

# BIRD FACTS & FANCIES

## Bird Watchers Flock To Florida Beaches

(NAPSA)—There's now another good reason a growing number of bird watchers are flying toward Florida beaches. The newly opened south loop of the Great Florida Birding Trail brings 116 sites across south Florida into the 2,000-mile highway trail designed to conserve and enhance bird habitat by promoting bird watching activities and conservation education.

With more than 300 species of birds visiting or living along The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel, visitors come from all over the world to explore sites along the shoreline, shallow mud flats, inland waters, back bays and forests. Birds are so prevalent in the area, it's been named the top bird watching destination in the U.S. by USA Today. Bird watchers can spot egrets, wood storks, ibis and herons of every description and color. Rarities such as limpkins and reddish egrets may also be seen, as well as birds of prey such as red-shouldered hawks, bald eagles and osprey.

Mark Kiser of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission serves as birding trail coordinator. The Florida Birding Trail program identifies interesting sites for bird watchers in a Birding Trail guide available, free, at the Audubon Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary or [www.floridabirdingtrail.com](http://www.floridabirdingtrail.com).

Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary was selected as a premier or



**SOMETHING FOR BIRD WATCHERS TO SING ABOUT: Rare and beautiful birds can be found in Lee County and other parts of Florida. Now, a new birding trail makes them easier to spot.**

“gateway” site because of its extensive services for visitors, from a 2.25-mile boardwalk, to state-of-the-art Blair Audubon Center and a variety of educational activities, as well as more than 200 species of birds, including the largest nesting colony of endangered wood storks. The area encompasses more than 13,000 acres of natural habitats; there's even the largest stand of old-growth bald cypress trees.

For information on specific birding sites in The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel, including the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island, and for vacation-planning information, visit [www.FortMyersSanibel.com](http://www.FortMyersSanibel.com).