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## Giant Woodpecker Visits



The pileated woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*) is a large woodpecker native to North America. This bird inhabits deciduous forests in eastern North America and elsewhere. It is the second-largest woodpecker in the United States, after the critically endangered and possibly extinct ivory-billed woodpecker. Seen here at a tree on The Ink Pad property, this bird was looking for insects to eat. The Ink Pad is located in an unrecorded subdivision (although now it is counted as being a reported unrecorded subdivision) in the unincorporated area of Levy County more or less between Carter's Crossroads and Fowler's Bluff.

*Photos By Jeff M. Hardison © March 26, 2018 at 7:48 a.m.*



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## Wildflowers Bloom



Flowers abound in the Tri-County Area of Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties. Some mowing groups let the flowers go until they lose their petals.



Others mow them down. Roadside phlox (*Phlox drummondii*) is an annual that is not native to Florida, but widely planted on roadsides throughout the northern half of the state. It is native to Texas. The species is a flowering plant in the genus *Phlox* of the family *Polemoniaceae*. Those are the purple, blue, red and white (and some other colors) in this photo. As for one official flower of Florida, the orange blossom (*Citrus sinensis*) was designated as the official state flower of Florida in 1909.

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This spring, the flowers started showing up in February when there was a warm stretch. Then there were a couple of freezes, and so many plants saw an opportunity to bloom twice within a short time. Depending on potential April showers, that may bring more flowers in May too. The Spanish words "Pascua Florida" mean "flowery festival" and in reference here generally is accepted as making reference to Easter. Juan Ponce De Leon, the Spanish Explorer named the state this.



Florida is also noted to have received its name when in 1527 Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca was a Spanish explorer of the New World, and one of four survivors of the 1527 Narváez expedition. Among other things, they were looking for gold when they just happened to stumble across this beautiful land that was bountiful with plants. Florida

became part of the United States of America as a state (after being a territory) on March 3, 1845.

*Photos By Jeff M. Hardison © March 25, 2018 at 8:48 a.m. All Rights Reserved on All Original Photos Published In HardisonInk.com*



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## Hawk In The Mist



These photos capture some of the last remnants of winter 2018 in Levy County as a hawk sits on a pole (and then a tree) in front of a pond that is 'steaming' from the difference between the water and air temperatures.

**Natural beauty abounds in the Tri-County Area of Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties. Now it is a couple of days into spring.**

*Photos by Jeff M. Hardison  
© March 23, 2018 at 10:08 a.m.*

