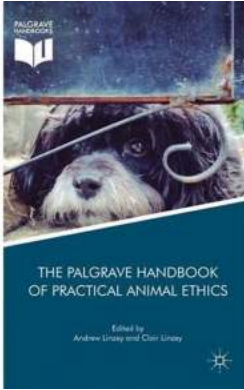
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The West Section of the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail (GFBWT) spans 21 counties of the western and central Florida peninsula, from the Osceola National Forest and Pinhook Swamp on the Georgia border to upper Sarasota Bay and the headwaters of the Myakka River. From Alachua to Zolfo Springs, you'll want to experience all the amazing sights and sounds the West Section has to offer. Prominent features of this region include the bountiful Big Bend and its associated seagrass beds, salt marshes and oyster reefs; the limestone bluffs, stately cypress trees and tannic waters of the renowned Suwannee, Withlacoochee and Hillsborough Rivers; the sweeping grasslands of Paynes Prairie; the Green Swamp's vast forests, and the abundant waters of Tampa Bay, Florida's largest estuary. No matter how you choose to explore—by foot, bicycle, car, boat or horse—you'll find some of Florida's best birding and wildlife encounters.



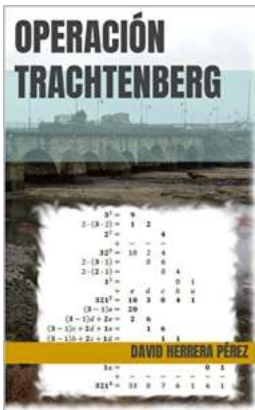
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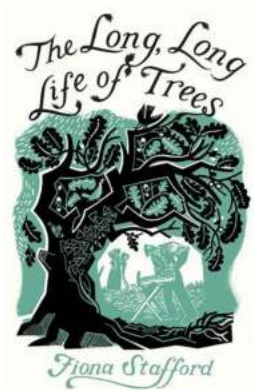
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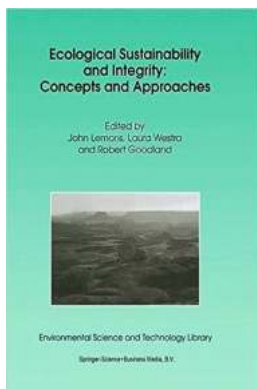
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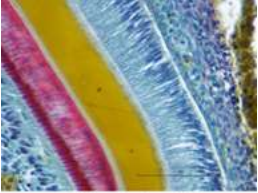
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