



Hendry County Real Florida Guide

Note: Colored numbers correspond with numbers on the map.

Choose from the options below to plan your trip in [Hendry County](#) or plan your own day-long adventure or a multi-day stay in the South Central Florida region. Savor the slow roads of five counties by taking the [Big Water Heritage Trail](#), a scenic auto tour route which links the assets around the great Lake Okeechobee.

See the [Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park and Okeechobee Battlefield State Park Multi-day Road Trip](#) for additional adventures.

Day 1, Clewiston, Florida

Start your adventure in the [City of Clewiston](#) (1) in Hendry County. Stop by or stay overnight at the Historic Clewiston Inn (2). [The Clewiston Inn](#) built in 1938, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. See the 360-degree [Everglades Mural](#) showcasing the unique ecology of the Everglades as it wraps around the walls of the Inn's Everglades Lounge.



Tour Clewiston and the shore of Lake Okeechobee with [Sugarland Tours](#). Learn about area history, tour sugar cane and citrus farms, and view harvesting of both sugar and citrus processing operations.

Time your Hendry County visit with the [Clewiston Sugar Festival](#), held annually the second Friday and Saturday in April or the annual spring [Big "O" Birding Festival](#). The birding festival showcases the 250 migratory and resident birds located in rural South Central Florida and some of the county's [Great Florida Birding & Wildlife Trail](#) sites such as [Dinner Island Ranch Wildlife Management Area](#) (WMA), [Okaloacoochee Slough WMA](#) and [State Forest](#), [Spirit-of-](#)



[the-Wild WMA](#), and [Stormwater Treatment Area #5](#) (STA5).

Dinner Island Ranch WMA (3), located 29 miles southwest of Clewiston is 34-square miles of pastures, sloughs, pine flatwoods and oak hammocks. This public land area is open year-round, features hiking, biking, horseback riding, camping (two designated areas), and scenic drives on unpaved roads. All roads offer great scenery and abundant wildlife. Wading birds of all types— ibis, herons, egrets, wood storks, roseate spoonbills - as well as Florida sandhill cranes, crested caracaras, kestrels and white-tailed deer are common.

The location name may not entice you, but the wildlife will. STA5 (4), a man-made wetland complex built to help protect Florida's Everglades, is one of the state's top birding destinations. Located one mile east of Clewiston, more than 200 species have been spotted in this remote site, including the roseate spoonbill, peregrine falcon, purple gallinule, and black-bellied whistling duck. STA5 is open to the public during daylight hours on Fridays, Saturdays, and Mondays year-round, and on Sundays except during posted duck-harvesting days in fall and winter. The best way to visit is via one of the 25 [Hendry-Glades Audubon Society](#) guided tours offered throughout the year. In addition to the guided tours, you can hike or bike the 18 miles of trails. Motorized vehicles are allowed only during driving trips with the Audubon tours.

Other options in the area: For long-distance hikers, the [Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail](#) (LOST) is designated as a part of the larger [Florida National Scenic Trail](#) (FNST). [Okeechobee West](#) is 56.5 miles of LOST starting in the town of Okeechobee, south through the towns of Lakeport and Moore Haven in Glades County, to the town of Clewiston in Hendry County. This mileage is divided into five segments, with panoramic views of prairie, marshland, cattle ranches and sugar cane fields, and there are magnificent views of sunrises and sunsets over Lake Okeechobee. The segment from the town of Moore Haven to Clewiston is 11.9 miles and the segment from Clewiston to the City of South Bay in Palm Beach County is nine miles.





Day 2, LaBelle

From Clewiston it is an approximately 30 minute drive west to the town of [LaBelle \(5\)](#), on the Caloosahatchee River in Hendry County. In May of 1923, the Florida Legislature created Hendry County named for early resident and "Cattle King of South Florida" Captain Francis A. Hendry with LaBelle as its county seat. While in-town, make time to visit the LaBelle Heritage Museum ([6](#)) and the [LaBelle Nature Park \(7\)](#). This small park sits on a bluff along the river and a tributary, and includes several habitats along its deeply shaded trail system. There are many cross trails and loop trails inside the Nature Park. The outer loop is only half a mile, but utilizing the broad variety of trails through the hammocks, you can walk a good mile through the park.

LaBelle hosts the annual February [Swamp Cabbage Festival](#), featuring a rodeo, country dance, auto show, 5K run, and fishing tournament. Other festivals include the annual [Hendry County Fair](#) held in early February. Enjoy the parade, livestock show, beauty pageants, exhibits, and midway entertainment.

Located a 21 minute drive south of LaBelle on County Road 832, is the [Okaloacoochee Slough WMA](#) and [State Forest \(8\)](#) one of the largest state forests in South Florida. This pristine forest covers 32,039 acres and is one of the few places in South Florida in which the pre-Columbian landscape can be observed. Visitors can hike, bike, camp and horseback ride on unpaved roads. The area was logged in the early 1900s for making railroad ties and then used as a cattle ranch before being bought by the state. At one time there was even an oil well on the property. The unique natural system now is the roaming area for Florida panther, black bear, sandhill crane, wood stork, and gopher tortoise.



Twelve miles north of the town of LaBelle is the [Spirit-of-the-Wild WMA \(9\)](#). Its 7,487 acres are a part of a growing mosaic of conservation lands undergoing long term restoration to benefit the Florida panther, Florida black bear and other protected species. Recreational opportunities include wildlife viewing, hiking, biking, horseback riding, and scenic driving on unpaved roads.



Day 3, Big Cypress Reservation

The [Big Cypress Indian Reservation](#) (10) is in southeastern Hendry County approximately 45 minutes from Clewiston and one hour south of LaBelle. This Reservation features a "wild" look at Florida through the eyes, food, and wild scenery of the Seminole Indian Tribe. You may camp, take swamp buggy rides, guided hikes and horseback riding, participate in storytelling, wildlife shows, and eat here or just take a day tour. For more information call 800-949-6101 or 813-983-6102.



The [Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum](#) (11) is a place to learn about the history and cultural traditions of the Seminole people. The swamp boardwalk educates visitors about medicinal plants and leads to a Seminole camp.

The [Billie Swamp Safari](#) (12) features airboat rides, the [Swamp Water Café](#), swamp buggy tours, venomous snake shows, bird and reptile exhibits, and swamp critter show. Sleeping accommodations include options such as rustic [native-style chickees](#) (thatched roof dwellings) to a full service [RV campground](#).



Other options in the area: For hikers, the [FNST segment through the Big Cypress Seminole Reservation](#) is 11.1 miles long and arrangements must be made in advance by contacting the [Florida Trail Association](#) at 877-HIKE-FLA to ensure passage.

