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Mother's Day at Wakulla Springs

By Jeff Hugo and Cherie Graves

On Mother's Day, take Mom outside to watch her wildlife counterparts raising their young at the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park. The many mothers along the Wakulla River labor intensely in their picturesque homes.

In May, visitors to the state park can experience the drama of the mothers who make the area home. Three osprey nests along the river boat tour route are active

with chicks begging for fish freshly plucked from the river's chilled waters. Great egret chicks in the rookery (a communal nesting area) plead for more food from mothers whose outspread wings shade them from the hot sun. Anhinga mothers dive gracefully to provide a fish dinner for their offspring.



Moorhens' bright red-orange beaks tipped in yellow beckon fluffy chicks to enjoy another morsel of duckweed, cackle to keep their wandering charges close. A mother alligator guards her September hatchlings. She has fended off great blue herons and other predators of her precious progeny.

On Mother's Day, the Wakulla Springs Lodge kitchen staff will be busy preparing a sumptuous buffet. Among the delicacies will be oyster casserole, gulf fried shrimp and leg of lamb. Homemade desserts provide a delightful end to the meal. Please call (850) 926-0700 to make reservations. Overnight stays can also be arranged. Wakulla Springs State Park and Lodge is listed on the Natural Register of Historic Places and is designated as a National Natural Landmark.

If a picnic is more your mother's style, a spacious picnic area, playground, a nature trail that winds along the upland wooded areas of the park and the refreshing waters of the Wakulla River offer a full day's entertainment for the family.



Moms may also enjoy a boat tour of the Wakulla River. The river boat tour takes guests on a 3-mile round trip down the Wakulla River and circles the Wakulla Spring, one of the world's largest and deepest freshwater springs. The tour provides excellent choices for meeting wildlife mothers of the Wakulla springs and river.

Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park is located 14 miles south of Tallahassee on State Road 267 at the intersection with State Road 61.

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