

# **The Village Birders Calendar**

**December 2025 – April 2026**

(as of November 22, 2025)

**This schedule is subject to change.**

Please check the website for updates and additional information.

<https://www.villagebirders.org/birding-trips>

All monthly meetings held at 9:00 AM at the Lake Okahumpka Recreation Center, 4505 Okahumpka Run.

## **December 2025**

December 5 (Friday) Bird Trip: Chinsegut Conservation Center, 23212 Lake Lindsey Road, Brooksville. Leader Susan Pepper. Meet 8:15 AM at venue (gate opens at 8 AM). Watching bird feeders and walking on uneven grass paths. Yes Restroom.

December 10 (Wednesday) Bird Trip: Fort Island Gulf Beach, 16000 W Fort Island Trail, Crystal River. Leader Alice Horst. Meet 8 AM at venue in beach parking lot. Walking on sand and pavement. Restroom Port-A-Let only. Optional lunch at Shrimp Landing.

December 17 (Wednesday) Bird Trip: Hogeye Nature Preserve Walking Trail, 5227 Marsh Bend Trail, The Villages. Leader Bob Cole. Meet 8:30 AM at the path entrance next to Edna's on the Green. Easy walking on paved path. Yes Restroom.

December 20 (Saturday) Monthly Club Meeting: Lake Okahumpka Recreation Center at 9:00 AM. Program: Birding 101 presented by Village Birder Bob Smidt. Bring your own Binoculars. After the program the club will have extra binoculars and spotting scopes as demos on the boardwalk behind the Rec Center. If you need help with adjustments or general binocular questions, see Susan Pepper.

December 20 (Saturday) West Marion County Christmas Bird Count (CBC-FLWM). To volunteer contact Pat Larson with Marion Audubon, at email address [plarson2657@hotmail.com](mailto:plarson2657@hotmail.com).

December 22 (Monday) Emerald Marsh Christmas Bird Count (CBC-FLEM). To volunteer contact Gigi DelPizzo with Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, at email address [G2cowgirl@yahoo.com](mailto:G2cowgirl@yahoo.com).

### January 2026

January 1 (Thursday) New's Year Day Challenge. As a consolidated group how many bird species can we find inside The Villages on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Same rules apply as the June Challenge. Email final checklists to challenge coordinator Alice Horst at [ahorst@comcast.net](mailto:ahorst@comcast.net).

January 3 (Saturday) Villages-Lake Panasoffkee Christmas Bird Count (CBC-FLTV). To Volunteer contact Brownwood Birders, Liz Stackenborg at email address estakenborg@gmail.com.

January 15 (Thursday) Bird Trip: Briar Meadow Postal Station, 8700 SE 172nd Legacy Ln, The Villages. Leader Alice Horst. Meet 9 AM in venue parking lot. If you come by golf cart you can drive to each location. Walking on paved path and grass. No Restroom.

January 17 (Saturday) Monthly Club Meeting: Lake Okahumpka Recreation Center at 9:00 AM. Program "Florida's Neighborhood Bats" presented by Shari Blissett-Clark with the Florida Bat Conservancy.

January 20 (Tuesday) Bird Trip: Pine Meadows Conservation Area, 2280 Pine Meadows Golf Course Rd, Eustis. Leader Susan Pepper. Meet 8:30 AM in venue parking lot located at the end of the entrance road, past the boat ramp. Easy walking on asphalt, grass & dirt paths. Restroom Port-A-Let only.

January 26 (Monday) Bird Trip: Scrub Jays Ocala National Forest. Leader: Alice Horst. Meet 8:30 AM at Sunnyhill Restoration Area Blue House Trailhead. For map directions use address 19561 SE Hwy 42, Umatilla. Address is the St. Johns River Water Mngmt District Office (a small blue house). From this address, drive past this office, then take the left-hand fork, follow road back to a

larger Blue House and park in the rear. We will carpool, then drive/stop along a 12-mile dirt road loop through the Forest. No Restroom.

## February 2026

**February 4 or 5 (exact day pending)** Bird Trip: Orlando Wetlands Tram Tour, 25155 Wheeler Rd, Christmas, FL. LIMITED TO 24 PEOPLE. Registration and Prepaid \$10 wetland donation required in advance to Alice Horst, email address is ahorst@comcast.net. Meet at venue, bring picnic lunch.

February 13 (Friday) Bird Trip: Chinsegut Conservation Center, 23212 Lake Lindsey Road, Brooksville. Leader Susan Pepper. Meet 8:15 AM at venue (gate opens at 8 AM). Watching bird feeders and walking on uneven grass paths. Yes Restroom.

February 18 (Wednesday) Bird Trip: Emerald Marsh Conservation Area Public Boat Ramp, located off Emerald Island Rd, Leesburg. Leader Alice Horst. Meet 8:30 AM at venue, park in area just past large sand pile. Walking on a gravel road. No Restroom.

February 21 (Saturday) Monthly Club Meeting: Lake Okahumpka Recreation Center at 9:00 AM. Program "Birding Tanzania" presented by Sam Fried.

February 23 (Monday) Bird Trip: De Leon Springs State Park Pontoon Boat Ride, 601 Ponce De Leon Blvd, De

Leon Springs. Ride approx. 50 minutes. LIMITED TO 30 PEOPLE. Advanced registration and \$17 payment required by Feb 13th to Alice Horst, email [ahorst@comcast.net](mailto:ahorst@comcast.net). Followed with lunch on site at the Old Sugar Mill Pancake House, all you can eat Pancakes \$8.99. Park entry fee is \$6/vehicle or Florida State Park Pass. Yes Restroom.

### March 2026

March 4 (Wednesday) Bird Trip: Sunnyhill Restoration Area Blue House Trailhead. For map directions use address 19561 SE Hwy 42, Umatilla. This address is the St. Johns River Water Mngmt District Office (a small blue house). From this address, drive past the office, take the left-hand fork, follow road back to the larger Blue House and park in the rear. Leader Tammy Martin. Meet 8:30 AM at venue. Walking on grass paths. No Restroom.

March 11 (Wednesday) Bird Trip: Silver Springs State Park-Sandhill Trail Parking Lot. Use the Camping Entrance located at 1425 NE 58th Avenue, Ocala. Leader Marlene Armstrong. Entrance Fee \$8 per vehicle. Meet 8:30 AM at venue. Walking on sand paths. Yes Restroom down the park road.

March 19 (Thursday) Bird Trip: Soulliere Ponds, 16705 SE 74th Soulliere Ave, Summerfield (The Villages). Leader Alice Horst and Susan Pepper. Meet 8:00 AM in parking lot of the Soulliere Villas Pool and Postal Station. Walking on grass berm around ponds. Yes Restroom.

March 21 (Saturday) Monthly Club Meeting: Lake Okahumpka Recreation Center at 9:00 AM. Program "Spring Warblers" presented by Tammy Martin, bird tour leader with the Road Scholar program in Northern Ohio.

March 25 (Wednesday) Bird Trip: Ocala Wetlands Recharge Park, 2105 NW 21st St, Ocala. Leader Susan Pepper. Meet 8:30 AM in the venue parking lot. Easy walking on paved path. Yes Restroom.

### April 2026

April 2 (Thursday) All Day Bird Trip: Cedar Key. Leader: Beth Sharlow. To carpool meet at 7 AM at Walmart Supercenter, 4085 Wedgewood Lane in The Villages, in the far Southwest corner of the parking lot. Alternate, meet the group at 9 AM at the Marathon Gas Station, 7690 FL State Rd 24, Cedar Key (approx. 14 miles after turning off US Hwy 19). Trip itinerary will be provided to drivers. Questions contact Susan Pepper, cell 352-425-5661, email [spepp336@yahoo.com](mailto:spepp336@yahoo.com).

April 8 (Wednesday) Bird Trip: Moss Bluff North Park, 16298 SE 95th Street Rd, Ocklawaha. Leader: Bob Smidt. Meet 8 AM in the venue parking lot. Walking on a grass berm. Entrance Fee \$7 per vehicle. Then drive to South Park to check trees for Warblers. Yes Restroom.

April 18 (Saturday) Monthly Club Meeting: Lake Okahumpka Recreation Center at 9:00 AM. Program "The

Everglade Snail Kite: Adaptation and Conservation in a Changing Florida" presented by author Hilary Flower.

### June 2026

June 1-30 is the June Challenge. Coordinator: Alice Horst. Join the fun to see if ALL of US can beat last years record of 103 species found within the three counties of The Villages. You can bird one day or 30 days by golf cart, car, or from your lanai...it doesn't matter. EVERYONE is important as you might be the ONLY person to see that particular species! More information to follow.