



**Get Outdoors Florida!** is a coalition promoting outdoor experiences to help Floridians have healthier lifestyles and develop an appreciation for our abundant natural resources.

For more Get Outdoors Florida! destinations and activities, visit [www.getoutdoorsflorida.com](http://www.getoutdoorsflorida.com)

# Summertime ... and the Livin' Is Easy

By Jennifer Sellars

**F**ish are jumpin' and the humidity is high. Hopefully Gershwin will let us get away with adding a little Florida vernacular here, but however we sing our songs of summer, they're usually accompanied with visions of vacations, outdoor adventures, and hot, sunny afternoons barbecuing in the backyard.

This seems like the perfect time to review a few home-grown ways of enjoying the summer season, since the thermometer is clearly indicating that it's already upon us.

Our area's web of rivers, Gulf Coast preserves, and thousands of acres of public lands make Tallahassee and its perimeter an outdoor adventurer's paradise with more than a few swimming holes to keep you cool. Here are a few of my favorites.

The wilds of Bald Point State Park will have you packing your birding books and field glasses. Situated on Alligator Point where Ochlockonee Bay meets Apalachee Bay, Bald Point is a well-known destination for birding and wildlife viewing. Swimming, sunbathing, fishing, canoeing, kayaking, hiking, windsurfing, picnicking, and bicycling are also popular activities. Nearby Ochlockonee River State Park offers another "old Florida" field trip only a few miles south of Sopchoppy.



If you're looking for something a little less wild and bit more botanical, head to Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park. These beautiful ornamental gardens were first planted in 1923. Considered a masterpiece of floral architecture, the gardens feature a picturesque brick walkway, a secret garden, a reflection pool, a walled garden, and hundreds of azaleas and camellias. Check out [floridastateparks.org](http://floridastateparks.org) for more information on these and other Florida parks.



For many of us, excursions will be limited to backyard adventures due to limited budgets or limited time off, but don't let that dampen your get-outdoors spirit. Many websites like [pelicanpete.com](http://pelicanpete.com) and [greenhour.com](http://greenhour.com) offer nature facts and activities for simple, no-materials-needed outdoor play. You'll be amazed how your own neighborhood offers forays into wild flora and fauna.

*"The perfect time to review a few home-grown ways of enjoying the summer season."*

Take some time with your friends and family and think about the songs of summer. Wherever they take you, enjoy the outdoors and remember, this season of easy livin' will be here and gone before you can say "Pass the potato salad, please."

Jennifer Sellars is the Public Relations and Marketing Director for Sagaponack Books, publisher of the award-winning Pelican Pete book series that connects children with nature. For more information about Pelican Pete, visit [www.pelicanpete.com](http://www.pelicanpete.com).