

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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News Release

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Outer Banks of North Carolina offers Photography, Birding, Paddling, and More!

The Wings Over Water Wildlife Festival, a six-day celebration of the wild side of the Outer Banks region of North Carolina, is set for Nov. 3 through 8.

As always, the festival includes a wide variety of programs and this year -- due to popular demand -- there are an increased number of photography programs to be taught by professionals. Classes have been designed for both the skilled and not-so-practiced, as well as some programs for children and/or families.

Birding, natural history, and paddling are just some of the other types of programs planned for the festival which spans Veteran's Day weekend.

The regions offers some of the country's best paddling for canoe and kayak enthusiasts. From tannin-fed cypress swamps to endless marsh mazes, it is possible to paddle the region for a lifetime yet still study charts at night, discovering unexplored areas.

Registration currently is open for an assortment of water trips escorted by leaders who are familiar with the various areas. Physical demands range from open water with wind exposure, to short distances with excellent wind protection.

Several different paddling trips are planned and include the Kitty Hawk Bay Sunset Kayak Tour that will allow participants to enjoy a classic Carolina sunset over the bay while navigating through tall cord grass fields and listening for the mysterious sounds of the night marsh.

The Backcountry Expedition combines "off-road" four-wheel-drive and kayaking into an eco-tour that explores 30 miles of beach and backcountry lanes by SUV to paddle the northern Currituck waterways from inside the Spanish Mustang Reserve. Trained naturalists discuss local ecology, history and shore life.

Upper Milltail Creek Canoe Trip allows canoeists to explore the narrow, winding creek through the heart of Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. Sheltered paddling gives participants a close look at the wildlife that calls the Refuge home, including Pileated Woodpeckers, river otter, and a variety

of reptiles and amphibians.

This year's keynote dinner will be held in the Museum and Grand Mall at Roanoke Island Festival Park. Catered by Kelly's Restaurant, the keynote address will be presented by Mark Buckler, award-winning nature photographer. The cost of the keynote dinner is \$35 and registration is required. Dinner includes beer, wine and nonalcoholic beverages.

This festival is traditionally set during the shoulder season when rates are lower for accommodations, traffic is light and the weather is mild.

To learn more about the Wings Over Water Wildlife Festival call 252-216-9464 or go to www.wingsoverwater.org.