



### A World on the Wing: The Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds by Scott Weidensaul January 20, 2022



Snowy Owl and Scott Weidensaul. Photo: Beth Sanders

On January 20th Orange Audubon Society is pleased to host “A World on the Wing: The Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds” by ornithologist and best-selling author Scott Weidensaul.

Birds in migration undergo one of the most extraordinary and exhausting undertakings of any living things on the planet, an endurance test made all the more difficult by climate change, habitat loss and illegal hunting. Few know this better than Weidensaul, a bird researcher, prolific nature writer and the author of more than 30 books, mostly about birds.

Weidensaul first tackled bird migration with *Living on the Wind*, that made him a 2000 Pulitzer Prize finalist. He comes back to the topic with his new book *A World on the Wing: The Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds* with up-to-date research. Weidensaul is an active field researcher, specializing in the study of migration in owls, hummingbirds and songbirds. To study Snowy Owls, he and collaborators have formed a non-profit research organization [Project SNOWstorm](#). We encourage you to check this out in advance.

This is a YouTube Live online program but unlike most of our programs, it will be archived on OAS' You Tube channel only for three weeks. To see the program live, simply open YouTube and put Orange Audubon Society in the search field on January 20th at 7 p.m. Don't miss this fascinating program!

*Terry Piper, Programs Chair*



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

Programs are the 3rd Thursday of each month (September–June).  
In most months of the 2021-2 season, programs are held online through YouTube LIVE.

### Help Migratory Birds

We at Orange Audubon Society (OAS) find the comings and goings of migratory birds one of the most fascinating things about birding. But we also know migration is full of dangers —as Scott Weidensaul's talk January 20th will reveal — and we need to help.

For each of us in our own yards, we promote the [Homegrown National Park](#) concept of [Dr. Doug Tallamy](#) with our [Plants for Birds](#) efforts. And, in our area, we work to protect migration stopovers and winter bird habitat, like the Lake Apopka North Shore, Orlando Wetlands Park and Mead Botanical Garden.

We schedule programs on migration and conservation of migratory birds in our weekly Bird Chats and have organized them on our YouTube channel into [Playlists \(basically folders\)](#). At [this link](#) you can see the our past programs so far related to bird migration.



Peregrine Falcon. Photo: Steve Shaluta

Most of the organizations that monitor bird migration are non-profits operated by volunteers, such as Weidensaul's Project SNOWstorm. By tracking where the birds go, these researchers can identify critical areas to preserve and then work with governments, conservation trusts and even private landowners to make that happen. Over the years OAS has heard about tracking Swallow-tailed Kites by the [Avian Research and Conservation Institute \(ARCI\)](#) and how that has contributed to [conservation efforts](#). *Continued p. 8*



**Orange Audubon Society's First Employee**

After months of discussions and groundwork-laying by Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) Nature and Environmental Education Center and Education committees, OAS has hired its first employee in over 50 years, a part-time education coordinator.

Out of nearly 30 applicants who met the late September deadline, the committee selected and the OAS Board approved hiring our own hard-working board member and volunteer Kathy Rigling. Kathy is a retired middle school science teacher who directs nature studies at the Wekiva Youth Camp each summer and has run many after-school science clubs. Living in West Orange County and having taught in West Orange schools, she is well situated to develop school programs centered around Lake Apopka. This hire is part of OAS' long-term efforts to develop a nature and environmental center around the Lake Apopka North Shore.



Beginning Birding Class at Wekiva Springs State Park, part of the December 2020 NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL, led by Kathy Rigling (right). Photo: Deborah Green

In addition to working towards a Lake Apopka curriculum tied to current Orange County Public School standards and developing contacts for future programs, Kathy will utilize *Audubon Adventures*, National Audubon's school nature curriculum materials which are supported financially by our members. She will visit classrooms to assist teachers in utilizing these materials and in doing so will greatly expand educational aspects of what OAS has been able to accomplish with just volunteers. This is a milestone for our chapter. Thanks to you, our members, for your financial support that makes these efforts possible.

*Deborah Green, OAS President*

**Preventing Guacamole Water**

Lake Okeechobee historically overflowed south into Everglades wetlands, until farms and towns developed south of the lake to use the lake shore's rich muck soil (forming the Everglades Agricultural Area, similar to Lake Apopka's North Shore farming district). Now when Lake Okeechobee water levels rise, the Army Corps fears a dike breach flooding those farms and towns. So it discharges water east to the St. Lucie River and west to the Caloosahatchee River via the C-44 and C-43 canals, respectively. But by 2016 it was clear that these releases were damaging coastal estuaries, both in terms of salinity balance and nutrient pollution.

In St. Lucie County, home to the troubled Indian River Lagoon, officials have now prohibited homeowners from using fertilizer during the summer and are testing for pollution linked to septic tanks.

To keep polluted stormwater runoff out of the St. Lucie River, the Army Corps has just completed the \$339 million C-44 Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area, a big milestone. The 12,000-acre project will capture, store and clean stormwater that drains into the C-44 Canal (St. Lucie Canal) from Martin County farms.

Going west, the C-43 (Caloosahatchee) Canal's similar reservoir is costing \$1 billion to develop on 10,000 acres of former farmland south of the Caloosahatchee River in Hendry County. It is scheduled to be complete in 2023, but critics see faults in a lack of water quality measures. Read more at [this link](#).

*OAS Conservation Committee*

**State Legislative Session Begins**

The Florida legislative session convenes on January 11th and ends 60 days later on March 11th. Audubon Florida has policy staff in Tallahassee working hard on all issues of environmental concern, interfacing with legislators, including during pre-session committee weeks. The Audubon Florida Advocate newsletter is sent weekly during the legislative session (monthly most of the year). Please sign up [at this link](#) and respond to the calls for action, most of which will be closer to the end of session. See also [Audubon Florida's Facebook page](#).



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  
[miked129e@gmail.com](mailto:miked129e@gmail.com)  
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## Why Restoring the Ocklawaha River Can't Wait

Thanks to a coalition of environmental groups, including Audubon chapters throughout Florida, restoration of the Ocklawaha River has a chance this session. The Governor was sent over 22,000 letters last winter supporting restoration, and recently over 10,000 people responded to the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) online survey with over 85% responding in support of restoration.

It is time to begin restoration of three rivers—the St. Johns, Ocklawaha and Silver Rivers, now known as The Great Florida Riverway—plus 50 springs.

With Governor DeSantis' focus on resiliency and water resources, we are hopeful he supports this priority.

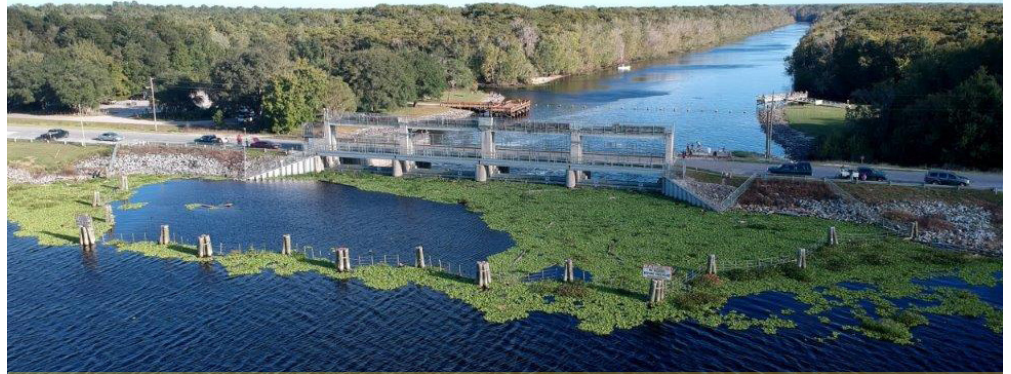
There are three strong reasons why it can't wait:

### 1. The Dam is Past Its Life Expectancy and is Vulnerable to Failure.

Although the most recent 2018 Emergency Action Plan for the Kirkpatrick Dam and Rodman Reservoir, received from Florida Department of Environmental Protection, was greatly redacted, it still confirmed that the dam has serious issues. Advocates are awaiting the required 2020 dam assessment that should have been made available by now. The dam is past its 50-year life expectancy and presents a danger to the town of Welaka and other downstream communities. Northeast Florida's strongest resiliency project, breaching of the Rodman/Kirkpatrick Dam, could protect over 539 property owners with lands valued at over \$57 million by providing downstream flood protection, as well as reduce saltwater intrusion and save an economically valuable fishery in the lower St. Johns River.

### 2. Breaching the Kirkpatrick Dam can help Florida's manatees when they need it most.

Providing warm-water habitat for wintering manatees that is safe, has available food sources, and the right temperature to avoid cold stress syndrome is key to manatee conservation. Restoring the Great Florida Riverway by breaching the Rodman/Kirkpatrick Dam holds significant potential to provide manatees with access to this important type of habitat.



Buckman Lock. Photo courtesy Free the Ocklawaha River for Everyone.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's response to the SJRWMD Rodman/Kirkpatrick Dam stakeholder survey was: "Improving access for manatees to natural warm water refugia such as the springs in the Silver and Ocklawaha rivers and the abundant submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) in the system would be a major positive contribution to creating a sustainable network of regional warm-water habitat necessary for the recovery and persistence of the Florida manatee into the foreseeable future."

Constraints such as locks, dams and fences prevent or restrict manatee access that might otherwise provide important warm-water habitat for manatees.

The Ocklawaha springs, now covered by the weight of the waters of the Rodman/Kirkpatrick Dam and Silver Springs have been identified on the warm-water site list in Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation's Florida Manatee Warm-Water Habitat Action Plan. Breaching the Kirkpatrick Dam, which is past its life expectancy, would provide hundreds of manatees with unimpeded access to warm water habitat in the larger, uncovered Ocklawaha springs and Silver Springs.

### 3. The Rodman/Kirkpatrick Dam continues to impact water resources and wildlife up and downstream.

The Buckman Lock of the Rodman Reservoir was recently closed for 15 days due to invasive aquatic weed blockages that required four herbicide applications.

This is not a new issue but has gotten progressively worse. Herbicides are not good for people, fish, or manatees.

The herbicide-laden, browned-out vegetation either sinks adding to the muck below or floats through the locks to the St. Johns River. It likely has contributed to the loss of an average of over 3000 boat visits per year to the Rodman Reservoir since 2010.

The dam has reduced freshwater flow to the 100-mile St. Johns River estuary increasing saltwater intrusion and impacting submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) growth, vital to fish and manatees.

The SAV is disappearing, cypress forest wetlands are stressed, and commercial and recreational fisheries are declining within the St. Johns River estuary from Welaka to Palatka to Jacksonville.

Silver Springs and the Upper Ocklawaha have seen reduction or loss of many important fish species. The large schools of mullet that once helped clean the eelgrass in Silver Springs are rarely seen. Exotic tilapia have begun to take over.



Eye-to-Eye—Black-crowned Night Heron. Honorable Mention Winner, Youth Category, 2017 Chertok Florida Native Nature Photo Contest. Photo: Hank Tushek

All this negatively contributes to the ecosystem, including decline of birds, visitor appeal and the economy of Silver Springs and the surrounding communities. For latest updates, sign-up for the Free the Ocklawaha River for Everyone (FORCE) newsletter at Sign up - [freetheocklawaha.com](http://freetheocklawaha.com).

Margaret Spontak, FORCE Chairperson



White Pelicans. Photo Mary Keim.

### SpaceX Launch Site

Orlando Sentinel environmental reporter Kevin Spear's recent [article](#) has alerted us to a new proposed launch site for SpaceX that has the potential for regular or prolonged closures of the Canaveral National Seashore Playalinda Beach access road plus the destruction of coastal wetlands. Audubon Florida's Charles Lee is monitoring the situation and we may be called upon to comment.

### Tree Protection Ordinance

Orange County Environmental Protection Division's second presentation on an updated Tree Protection ordinance revision will be on the January 11th Board of County Commissioners meeting.

### Longleaf Pine Planting

Since longleaf pines have been reduced to 3% of their original population, the [Florida State Parks Foundation](#) intends to plant 100,000 longleaf pines by April 29, 2022.

### Please Skip the Rodenticides

When a Red-shouldered Hawk calls, I can easily identify it because the two red-shoulders in my neighborhood call constantly, all day long. At least they did. On the Conway Facebook Page someone posted about two Red-shouldered Hawks found dead on the ground. No apparent injuries. The location was just north of my house on the other side of Lake Margaret. Then someone posted about a dead owl in the same area. With the holidays I hadn't been in my yard much, but then I realized, no more red-shoulders were calling. Those were my birds!

Three raptors dead in one area point directly to rodenticide poisoning. I replied to the post explaining just how toxic rodenticides are and how the poison easily passes from rodent to raptor and, at times, to pets.

Coincidentally the winter issue of Audubon Magazine features an article entitled, "The Internet has a Rat Poison Problem." The EPA regulates highly-toxic second generation anticoagulant rodenticides and prohibits them being sold in consumer retail stores. But

### Project Feeder Watch

Enjoy feeding birds at your home? You can provide valuable scientific data to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Project Feeder Watch. This project runs from Nov. 13, 2021- April 30 2021. Select an area that is easy to observe from your home and record birds two days in a row. To learn more about this worthy and fun project visit <https://feederwatch.org>.

### Mead Bird Feeders Supported by Wild Birds Unlimited

Both feeders and bird seed from the Wild Birds Unlimited store in Winter Springs have been donated to Mead Botanical Gardens via Orange Audubon to help Mead's local and migrant birds.

Volunteers have cleaned and rehung the feeders in two stations, and Mead liaison Larry Martin has taken the charge of re-filling the feeders. Already Painted Buntings, Northern Cardinals, Tufted Titmice and others have been visiting the feeders. Benches are available by both feeder stations for those who want to sit and enjoy the show!



Red-shouldered Hawk. Photo: Mary Keim

it's easy to purchase these regulated rodenticides online from Amazon, WalMart, Sears and do-it-yourself Pest Control websites. I've lived in my home since 1995. I see a rat in my yard once or twice a year. Do I have a rat infestation? I don't think so. Until recently, I had raptors that helped keep lizards, snakes and rats at bay. We need to continue to educate our friends and neighbors on the risks to the environment presented by these toxic poisons; as well as steps to prevent rodent infestations. And reassure our neighbors that one sighting of a rat is not an invasion.

*Susan Thome-Barrett, Conservation Chair*

### Orlando Wetlands Park Full of Wildlife

Orlando Wetlands Park's (OWP) primary purpose is to provide advanced treatment of reclaimed water before it is discharged into the St. Johns River.

But, there is a lot more going on at this constructed wetland in Christmas, Florida than nutrient uptake.

While visitors come for a variety of reasons, one of them is the number of bird species reported on eBird—249. species! A couple of birds that visitors often ask about are Limpkin and Purple Gallinule. Rarely do visitors leave disappointed.

Visitors can walk or bike the 19 miles of berms seven days a week. In addition, on Fridays, Saturdays and seasonally on Sundays, there are first come-first served tram tours from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. run by OWP volunteers. Tours are free, but donations are accepted. See [this link](#) for more information.

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) and OWP have partnered on environmental education efforts for many years. OAS has been a sponsor of the park's Orlando Wetlands Festival — not being held in 2022 — and has provided educational materials to the park funded by several grants.

The park has supported OAS' educational efforts by providing a location for classes and has allowed OAS to distribute its brochure at the park.

To preview the fauna and flora you may see at the park, check [the brochure](#) created by a park volunteer and featuring photographs taken by the volunteers.

A brochure with park information can be downloaded [from this link](#). To learn more about volunteer opportunities at the park, see [this link](#).

A fun way to learn more birds is to join new OAS board member Jeffrey Gammon on his monthly Orlando Wetland Park bird surveys on the 3rd Saturday or Sunday. Next survey is January 23rd. Contact Jeffrey at [jeffreyg@knights.ucf.edu](mailto:jeffreyg@knights.ucf.edu).

*Mary Keim, OWP Volunteer*



**Your Biggest Year Ever**

Do you keep a year list of birds you have seen? For 2022, challenge yourself or your best birding buddy/rival to see more bird species than any previous year. Orange Audubon Society has many trips that can help you build your list, including January 1st, 7:30 a.m. -12 p.m. with Kathy Rigling and Susan Thome-Barrett on the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive. Limit is 12 people, and the trip is almost full but you can contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559 or riglingkathy@gmail.com. Cost is \$12 Audubon members, \$17 non members.

**Birds of Prey ID Classes  
January 2 & February 6, 2022**

On Sunday, January 2, 2022, popular instructor Bob Sanders will teach a Birds of Prey Identification class on the [Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive](#) from 7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Price is \$7 (Audubon members) or \$12 (non-members). Bob is an avid birder and raptor expert. Before moving to Central Florida, he was co-founder of the Chimney Rock Hawk Watch in Martinsville, New Jersey. A second class is February 6, 2022. To register contact Bob at (407) 459-5617 or email info@orangeaudubonfl.org.

**Limited Edition Field Trips**

On December 19th, Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) Limited Edition Field Trip participants arose well before daylight on a quest to see three very secretive sparrows of the saltmarsh that are only found together in Florida during the winter. One of the best places to observe these sparrows is a small park in St Augustine called Dr. Robert Hayling Freedom Park.

The easiest time to see these sparrows is as high tide approaches. The sparrows become very active and can be spotted flying low over the grasses and then finding a slender blade or twig to temporarily rest upon. We arrived at the park about 30 minutes prior to high tide and within 5 minutes got great looks at the Nelson's Sparrow.

After a short time with the help of trip leader Lorri Lilja, we successfully found the very similar Saltmarsh Sparrow. Finally, the more cryptic of the three, the Seaside Sparrow,



Top, Saltmarsh Sparrow. Bottom, Nelson's Sparrow. Photos: Kathy Rigling

**Northwest FL Panhandle Birding**

Dates: April 13-17, 2022. This overnight trip is timed to see migratory and southern breeding songbirds and shorebirds. Cost is \$150 for members, \$170 for non-members and includes local expert guides, Wakulla Springs boat tour and some picnic meals. For registration/lodging/other details, email Teresa at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com.

was located! Other notable birds we found were very noisy Clapper Rails, Marsh Wrens, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Little Blue Herons, Double-crested Cormorants and American Kestrels.

Next, we used eBird to locate birding hotspots along the coast on our way back to Central Florida. We stopped at St. Johns County Ocean Pier where we got great looks at adult and juvenile North Gannets as they fished offshore. Using our spotting scopes, we also saw Forster's Terns and Royal Terns and learned how to identify them using distant field marks. Dolphins fed in the surf.

Next stop was Ft. Matanzas Peninsula where we were saw over 100 Black Skimmers! We also observed both White and Brown Pelicans, fishing Ospreys and many shorebirds including Piping Plover, Short-billed Dowitcher and Semi-palmated Plover.

With bad weather approaching, we only had time for one more stop,

**Young Birders Club Trip  
January 22, 2022**

Orange Audubon is excited that we have started a Young Birders Club with successful bird walks on September 25th to Mead Botanical Gardens and on November 13th to the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive.

Our next trip is January 22nd to Orlando Wetlands Park.

If you have a child or grandchild aged 7 to 16 who would like to participate in the Young Birders Club, please contact me at riglingkathy@gmail.com.

*Kathy Rigling, Education Chair*



Young birders on the NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL's Youth and Family Field trip to Newton Park, led by Kathy Rigling and Susan Thome-Barrett. Photo courtesy NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL

and we chose the public beach at Marineland. There we saw more North Gannets (several fairly close), Sanderlings, Ruddy Turnstones, Willets and a flock of very vocal Nanday Parakeets.

OAS' Limited-Edition Field Trips have been filling up early. The January 28-29 Gainesville hotspots and the April 11-12 Fort Desoto trips are already full.

Reservations are being accepted now for the February 26th Birding and Biking Trip on the North Shore of Lake Apopka, led by Alan Shapiro and myself. You must bring your own bicycle to participate. We will ride beyond the locked gates to explore the remarkable birds and other wildlife of the North Shore.

Other upcoming Limited Edition Field Trips with space still are March 13th to PEAR Park, April 9th Birdathon Leader's Choice and May 7th Ocala Wetlands. For more information contact me at riglingkathy@gmail.com.  
*Kathy Rigling*

## Eastern Meadowlark: Not Really a Lark!

*O happy bird, of heart most gay  
To sing when skies are gray!  
-- Paul Laurence Dunbar*

A beloved subject of poets, the Meadowlark is known for its thrilling, flutelike song. A chunky medium-sized songbird with a short tail, spear-shaped bill and long legs, the Eastern Meadowlark has a striking black V on its bright yellow chest, brilliant yellow throat bordered by a white mustache, streaked sides and bold head patterns.

Western Meadowlarks are almost identical and can only be distinguished from the Eastern species by their songs, which are very different.

This bird is slightly larger but more compact than an American Robin and smaller than a Blue Jay. The outer feathers are white and clearly visible during flight. Not actually larks, meadowlarks are members of the blackbird family, which includes cowbirds and orioles.

It is a thrill to find these birds in a distant meadow proclaiming their presence with their beautiful, clear, unmistakable whistle. I have seen them at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge and other areas of the Florida countryside. Meadowlarks also sing from fence posts and telephone lines or stalk through grasses probing the ground for insects with their long sharp bills. Their brown and black dappled upper parts help to camouflage the birds among dirt clods and dry grasses. When perched, however, their bright yellow under parts and black V are clearly visible.

Eastern Meadowlarks primarily eat insects such as crickets, grasshoppers, caterpillars and grubs. In winter they also eat weed seeds, corn and wild fruits. They forage by walking on the ground and probing with their bills to expose grubs and worms.

Meadowlarks nest on the ground. The female finds a small depression or hoof print concealed by vegetation and builds the nest in about a week. Some of these constructions have elaborate overhead roofs and tunnels! When not breeding Meadowlarks are very shy; they slink away when people approach and females may abandon their eggs if disturbed.

Eastern Meadowlarks have declined rapidly during the past 50 years because of our disappearing grasslands. Populations fell more than 3 percent per year between 1966 and 2015, resulting in a cumulative decline of 89 percent according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey. Prairie is scarce in the Eastern U.S. and small, family farms with pastureland and grassy fields have been replaced by larger agricultural operations or development. Early mowing, overgrazing by livestock and pesticides also harm Meadowlarks nesting on private lands.

How to find this species? Listen for their dazzling, flutelike songs. Search fence posts for their bright yellow breasts and dramatic black V. In winter you may find large flocks foraging fields for leftover seeds and grains.

They will also come to backyard feeders. You can discover what they like to eat by using the [Project FeederWatch Common Feeder Birds bird list](#) of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Check out the magnificent Eastern Meadowlark! Its exquisite song, its eager, unmistakable posture and brilliant markings will captivate you. And you will understand why poets have long been moved to write about this “happy bird, of heart most gay.”



Eastern Meadowlark. Third Place Advanced Category, 2021 Chertok Florida Native Nature Photo Contest. Photo: Ruth Pannunzio

## New Year: Check On or Update Your Membership

The start of the calendar year is a great time to renew your 3-way membership in Orange Audubon Society (OAS), Audubon Florida and National Audubon Society, if your membership has expired. That way you can always easily remember your expiration date. Email [membership@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:membership@orangeaudubonfl.org) to check if your membership has expired and if so when.

A few tips to help OAS: Whether it is a renewal or not, make your check to Orange Audubon Society, and we will forward to National Audubon.

Also, if you want to include an additional donation as part of your membership, you can. Otherwise the rate is \$20 (\$15 for students). If you renew directly through National and include more than \$20, the \$20 plus any additional will go to National.

Membership is extremely challenging for a large chapter—adding new members to our email blast list, updating emails and expiration dates, and sending reminders. National sends too early mailings that confuse the issue. Plus, it takes a few months for a new membership to show up on our chapter roster from National.

I have discussed with another large Audubon chapter in Florida how they handle membership and was told that they just let members sign up and update their emails on their own. However, we think a lot of memberships slip through the cracks that way. We think there is local political clout associated with being a large chapter.

So, although extremely time-consuming, we continue to work to keep our membership rosters up to date.

Please help us and renew directly through OAS, either by sending a check to Orange Audubon Society, P.O. Box 941142, Maitland, FL 32794-1142 or by going to OAS' website home page and clicking on the [Join Us link](#) on the bottom left. You can then pay through the Buy Now button at the bottom of the Membership form page.

Thank you for using membership as a way to support OAS. Again, if you have questions about your expiration date, email [membership@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:membership@orangeaudubonfl.org).

*Deborah Green, Membership Co-chair*

*Linda Carpenter*



In case you missed it...

**Disney Conservation Programs by Dr. Jason Fischer**

Orange Audubon Society's speaker for December is a specialist on how imperiled species react to human-caused change. Post-university stints with Arizona Game & Fish, The Nature Conservancy and as a wildlife consultant led Dr. Jason Fischer to become Disney's Conservation Programs Manager, a position he's held for six years. He reminded us of Disney's earliest films that were nature documentaries.

He shared with us three major conservation program topics. The first is saving imperiled species. Second is inspiring action in others. Third is protecting habitats.

Disney partners in the Siberian Crane conservation project with the International Crane Foundation to save this magnificent bird and its habitat. Siberian Cranes form long-term bonds and produce one chick (or "colt") each year. They eat aquatic plants and tubers. Historically, there were three separate breeding populations, but today only one remains that breeds in the far northeastern portions of Siberia near the sea and migrates to China. On their migratory route, the cranes stop to fatten up. But their mid-migration area is the most developed place on our planet with open plains that have been farmed for thousands of years. Local people also use wetlands habitats for fishing, so conflicts have arisen.



Siberian Cranes. Photo: Jason Fischer

The wintering grounds for Siberian Crane is a single lake, Poyang Lake on the Yangtze River. As it dries out in winter, it is reduced to smaller lakes or shallow wetlands, exactly what cranes need. There are two national nature reserves that protect some of the area. Disney and its many partners developed successful fishing techniques that protect cranes. At

**Chertok Deadline: April 21, 2022**

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) 2022 (34th Annual) Kit and Sidney Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest is themed *Florida Native Nature*. Competing in this contest will sharpen your photo skills, increase knowledge of Florida's amazing wildlife and wild places and teach valuable ethical field practices.

Eligible photos may not include humans, human artifacts or introduced plant or animal species—subject matter must be native to Florida—and photos must be taken in compliance with the NANPA code of conduct.

The deadline is April 21, 2022 (postmarked or electronically submitted by date). Participants will be notified of any disqualified entries and may optionally replace them at no charge by following instructions given when notified.

There are three skill level competition categories:

Youth—for photographers age 17 years or younger by April 21, 2022;

Novice—for new and less experienced  
Advanced Amateur/ Professional—for experienced photographers who have honed their skills over time.

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) 718-1977 if you have questions.

*Teresa Williams, OAS' Chertok Photography Contest Chair*

last count, the crane population was up from only 4,000 to 5,500 in less than 10 years.

Disney also partners with different teams to develop best management practices in habitat restoration and monitoring for success, for example, at the Wishing Star Park in the Shanghai Disney Resort in China. Partners have created a beautiful 100-acre lake from an abandoned industrial park. The restoration was complex, with the original soil having been removed and replaced with new soil.

The Shanghai Wild Bird Society monitors bird life as it begins to use the park's restored habitats. An amazing 116 species have been documented, and more migratory species overwinter and breed in park.



Orlando Wetlands Park's distinctive flooded palms at sunrise. Photo: Milton Heiberg

**Sunrise Photo Shoot Orlando Wetlands Park February 26, 2022**

Professional photographer, author and instructor of nature photography Milton Heiberg will teach a sunrise photo workshop on Saturday, February 23rd from 6:00-10:00 a.m. This is at one of the most scenic locations in Central Florida—Orlando Wetlands Park. The park's many gray sun-bleached tree branches make interesting, photogenic perches for avian subjects. Participants should have a working knowledge of digital SLR photography. Bring a tripod and a 300 mm or longer lens (tele-extenders help). Cost is \$60 (Audubon members); \$75 (non-members), and class is limited to 12 adult participants. To register contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796 or [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com).

a rare opportunity to connect with nature.

At Walt Disney World, Dr. Fischer collaborates with Dr. Anna Forsman from the University of Central Florida and other partners to monitor the population of Purple Martins that breed in the park. By providing 512 total nesting apartments, Disney has become a "purple martin factory." Almost half of these are located where guests can watch nesting, and this propinquity seems to have had no negative impact to the birds.

Follow Disney's conservation projects on social media. See more [at this link](#). Enormous thanks to Dr. Fischer who shared rare good news for imperiled species.

*Terry Piper, Programs Chair*

## Help Migratory Birds, continued

Besides the aforementioned Project SNOWstorm and ARCI, and of course Audubon and Cornell Lab of Ornithology, what other non-profits work to learn more about bird movements and to conserve bird habitat? We asked our upcoming speakers their favorites. Dr. Greg Butcher of the U.S. Forest Service Migratory Bird Program, who will be

presenting on Bird Chat on January 13th, recommends [Birds Caribbean](#). He says this group has “so many different kinds of projects, all relating to birds! And such a high level of need with poverty, many endemic species, hurricanes, volcanoes, etc.”

Alex Lamoreaux of Wildside Nature Tours, who led trips for the NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL (NSBF)

and will lead OAS’ Maine trip in June, will be presenting on Bird Chat on January 27th, a repeat of his NSBF keynote. Alex supports [Manomet](#) which does extensive work with shorebirds. Others recommend [American Bird Conservancy](#). Thanks for tuning in to our programs and considering support of these groups.

*Deborah Green*

## JANUARY/FEBRUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Your Biggest Year Yet Field Trip

January 1, 2022

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

### Birds of Prey Identification Field Trip Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive

January 2, 2022

Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

### South Florida Birding Adventure

January 6-9, 2022

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

### Bird Chats with OAS via Zoom

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

### - Migratory Bird Conservation on Working Lands in Latin America & the Caribbean by Dr. Greg Butcher

January 13, 2022

### - Invaders, Vagrants & Rarities by Alex Lamoreaux

January 27, 2022

### - South Florida Birding by the Bird Chat Team

February 3, 2022

### - The Casual Birder Podcast by Suzy Buttress

February 10, 2022

### - Crossing of the Loons by Andy Krattner

February 24, 2022

### Oakland Nature Preserve Survey

January 15, 2022

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

### January Wekiwa Monthly Survey

TBA

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

### Beginners' Bird Watching Class: Orlando Wetlands Park and local areas

January 16, 23, Feb, 6, 2022

Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977

### January Program: A World on the Wing: The Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds by Scott Weidensaul

January 20, 2022

Contact Terry at (321) 436-4932

### Young Birders Trip, Orlando Wetlands Park

January 22, 2022

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

### January Field Trip: Clay Island, Lake Apopka

January 22, 2022

Contact Larry at (407) 252-1182

### Orlando Wetlands Park Monthly Survey

January 23, 2022

Contact Jeffrey at jeffreyg@knights.ucf.edu

### Limited Edition Field to Gainesville hotspots - overnight trip Full

January 28, 2022

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

### February Wekiwa Monthly Survey

February 5, 2022

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

### Birds of Prey Identification Field Trip

Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive

February 6, 2022

Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

### February Program: All About Hummingbirds by Emma Rhodes

February 17, 2022

Contact Terry at (321) 436-4932

### Great Backyard Bird Count

February 18-21, 2022

[www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc)

### February Field Trip: Orlando Wetlands Park, Christmas

February 19, 2022

Contact Larry at (407) 252-1182

### Orlando Wetlands Park Monthly Survey

February 20, 2022

Contact Jeffrey at jeffreyg@knights.ucf.edu

### Sunrise Photo Shoot at Orlando Wetlands Park with Milton Heiberg

Orlando Wetlands Park

February 26, 2022

Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977

### Limited Edition Field Trip Birding and Biking, McDonald Canal Boat Ramp

February 26, 2022

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

### Green PLACE Nature & Photography Hike

February 26, 2022

Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977