



## Orange Audubon Society

The Voice of Conservation in Central Florida

Vol. 51 Issue 5 • January 2016

### Monthly Field Trip: January 23, 2016

### Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge Field Trip

Orange Audubon Society will visit [Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge](#), a 140,000 acre refuge near Titusville, known for its wintering waterfowl. The field trip will be from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. starting in the parking lot of [Parrish Park](#) on SR402 in Titusville. This is primarily a driving field trip along Black Point Wildlife Drive, but we will walk about 1 mile. Bring lunch, drink and birding gear (spotting scopes are helpful) and \$5/carload refuge entrance fee. Dress with wind across the marsh in mind. No registration is required. If you have questions about the trip, contact us at [rssmhk@gmail.com](mailto:rssmhk@gmail.com).

Mary Keim and Randy Snyder,  
Field Trip Committee



Roseate Spoonbill. Photo: Mary Keim

### Get Out Your Cameras! 28th Annual Photo Contest

*Florida Native Nature* is the theme of Orange Audubon Society's 28th Annual Kit and Sidney Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest.

Eligible photos may not include humans, human artifacts or introduced plant or animal species.

#### The deadline is now April 21, 2016

(postmarked by date). Participants will be notified of any ineligible entries and given the option with instructions for replacing such images at no extra charge. Winners will be announced and prizes awarded at OAS' June 16th program.

There are three competition categories: Youth—for photographers age 17 years or younger by May 19; Novice—for new and less experienced photo hobbyists; and Advanced Amateur/Professional—for experienced photographers who have practiced and honed their skills over time.

**Also new: There are bonus prizes for 1st through 3rd place winners photographed at Orange County Green PLACE properties.** Green PLACE entries may also be included in OC's 2017 nature calendar. To see Green PLACE properties, click [here](#).

An optional online photo entry system is currently under development.

So get outside with your camera and start shooting to capture Florida's amazing native nature! Contact me at (407) 644-0796 or [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com) if you have questions.

Teresa Williams, Photo Contest Chair

### This Month's Program: January 21, 2016

### The Big Year with Greg Miller

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) January 21st speaker, Greg Miller, is one of the three birders depicted in the film *The Big Year*. Greg's character was played by Jack Black.



Actor Jack Black and Greg Miller  
Photo Courtesy Greg Miller

Greg, who is Ohio-based when he is not leading birding tours, will be in Florida for the Space Coast Birding Festival. An entertaining speaker who has inspired many young people to take up birding, he will present to OAS thanks to sponsorship by [Wild Birds Unlimited](#) in Winter Springs.

Greg embarked upon his Big Year in 1998, while holding a job at a nuclear power plant. In 2004 Denver-based journalist and birder Mark Obmascik wrote his nonfiction bestseller *The Big Year* about the competition among Greg and two other birders who also chose to do a Big Year in 1998. Greg was the main birding advisor for the 2011 film. If you haven't seen it, there's still time. It is available at libraries and streaming sites. Learn more about Greg from his [blog](#).

Put January 21st on your calendar to hear the reminiscences of one of our country's top birders. Time and location in box to left.

Brook Rohman, Programs Co-chair

**Happy New Year from Orange  
Audubon Society!**

**Hope you are ready for a brand  
new year of nature conservation,  
education, and enjoyment!**

Orange Audubon Society programs are free and no reservations are necessary.

Programs are the 3rd Thursday of each month (September–June)  
and all but June start at 7:00 p.m.  
in the Camellia Room at

**Harry P. Leu Gardens**

1920 North Forest Ave., Orlando, FL 32803

For map and directions, visit:

[www.leugardens.org/plan/directions/](http://www.leugardens.org/plan/directions/)



**Climate: Energy Efficiency**



Climate change and its impact on bird and other wildlife populations are tremendous problems throughout the U.S., but even worse in low-lying, storm-prone Florida.

Energy efficiency is the most rapidly implementable and cost-effective strategy to reduce the greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. Data from the City of Winter Park's Electric Utility indicates that its low-income West Winter Park neighborhood has the highest energy use *per square foot* of any part of the city. Low-income residents do not have the funds to make energy efficiency upgrades, and their older homes take more energy to heat or cool due to air leaking through small cracks in a building's roof, walls, doors and windows.

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) has completed a year-long effort to demonstrate the importance of energy efficiency as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Funded by a \$64,000 [Toyota TogetherGreen by Audubon grant](#), OAS has worked with several local contractors through the [City of Winter Park Sustainability Department](#) to provide energy efficiency retrofits to low-income residents.

Of the 63 residents who attended energy efficiency workshops, 59 had energy evaluations, and 40 applied for and were given free weatherization, insulation, duct repair, ventilation repairs, and/or window film. Additionally 5 churches, a church annex, and nursery, all in West Winter Park, have been retrofitted with the aforementioned enhancements, plus lighting upgrades.

This Winter Park program was modeled after the [Orange County Homeowners Energy Efficiency Program \(OCHEEP\)](#) which provided retrofits to approximately 2500 homes, funded by a federal Recovery grant. OAS' program seeks to publicize the energy savings possible through these energy efficiency retrofits—something OCHEEP did not do. City of Winter Park gets its energy from Duke Energy but has its own utility for billing

purposes. The most valid reduction of energy use comparisons are made using the same months of preceding and current years following energy efficiency actions, and records from Winter Park Utilities will show billed electricity following participation.



Above: One of the eight Energy Efficiency Workshops that were part of this grant. Below: Flowers Temple Annex receiving duct test prior to retrofit. Photos: Deborah Green

The City of Winter Park is the only Florida semi-finalist in the [Georgetown Energy Prize](#), and the City's Sustainability staff were essential partners in this grant. OAS so appreciates the Toyota TogetherGreen by Audubon grant that allowed us to do this worthwhile project! Savings data to come.

**Solar Choice Petition**

Orange Audubon Society supports the [Solar Choice ballot initiative](#). We hope you will sign the petition, ask others to sign, and avoid the Smart Solar petition also competing for your signature. Please see the [December OASis](#) for a long explanation of how this amendment will help the progress of solar in Florida and how the competing ballot initiative is designed to keep things status quo. Thanks!

*Deborah Green, Climate Chair*



The purpose and dedication of Orange Audubon Society (OAS) is to promote public understanding of, and an interest in, wildlife and the environment that supports it.

OAS' education programs foster the recognition of the tangible and intangible values in the remaining natural areas of Florida and the world, and our responsibility for the conservation of the Earth's natural ecosystems and the services that they provide for the health of the planet.

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(407) 637-2525

The OASis (Orange Audubon Society Information Source) Newsletter is published monthly from September through June. The newsletter is posted on the OAS website, and a link is e-mailed to all OAS members.

Address Change or E-Delivery:  
Mike Daley  
[miked129e@gmail.com](mailto:miked129e@gmail.com)  
(407) 417-7818

JOIN OAS' [MEETUP](#) GROUP  
LIKE OAS ON [FACEBOOK](#)

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## Legislative Watch

The 2016 legislative session begins January 12, 2016 and lasts for 60 days until March 11, 2016. Contacting our legislators to let them know our opinions has had mixed results in the past year, but now is not the time to give up on advocacy. This session could be one of Florida's worst ever in undoing environmental protections if we are not active. Track specific bills mentioned below by using [this link](#) for the House and [this link](#) for the Senate.

## Fracking

A Texas oil company, Burnett Oil, has submitted an application to the National Park Service (NPS) to explore for oil and natural gas in the Big Cypress National Preserve next to the Everglades. Comments need to be submitted to NPS before January 4 via this [NPS link](#). Please comment!

There are 2 bills in the Florida legislature moving through committees to *allow* fracking in Florida: Senate Bill 318: Regulation of Oil and Gas Resources and House Bill 191: Regulation of Oil and Gas Resources. Both would take effect July 1, 2016 and *prevent cities and counties from prohibiting fracking*, even if they have already done so. On December 2nd, HB 191 was approved 9-3 by the Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee to move forward. However, as a result of our calls, many of those voting for the bill expressed concerns about aspects of the bill including: preemption of local governments to regulate fracking, aquifer safety, needing a more comprehensive study and legislative review of Department of Environmental regulations before implemented.

Senate Bill 166, Oil and Natural Gas Production or Recovery, sponsored by Senator Darren Soto with co-introducers Dwight Bullard and Jeff Clemens seeks to ban fracking in the state.

On December 15th, Orange County commissioners voted to ban fracking in Orange County, joining at least 32 other counties in Florida and nearly 30 cities.

Please join the Facebook group "[Ban Fracking in Florida](#)" to stay informed.

*Phyllis Hall, Conservation Committee*



Big Cypress Sunrise. Honorable Mention, 2013 Chertok Photo Contest. Photo: Kevin Barry

## Our Parks in Peril

[Senate Bill 570](#), now moving through legislative committees, will *end park fees altogether!* Then the parks will clearly be unsustainable and can be privatized. A [MoveOn.org petition](#) is a chance for you to object to this. The Facebook page [Florida Parks in Peril](#), organized by a dozen or so dedicated former park employees, can keep you up to date. If you are willing to make calls or send emails to legislators about this, please do so right away and if you have questions, contact Deborah at [sabalpress@mac.com](mailto:sabalpress@mac.com).

## Bad Water Bills

Two water bills, [HB 7005](#) and [SB 552](#), will be on the House and Senate Floor in 2016. The Gainesville-based Florida Springs Council, of which Orange Audubon Society is a member, opposes passage of both bills as they will not clean up springs. The bills provide taxpayer money to private companies for pollution and water use reduction actions the companies should pay for on their own. See [Florida Springs Council](#) for more.  
*Deborah Green, Conservation Committee*

## Please Join the Orange Audubon Society Central Florida Conservation Network

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) Conservation Committee follows Central Florida conservation issues and takes action on behalf of OAS. We need many eyes and ears out there to learn about environmental threats before it is too late for action.

Committee members will be joining other chapters in the Regional Conservation Committee meeting on January 10th.

If you wish to help but do not have time to join the committee, please join the OAS Central Florida Conservation Network to be contacted when urgent matters require writing to legislators or agency heads.

Please email me at [rbaird4@att.net](mailto:rbaird4@att.net) to be added to the email list. Thank you!

*Rick Baird, Conservation Chair*



## Christmas Bird Count Reflects Warmest December

As you may have heard, December was one of the warmest on record. The Christmas Bird Counts in Central Florida are apparently reflecting this situation. On Lake Jesup, there were none of the usual rafts of Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Ducks, and other wintering waterfowl. We presume these birds will join us later, when cold weather finally pushes them south.

**January 3, 2016  
Birds of Prey  
Identification Class,  
Lake Apopka**

Orange Audubon Society will hold the second of this year's Birds of Prey Identification Classes on the Lake Apopka North Shore on January 3rd, followed by a final class February 14th. The December class allowed participants to see most of the many species of raptors that winter there.

Before moving to Central Florida, class instructor Bob Sanders was co-founder of the Chimney Rock Hawk Watch in Martinsville, New Jersey. Bob really knows his raptors.

Each class will start at the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive entrance on Lust Road at 7:30 a.m. and end about 1:00 p.m. You can attend one or both of the remaining dates. Cost for each day is \$5 (Audubon members) or \$10 (non-members).

No early registration is required. If you have any questions, contact Bob at (407) 459-5617. See you out there!

**January 9, 2016  
Youth Field Trip**

Orange Audubon Society's next youth trip will be Saturday, January 9th at Lake Lotus Park in Altamonte Springs (1153 Lake Lotus Park Road).

This site with boardwalk should allow us to see wintering and resident woodland species as well as wetland birds. Parking is across the street from Lake Lotus. We will meet in the tram parking lot at 9 am. to catch the tram. Children must be accompanied by an adult.



This trip is free and no reservations are necessary. Loaner binoculars will be available. Please contact me at brookrohman@gmail.com or (407) 921-8008 if you have questions. Brook Rohman, Education Committee



*Our Native Birds of Song and Beauty. Photo courtesy of Nehrling Society*

**Open House at Nehrling Gardens, January 9, 2016**

Henry Nehrling (1853–1929) was an ornithologist and horticulturalist from Wisconsin who in 1885 settled with his family on 40 acres near present day Windermere in the German colony of Gotha. Acquiring adjacent properties along a lake he called Lake Audubon, Nehrling developed his Palm Cottage Garden. Nehrling was a founding member of the American Ornithological Union prior to moving to Florida, and seeing a need for a book on identification and natural history of birds, he published *Our Native Birds of Song and Beauty*, first in German and then in English in two volumes (1893-1896).



*Henry Nehrling. Photo Nehrling Society*

Nehrling worked with the United States Department of Agriculture to test plants from all over the world for introduction into horticulture, and his garden became a tourist mecca until Nehrling's death in 1929. In 1935 the Nallys, also horticulturalists, purchased it and bred various plant species.

The Henry Nehrling Society was formed in 1999 in order to save and purchase the property—a mission that was accomplished in 2009. A challenge has been that many of the plants introduced into horticulture by Nehrling and the Nallys have become invasive species. Volunteers have worked hard in recent years to remove invasive species while keeping certain species as demonstrations of Nehrling's horticultural work.

The Nehrling Society will host Orange Audubon Society in a special early visit prior to its 2nd Saturday open house on January 9th. The event will start at 9:00 a.m with an orientation to Nehrling's ornithological work by Gardens staff, followed by a chance for participants to bird throughout the property, including near Lake Nally (Nehrling's Lake Audubon). The trip is free, although a \$5 donation to Nehrling Gardens is requested. No reservations are necessary.

Nehrling Gardens is located at 2267 Hempel Ave, Gotha, FL 34734. Parking is across the street by the dance studio. OAS Education Chair Dominique Shimizu will lead this event and can be reached at shimizu\_wcs@yahoo.com. If you have questions, please call Nehrling Gardens at (407) 579-4621.

**Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive Field Trip, January 9, 2016**

Oakland Nature Preserve has requested that Orange Audubon Society lead several bird walks for their membership, which provides an excellent opportunity for us to share enthusiasm for the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive (LAWD). On January 9th at 9 a.m. Larry Martin and I will co-lead such a birding activity that starts at Magnolia Park, where carpools will be formed. If you are birding LAWD that morning and see our group, please share some of your sightings. Contact me at sabalpress@mac.com or (407) 637-2525 if you can help. Thanks.

*Deborah Green, Education Committee*

## Limited Edition Field Trip, Smyrna Dunes Park January 17, 2016

Located on the south side of Ponce Inlet in New Smyrna Beach, Smyrna Dunes Park can be an excellent spot in winter to see various coastal species of birds—gulls, terns, Common Loons, Northern Gannets and shorebirds including the endangered Piping Plover and scarce Purple Sandpiper. Wintering song birds also can be found in the dunes and mangroves. Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, and lots of Ospreys are usually here as well.

This trip is limited to 15 people and has a cost of \$10 per person per trip for members and \$15 per person for non-members. Reservations are required and will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis the week prior to the trip. For trip questions or reservations call Bob Sanders at (407) 459-5617.

## Genius Drive Workday January 17, 2016

On January 17th Orange Audubon Society (OAS) volunteers are needed for a 2-hour "Workday" in the restored cedar grove of Genius Drive Nature Preserve in Winter Park. OAS workdays began in 2006 and remain an important element in the success of a 2003-2008 ecological restoration effort directed by Bruce Stephenson, professor of environmental studies at Rollins College. Project goals included protecting and restoring the native and historical landscape of this 48-acre 'old Florida' landscape and providing a working laboratory in landscape restoration for Rollins faculty, its students and others.

In 2008 the OAS-nominated restoration project won a prestigious Better Community Award from 1000 Friends of Florida, as an effort to restore and protect an important piece of open space in an urban setting and as an exemplary community partnership.

The property is also an important oasis for resident and migrating birds. In September 2007 OAS began bird surveys led by Bruce Anderson. To date surveyors have documented 181 species. If you can help with the Workday on January 17th, please contact Teresa at [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com) or (407) 644-0796. Thank you!

## Flamingo Quest! April 9-10, 2016. Spaces Going Fast!

Join Orange Audubon Society (OAS) on an exciting trip in search for American Flamingos. The long-legged wading birds have found the shallow lake habitat they require in a restricted property that is one of the South Florida Water Management District (District) Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs), south of Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades Agricultural Area. Where they have been seen for the past 9 years was kept secret, until it leaked out last year, and the District asked Audubon Society of the Everglades to conduct weekend tours of the area.

OAS has booked Saturday, April 9, 2016 from noon to 4 p.m. for the 20-mile drive into the 15,500-acre STA-2. Please be aware that there is no guarantee that we will see flamingos, as they do move around. Fortunately, STA-2, which is managed for seasonal waterfowl and alligator hunts, has many other exciting birds at that time of year. To help us find great birds, OAS has contracted David Simpson, one of Florida's top birders, who has extensive field experience in South Florida.

The trip from Orlando is approximately 3 1/2 hours, and this can be a day-trip. However, April 9-10th is during spring migration, so the trip will include additional birding with David after we leave STA-2 Saturday at 4 p.m. through Sunday around 4 p.m.

Possible locations for Saturday afternoon and Sunday birding are Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, Spanish River Park, Snook Island Preserve, Green Cay Wetlands and/or Wakodahatchee Wetlands, to be narrowed down based on reported sightings.

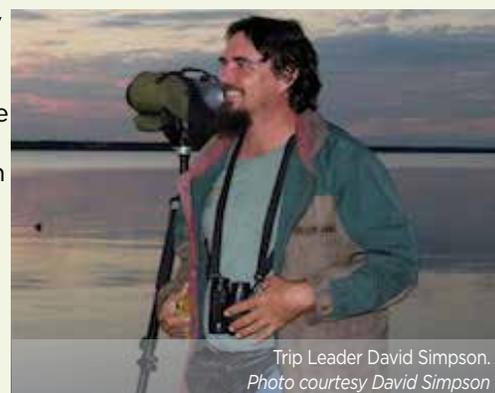
Cost for the weekend trip is \$40 for Audubon members/\$55 for non-members and cost for Saturday-only is \$25 for Audubon members/\$40 for non-members, which includes a fee for our guide and contributions for Audubon Society of the Everglades (ASE) and for OAS' future nature center.

With the trip 65% full and OAS inviting neighboring Audubon chapters to go, you should not delay in registering! Final registration deadline is March 31st. A wait list will be kept and cancellations will be filled through April 2nd. After that ASE's wait-listed participants will claim open spots. OAS will issue a full refund for cancellations made by March 17th and 50% refund for cancellations made March 18th-24th, after which no refund will be issued.

To register, first contact Teresa at [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com) or (407) 644-0796 to assure space availability; next follow instructions given to provide registration information and make payment by check or credit card, which will confirm your spot.

Participants are responsible for all meals, transportation, incidentals and for booking their hotel or campsite for Saturday night in the Boca Raton area. OAS will provide information by email to registrants on a discounted group hotel rate. Contact me at [sabalpress@mac.com](mailto:sabalpress@mac.com) or (407) 637-2525 with non-registration questions. We hope you join us on this exciting tour!

*Deborah Green*



Trip Leader David Simpson.  
Photo courtesy David Simpson

## OAS' Nature-inspired Merchandise at January Program

What says *Be My Valentine* better than gifts of nature-inspired t-shirts, tote bags, nest boxes, signs, mugs, caps and more? Orange Audubon Society will be selling these items at the January 21st program. Sales start at 6:30 p.m., so come early, browse and buy! Bring cash or check for quick check-out (PayPal for credit cards is available). If you can help with sales please contact Teresa @ [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com) or (407) 644-0796. Thank you!♥



## Birdapalooza Birding Weekend, February 5-7, 2016

The Lake Apopka Wildlife Festival & Birdapalooza is now a *weekend event*, perfect for birders visiting Florida or local birders wanting to learn more from well-known, expert birding leaders. Orange Audubon Society (OAS) has organized a mini-Birding Festival for Friday, February 5th with three trips on the Lake Apopka North Shore.

While the successful Saturday Birdapalooza festival, now in its 4th year, proves that people from Central Florida are interested in the nature of the North Shore, the Friday Birding Festival will prove that people from other parts of Florida and the country are also interested. In other words, birding is a key part of the ecotourism equation. [Download the brochure](#) providing details about the field trips and leaders.

You can sign up for the all-day trip or a combination of field trips. A minimum donation to OAS' nature education center fund is requested as part of registration. The all-day trip is \$40 and half-day trips are \$20 each. Each trip has a limit of 30 participants.

- Trip 1. Birding Lake Apopka North Shore, 7:30 am-4:00pm.  
Leaders: Lorne Malo and Andy Wraithmell.
- Trip 2. Waterfowl ID Field Workshop, 8:00am-11:00am.  
Leaders: Michael Brothers and Brook Rohman.
- Trip 3. Raptors of the North Shore, 1:00pm-4:00pm.  
Leaders: Gallus Quigley and Bob Sanders.

To assure space is available, start registration by contacting Teresa at (407) 644-0796 or [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com). You will receive instructions for making your donation online or by check. If you have any other questions, contact Deborah at [sabalpress@mac.com](mailto:sabalpress@mac.com) or (407) 637-2525.

On Saturday, February 6th, enjoy the free [Birdapalooza Festival](#), now in its 4th year, and on Sunday, February 7th, find other unusual birds on your own. Mark your calendars! Tell your family and friends and bring them with you!

## Volunteers Needed

Orange Audubon continues to be a co-sponsor of Birdapalooza on Saturday, February 6th from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. If you can help for a couple of hours anytime that day, please contact Loretta (407-886-2925 or [LNS-oas@att.net](mailto:LNS-oas@att.net)) as soon as possible. Thank you so much for helping us make this event a continued success.

## Interpretive Wildlife Kiosks Installed

With partial funding from a National Audubon Society grant and with contributions, both monetary and of time, talent and expertise, Orange Audubon Society (OAS) has been able to complete the installation of three kiosks with interpretive signage on the Lake Apopka Loop Trail and Wildlife Drive and at Orange County's Magnolia Park. This was a cooperative project that included Audubon, Orange County, the St. Johns River Water Management (SJRWMD) and the private sector.

The attractive signs include pictures of ten large animals, from Bobcats to White Ibis, commonly seen at the Lake Apopka North Shore. There is a Quick Response Code (QRC) associated with each animal that, using a smart phone or tablet with a QRC reader, brings up information from the OAS website about identifying characteristics and behavior of that animal.

Grateful thanks are extended to Reinier Munguia of Lake Region Audubon Society for doing the sign layout and supplying animal pictures; to OAS members Milton Heiberg, Mary Keim, Loretta Satterthwaite and Teresa Williams for web support or species information content; to Magnolia Park staff (Fred Wilson, Ronnie Cochrane, Jennifer Smith, Janine Campbell, Ron Liles and Tomas Perez) for kiosk construction and installation; to St. Johns River Water Management District staff members Rosi Mulholland and Maria Zondervan for site location identification and preparation; and to Paul Faircloth of Mosquito Creek Outdoors and Jason Poludniak of Blink Printing for contributions towards sign printing.

Further, thanks are extended to OAS Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest photo contributors (Mike Brinkley, Peter Christensen, Myrna Erler-Bradshaw, Kimberly S. Fulwider, Terry Godbey, Mary Keim, James Kochanowski, Barbara Hillerman Lieske, Diane Munster, Ruth Pannunzio, Jake Paredes, Rachel Pelham-Jones, Robert Stamps and Joyce Stefancic) whose images were used on the sign or species accounts. Thank you all for enabling a 1-kiosk idea to grow to a 3-kiosks success.



Kiosk installed along Loop Trail. Photo: Bob Stamps

Bob Stamps, Project Manager

## February 13, 2016 Sunrise Photo Shoot with Milton Heiberg

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) is offering a Sunrise Photo Shoot taught by OAS board member and renowned nature photographer, Milton Heiberg, to complement the 2016 Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest (p. 1). The instructional sunrise shoot, designed to improve your nature photography skills, takes place on Saturday, February 13th from 6 a.m.-12 p.m. at a location to be announced.

Registration is required and limited to 12 participants. The cost is \$70 for Audubon members and \$85 for non-members. To register please contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796 or mwilliams@cfl.rr.com.

Bring a DSLR (digital single lens reflex camera), sturdy tripod, adequate media storage and lenses, proper walking shoes and apparel and insect repellent, and show up about 15 minutes before 6 a.m. If you have questions about the photo shoot, contact Milton at (407) 658-4869.

For more about Milton's career as a nature photographer and teacher of nature photography, visit [this link](#).

### In Case You Missed the Program.... Members' Favorite Wildlife Viewing Spots

Attendees of the December program, Members' Favorite Wildlife Viewing Spots, heard about the Grasshoppers of Central Florida from Mary Keim, Florida Scrub Jays in the Ocala Forest from Milton Heiberg, Wekiwa Springs State Park from Kathy Rigling, Orlando Wetlands Park, Viera Wetlands and the Everglades from Susan Kirby, Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive from Brook Rohman, Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge from Melissa Gonzalez, and Everglades National Park from Deborah Green. It was an enjoyable holiday program.

Thank you to all who have already donated in response to Orange Audubon Society's once-a-year Letter Appeal sent to you in September to request financial support. If you have not already done so, we hope you will consider supporting your local Audubon chapter.



Sunrise Shoot at Orlando Wetlands Park. . Photo: Milton Heiberg

## IRA Charitable Rollover for Those 70 1/2 or older

*This notice is for members 70 1/2 or older who may have time to consult their tax professional now before the end of 2015 (or will plan ahead for 2016).* Thanks to a permanent extension of tax law enacted by Congress right before Christmas, there is now a special tax-advantaged way to support Orange Audubon Society if you are age 70 1/2 or older—the *IRA Charitable Rollover*.

Congress enacted IRA Charitable Rollovers in 2006 as a temporary law that was extended each year thereafter, but made the provision permanent as part of the Tax Relief Act of 2015.

Now you can make charitable gifts directly from your IRA every year while excluding the amount of that gift from your adjusted gross income (AGI).

The tax advantage to you is that the IRA Charitable Rollover provision permits you to make donations directly to charitable organizations such as Orange Audubon Society from your IRA without counting the distribution as part of your AGI and, consequently, without paying taxes on it.

IRA Charitable Rollover distributions count towards your minimum required distribution for the year. Therefore, you don't have to recognize the distribution as income for federal income tax purposes.

Although limits apply\*, this permanent extension of the IRA Charitable Rollover provision is good news for public

charities like Orange Audubon Society and for taxpayers age 70 1/2 or older who are required to make an annual distribution from their IRA.

\*Total combined charitable IRA rollover contributions cannot exceed \$100,000 in any one year. Charitable contributions from an IRA must go directly to a public charity that is not a supporting organization. Contributions to donor-advised funds and private foundations do not qualify for tax-free IRA rollover contributions (there are some exceptions). Distributions can only be made from traditional Individual Retirement Accounts or Roth IRAs. Charitable donations from 403(b) plans, 401(k) plans, pension plans, and other retirement plans are ineligible for the tax-free treatment.

The distribution must be made directly from the IRA trustee to charitable organizations like Orange Audubon. You cannot receive any goods or services in return for your charitable IRA rollover contribution in order to qualify for tax-free treatment and you must receive an acknowledgement from each charity for each rollover contribution.

This notice is not intended as tax advice. You should seek advice from your personal accountant prior to making an IRA Charitable Rollover as individual circumstances can have a significant impact on whether charitable rollovers are advantageous.

In order to benefit from a 2015-eligible IRA contribution, plan to contact your IRA administrator as soon as possible as some administrators may place a deadline on requesting transfers.

## 16th Annual Orlando Wetlands Festival, February 20, 2016



Orlando Wetlands Park. Photo: Mary Keim

The 16th Annual [Orlando Wetlands Festival](#) will be held on February 20th from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Ft. Christmas Historical Park (1300 N. Ft. Christmas Rd.). Parking and vendors will be at Ft. Christmas, and shuttles will take visitors to nearby Orlando Wetlands Park (OWP) for bus tours, birding hikes, trail hikes, wildflower hikes, bird banding and hayrides. The City of Orlando, Orange County Parks and Recreation and Orange Audubon Society (OAS) co-sponsor this annual event. OAS members lead nature hikes as well as nature bus tours through Orlando Wetlands Park.

OAS will be selling nature-inspired merchandise including t-shirts, tote bags, signs and mugs (bring *cash, check or credit card*). We need volunteers to help with sales, outreach and/or the kids' art activity. If you can help, please contact

Teresa at [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com) or (407) 644-0796. No experience is necessary. For OWP questions, contact me at [rssmhk@gmail.com](mailto:rssmhk@gmail.com) or (407) 851-5416 *Randy Snyder, OAS-OWP Liaison*

## Exciting News About Orlando Wetlands Park

The City of Orlando constructed the Iron Bridge Regional Water Reclamation Facility in 1979 under a mandate from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to consolidate several wastewater treatment facilities. By the mid-1980s, this facility needed additional disposal area. So in 1986 the City purchased 1,650 acres near Fort Christmas from a ranching family.

Early ranchers had put in canals and ditches to drain natural wetlands. A man-made wetland treatment system covering 1,220 acres was set up in July 1987. The artificial wetlands were set up with cells that could later be cleaned out if vegetation became overgrown. The cells had berms that could be walked on. When Mayor Bill Frederick learned of birders and other wildlife watchers' interest in visiting the area, it became Orlando Wetlands Park. Viera Wetlands and all of the many wonderful birding spots around the state at reclamation facilities were modeled after this pioneering project.

In the original land sale, the ranching family had retained rights to hunt from November 15th through the end of January every year for 50 years. However, the increasing popularity of the park for wildlife watching caused the City to re-think this arrangement. As quoted in the *Orlando Weekly*, Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer has stated "We did not anticipate how much birding activity there would be. I would suggest anybody that has not been out there, it is a natural beauty." In December, the Mayor and City Commission approved purchase of the remaining 22 years of hunting rights from the previous owners for \$400,000. After February 2016, the property will be open all year. Orange Audubon Society members are very happy.

## JANUARY/FEBRUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### **Birds of Prey Identification Class**, Lake Apopka

January 3, 2016

Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

### **Nehrling Ornithology Open House**

January 9, 2016, 9 a.m.

Contact Dominique at [shimizu\\_wcs@yahoo.com](mailto:shimizu_wcs@yahoo.com)

### **Youth Field Trip, Lake Lotus**

January 9, 2016

Contact Brook at (407) 921-8008

### **Limited Edition Field Trip**

Smyrna Dunes Park, New Smyrna Beach

January 17, 2016

Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

### **Genius Drive Workday**

January 17, 2016

Contact Teresa at [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com)

### **January Monthly Program: The Big Year by Greg**

**Miller** Sponsored by Wild Birds Unlimited, Winter Springs.

January 21, 2016

Contact Brook at (407) 921-8008

### **January Monthly Field Trip: Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge**

January 23, 2016

Contact Mary at [rssmhk@gmail.com](mailto:rssmhk@gmail.com)

### **Field Trip Birdapalooza Birding Weekend**

February 5-7, 2016

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

### **Great Backyard Bird Count**

February 12-15, 2016

[link](#)

### **Sunrise Photo Shoot with Milton Heiberg**

Location TBA

February 13, 2016

Contact Teresa at [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com)

### **Birds of Prey Identification Class**, Lake Apopka

February 14, 2016

Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

### **Monthly Program, Florida Scrub-Jay by Maria Zondervan**

February 18, 2016

Contact Brook at (407) 921-8008

### **Orlando Wetlands Festival, Christmas**

February 20, 2016

Fort Christmas Historical Park

Contact Randy at [rssmhk@gmail.com](mailto:rssmhk@gmail.com)

### **Limited Edition Field Trip**, Merritt Island National

Wildlife Refuge, Titusville

February 28, 2016