

# Trails and Tales

## NEWSLETTER

*A forum for the exchange of news and ideas about conservation and  
the enjoyment of our valuable natural resources*

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Photo by Patsy Sweet

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### Regional Authors Wanted

The success of the Common Man Books series has sparked demand for more regional hiking and biking guides in our original format.

To meet this need we are working with authors to write hiking trails guides in Eastern Iowa, biking trails in the Atlanta, Georgia area and similar books for Bellingham, Washington and Lake Tahoe, NV.

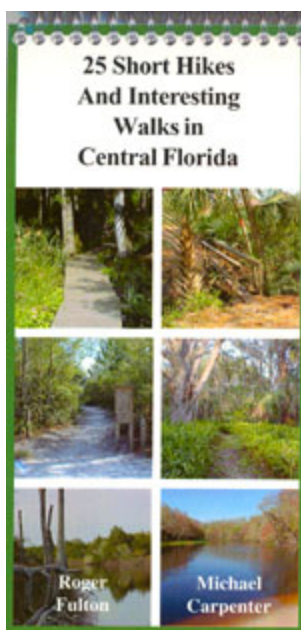
And, yes we can use authors in your home area. If you think you can write a concise guide for hiking, biking, wildlife viewing or birding in your home area, let us know. We provide the format, guidelines, editorial services (in case you don't spell so gud) and we get the books in print.

Once in print, you receive royalties and you can be the proud author of a book in your region of the country. There are no fees to you, just the work involved in hiking, biking or going to wildlife viewing areas and writing them up in our format. Tough work!

To propose a book, contact Marilyn Olsen at Common Man Books, 2024 Falcon Ct., Bellingham, WA 98229, 360-647-1785 or via e-mail through [www.CommonManBooks.com](http://www.CommonManBooks.com)

## Three New Florida Trail Guides Released

If you want to get out and explore the great outdoors of Central Florida, but don't know where to go...and don't want to work too hard when you get there... then this series of trail guides is for you. Each book contains more than 60 color photographs and has easy-to-follow directions from an Interstate highway. Each trail listed is described in detail and is rated easy, moderate or difficult. They are spiral bound on the top and designed to fit easily into your pocket or backpack.



The series is known as the “Common Man” series because the average man or woman can actually do these trails. If you can't, we tell you that you can't. Each book tells you what we found and what you can expect to see and experience. A log sheet is included for each hike so you can record your experiences.

The retail price for each book in the series is \$21.95 plus S&H. For additional information, or to order, go to: [www.commonmanbooks.com](http://www.commonmanbooks.com) If you prefer, you may also call, toll free, 877-429-3651 to talk or order.

## On The Internet

Want to know about endangered species in your area? Simply go to [www.enature.com](http://www.enature.com) and search on their extensive database. They also have many other features for the nature lover.

**Hiking:** Check out [www.americanhiking.org](http://www.americanhiking.org)

**Biking:** Check out the Daytona Beach Bike Club's webpage at: <http://home.earthlink.net/~dthigdon/daytonaclub/>

**Birding:** Looking for a birding spotting scope? Go to [www.optics4birding.com](http://www.optics4birding.com)

## Questions Answered

**Q:** What exactly do you mean by the term "wildlife viewing"?

**A:** That's a broad term that encompasses getting out and viewing all types of wildlife. It's another excuse to get outside, go for a walk and see something that most "city folk" will never see.

Many people seek out birds that are fairly common in any rural, and even city, environment. But where you find birds you may also find rabbits, otters, beaver, foxes, bobcats, deer, bear and all sorts of amphibians and reptiles (...whether you want to or not!).

So whether you are looking for the elusive Gopher Tortoise in Florida, or the elusive beaver in Northern New York, it's just a fun day out in the wild. Enjoy the fresh air, the scenery and the day. If you happen to see a bit of wildlife along the way, consider it a great day!

If you don't see wildlife, consider it a great day to be outdoors in the sunshine and fresh air of the natural world!

## Man and Nature

Man has devised a variety of structures that you can climb up into or hide behind to view wildlife. These towers and blinds give you a better view of the wildlife and the area than you would normally be able to see without them.

Here is an example of a tower equipped with a viewing scope. This was erected by the West Volusia Audubon Society (FL) so that the public could view the birds and other wildlife at Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge near DeLeon Springs, Florida.



## Sponsorship

*Trails and Tales* is sponsored and published by Common Man Books, 2024 Falcon court, Bellingham, WA 98229, 877-429-3651, [www.CommonManBooks.com](http://www.CommonManBooks.com)

The goal of *Trails and Tales* is to promote recreational use of the outdoors, and to promote the conservation of our natural resources for future generations.

Material for possible inclusion in this newsletter should be sent to the editors at P.O. Box 123, Alexandria Bay, NY 13607.

This newsletter is now going to be published quarterly. It is now free to our customers and friends online through [www.commonmanbooks.com](http://www.commonmanbooks.com) or through [www.RogerFulton.com](http://www.RogerFulton.com).

## Featured Critters: Birds of Prey



### General Info:

So what is a bird of prey (or raptor as they are commonly called)? They are predatory birds that hunt and kill other animals for food. They prey on fish, small mammals, snakes and lizards, depending on the species. They are fast in the air, keen of sight and hearing and have strong feet with sharp talons for attacking, holding and killing their prey. Their sharp, powerful and curved beaks are designed to tear apart flesh to provide them with a meal. They are critical in controlling certain populations including rats, mice, snakes and insects.

The raptors include falcons, hawks, kites, caracara and the majestic eagle. Some stalk their prey on the ground, others from the air. The osprey flies over lakes and ponds spotting fish near the surface, then swoops down and grasps them with his mighty talons and flies to a high tree to finish off his prey. Watching an osprey gracefully fly and hunt is a fascinating experience.

### Where they live:

Raptors can be found in nearly every type of habitat. Eagles tend to frequent coastal beaches, marshes, pine woods and even urban areas. Ospreys need high nests near fresh water since their primary

food is fish. Other species live in agricultural areas where there is a good supply of mice and other rodents. Most raptors roost in trees. The burrowing owl is an exception to this rule.

### What they eat:

Each species has its own special foods. The red-tailed hawk will eat rodents, snakes, insects and squirrels. The great horned owl prefers birds, mammals and insects. The Cooper's Hawk prefers small birds. And the eagle will eat most anything including fish, birds, small mammals and carrion.



### Interesting facts:

Owls are primarily nocturnal hunters and are seldom seen by the average person. They hide in dark holes in trees by day and hunt at night. Most have keen hearing and night vision. They can hear a mouse running on the ground, can see it in the dark, and can swoop down on it in a matter of seconds.

Contact your local Audubon Society if you would like to view eagles or ospreys in the wild. They generally keep a listing of local sites where you are most likely to see them. As for the other species, stay alert and observant as you walk along your local trails. More birds of prey will see you than you will see them. Aren't you glad they're not bigger than you?

## Featured Trails

### Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge DeLeon Springs, Florida



In our three Central Florida hiking and biking books we have featured several interesting trails at the Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge. Located about 35 miles west of famous Daytona Beach FL, this is a truly wonderful place for the nature lover.

Although the refuge is more than 16,000 acres, the best part is the 450 acres of managed ponds that give refuge to many species of indigenous and migrating birds. In addition there are dozens of species of mammals, amphibians and reptiles.

And, you can see them up close as you hike or bike along the dikes of the ponds. Exotic birds and animals, including alligators will be only yards away, yet, rest assured that you are pretty safe. But there is some small element of risk since it is a wild environment.

#### **What you may see:**

Driving in you may see wild turkeys, whitetail deer and random critters. Once you are on the dikes, you may see wading birds such as glossy ibis, white ibis, great blue heron, little blue heron, snowy egret, great egret, limpkin,

common moorhen, coots, and sandhill cranes. You may also see marsh rabbits, otters, raccoons, alligators and snakes.



#### **How to get there:**

Although the refuge can be reached from I-4 or I-95, we have included the easiest directions from I-95. Take Exit 268, Ormond Beach, and travel west on Route 40 for about 20 miles to Barberville. Turn left at the red light and go south on Route 17 for about 6.5 miles to DeLeon Springs. Take a right on W. Retta Street. At the 1<sup>st</sup> stop sign turn left onto Grand Ave. Go about .6 miles and take a right on Mud Lake Road. Continue straight on Mud Lake Road for about 1 mile, even though the road turns to dirt. You will cross a railroad track on your way, (be sure to stop and look because the trains really move on this stretch of track), and continue straight into the main parking lot.

**Caution:** Do not confuse Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge with DeLeon Springs State Park. They are only a short distance apart, both in DeLeon Springs, Florida.

This information has been excerpted from our Central Florida guides. More detailed information regarding facilities and cautions is contained in each guide. For more information go to: [www.CommonManBooks.com](http://www.CommonManBooks.com) or call, toll free, 877-429-3651.

## Future Publications

We have been busy at work seeking out hiking and bicycling trails in both New York and Florida. You can expect to see the following titles out by Spring of 2005 .

***25 Short Hikes and Interesting Walks in the Saratoga Springs, NY Region***

***25 Interesting Bicycle Trails in the 1000 Islands and St. Lawrence Seaway Region of Northern New York***

***25 MORE Short Hikes and Interesting Walks in Central Florida (Done and available!)***

(If you have an interest in any of these titles, you might get them early by going to [www.commonmanbooks.com](http://www.commonmanbooks.com) and sniffing around. Or, call 877-429-3651 and talk nice to whoever answers the phone.)

Long term projects include:

***Wildlife Viewing in the 1000 Islands Region of New York***

***Outside the Adirondack Park - 25 Interesting Trails in St. Lawrence County, New York***

***25 Great Wildlife Viewing Sites in Central Florida***

***25 Flatwater Canoe/Kayak Trips in the Lake George, NY Region***

And, we'll have many more guides after these. Stay tuned!

## Amazing Nature

The Sandhill Crane stands nearly 4 feet tall and is a graceful bird both in the air and on land. Yet when their eggs hatch there are one or two fluffy yellow creatures who emerge that make it hard to believe that they will grow up to be four feet tall.

But, we have proof in the following photograph of the fledglings that are destined to be majestic birds. Note that Mom is always nearby to protect them.



## The Last Word

*Trails and Tales* and the Common Man Exploration Series are intended to help you to enjoy and preserve the environment. Our five-year plan is to continue to expand our recreational and conservation efforts in more areas of the country and, as we mentioned in the lead article, to provide a mechanism for others who would like to join us.

Please send us your thoughts, your articles, your ideas, and certainly your feedback on any of our publications. We'd love to hear from you.

Your Editors – Roger and Mike