

**Four-Day Bus Trip to Wakulla Springs, St. Marks NWR, Ochlockonee River Park,  
Tall Timbers Research Station  
January 23-26, 2018 “A Top Spot in Florida Birding”**

Join us for what is sure to be a fun and educational adventure birding at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge/Wakulla Springs/Ochlockonee State Park and Tall Timbers located in the Panhandle of Florida. We will mix four days of great birding with fine dining, and exploration of Panhandle birding hot spots. In addition, we will search for the elusive Red-cockaded Woodpecker at Ochlockonee River SP and Tall Timbers. We have the opportunity to ride on trailers through forests to observe the winter bird scene. Near an activity area where an attempt was made to locate the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in Florida (Choctawhatchee River area) is approximately 90 miles west of St. Marks NWR and the Apalachicola National Forest.

St Marks NWR is on the shores of Apalachee Bay, in northwestern Florida. Established in 1931, the refuge contains about 68,000 acres of salt and brackish marshes, hardwood swamps, pine flatwoods, and pine-oak uplands. At least 318 bird species have been reported in the area. St Marks is truly a US birding hotspot.

Edward Ball Wakulla Springs Lodge and State Park is the historic place our group will stay during the three nights of the trip. “Humans have occupied Wakulla Springs for nearly 15,000 years. It is thought *Wakulla* means ‘river of crying bird’ or ‘strange and mysterious waters.’ Archaeological evidence shows intermittent habitation from Paleo-Indian times through the time of European contact in 1513.”

Check the itinerary below for details. If you wish to join us, please send in the registration form and payment by November 30. Your prompt registration and payment will allow you to choose the room you would like at the Wakulla Springs Lodge. First come, first to choose. The payment may be split into two equal payments for your convenience. The final payment is due no later than December 30. (Refer to registration form for refund policy). A copy of this itinerary will be emailed to all participants.

**Cost:** \$480.00 per person (double occupancy). \$600.00 per person (single room).

Cost based on 36 participants. The trip can accommodate 46 participants.

Includes:

- 4 days of observing the best of Florida birds
- 3 nights at the historic Edward Ball Lodge at Wakulla Springs SP
- 4 days of bus transportation, driver tip included
- Dinner on Day One, box lunch on Day Two, Dinner on Day Two
- 3 Complimentary breakfasts
- Admission fee - St. Marks NWR and Ochlockonee River SP.
- River Cruise (45 minutes) on Wakulla River, guide tip included
- Use of Scopes and binoculars to observe wildlife
- Expert bird guides and trip leader: Charlie Sample
- All 27 rooms at Lodge are reserved, sign up and pick your room

Additional costs (not included):

- Lunch on Day One and Day Four
- Dinner on Day 2 and Day 3

**Hotel Amenities:**

Bar/lounge  
Complimentary coffee/tea available on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Complimentary breakfast  
Elevator  
24-hour front desk  
Restaurant  
Shower/tub combination  
Iron/ironing board  
Free WiFi  
Hair dryer  
Ice machine  
No refrigerator or microwave in rooms  
No TV in rooms

**What To Bring:**

Binoculars  
Scope (if possible)  
Good bird field guide  
Camera  
Warm Jacket or Sweater (it could get cold and windy in January??)  
Knit hat and gloves  
Rain jacket or fold up umbrella (not expecting rain, play safe)  
2 pair sneakers or footwear (in case one gets wet walking in rain or wet grass)  
Would not recommend wearing shorts  
Smart phone or small computer and charger for email (WiFi in Lodge)  
Wear nametag (receive at registration on departure day) so we get to know you  
Small flashlight for nightlight  
Alarm clock

Don't need to bring lunch  
Provide your own snacks  
Bottled water provided

**Things To Think About: (without wind chill factor)**

Average Temp: 51.3 F  
Average High Temp: 63.5 F  
Average Low Temp: 39 F

**Bus seating:** Seats are not reserved on the bus and may be changed daily. If you have a motion problem and need a special seat on the bus, contact Charlie.  
Toilet on bus is for emergency use only. Plenty of rest stops.

**Why do we go in the winter?** That's when the birds are the best. In October, I visited St Marks to get ready for the trip. It was virtually empty of birds, no ducks or small wading birds. The eagles were restocking the big nest at the lighthouse area. Laughing Gulls were plentiful, just like Venice. Look at the Target List for all the possible birds in January.