



This Month's Program: March 18, 2021

Lawn to Wildflowers

Dr. Nash Turley co-founded the non-profit "[Lawn to Wildflowers](#)" to inspire people throughout the country to convert grass lawns to native wildflowers and make that process as easy as possible.

A plant and insect ecologist and Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Central Florida, Dr. Turley knows wildflower and pollinator biology, the ecological impact of mowed grass lawns around the nation, and the importance of converting lawns to native wildflowers.

Through interactive online and mobile app tools, Turley is teaching people how to identify pollinators, and he is enlisting the public to collect data on pollinators so we can better understand where they are declining and why. In this presentation, Dr. Turley will demonstrate pollinator ID and data



Lawn to Wildflowers.
Graphics courtesy Nash Turley

collection using mobile app tools.

The program will be aired on YouTube Live — search YouTube for Orange Audubon Society, on which channel the program will be archived for later viewing. It will pop up on that [OAS' YouTube channel](#) at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 18th. Join us for an exciting presentation.

Terry Piper, Programs Chair

Youth & Family Photo Workshop, March 13, 2021

Do you have any budding photographers in your life? Sign up for Orange Audubon Society's Youth & Family Photo Workshop to be held at Mead Botanical Garden, Winter Park, Saturday, March 13, 2021.

The instructor will be skilled photographer Susan Kirby who enjoys teaching young people — her grandchildren are accomplished photographers too! Limit is 2 young people (10-17) with one adult, total workshop maximum 10 people. Cost per adult is \$5 for Audubon members; \$15 non-members. Youth (10-17) are



Young photographers at Youth and Family Photo workshop at the January 2020 North Shore Birding Festival. Photo: Tina Pruitt

FREE with registered adult. The date and time is Saturday, March 13, 2021 from 1:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m. To register, call Teresa Williams at (407) 718-1977. For questions about the workshop, contact Susan at (443) 994-9909.

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.



Get Out and Take Nature Photos!

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

Any photographer (except members of OAS' board and Chertok committee) 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.

To check if your plant is native use the following authority: [Atlas of Florida Vascular Plants](#).

As to whether birds you photograph are native, consult the [Florida Ornithological Society Bird Checklist](#). Photos 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 guides. Note that winning entries since 2006 are posted there, 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 or (407) 718-1977 if you have questions.

Teresa Williams
2021 Chertok Photo Contest Chair



Migratory Bird Treaty Act News

National Audubon continues to work to restore the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) that was gutted during Trump's final days in office. The former administration wanted to exempt all industrial hazards from enforcement in the "incidental" death of birds, regardless of how avoidable or devastating. As an example, if this had been in effect, it would have meant no clean up funding for the catastrophic Exxon Gulf oil spill. Exxon's profit last year was down 31.5% in 2020, primarily due to COVID-19, but the payments for clean-up for the massive oil spill did not bankrupt or make this company unprofitable.

The Biden Administration's announcement that it would delay the rollback of MBTA protections was on February 5th, and National Audubon Society (NAS), which had sued to stop the rollback, is taking the opportunity to try to update and strengthen the century-old MBTA. Orange Audubon Society (OAS) is among the chapter signatories to this effort. Follow NAS' conservation efforts by [signing up for alerts at this link](#).

Legislature Convenes

The 60-day Florida legislative session is underway, and unfortunately it seems that positive environmental bills are not getting traction. Bills are assigned committees in which to be heard, and the committee chairs can choose not to hear bills — which stops progress forward. Audubon Florida policy staff are closely monitoring legislation and talking with legislators to try to create positive outcomes.

In Governor DeSantis' proposed budget there is a decrease by 50% of the amount of money dedicated to Florida Forever and Rural and Family Lands programs. Florida Senator Linda Stewart (D) and Representative Thad Altman (R) have introduced a bill in their respective houses to increase and stabilize funding for Florida Forever. Under the 2014 Florida Water and Land Conservation Amendment (now Article X, Section 28 of Florida's Constitution) monies for Florida Forever come from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund set up to receive a minimum percentage of the state's documentary stamp tax revenues to be used to acquire and restore Florida conservation and recreation

lands; \$906 million are expected to be available in the current fiscal year for Everglades, Lake Okeechobee and Lake Apopka restoration efforts, and to clean up springs.

In the Governor's budget presented to the legislature, DeSantis requested \$180 million over 4 years for the 'Florida Resilient Coastlines Program' that will provide grants to state and local governments to complete vulnerability assessments and fund local governments to make their communities more resilient to climate change. Audubon Florida asserts that Florida Forever conservation land purchases are part of resiliency.

Reptile Invasive Species Rule

Pythons, iguanas, tegus, and other invasive reptiles were introduced to Florida through the pet trade and have established populations in the wild—decimating native wildlife, preying upon eggs and nestlings in wading bird colonies and on other birds. The spread of invasive reptiles costs taxpayers and private landowners millions of dollars in damages and management efforts each year.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) on February 26th considered rules regarding these invasive, non-native reptiles. While some members of the reptile importation and breeding industry have been very vocal in opposing new regulations, FWC unanimously passed rule updates to go into effect 90 days after enactment.

The changes will include adding 16 high-risk non-native reptiles to the list of species with permitting and bio-security requirements. Current pet owners can get permits to own those animals throughout their lifetimes and permitted exhibitors will be allowed to maintain these species with new caging requirements. Python breeding will stop and owners need to liquidate supplies within 90 days. Tegu and iguana breeders have until June 30th, 2024 to transition away from those species. FWC will still have to deal with existing wild populations, but this IS an important step toward reducing new introductions. Over 2,000 people took action through Audubon Florida's advocacy alert. FWC expressed its appreciation for Audubon's support, which included comments by OAS' conservation chair 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.

Orange Audubon Society
P.O. Box 941142
Maitland, FL 32794-1142
www.orangeaudubonfl.org

President and *OASis* Editor:
Deborah Green
info@orangeaudubonfl.org
(407) 637-2525

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.

For other membership information, contact: Mike Daley
miked129e@gmail.com
(407) 417-7818

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

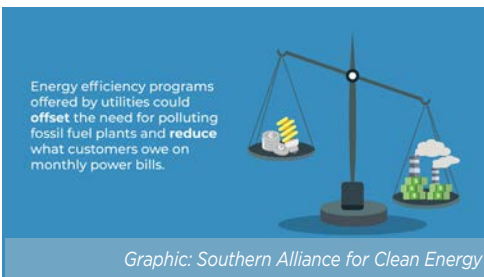
Orange Audubon Society, Inc. is a Florida not-for-profit organization, tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE, 1-800-435-7352, WITHIN THE STATE. FROM OUTSIDE OF FLORIDA CALL 1-850-410-3800. VISIT www.800helpfla.com FOR HELP. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. REGISTRATION NO. CH2330

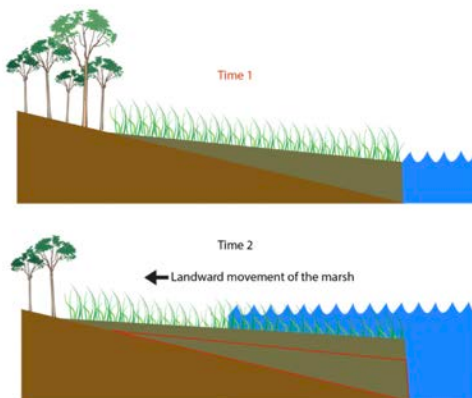
Energy Efficiency Standards

The Public Service Commission (PSC), the state agency that regulates Florida’s investor-owned utilities, is reviewing the methods by which utilities set their energy efficiency goals. These goals determine the minimum energy savings that utilities must provide through the energy efficiency programs offered to customers, which include things like rebates for energy efficient appliances or LED lightbulbs.

Florida’s utilities have some of the lowest energy efficiency goals in the country and the current rules for setting those goals do not incentivize energy savings. Audubon Florida drafted a sign-on letter to the PSC, asking that they expand the rulemaking scope for Florida Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act (FEECA) so that Florida utilities can better set and achieve energy efficiency goals. With a robust suite of energy efficiency programs, the state’s total energy consumption would decrease—and that would mean both lower bills for customers and fewer emissions from energy production. We will post updates on this issue. *Deborah Green*



Marsh Migration and Climate Change



We all know that birds migrate, but did you know that so do...marshes? As the sea level rises, water encroaches on both beaches and coastal wetlands. All marsh grasses prefer to grow at a certain water level—not too deep and not too shallow. As the waters rise, grasses farther inland grow better than the grasses in the deeper water—so over time, the marsh migrates inland. Birds, reptiles, baby fish, and other animals can follow the marsh as it slowly moves over time, and this potentially lets the ecosystem continue to flourish.

As the water level rises, the seaward grass gets flooded out, but the landward grass spreads inland (NC Sea Grant).

Marsh migration is a natural process that can help the marsh ecosystem cope with climate change. However, it can only happen if a few conditions are met. First, the water can’t rise faster than the grasses are able to make new seeds or

shoots, which need to spread inland so that new grass can sprout. In some places like at the mouth of the Mississippi River, sea levels are rising so fast that the marsh just can’t keep up. Part of the problem at the Mississippi’s mouth is that the river’s natural sediment, which would normally be carried downstream and be deposited there, is being blocked by dams upstream. So the marsh is being squeezed in two directions: by the rising water and the lack of sediment to replace the delta’s mud.

We see a second way that marsh migration can be blocked more often in Florida. When coastal development like roads and seawalls is very close to the edge of the marsh, there is just no place for the marsh to move. After all, if you’re a marsh grass, you won’t have much luck getting across the A1A! This squeeze between the rising sea and our infrastructure is having a big effect on coastal marshes and the species that live in them.

Predicting which marshes will have trouble migrating in the future is complicated. Two things Audubon members can do are supporting “green” infrastructure options and advocating to preserve coastal open space. This will give the marshes — and their resident birds — a chance to migrate as the sea keeps rising.

Sonia Stephens

Greenhouse Gas Inventories

Florida’s largest, simultaneous Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory initiative launched in East Central Florida this February. Audubon Florida announced the initiative, which will develop common sense baselines for greenhouse gas emissions for 18 visionary cities and counties in the region, in partnership with ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability (originally the [International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives](#)), the East Central Florida Regional Resilience Collaborative (R2C), and local universities. Active in 100+ countries, ICLEI influences sustainability policy and drives local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient, and circular development.

The baselines to be developed are a critical first step in helping local governments track the effectiveness of their efforts to improve energy efficiency in their own operations and shift to renewable energy sources over time. Both can result in cost savings to taxpayers and the reduction of emissions that contribute to climate change.

The municipal GHG inventories will assess the emissions produced by government operations in municipally-owned buildings, municipal fleet usage, and waste services, among others. Student Fellows—from University of Central Florida, Florida Institute of Technology, and Stetson University—are paired with a representative from a participating city or county. Each Fellow

will assist their assigned local government in developing the GHG inventory, while receiving specialized training from ICLEI and experience in this growing field.

By understanding their municipal operations more fully, local governments create a critical framework for local resiliency decisions that reduce emissions and maximize efficiency; student fellows earn valuable experience in project management, resilience planning, and municipal operations.

Audubon Florida is funding and co-facilitating the GHG inventories with the R2C and ICLEI as part of its commitment to strengthening climate resilience through science, innovation, and entrepreneurship for the benefit of Florida’s communities and ecosystems.

Wekiva-Ocala Greenway Florida Forever Project

The [Wekiva Ocala Greenway](#) (WOG) is the ecological link between the Wekiva River basin and the Ocala National Forest. It contains natural springs, the greatest expanse of sand pine scrub in the world, and Florida's largest black bear population. Many parts are designated as Important Bird Areas.

Florida Forever, Preservation 2000 and earlier State land acquisition programs [brought thousands of acres within the WOG into public conservation](#) through the Division of State Lands and St. Johns River Water Management District, in cooperation with local partners and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. But there are vital missing pieces between the Ocala National Forest and Wekiva River Basin State Parks. Before Florida Forever lost its funding, delineation of the properties necessary to protect the WOG was completed. The project is currently [ranked 6th in priority](#) under the Critical Natural Lands Projects category of the Florida Forever program. The Water and Land Conservation Amendment (2014 Amendment 1) was intended to fund the Florida Forever program so environmentally sensitive lands like the WOG could be protected.

In 2017 Orange Audubon Society (OAS) wrote to the Acquisition and Restoration Council in support of an amendment to the boundary to the WOG to add a parcel that would be beneficial to the [Wekiva - Middle St. Johns Aquatic Preserve](#). The boundary amendment was approved, but funds to purchase the 45-acre parcel were not allocated. OAS also wrote to the Lake County Water Authority (LCWA) to encourage it to purchase at least 18 acres to improve the public's access to Lake Norris and Blackwater Creek, a major tributary of the Wekiva River.

OAS will be discussing with its new partner, the land trust Conservation Florida, about whether the trust could assist with land purchases in the WOG. Meanwhile, we continue to document the rich bird life through monthly bird surveys and this month's field trip (p.7). *Deborah Green*

March Bird Highlight:

Little Blue Heron: A beautiful species at risk

A common but secretive wading bird, the exquisite Little Blue Heron is easily overlooked. It isn't large and flamboyant like the Great Blue Heron nor so colorful as the Reddish Egret or Tricolored Heron nor so easy to spot as white egrets. Its subtle colors blend into water and foliage.

Adult Little Blue Herons have a slate blue body and wings and a purplish head and neck. The bi-colored bill is pale blue with a dark tip. Only 24 inches long, the bird is so small, dark and slender you could miss its quiet presence near lakes and marshes as it stalks small fish and amphibians in shallow waters. The deliberate movements of Little Blues distinguish them from other herons and egrets that move quickly and erratically.

Because they are white during their first year of life, the immature Little Blue is often confused with other white wading birds. Since immature birds are more easily tolerated by snowy egrets, the white plumage provides a survival advantage. And if they forage with a group, they can catch more fish. Mingling with other species also provides extra protection against predators for the immature Little Blue.

After the first year, when transitioning to adults, the white juveniles display patches of blue plumage and are often referred to as "calico" or "piebald" during this phase.

Little Blue Herons escaped the feathered hat fashion craze of the early 20th century because they lacked showy "aigrette plumes," or tufted crest feathers of egrets hunted for their fashionable feathers. During breeding season, however, the bird has long, lance-like plumes on the crest and back.

The base of the bill and the skin around the eyes change to brilliant cobalt blue and the eyes and legs turn dark. Fledglings are mostly white with black-tipped bills.

Conservation data regarding overall population is available [at this link](#). Habitat conversion and physical destruction of breeding sites continue to threaten these birds. Poachers in some regions of the U.S. still hunt the birds for feathers and food. Little Blue Herons are sometimes shot illegally at fish farms in Florida and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife in some states allows permitted shooting of the birds at fish farms. In the Southeast U.S., Little Blue Herons are considered a species at risk.

Little Blue Herons are present in Florida and the coastal Southeast throughout the year. Although they may gather with other herons or egrets, they typically forage alone or in twos. In open marshy habitats, you may also see them flapping slowly across the sky. The birds often nest with other water birds. So if you find an active colony, scan the group for small herons with dark plumage.

Check out this beautiful wading bird! There is much to learn about Florida's fascinating avian life!



Immature Little Blue Heron and Tree Frog. 2016 Orange Audubon Society Chertok Photo Contest. Novice Category, First Place Winner. Photo: Lynn Marie Folts

Linda Carpenter
Orange Audubon Society Board Member

New Collaborations for Birding

A great collaboration between Audubon chapters and conservation land trusts has been facilitated by a grant from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to Apalachee Audubon Society. Centered around the eBird database and mobile app, the project's goal is to get birders onto landscapes with no public access to help document bird populations. The target properties are owned by conservation land trusts or are private lands with conservation easements through the land trusts.

Conservation Land Trusts

Conservation land trusts or land conservancies, like The Nature Conservancy, protect and steward natural areas or preserve productive lands for food or fiber. Originated in 1891, they were not well known until the 1980s.

There are now more than 1,700 conservation land trusts in the U.S. and 26 in Florida, including 6 that are accredited through the Land Trust Accreditation Commission: Alachua Conservation Trust, Conservation Florida, Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast, North Florida Land Trust, Tall Timbers Research Station & Land Conservancy, and Tampa Bay Conservancy.

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) is familiar with the Tall Timbers Research Station & Land Conservancy, the land trust partnering with Apalachee Audubon. Jim Cox of Tall Timbers has hosted OAS on its annual Panhandle trip over the past 7 years. Tall Timbers conserves 145,000 acres in Florida and Georgia through direct ownership and conservation easements. Alachua Conservation Trust, the land trust partnering with Alachua Audubon Society, has directly acquired 19,700 acres of wildlife habitat in Florida.

Conservation Florida is the land trust partnering with OAS. Founded in 1999 as Conservation Trust for Florida, it conserves approximately 25,000 acres, including the recently-acquired 476-acre D Ranch Preserve that contains a population of Florida Scrub-Jays. As the grant application pointed out, collectively, these lands amount to over 177,000 acres of land in conservation status, much of which



Lillian Dinkins opening the gate for field trip attendees at the D Ranch Preserve. Photo: Deborah Green

never gets birded yet is likely to contain declining bird species.

The grant points out that more people must feel connected to natural lands and play a role in solving problems. This project uses eBird, an innovative piece of technology, plus the seemingly simple, but too infrequent, act of building connections between different groups of people.

Each Audubon chapter has offered an eBird workshop for the public, based on one developed by Apalachee Audubon and Cornell. OAS' eBird workshop is [archived at this link](#).



Conservation Florida

The Scholars for Conservation Leadership Program is a career and leadership

development program launched by the Land Trust Alliance, a national land conservation organization, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service's Cooperative Forestry Unit. The program aims to expand opportunities for students to pursue careers in natural resource management and conservation, with an emphasis on reaching students of underrepresented and minority backgrounds in these sectors.

Conservation Florida and the Land Trust Alliance in July placed two Fellows for the Scholars for Conservation Leadership Program. Lillian Dinkins, who graduated with a degree in environmental science from Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, Alabama, and Papa Gueye, who graduated with a degree in agronomy from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in Tallahassee,

are on year-long fellowships at Conservation Florida. Lillian is the liaison between OAS, West Volusia Audubon Society and Conservation Florida for the Cornell eBird land trust grant.

D Ranch Preserve

On February 27th, the first field trip/bird survey was conducted on the D Ranch Preserve. Thanks to a generous donation by D Ranch, Ltd., Conservation Florida now owns this 476-acre property that was a ranch and cow/calf operation for decades.

Located in Deltona, the area is under immense development pressure. It contains 149 acres of critical Florida scrub habitat and 60 acres of scrubby flatwoods. The D Ranch Preserve borders the 7,487-acre Lake Monroe Conservation Area, which is managed by the St. Johns River Water Management District.

Conservation Florida hopes to open the property for passive public uses—such as hiking, horseback riding and academic research. If interested in future field trips through this new partnership, contact info@orangeaudubonfl.org.



Sky Blue Lupine blooming at the D Ranch Preserve. Photo: Kathy Rigling. College-age participants observing scrub plants. Photo: Deborah Green

In case you missed it...



Cerulean Warbler with caterpillar. Photo: Frank Salmon

Homegrown National Park

You may have read any one of Doug Tallamy's several books. The first one I read was *Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants*. It was a revelation, replacing personal anecdotes with research and statistics that quantifiably show the benefits of native plants to wildlife.

Dr. Tallamy's latest project is called the Homegrown National Park (see his lovely website that features webinars, podcasts, and additional presentations at <https://homegrownnationalpark.org>).

If you've read any of his books, you will recognize major themes:

1. Landscaping with native plants benefits all wildlife, but especially wild birds. Planting host plants & trees that are used by moth and butterfly species to reproduce will provide soft & nutritious caterpillars for hungry baby birds. Almost all bird species feed caterpillars to their nestlings.
2. In this country, urban and suburban areas make up more area in acres than almost all the national parks combined. If the majority of us were to add native plants to our yards, we could create a wildlife habitat larger than our national parks—a "homegrown national park."

In addition to being an accomplished author, Doug is a fine photographer. He treated us to images of the many caterpillars in residence at his own 10-acre, restored native yard, formerly an agricultural farm. His latest moth species count is 1,031!

And as his moth count grows, so do the number of bird species that visit and nest in his yard, as they certainly will in your yard if you "go native."

If you need any other encouragement, go to homegrownnationalpark.org and pick up a book by Doug Tallamy!

Terry Piper, Programs Chair

Plants for Birds Resources

Dr. Doug Tallamy's call to action is not only to create native habitat in your own yard but to educate others on it and to convince your neighbors to join in.

With this in mind, Orange Audubon Society (OAS) has created a Plants for Birds committee.

Plant Selection

If you are inspired to add more native plants to your home landscape, how do you prioritize what plants you should purchase and where can you purchase them?

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) Mary Keim and Randy Snyder, native plant gardeners and all-around naturalists, spearheaded OAS' *Bird- and Butterfly-Friendly Plants for Central Florida* brochure, now available [at this link and a great guide when you are selecting new native plants to install](#).

In the *January OASis*, we profiled the brochure's top bird-friendly trees. They are Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*), Cabbage Palm (*Sabal palmetto*), Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*), Live Oak (*Quercus virginiana*), Longleaf Pine (*Pinus palustris*), Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*), Sugarberry (*Celtis laevigata*), and Winged Elm (*Ulmus alata*).

The Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) has extensive resources. Start [at this link](#) and then find your local chapter and follow its events.

Plant Sales and Nurseries

The Florida Association of Native Nurseries [website](#) allows you to find nurseries that sell specific plants and there is extensive information about the plants there also.

And there are two upcoming native plant sales by our local native plant chapters.

March 6, 2021 The Cuplet Fern Chapter of FNPS is having a small native plant sale on Saturday, March 6th from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Sanford Garden Club, 200 Fairmont Drive, Sanford, off 17-92. Come early to get your choice of the pickings. Cash or Credit. [Link](#)

March 13-14, 2021 The Tarflower Chapter of FNPS will be selling native plants at the Leu Gardens Plant sale on Saturday, March 13th and Sunday, March 14th, from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at Harry P. Leu Gardens, 1920 N. Forest Ave.,

Swallow-tailed Kite "Apopka" Heading Our Way

The Avian Research and Conservation Institute (ARCI) in Gainesville now has 10 Swallow-tailed Kites mounted with solar-powered GSM/GPS transmitters.

These communicate through the cell phone network, but when birds are beyond cell-tower range, the transmitters do not upload their GPS data. Data are stored until the birds move within range of a cell tower. ARCI may go for long periods not "hearing" from birds as they migrate through and/or winter in remote areas.

The Swallow-tailed Kite named Apopka was tagged and released, as profiled in the [May 2018 OASis \(p.6\)](#). Apopka wintered in Rondonia, Brazil, and his last transmission was still from there on January 27th. We join ARCI in hoping all of the kites have safe journeys "home."

Follow the journeys of Apopka and the other kites through ARCI's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ARCIInst/> and <https://www.arcinst.org/blog/>.



Orlando. Free parking is available at Audubon Park School at 1500 Falcon Drive roughly a half mile away. [Link](#).

It can be useful and inspiring to see examples of native landscapes. Do you have a mostly native landscape that you would like to profile? Send photos and info to Plants for Birds committee member Terry Piper at terrypiper890@gmail.com. And thanks for joining the Plants for Birds effort.

Deborah Green

Wekiwa Springs State Park Field Trip, March 21, 2021



Florida Scrub-Jay at sunrise. Photo: Susan Kirby

Orange Audubon Society's March Field Trip will be to Wekiwa Springs State Park on Sunday morning, March 21st in search of some of the specialty birds of this well-burned park. Trip is free but participant number is limited. Call Larry to reserve at (407) 647-5834.

Artist Featured

Susan Kirby, instructor for the March 13th Youth and Family Photo Workshop (p.1) and past OAS board member, will be one of two Featured Artists for the month of March in Mount Dora's "Artisans of Fifth" shop. Susan will be displaying her "Bird" art (prints, notecards, canvases, and framed canvases). On March 21st from 2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. Susan and one other featured artist will hold a "Meet the Artists Reception." To see more details, go to [this link](#).

2021 Orange Audubon Society Board Elections

The Orange Audubon Society (OAS) annual election of board members will be held online prior to April 16, 2020. The slate of nominations for April's election will be announced at the March 19th OAS meeting. I, Linda Gaunt, have the pleasure of chairing the nominating committee with committee members Mary Soule (msoule43@aol.com) and Mary Van Egmond (mary.vanegmond@icloud.com).

The OAS board is comprised of up to twenty volunteer members: 5 officers who serve two-year terms and up to 15 non-officer members of the board of directors who serve staggered 3-year terms.

Officer positions—president, 1st vice president, 2nd vice president, secretary and treasurer—are not up for election/re-election until April 2022.

All board members of the class of 2018-2021 are up for reelection to the 2021-2024 term, and OAS has several unfilled seats for one or two year terms.

To serve on the board, you must be an OAS member, have an interest in wildlife and the environment, and be able to attend monthly, one-hour board meetings. Once in-person meetings start again, board meetings will resume on the third Thursday of each month (except July and August) at Leu Gardens.

Currently board meetings are held through Zoom on the 4th Wednesday. Board members are also expected to attend the all-day summer planning meeting, usually in late July.

As "a baby step" prior to applying for the board, we encourage you to join one of OAS' committees. OAS' greatest need is for help with conservation, education, and outreach.

Other committees are Birdathon, brochure, Chertok photography contest, climate, field trips, finance, hospitality, membership, nature and environmental education center, nominating, OASis (newsletter), programs, publicity, sanctuaries, silent auction, speakers' bureau, website, and wildlife surveys. New committees formed this year are Equity, Diversity and Inclusiveness (EDI) and Plants for Birds.

The OAS board application informs applicants of volunteer options and OAS' service and donation expectations and collects information about your interests and skills to align them with OAS' needs.

If you wish to give back to your community through the conservation and nature education initiatives of OAS, contact me at lgaunt246@gmail.com.

Linda Gaunt, Nominating Committee Chair



Lake Harney Wilderness Area overlook. Photo: Larry Martin

Lake Harney Wilderness Area Trip

A fortunate group of birders enjoyed spectacular weather at the Lake Harney Wilderness Area for the February Limited Edition Field Trip. Fifty-five species were identified.

We walked the floodplain trail and were startled when a Wild Turkey flushed from the tall grass right beside us. We had nice looks at a Hermit Thrush, a Yellow-throated Warbler and a Northern Parula, among other birds. We walked out to the river along the old rail bed and had good looks at an eagle nest and its young occupant. An EagleWatch volunteer from Seminole Audubon shared details about the nest. The area was occupied by Native American settlements and later a once-thriving cypress mill town. The Seminole County Natural Lands Program is to be congratulated for purchasing and creating access to this excellent place. *Larry Martin*

Green PLACE Trip

Orange Audubon Society held a February trip to a favorite Orange County Green PLACE property, Savage Christmas Creek Preserve in Christmas. Beth Jackson, Green PLACE manager and naturalist, co-lead this trip with Lee Ann Posavad, wildlife photographer. Two families and several other adults enjoyed the morning out in nature. Thanks Beth and Lee Ann.



Hungry Cattle Egrets. 2020 Chertok Photo Contest. Advanced Category, Honorable Mention. Photo: John Wise

Coming Up in April—Save Your Spot

NW Florida Panhandle

Birding, April 29–May 2, 2021

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) fun trip will vary from past Panhandle trips. It will be in late April/early May, timed to see breeding songbirds and shorebirds at birding hotspots between Tallahassee and St. George Island State Park.

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge is a 'can't miss' stop, and at Wakulla Springs we will also enjoy a boating tour in search of Prothonotary Warblers.

To register and receive more details, contact Teresa at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or (407) 718-1977. Trip limit of 20 is subject to reduction based on prevailing COVID-19 safety concerns.

Note that Carolina trip will not be held this spring, due to difficulties in traveling out-of-state in the COVID-19 era. But we will be working toward holding a similar trip in September.



St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. Photo: Joyce Stefancic. American Flamingo at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. Photo: John Middleton

Bird Chats with OAS

For Bird Chats with Orange Audubon Society (OAS) register [at this link](#) to be sent the Zoom link each week. Past Bird Chats are archived on [OAS' YouTube Channel](#).

On Thursday, March 4th, the Bird Chats with Orange Audubon Society (OAS) team will focus on Orlando Wetlands Park with special guests Park Manager Mark Sees and volunteer Reinhard Geisler.

On March 11th our topic will be Alaska: Birding the Last Frontier with special guest Andy Bankert. Andy grew up in Brevard and presented for OAS years ago. He now lives in Alaska. This should be an exciting program.

On March 25th OAS member and North Shore Birding Festival trip leader Mark Hainen will present on the Warbler Mecca—Magee Marsh, Ohio. Mark lives part of the year in Ohio and is a big fan of the Magee Marsh and an outstanding photographer.

MARCH/APRIL CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Bird Chats with Orange Audubon Society

March 4, 11 and 25, 2021
Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

Beginners' Birdwatching Class

March 6, 13 and 20, 2021
Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977

Bird Survey: Wekiwa Springs State Park, Apopka

March 13, 2021
Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

Youth & Family Photo Workshop, Mead Botanical Garden

March 13, 2021
Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977

March Program: Lawn to Wildflowers by Nash Turley

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

Monthly Field Trip: Wekiwa Springs State Park, Apopka

March 21, 2021
Contact Larry at (407) 647-5834

Limited Edition Field Trip: Orlando Wetlands Park, Christmas

March 28, 2021
Contact Larry at (407) 647-5834

Lake Eola Spring Fiesta in the Park, Orlando

April 3-4, 2021
Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977

Spring Mead Botanical Garden Bird Walks, Winter Park

April 3, 10, 17 & 24, 2021
Contact Larry at (407) 647-5834

April Wekiwa Bird Survey

April 10, 2021
Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

OAS Birdathon Fundraiser

April 10, 2021
Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

Chertok Nature Photography Contest Deadline

April 15, 2021
Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977

April Program: Birds and Hurricanes by Ken Meyer

April 15, 2021
Contact Terry at (321) 436-4932

Limited Edition Field Trip to Fort De Soto Park, Pinellas County

April 18, 2021
Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

Apopka Art & Foliage Festival, Apopka

April 24-25, 2021
Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

Central Florida Earth Day, Lake Eola, Orlando

April 25, 2021
Contact Rick at (407) 277-3357

NW Florida Panhandle Birding

April 29–May 2, 2021
Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977