



### This Month's Program: January 21, 2021

## Shorebirds of Florida by Michael Brothers



© Marina Scarr



Above, Black-necked Stilt Afterglow. 2013 Chertok Florida Native Nature Photo Contest. Second Place, Advanced Category. Photo: Marina Scarr.

Below, Little Runner—Snowy Plover Chick. 2019 Chertok Florida Native Nature Photo Contest. Honorable Mention, Advanced Category. Photo: Kristian Bell

Most shorebirds that we see in Florida breed in the Arctic tundra. Only a few species, like Wilson's Plover and Snowy Plover, nest on our own beaches. Shorebirds include not only showy Black-necked Stilts, American Avocets and American Oystercatchers, but also amazingly confusing "peeps," like the Western or Semipalmated Sandpiper.

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) January 21st presenter — Michael Brothers — retired as director of the Marine Science Center in Ponce Inlet and leads natural history tours throughout Florida, the Galapagos Islands, Kenya, and the Amazon. He has been leading pelagic birding expeditions off Florida and Georgia for the last 15 years.

Michael is a member of the Florida Ornithological Society Records Committee, which evaluates reports of birds recorded in Florida and updates the scientific record of Florida's bird life. He is also the Florida regional editor of the journal *North American Birds*.

For the past several years Michael has led the final trip of OAS' North Shore Birding Festival to see the amazing gull congregation at Daytona Beach Shores.

On January 21st, 7 p.m. Michael's Shorebirds of Florida program will be presented Live on [OAS' YouTube channel](#) where it will also be posted for later viewing. Join us for another great program from one of Florida's most knowledgeable birders.

*Terry Piper, Programs Chair*

## Your Biggest Year Yet Orlando Wetlands Park January 2, 2020

With masks and social distancing and Sherri Brown as our expert trip leader, Orange Audubon Society will hold a fun field trip to help you make 2021 your biggest birding year yet. The trip is limited to 10 participants. Everyone must register in advance. Time: 8-11:30 a.m. Cost is \$10 for Audubon members, \$15 for nonmembers. Contact Kathy at [riglingk@aol.com](mailto:riglingk@aol.com) or (407) 488-9559 to sign up.

## Fort De Soto Park Trip

Situated in the mouth of Tampa Bay, Fort De Soto Park is a good spot for overwintering shorebirds, and trip leaders Larry Martin and Kathy Rigling have chosen January 23rd for this Limited Edition field trip. Plan for a long day. Definitely pack a lunch!

The trip is limited to 12 people and has a cost of \$10 per person 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 Kathy at (407) 488-9559.



Marbled Godwit at Fort DeSoto Park.  
Photo: Paula Duenas

Orange Audubon Society Guest speaker programs are the 3rd Thursday of each month (September-June) and all but June start at 7:00 p.m.

These programs are normally held at Harry P. Leu Gardens.

However, they will be held virtually until further notice due to COVID-19 health precautions.

Bird Chats with OAS are offered most other Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. Your one-time registration at [this link](#) enables you to be notified before each Bird Chat.



## Bird Chats with OAS

On Thursday January 7th the Bird Chats with Orange Audubon Society (OAS) team will focus on waterfowl. If you have never attended a Bird Chat, register [at this link](#) to be sent the Zoom link. To see past Bird Chats as well as past OAS monthly programs, visit OAS' YouTube Channel [at this link](#).

## Climate Change and Bird Migration

On October 10, 2019, National Audubon Society released *Survival by Degrees: 389 Bird Species on the Brink*, [an in-depth report](#) shedding light on how 389 out of 604 North American bird species are being adversely affected by climate change.



Wood Duck female and duckling. Photo: Peter Brannon

As climate change becomes more extreme, birds will be affected in many different ways. Higher temperatures are stressful for birds, and also make insects hatch earlier, which can disrupt breeding birds' ability to feed their nestlings with tasty caterpillars. In many places we will also see changes in rainfall, with more dry days overall coupled with more frequent severe rainfall events. Many of these changes are region-specific, so scientists are combining computer models with current observations to see what might happen in particular places. Take migration itself. Most North American birds migrate at least some distance from summer breeding grounds to winter foraging grounds. A 2018 study by researchers at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology found that as the climate changes, wind patterns will also change, which will affect migration.

By the end of the century, changing upper-level wind patterns may make it harder for birds that migrate through Florida to migrate south in the fall, but easier for them to come north in the spring. This is because winds from the south will become stronger during spring and fall migration periods. Stronger south winds will speed birds along on northward journeys, but slow them down—or even make them decide not to take off on a particular evening—when heading south in the fall.

What does this mean for the birds? In the spring, they might have an easier time getting to their northern breeding grounds, which is a net

positive. But in the fall, it will be harder to migrate south—which is of course negative.

These changes to wind patterns are going to affect different birds differently, but it does seem that they will affect birds migrating in the central and eastern parts of North America more than in the west.

How can we help migratory birds survive climate change and this future uncertainty? The most important steps we can take are as a society—drastically cutting carbon emissions and committing to habitat conservation and restoration along birds' migratory routes and in their summer and winter ranges.

But there are also things we can do as individuals. First, reducing our own carbon footprints and encouraging local and national governments to adopt climate-friendly policies. We can take other actions too, like planting native plants that provide food for birds during migratory stopovers and conserving and restoring natural habitat locally. We will need all of these steps to help birds survive the uncertain times ahead.

*Sonia Stephens*

## EPA Approves Florida Request to Assume Wetlands Permitting

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Andrew Wheeler announced the agency's intent to approve the State of Florida's request to take over permit responsibility under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, a job currently held by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Audubon Florida (AF), Orange Audubon Society (OAS) and other conservation groups voiced concern over the change, particularly since the state will not be increasing staffing for this work.

“At a time when red tide is fouling Southwest Florida's beaches, we need more eyes on Florida's wetlands, not fewer,” said Julie Wraithmell, AF Executive Director. Audubon hopes the incoming administration will provide vigilant oversight to ensure the program is implemented as intended.

*Susan Thome-Barrett*



Orange Audubon Society (OAS) mission: To promote public understanding of, and an interest in, wildlife and the environment that supports it; 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.

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The *OASis* (Orange Audubon Society information source) newsletter is published monthly, September–June, and posted on the OAS website. A link announcing new issues is e-mailed to subscribers.

Never miss out on OAS happenings. Add or update your email address by contacting [newsletter@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:newsletter@orangeaudubonfl.org).

For other membership information, contact: Mike Daley  
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Plants for Birds

**Creating a Homegrown National Park by Doug Tallamy**

In his 2020 book, *Nature's Best Hope*, University of Delaware entomology professor and best-selling author Doug Tallamy proposes that we create a "Homegrown National Park" through our home landscapes. Our country has lost the habitat that birds need and bird populations are down 2.9 billion in the U.S and Canada over the past 50 years.

Tallamy points out that 54% of the U.S. is now urban/suburban (41% is in agriculture and only 5% in parks). Our public preserves are clearly not enough to sustain biodiversity.

In specifying how we create this wildlife habitat in our own yards, Tallamy explains how you need native plants to support native insects, particularly caterpillars, that birds feed on and feed to their young. He has studied trees in the Eastern United States that are best for hosting caterpillars and will share this information with us.



Black-and-White Warbler with caterpillar. Photo: Sam Mitcham

Tallamy's call to action is to not only create native habitat in your own yard but to educate others on it and to convince your neighbors to join in. If you have never heard Tallamy speak, you may want to listen to the program presented in September by Audubon Florida and Venice Audubon at [this link](#). Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) February 18th presentation, co-sponsored by Seminole Audubon Society along with the Tarflower Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, will focus on the caterpillar connection and plants best suited for our Central Florida yards.

It will be aired on YouTube Live — search YouTube for Orange Audubon Society — the program will pop up on that YouTube site at 7 p.m.

on Thursday, February 18th — and will also be archived there for later viewing. Prepare your questions and let's use this program to give us all ammunition to expand habitat for the birds we love.

**Bird- and Butterfly-Friendly Plants for Central Florida**

OAS developed a brochure using information from Tallamy as well as several Florida specific resources in order to customize a plant list to make our Central Florida yards more bird- and butterfly-friendly.

Here are our top trees:

Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*) – trees in the genus *Prunus* are top choices for attracting fruit- and insect-eating birds; host for Eastern Tiger Swallowtail.

Cabbage Palm (*Sabal palmetto*) – Florida's State Tree; nectar for pollinators; fruit for birds; host for Monk Skippers.

Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) – fruit and dense shelter for wildlife.

Live Oak (*Quercus virginiana*) – oaks are top choices to support caterpillars and thus insect-eating birds; acorns are important food for larger songbirds and mammals; host for several hairstreaks and skippers.

Longleaf Pine (*Pinus palustris*) – pines are important to support insect-eating birds; nuts for birds and mammals; a nest site for many birds including hawks and woodpeckers.

Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) – maples support insect-eating birds; fruit for birds and mammals; early nectar for



Hackberry Emperor. Photo: Robert Sena pollinators.

Sugarberry (*Celtis laevigata*) – fruit for birds; host for Hackberry Emperor and Tawny Emperor.

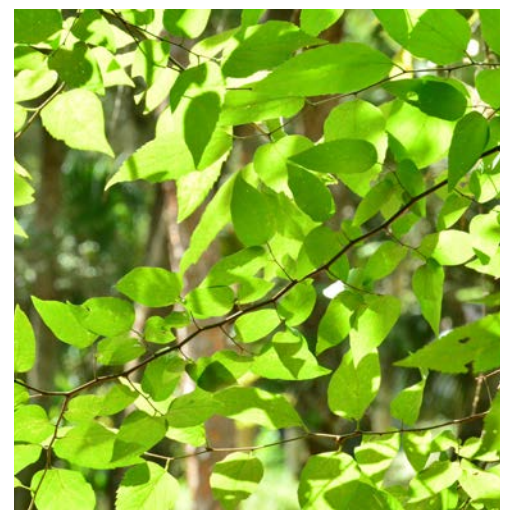
Winged Elm (*Ulmus alata*) – supports insect-eating birds; seeds for birds and

**Sugarberry *Celtis laevigata***

When you go to the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive, if you are a birder, you will have looked for birds in the sugarberry trees at the entrance. Sugarberry is a fast-growing native tree that hosts tiny caterpillars that attract insectivorous birds like warblers.

And it has wonderful sweet dry fruits, called drupes (fleshy fruits with a stony enclosure around the seed, like a peach). The fruit turns black as it ripens in fall and stays on the tree into winter, available to be eaten by birds, squirrels, or raccoons.

Sugarberry, a member of the elm family, ranges from southeastern Virginia to southern Florida, west to central Texas. Small, greenish flowers appear with the leaves in the early spring. Its elm-like form and warty bark make it an attractive landscape tree; however, it is not commonly sold, even by native plant nurseries, because it is considered a "junk tree."



Sugarberry. Photo: Edward Feldman

I planted sugarberry in my native landscape first to attract the specialist caterpillars of the Hackberry Emperor butterflies. To date I have not seen those butterflies in my yard, although they occur on the sugarberries at the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive. But I soon became a fan of this tree because migrating songbirds feed on caterpillars on it, as well as on the sweet fruits. This tree requires no supplemental water or care and is fast-growing. Try it!

Deborah Green



## Killdeer Drama

On June 12th when the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive reopened — after a three month closure while the St. Johns River Water Management D COVID-19 safety procedures — I discovered a Killdeer sitting on four eggs just off the Lake Apopka Loop Trail. On June 26th, the adult Killdeer was helping open the pip hole on the first hatchling.

I originally thought the adult was moving the egg around. Once I processed the image, I saw what was really going on. That day three of the four eggs must have hatched. Saturday morning there were three chicks all fluffed-up and occasionally walking/stumbling/falling around the adult that was on the nest.

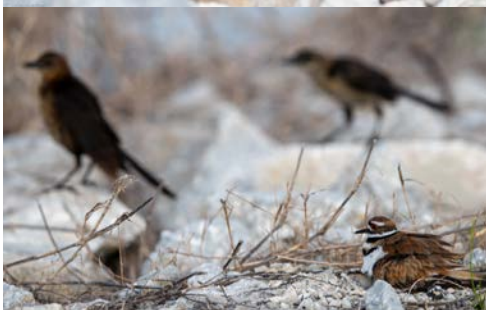
At most they traveled two feet away from the nest. The fourth chick had just hatched, still wet with its egg tooth, not able to stand.

Male Boat-tailed Grackles showed up and took turns testing the Killdeers' perimeter defenses. The two adults took turns or both went after the grackles and appeared to be trying to pull out their feathers. They would fly after them for 20 feet or so. Eventually the grackles went elsewhere.

Bicycles were zooming by and vehicles would come through in waves. The adults ignored this, and me, and were occasionally standing over the chicks (to cool them down?). But normal only lasted so long, as two female grackles showed up and landed simultaneously close to the nest. The adult just sat on the babies. No one moved, it was crazy... and eventually the two female grackles flew off as quickly as they had appeared.

So three chicks are running around and then they go back to the nest and crawl under the adult. Repeat. The fourth chick couldn't stand up for the longest time. Eventually it could stand but really couldn't walk around yet. What's a mother to do?

The adults determined it was time to head to the feeding grounds and leave the gravel nesting area. So the adults call to the chicks and the chicks start to follow. Off they all



Photos left column and above: Killdeer on nest at the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive and with three chicks hatched. Photos: Jack Horton

go (well, almost all) with one adult in front, three chicks in the middle, and the other adult bringing up the rear.

The littlest chick couldn't get more than a foot away from the nest, while the others were 50 feet away and heading West along the bank of Lake Apopka. Killdeer do not feed their young, rather they take them to a place with food where chicks must feed themselves. The chicks will drop weight if they don't get food (one study documented a 12% reduction in weight). So mom knows best, it's 24 hours since the first hatchling and time to head to a feeding area.

What happened next was quite surprising — one of the chicks turns around and returns to where the youngest was located. The youngest tries to get under the other chick like it would an adult. I could hear David Attenborough's voice chiming that "not all will survive and that sometimes bad choices are made".

Then another chick turns around and comes back to join the youngest chick (in photo above on left) and our hero (middle). Eventually the fourth chick and both adults came back and settled in as they had been earlier in the morning. I left with all four chicks under one of the adults and the other adult off somewhere. On Sunday morning all were gone.

I'm sure this type of stuff happens out there all the time, but it was amazing to watch it all unfold over time.

Jack Horton

*In case you missed it...*

## Key Elements of an Excellent Image



Prothonotary Warbler. Photo: Lisa Langell

To kickoff the upcoming 2021 Chertok Florida Native Nature Photo Contest, Orange Audubon invited professional photographer Lisa Langell to discuss the elements she teaches her students to improve their photographic images. She described the following six elements:

1. **Impact.** This most powerful element of an award-winning photograph is the “wow” factor, the element that catches a contest judge’s eye, the element that holds the viewer’s attention. Lisa polled viewers’ reactions to a series of her own photographs. Some had more “impact” than others, and she discussed why. The characteristics are various, but include extreme close-ups, clear focus, subject expression, detail, and emotional content.

2. **Technical excellence.** Lisa described this element as the quality of the image being presented for viewing and all the various steps to get to that point. Those steps include re-touching, manipulation, color correcting, exposure, sharpness and mounting.

3. **Creativity.** The creative element is the external expression of the imagination of the maker. It comes from the photographer him- or herself, his or her originality and the freshness with which the photographer approaches the subject. Lisa’s examples were from a field of poppies

in the American southwest. She tried to shoot the poppies in as many ways as she could, from above and below, with the sun silhouetting the image, with the poppies as the background or close up, or sprayed with water to emulate a dewy surface mist. Lisa reminded us of Picasso’s quote, “Inspiration exists, but it has to find you working.”

4. **Composition.** Composition is the design of the image, the element that brings the image together visually. Used properly, effective composition can be pleasing or disturbing, depending on the intent of the maker. It can feature the strategic use of contrast, or the use leading lines to frame the image — guiding the viewer’s eye toward the subject. Lisa mentioned the classic “Rule of Thirds” — a grid-like system with four strong “power points” that can be used to guide the placement of the subject within the frame to, usually, improve the image.

5. **Lighting.** As one might guess, this element has to do with the use and control of lighting. It refers to the dimension, shape, and roundness of an image, and using light and shadow to enhance the image. Lisa shared examples of her work featuring lighting from the front, back, side and silhouetting or “rim” lighting.

6. **Storytelling.** This final key element refers to the ability of an image to evoke one’s imagination through a subject’s action or gesture, suggesting there may be more happening in the image than meets the eye. Lisa’s several examples included subjects that were interacting with each other in some way.

Lisa recommended that wildlife photographers follow the ethical guidelines of the North American Nature Photography Association, which can be found at the [nanpa.com](http://nanpa.com) website.

She not only displays photographs on her website, [Langellphotography.com](http://Langellphotography.com), but also offers more information, classes, workshops and field trips. Lisa’s beautiful photography is really worth a look!

You can also watch the recording of her talk [at this link](#).

*Terry Piper, Programs Chair*

## Get Out and Take Nature Photos!

Orange Audubon Society’s (OAS) announces its 2021 (33rd Annual) Kit and Sidney Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest. The theme is Florida Natives Nature and the entry deadline is April 15, 2021 (postmarked by date).

The contest is open to all photographers (members of OAS’ board and Chertok committee excluded) who may enter one of three skill-level categories:

Youth—for photographers age 17 or younger by April 15, 2021; Novice—for new and less experienced photo hobbyists; and Advanced Amateur/Professional—for experienced photographers who have practiced and honed their skills over time.

Eligible photos must not include humans, human artifacts or introduced plant or animal species—subject matter must be native to Florida (References are Plants: [Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants](#); Birds: [Florida Ornithological Society Bird Checklist](#). Entries must also be taken in compliance with the [NANPA code of conduct](#).

Participants will be notified of any disqualified entries and may optionally replace them at no charge.

Entry submission details will soon be posted [on the Chertok page of the OAS website](#). Meanwhile you can use last year’s entry forms as a guide. Note that winning entries since 2006 are posted, to give you ideas.

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

*Teresa Williams  
2021 Chertok Photo Contest Chair*



Golden Hour—Great Egret. 2020 Chertok Florida Native Nature Photo Contest. First Place, Advanced Category. Photo: Claudia Daniels



## Hannah and Erik Go Birding Podcast

In my quest to find pleasant bird related podcasts to listen to while driving, I stumbled upon *Hannah and Erik Go Birding*.

If you are unfamiliar with podcasts, they are usually topic-based narratives that you can listen to using a smart phone or a computer.

I use Bluetooth to pair my phone with my car's audio system and I am able to listen hands free while driving.

Hannah and Erik are a young married couple who discovered the joy of birding together. They have lived in Texas, Florida and currently reside in Oregon.

Their podcast is aimed at inspiring and educating others about the adventure and fun of birding.

Their podcast is released twice monthly, though there are 2 years of archived shows that you can listen to.

A few months ago, on a drive to Georgia I listened to multiple episodes, passing the time with their light witty style mixed with informative and interesting bird-related interviews.

In listening I discovered that the couple previously resided in Florida and in their earlier shows they featured Central Florida birding spots including Orlando Wetlands Park.

My absolute favorite episode so far has been the January 19, 2019, in depth interview with Greg Miller, the birding legend who in past years has been a featured leader at the North Shore Birding Festival. In this lengthy interview you will be treated to wonderful stories and inspiring insights by Greg.

Recent topics have included a young birder's quest for 300 birds (November 19), Snowy Owls (December 3), and SE Arizona and Ash Canyon Bird Sanctuary (December 17).

Their website: <https://www.gobirdingpodcast.com> provides a nice assortment of birding resources as well as links and show notes for their podcasts.

Treat yourself to a change of pace from the radio and enjoy *Hannah and Erik Go Birding*.  
*Kathy Rigling*

## Budding Photographers — Mark Your Calendars

### Green PLACE Nature & Photography Hike

Co-leaders: Beth Jackson, Orange County naturalist, and Lee Ann Posavad, wildlife photographer. Ideal for youth, families, and others to get great tips on wildlife photography and learn about the easy-to-photograph plant and animal inhabitants of this Orange County Green PLACE property. FREE.

Location: Savage Christmas Creek Preserve, Christmas

Date/Time: Saturday, Feb 13, 2021; 9:00–11:30 a.m.

### Sunrise Photo Shoot

Instructor: Milton Heiberg—(407) 658-4869

Registration: Teresa Williams—(407) 644-0796

Cost: \$60 members; \$75 non-members

Location: Orlando Wetlands Park, Christmas

Date/Time: Saturday, Feb 20, 2021; 6:00–10:00 a.m.

Class Limit: 12 participants

### Youth & Family Photo Workshop

Instructor: Susan Kirby—(443) 994-9909

Registration: Teresa Williams—(407) 644-0796

Cost: \$5 members; \$15 non-members per adult;

Youth (10-17) FREE with registered adult

Location: Mead Botanical Garden, Winter Park

Date/Time: Saturday, Mar 13, 2021; 1:00–4:00 p.m.

### Chertok Nature Photography Contest

Deadline to submit all entries: Apr 15, 2021

Deadline to replace disqualified entries: May 20, 2021

Awards: June 17, 2021—(407) 644-0796



Young photographer. Photo: Tina Pruitt

*Audubon's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion...*

## Moving Forward with Knowledge

National Audubon Society has a renewed focus on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Orange Audubon Society has formed an EDI committee. In the *Audubon Guide to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion*, I was surprised to read that the terms *ethnicity* and *race* have no scientific basis but were historically created to support the continued enslavement, colonization and oppression of black and brown people around the world. European academics began to categorize humans into racial categories in the 1690s. German's created three categories: Caucasoid, Mongoloid and Negroid. The "science" behind the categories and the "hierarchy" assigned to these categories was used for laws and practices that prevented certain groups from building wealth, owning properties or participating in government.

Our U.S. Census of 1790 had three racial categories, "free Whites, all other free persons and enslaved people." The 2020 Census offered multiple racial sub-categories under 5 overarching headings: American Indian or Alaska native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and White. And two options for ethnicity: "Hispanic or Latino" and "Not Hispanic or Latino."

Even though the concepts of "ethnicity" and "race" are socially constructed, members of these racial and ethnic groups face real impacts by living in a society built on radicalized laws and stereotypes. Such was the case with the returning black veterans of World War II. The GI Bill's promise of an affordable home loan was not accessible to many who found their discharges were disproportionately labeled "dishonorable." Those who were able to get a loan (approx. 2 out of every 3,000) were "redlined" into less desirable neighborhoods where property values were low and quality community amenities were scarce. For white GIs, owning property in good neighborhoods helped build their wealth and the wealth of future generations. This was not the case for most black GIs.

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According to the EDI guidebook, language related to race and ethnicity continues to evolve. Terminology has shifted from “minorities” to “persons of color” (POC) and “Black, Indigenous persons of color” (BIPOC). When trying to decide what words to use, keep in mind the individual and the context. *Be as specific as possible and don't forget to ask the person, if possible, the language that they prefer.* An individual may prefer Mexican-American over Latinx.

PEOPLE OF COLOR (POC)

This has become a common term used when referring to individuals who identify themselves as members of the following groups:

- \* Asian/Asian American
- \* Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- \* Black/African American
- \* Native American/Indigenous
- \* Hispanic/Latinx
- \* Multi-racial or multi-ethnic

BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) is now being used to acknowledge the unique histories of African American and Indigenous people in the U.S.

Language remains fluid and these currently used terms, POC and BIPOC, may evolve as time changes.

It is very important not to label anyone – only use a term when a person has been open about claiming that identity. Do not make assumptions by how someone looks. When in doubt, ask. If a mistake is made, offer a heartfelt and brief apology and try to do better next time. Nobody expects perfection – but everyone SHOULD be treated with respect,

Make an effort, do your best and most people will sincerely appreciate your good intentions.

*Susan Thome-Barrett*



Trip leader Natasza Fontaine points out a Greater Yellowlegs on Birding for Millennials and Others trip. Photo: Deborah Green

## Birding for Millennials and Others

The North Shore Birding Festival trip “Birding for Millennials and Others” hosted a mixture of young birders and those birders young at heart. All individuals were welcome, from the first-time birding beginner to the experts, all coming together to connect with birds and bird habitat.

Our small group of twelve did a nature walk around the North Shore trailhead before driving out to Lake Apopka’s North Shore.

Our field trip leaders made sure everyone was engaged. When field trips are designed around younger audiences, trip leaders share their passion for the outdoors and their excitement becomes contagious. We all stared transfixed by two Northern Harriers hovering over the tall grasses off the North Shore.



Northern Harrier. Photo: Joyce Stefancic

Our guides’ collective knowledge about the landscape and wildlife’s use of the environment was awe-inspiring. Wildlife guidebooks cannot show you how secretive a Sora is, pecking away at the edge of the water, using the tall brush to conceal most of its body; nor can they display how a Savannah Sparrow utilizes the dense bushy bluestem when it preens. Each habitat has a role to play, each species fits into its niche.

Trips like “Birding for Millennials and Others” help facilitate an environmental ethic. To enjoy the outdoors we need to protect, maintain and conserve the ecosystem services that all creatures depend on, including humans. For example, without birds we could not have the beautiful landscapes that we care about; we could not have birds without the environment they depend on. The “Birding for Millennials and Others” trip opened my eyes to how exciting nature can be and how resilient its functions are.

Connecting with younger generations



Sora. Photo: Sam Mitcham

through trips like this can spark an environmental ethic within a community. Being out in the elements with people who are passionate about the conservation and preservation of habitats used by birds and other species is such a meaningful pursuit.

Field trips designed around youth engagement present a call to action: to adventure, to explore, to experience the natural landscapes wherever they may be and to share what we have learned within these places. Only then can we realize how connected we are to the landscape’s intrinsic value, and how other species depend on its maintenance, protection and conservation.

*Richard Valdez, 2020-21 Conservation Leadership Initiative Participant*

## North Shore Birding Festival – Big Success!

Despite the difficulties of holding a festival during a COVID-19 pandemic, Orange Audubon Society’s (OAS) December 2020 North Shore Birding Festival was an unqualified success!

It started with a great Thursday evening keynote on Crested Caracaras and the news that the Caracara Quest field trip had found a Caracara at the Kilbee Tract of the Little Big Econ State Forest Friday afternoon.

Several out-of-town trip leaders and participants were able to stay at the Wekiwa Springs State Park Youth Camp. There Virginia birder and trip leader Lee Adams heard the “peent” of an American Woodcock. On the Owls and Whip-poor-wills walks at Wekiwa on Saturday and Sunday evenings most participants were able to see or at least hear the woodcocks, which was a big thrill.

And on Saturday night participants were treated to an amazing “Get to Know the Night Sky” session with Derek Demeter of the Seminole State College planetarium. *Continued next pg*



**North Shore Birding Festival — Big Success!, continued**

Trips added to the festival for the first time this year included the Genius Preserve in Winter Park, Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge and Lyonia Preserve. With trip leaders and participants sharing their eBird lists, a festival list of 163 bird species was compiled, up from 157 last year.

Registrants numbered approximately 200, down from 300 last year, but expected considering trips were limited to 10 participants and quite respectable. With only six weeks from



Beginning Birding field trip at the North Shore Birding Festival. Photo: Deborah Green

start of registration to the festival, our emphasis was less on bringing people in from around the country and more on providing field trip opportunities for past participants and locals. One extended family with children

ages 7 to 14 took advantage of the Beginning Birding trip. Participant comments indicated that everyone felt safe—that our COVID-19 precautions were adequate—and they were able to enjoy themselves.

Comments on the trip leaders were almost universally positive. “We had some great trip leaders who were skilled and patient with new birders.



Brian Cammarano leading Wekiva River Birding by Kayak trip. Photo: Deborah Green

They were willing to explain field diagnostics and tried to ensure all participants could get eyes on a bird in the social distance environment.”

As festival committee chair, I was most pleased that we gave an opportunity to lead to several young “hotshot birders,” pairing them with experienced trip leaders, providing this addition to their resumes.



Luis Gles showing a trip participant a bird through his digiscoping apparatus. Photo: Jack Horton

The St. Johns River Water Management District’s Maria Zondervan and Brian Silverman supported our efforts. Trip leaders Jack Horton and Sam Mitcham led scouting efforts in the week before.

The festival committee members — Linda Gaunt, Kathy Rigling, Loretta Satterthwaite, Bob Stamps, and Teresa Williams — did a yeoman’s job, and we appreciate our volunteers — Cecie Catron, Cindy Hall, Terrie Liebler, Debra Machamer, David Marano, Terry Piper, Shawna Resnick, Mary Soule and Susan Thome-Barrett.

“I was impressed with everything. Especially during a pandemic,” said one participant. We are very grateful we were able to hold this festival and with such success.

*Deborah Green  
Festival Committee Chair*

**JANUARY/FEBRUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**Your Biggest Year Yet Trip, Orlando Wetlands Park**

January 2, 2021  
Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

**Last Local Christmas Bird Count: Clermont**

January 3, 2021  
Contact John Thomton at jthomton@hotmail.com

**Bird Chats with OAS: Waterfowl**

January 7, 2021  
Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

**Wekiwa Springs State Park Bird Survey, Apopka**

January 9, 2021  
Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

**Bird Chats with OAS: Programs TBA**

January 14 and 28, February 4, 11 and 25, 2021  
Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

**January Program: Shorebirds of Florida by Michael Brothers**

January 21, 2021  
Contact Terry at (321) 436-4932

**Limited Edition Field Trip: Fort DeSoto Park**

(Note this is a date change from brochure)  
January 23, 2021  
Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

**Birds of Prey ID Class, Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive**

February 7, 2021  
Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

**Great Backyard Bird Count**

February 12-15, 2021  
<http://gbbc.birdcount.org/>

**February Program: Homegrown National Park by Doug Tallamy**

February 18, 2021  
Contact Terry at (321) 436-4932

**Sunrise Photo Shoot with Milton Heiberg**

February 20, 2021  
Contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796

**Oakland Nature Preserve Bird Survey, Oakland**

February 20, 2021  
Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

**Monthly Field Trip: Ferndale Preserve, Clermont**

February 20, 2021  
Contact Larry at (407) 647-5834

**Limited Edition Field Trip: Lake Harney Wilderness Area, Geneva**

February 21, 2021  
Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559