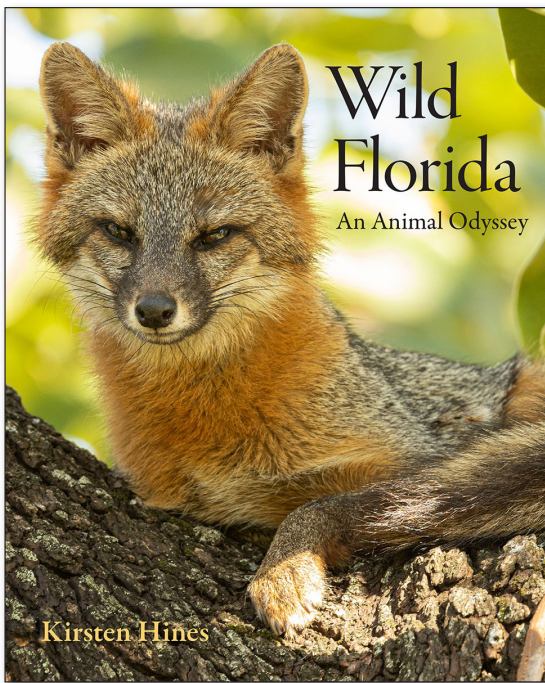


Advance Praise for *Wild Florida*



"Kirsten Hines brings you with her as she seeks out elusive subjects in Florida's most beautiful natural habitats. *Wild Florida* is a feast for the eyes and the mind as told by someone who understands that it is just as important to connect as it is to inform."—From the foreword by **RON MAGILL**, communications director, Zoo Miami

"Hines's images are both technical and artful, and the accompanying text is simultaneously accessible and reverent. Residents or visitors, newcomers or natives will all learn something new in these pages and find renewed appreciation for the ecology of still-wild Florida."—**JULIE WRAITHMELL**, executive director, Audubon Florida

"In this stunning presentation of images and vignettes, Hines truly captures the essence of wild Florida as a unique natural history wonderland. Spending time with this book will inspire people of all ages to appreciate Florida, to discover its countless natural wonders, and to help conserve it all for future generations to enjoy."—**JOHN FITZPATRICK**, emeritus director, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology

"Hines's elegant descriptions of the fauna interwoven with her personal anecdotes reveal not only fascinating—and often newly discovered—snippets of natural history but also a deep understanding of the anthropogenic processes currently shaping Florida's environment. Her love and passion for natural Florida and her respect for its people is evident throughout the book."—**MARK COOK**, scientific section lead for the Systemwide Everglades Research Group, South Florida Water Management District

"In this delightful book, Kirsten Hines highlights the incredible diversity of Florida's wildlife through gorgeous photographs and stories of nature connection. Her writing weaves together natural history with her personal encounters with the animals that call Florida home. By shining a light on Florida's native and non-native species and the myriad challenges they face, Hines asks us to consider what 'wild Florida' means and what we want it to look like in the future."—**GABY SALAZAR**, conservation photographer and social scientist

Wild Florida: An Animal Odyssey | Kirsten Hines | 978-0-8130-6981-4 | Hardcover \$42.00 | 328 pp., 211 color photos, 7 1/4 x 9 | Nov 2023

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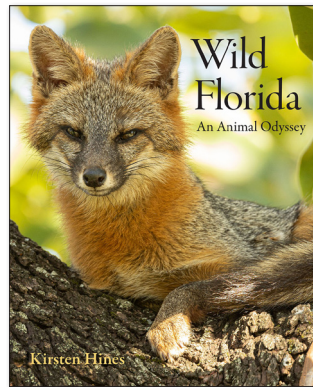
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About the Author of *Wild Florida*



Credit: James A. Kushlan



KIRSTEN HINES is a Coconut Grove-based author, wildlife photographer, and conservationist with a master's degree in biology and background as an environmental educator. Her writing and photography have appeared in various publications, including several of her own books on Florida's nature and history, such as the award-winning wildlife gardening reference *Attracting Birds to South Florida Gardens* and the pictorial history *Everglades National Park*. Kirsten's images have also been featured in numerous photography showcases, public art programs, and exhibitions. She aims to inspire conservation action through her storytelling, wildlife-oriented presentations, guiding and workshops, and through not-for-profit work such as cofounding Phobes Birding to connect women through nature, and serving on such boards as Audubon Florida; Florida International University's College of Arts, Sciences & Education; and The Kampong-National Tropical Botanical Garden. Learn more about Kirsten and her work at www.KirstenHines.com.

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Q&A with Kirsten Hines

author of *Wild Florida*

When did you know that you wanted to write this book? What led you to this subject?

The Press actually deserves some credit for inspiring this book. I reconnected with Meredith Morris-Babb, the editor of the *Attracting Birds to South Florida Gardens* book I'd published with UPF in 2014, at a Florida Native Plant Society conference. She said she'd love to publish more of my photography and encouraged me to pitch a proposal so I began researching what books were already out there and thinking about how my skills and interests might fill potential gaps. It didn't take long for me to realize that there wasn't a comprehensive photography book on Florida's wildlife and hence the dawning of *Wild Florida: An Animal Odyssey*.

What do you hope readers will enjoy the most about your book? What do you hope they will take away?

I hope they enjoy the journey! Delving so deeply into Florida's natural history ended up being more of an exploration than I'd anticipated. It gave me a greater appreciation for how incredibly unique and diverse Florida and its wildlife are and I hope my readers gain that same appreciation. Florida's wilds are truly a treasure worth fighting for.

What is your most memorable animal sighting?

That's a tough one as there were so many! I spent huge amounts of time out in the woods seeking these animals, often hiking miles or sitting for hours without seeing much of interest. So anytime I encountered something new, it was thrilling. The animal I ended up working the hardest to photograph though was the Florida bear. I literally spent three years stalking them all over the state, spending weeks camped out on a porch overlooking a yard regularly visited by bears (except when I was there) and one month to my book deadline, I still had no pictures. Then the floodgates opened—I found myself photographing not just one bear but a pair mating in front of me. That was memorable.

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Q&A with Kirsten Hines

author of *Wild Florida*

How long does it typically take to get just the right photo? What's the longest you've waited for the perfect shot?

There's a lot of variation because it depends on how cooperative the animal I'm trying to photograph is. Sometimes you only get a few seconds and you have to do the best you can. Even in those situations, though, I spend several more minutes (or hours) stalking the area in the hopes of another opportunity. The most extreme case for this project was the three years it took me to photograph Florida bears, as mentioned above.

How much research do you do prior to going out in the field? Is it important to know a lot about the habitats and behavior of animals before photographing them?

Background research is essential. Even to get a so-called lucky shot, you have to be in the right place at the right time and your "luck" increases exponentially with a solid understanding of habitat and behavior. There are some animals I never would have found or even known to look for without extensive research. The red widow spider, for example, is an animal that was brought to my attention by a fellow naturalist and required me to dig into scientific literature to even know how to begin finding it.

Do you have a favorite national park or wildlife sanctuary to visit for photography? What is it about this particular place that speaks to you?

There are of course many that I frequent and love, but the Big Cypress National Preserve was particularly meaningful for this project. To be honest, I hadn't previously spent enough time there to fully appreciate it. I was honored to be an artist-in-residence there while working on this book, though, and it was an incredible experience. There's something transcendental about sunrise on a misty morning surrounded by cypress trees. Beyond that, I also had access to the Preserve's researchers and their insights were key both to aiding my understanding of some of the state's most complicated conservation issues and obtaining photographs of some of the state's most elusive animals, in particular Florida panthers and Burmese pythons.

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Q&A with Kirsten Hines

author of *Wild Florida*

Who are your favorite photographers, and how have they influenced or informed your own work?

There are many photographers whose work I admire, but Art Wolfe is one whose work I was exposed to even as a child and probably influenced the way I thought about wildlife photography long before I owned my own camera. I always loved his ability to highlight the art in nature and it's something I strive to do with my images.

What's the best photography advice that you've ever been given? Do you have any advice that you'd like to pass on to photographers just beginning to take an interest in wildlife photography?

I attended a National Geographic day-long workshop in my early days of photography where it struck me for the first time that photography was visual storytelling. That revolutionized my approach to creating images. It seems like kind of a basic concept, but it can be technically challenging to achieve and is always on my mind as I compose my shots. That's an insight I always share when teaching photography workshops—I encourage beginners to go deeper than a simple portrait and to consider the story-telling potential of each shot. I also recommend that beginning wildlife photographers hone their skills in places where the animals are used to people—Wakodahatchee Wetlands in Delray Beach, Anhinga Trail in Everglades National Park, or the wild bird rookery at the St. Augustine Alligator Farm Zoological Park, to name a few.

Your book features essays about the animals you photographed and about the importance of conserving their environments. Tell us about your writing process and how it related to the process of capturing these photographs.

I started research and writing for the project immediately but in the end, I rewrote everything after completing the photography. Spending that much time in the field and with these animals gave me a different perspective, including about Florida's need for conservation. I experienced the myriad wonders of Florida's nature firsthand, but I also witnessed huge swaths of natural areas being converted into unsustainable developments just within the few years I worked on this book. It made me realize how tenuous the situation is for much of Florida and it inspired a more passionate and personal tone to the book than those early writings.

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Q&A with Kirsten Hines

author of *Wild Florida*

What are you working on next?

I've got several books in various stages of development, but my most pressing deadlines are for two that'll be published in 2024. The first is a photographic field guide to the birds of Florida that will be part of Bloomsbury's Helm Field Guide series. The second expands the landscaping for wildlife concept that inspired Jim Kushlan and me to write the *Attracting Birds to South Florida Gardens* book UPF published in 2014 to the wider Caribbean region. That one is titled *Restoring Caribbean Nature* and will be published by CRC Press.

What's the main take-home message of your book for your readers?

Florida's wilds are too often oversimplified and underappreciated. I hope my book will provide an opportunity for people to look beyond just alligators and beaches, to experience the natural wealth of this truly unique and diverse state, to fall in love with it, and to hopefully help protect it.

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