



Top, Eastern Towhee, Photo: Val Alm. Middle, Florida Scrub-Jay, Photo: Mary Soule. Bottom, Ralph Risch. Photo: Friends of Seminole State Forest

### Birds of Seminole State Forest by Ralph Risch, May 19, 2022

Orange Audubon Society's May Monthly Program will be by Ralph Risch on Birds of Seminole State Forest. Ralph is the Florida Scrub-Jay Biologist for Seminole State Forest in Lake County. The State Forest has a growing population of Florida Scrub-Jays, thanks to long-term management, which includes prescribed burning, introductions and monitoring with banding.

Eastern Towhees, Brown Thrashers, White-eyed Vireos, and other birds inhabit the scrub that makes up much of the State Forest. Wetter habitats along Blackwater Creek host migratory, wintering, and resident birds.

Ralph Risch earned his master's degree in zoology at the University of South Florida, Tampa, where he did research at Archbold Biological Station with pioneering Florida Scrub-Jay experts Reed Bowman, John Fitzpatrick and Glen Woolfenden. He also did bird biology research in Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, New York, Oregon and Washington and has birded in 45 U. S. states, 3 Canadian provinces, and 6 European countries. He participates in Christmas Bird Counts and has worked as a birding guide.

Ralph knows other animals besides birds and knows his plants, and he will share extensive natural history information in this online program. It will be on YouTube Live. Just put Orange Audubon Society in the search field at 7pm, May 19th. See you there!

*Terry Piper, Programs Chair*

### Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive 7th Anniversary

It was May 2015 when the St. Johns River Water Management District opened the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive (LAWD). Orange Audubon Society (OAS) values LAWD and has been celebrating the anniversary of its opening each year. OAS will be on LAWD doing outreach on Sunday, May 1st. For more information, see p.3.

## City Nature Challenge

Have you recorded any plants or animals on your phone on *iNaturalist* as part of the City Nature Challenge? To document biodiversity within the urban landscape, The Nature Conservancy is hosting this friendly intercity competition. Continuing through May 2nd, naturalists in Orange County are trying to record the most species, document the most observations and to engage the most participants. *iNaturalist* is a free mobile app that uses computer vision/artificial intelligence to provide real-time identification suggestions. Read more at this link: [City Nature Challenge 2022](#).

On Bird Chats with OAS, Kathy Rigling recorded a short video on [The City Nature Challenge](#) targeting educators and earlier The Nature Conservancy's Kierstyn Cox and local birder, photographer and naturalist Scott Simmons recorded an [intro to the program and iNaturalist](#). We hope you participate!

*Christianah Oyenuga,  
The Nature Conservancy*

### Call For Book Reviews

For several years, the *OASis* has featured book reviews in our June issue to inspire your summer reading. Would you like to review a book focused on conservation, nature, nature travel or nature study? If so, contact us about length and deadline. Email [newsletter@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:newsletter@orangeaudubonfl.org).

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

Programs are the 3rd Thursday of each month (September-June). This program will be held online on YouTube LIVE.





**Light Pollution**

Light Pollution is the focus of World Migratory Bird Day 2022. Artificial light is increasing globally by at least 2 per cent per year. It is a significant threat to migratory birds, causing disorientation when they fly at night, collisions with buildings, perturbations of their internal clocks, all interfering with their ability to undertake long-distance migrations. More and more cities around the world are taking measures to dim building lights during spring and fall migration. Best practice guidelines are being developed under the Convention on Migratory Species to address this growing issue and to ensure that action is taken globally

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) Bird Chat on May 12th at 7 p.m. will be "Dim the Lights for Birds at Night!" by Carol Bailey-White of Duval Audubon Society. Register [at this link](#), and let's learn from Jacksonville's exemplary program. If you are interested in helping to get such a program going in our area, email [info@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:info@orangeaudubonfl.org).

**World Migratory Bird Day  
May 14, 2022**

World Migratory Bird Day is celebrated twice a year, the second Saturday in May and the second Saturday in October. World Migratory Bird Day began in 1993 by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center focusing on migration of Western Hemisphere birds. Since 2007 this event has been coordinated by Environment for the Americas, a nonprofit that tries to connect people to bird conservation. This group focuses on movement of birds throughout the major migratory bird corridors worldwide. To participate, submit at least one eBird checklist anytime on May 14th. Multiple lists will provide more valuable data to researchers who are tracking migrating and resident birds. To learn more, visit: [migratorybirdday.org](http://migratorybirdday.org).

**Net Metering Saved — For Now**

Thanks to all who wrote Governor DeSantis to veto HB 741 that would have a chilling effect on Net Metering, a policy essential to promoting roof-top solar. He vetoed it on April 27th. Great news.



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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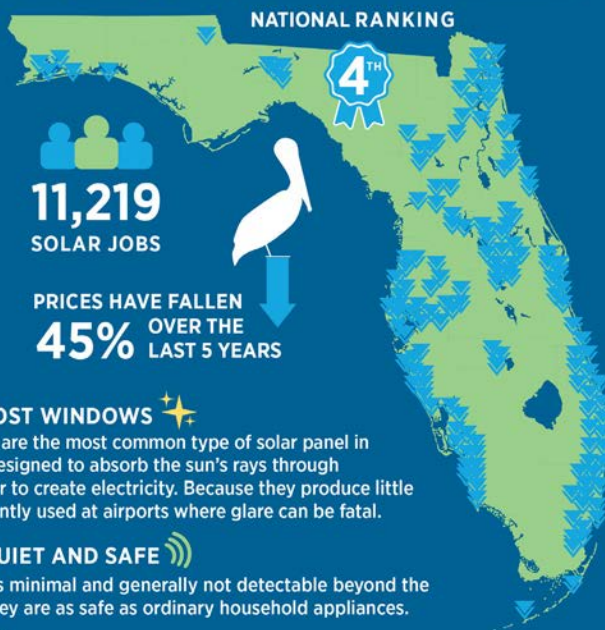
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Solar is a clean, reliable form of energy that can propel Florida into a healthier future for people and wildlife. Solar sites are good neighbors, and can boost regional economies.

**6,539.8 MW**  
TOTAL SOLAR INSTALLED

ENOUGH SOLAR POWER FOR  
**780,586**  
HOMES

**3%** OF FLORIDA'S  
ELECTRICITY  
POWERED BY SOLAR



**FACT #1** **LESS GLARE THAN MOST WINDOWS** ✨  
Photovoltaic (PV) modules are the most common type of solar panel in Florida. These panels are designed to absorb the sun's rays through non-reflective glass in order to create electricity. Because they produce little to no glare, they are frequently used at airports where glare can be fatal.

**FACT #2** **SOLAR FARMS ARE QUIET AND SAFE** 🗣️  
Noise from solar facilities is minimal and generally not detectable beyond the perimeter of the facility; they are as safe as ordinary household appliances.

**FACT #3** **PROPERTY VALUE** 💰  
A survey of home appraisers showed that most (66%) felt that homes located near a solar energy site were no less valuable than similar homes elsewhere, while many (11%) responded that the impact is positive.



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT AUDUBON FLORIDA'S EFFORTS, GO TO

[FL.AUDUBON.ORG](http://FL.AUDUBON.ORG)

## Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive's Seventh Anniversary May 1, 2022

It's been seven years since the St. Johns River Water Management District (District) opened the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive to the public. Orange Audubon Society volunteers will be on the drive on Sunday, May 1st, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at three stations along the drive. We will be sharing information on how to better identify birds along the drive, how to safely spot other wildlife, and about the lake restoration. The popular 11-mile one-way Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive (LAWD) was carefully designed to traverse existing farm levees to provide optimal wildlife viewing opportunities of the recovering wetlands and lake. LAWD is open on days that District staff and contractors are not carrying out Lake Apopka restoration work — Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and most federal holidays. Any day of the week visitors may hike or bicycle into the property and take the Lake Apopka Loop Trail, which extends over 18 miles.

The LAWD entrance gate opens to vehicles at 7 a.m. and closes at 3 p.m. to allow visitors time to complete the drive and exit the property by 5 p.m. The one-way drive begins at 2850 Lust Road in Apopka and exits onto Jones Avenue in Zellwood. Details and the audio tour can be found on the [District's website](#).

Over 172,000 visitors enjoyed the drive in 2021, more than any other wildlife drive in Florida. "We're proud of the drive's success and the incredible educational opportunity it offers residents and visitors," said District Executive Director Mike Register. "It's just one of the many benefits of the numerous restoration projects under way to improve Lake Apopka's water quality and natural systems." Cyclists and pedestrians make up thousands of additional visitors.

Any weekend throughout the year, you can see many out-of-state plates on LAWD, and these people buy gas and supplies, eat in restaurants, and stay locally, which brings in ecotourism dollars. Birding and nature photography ecotourism meets the International Ecotourism Society's definition that OAS promotes: Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education.

Come out on the seventh anniversary of this wonderful local resource and bring your questions for OAS volunteers.



Orange Audubon Society President Deborah Green was honored by the Foliage Sertoma Club of Apopka for her work to promote access and education on the Lake Apopka North Shore, which benefits residents of Apopka. One of 12 worthy candidates (all shown in the photograph, along with Apopka Mayor Bryan Nelson), Deborah was chosen winner in the club's annual Service to Mankind awards competition. At the April 21st Orange Audubon Society program at Leu Gardens, Sertoma President Lorena Potter (left of Deborah) and Secretary Bev Winesburgh presented a \$250 check for Orange Audubon Society. Photo: Diane Velazquez

## Jay Watch

[Audubon Jay Watch](#) volunteers contribute to citizen science research and preservation of the threatened Florida Scrub-Jay. To become a Jay Watch volunteer, you must take a free half-day training session in which you will learn standardized survey methods.

In-person Jay Watch training will only be available at two locations this year. The nearest one is at the Lyonia Preserve, Deltona, on Saturday, May 21st from 8 to 11 a.m..

There will also be two online training opportunities with video recordings available for those who cannot attend in person and/or would like a refresher. One is Tuesday, May 3rd, 5:30-7:30 p.m. and the other is Tuesday, May 17th, 10:00-Noon. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

Both trainings will provide the basic skills required to do surveys. Each of the in-person and online training opportunities will cover both Florida Scrub-Jay Basic Ecology and Audubon Jay Watch Survey Protocol.

Surveys take place annually between June 15 and July 15 and are coordinated by the land managers at their respective sites. Each site will conduct a survey for three consecutive days, from sun up to late morning. New Jay Watchers will be assigned to a team with a leader.

Jay Watch is one of Audubon Florida's most important Citizen Science efforts. Join in if you have time.

## The Casual Birder Podcast

Podcasts are audio recordings that can be listened to on a smart phone, computer or similar device. I enjoy listening to podcasts as I'm driving. It definitely helps to make the time go faster and relieves stress when there is a lot of traffic. One of my favorite podcasts is The Casual Birder podcast featuring Suzy Buttress. Suzy is a birder in southern England who shares her deep appreciation of all birds. Her podcasts feature her describing birds in various locations that she visits, including around her home. Listening to these really makes me want to slow down and appreciate all the birds that show up in the places that I visit, particularly around my neighborhood. Some of her podcasts feature guest speakers from different places throughout the world on various topics such as birding in the Isle of Wight, understanding Nightingales and Australian birding.

Suzy also organizes virtual teams from around the world to participate in birding events such as the Global Big Day. I participated in the last one in October, and she arranged a Zoom meeting so we could interact with other birders from around the world. This was really amazing experience.

Orange Audubon Society featured Suzy on a recent Bird Chat program which can be found on the Orange Audubon YouTube channel. Here is [the link](#).

If you want to listen to Suzy's podcasts go to the [Casual Birder podcast website](#).

You can find the Casual Birder podcast on your smart phone using Apple Podcasts, Google Play, Stitcher Radio, or other formats. Just a warning though; listening to this podcast will make you want to pack your bags and head to Great Britain to see all the beautiful birds that she describes!

*Kathy Rigling*



Northern Gannets spend most of their lives at sea. In North America, they breed in only six Canadian colonies: three in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Quebec, and three in the North Atlantic off the coast of Newfoundland. In Europe there are 32 colonies from the coast of Brittany in France northward to Norway (All About Birds). Northern Gannet, Bempton Cliffs, Yorkshire. Photo: Suzy Buttress from The Casual Birder

## OAS Education Coordinator Report, April 2022

As Orange Audubon Society (OAS) Education Coordinator, I've been busy helping teachers cover standards related to interdependence in the environment and Earth Day events.

In early April, I presented at the League of Environmental Educators of Florida spring conference on community (citizen) science and Bird ID using Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird. There at the beautiful Florida Elks Youth camp in Umatilla I also led a morning bird walk for participants.

The following week I visited Arbor Ridge K-8 school in Orlando and did programs for five second grade classes on birds and how to improve backyard and schoolyard habitats for birds.

I taught a lesson about the challenges of bird migration for two fifth grade classrooms at Zellwood Elementary School. The students were highly engaged with this outdoor game in which they represented either birds or obstacles, such as outdoor cats and wind turbines. On the last round of the game, additional habitat was introduced and they understood how the birds were better able to survive when they had more safe spaces to rest.

Later in the month I visited Lake Whitney Elementary School in Winter Garden and presented for fifth grade classes on bird beak adaptations.



Kathy Rigling at Spring Lake Elementary School. Photo courtesy Kathy Rigling

Using chopsticks, clothespins, and other items, the students raced to pick up pipe cleaner caterpillars and other "food" items. Students saw how differently-shaped beaks help birds eat various types of food. I spent a second day at Lake Whitney teaching about food chains and food webs by having each class create a giant food web.

On April 21st, I staffed a table at the Zellwood Elementary Earth Day Expo in which I shared with the students and their families how birds are important in the environment and simple things we can do to help birds.

On Earth Day, April 22nd, I visited Spring Lake Elementary in Ocoee to teach second graders about the importance of birds and bird conservation. I also gave them a brief

introduction to using binoculars. The youngsters were so excited to use real optics, and we even got to see an Eastern Bluebird, an American Crow, and an Osprey nest!

Also, at Spring Lake I presented for first graders on how to observe closely in nature, and then we explored the play yard for natural treasures. The students were very engaged finding ladybugs, chewed pinecones, lichens and even pollinating bees!

In addition to the school visits, I have been working with The Nature Conservancy to provide resources to help educators and others participate in the City Nature Challenge, April 29th-May 2nd (p.1).

I am also collaborating with the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs planning future programs with their Junior Gardener Clubs as well as completing my credentials to work with local Boy Scout troops.

I am available to do classroom visits with standards-based lessons, Science Nights, and activities for after-school groups and can assist with community science events. For information, email me at [education@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:education@orangeaudubonfl.org).

*Kathy Rigling, Education Coordinator*

## 2022 Orange Audubon Society Board Elections

The Orange Audubon Society (OAS) annual election of board members was held April 21, 2022, prior to the program at Leu Gardens. We welcome or welcome back president Deborah Green, 1st vice president Jack Horton, 2nd vice president Paula Duenas, secretary Linda Gaunt, and treasurer Teresa Williams. OAS welcomes new board members Marian Lichtler and Alan Shapiro and returning board member Lori Parsons.

There are still several board vacancies. 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 past 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. It also 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 [Stephanienieves55@gmail.com](mailto:Stephanienieves55@gmail.com).

*Stephanie Nieves,  
Nominating Committee Chair*

### *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion*

#### **Have Any Binoculars or Field Guides To Donate?**

In fall 2021 Orange Audubon Society (OAS) joined Audubon Florida/National Audubon's inaugural Future Leaders for Equity, Diversity, and Justice in the Environment or FLEDJE! program (see April OASis, p. 5). The program stimulated us to provide opportunities for underserved communities.

OAS now has the opportunity to apply for a mini-grant and has chosen to develop an after-school Birding Club at Zellwood Elementary. We will spend grant money on binoculars and field guides for the school for these students whose parents cannot afford them. OAS' Education Coordinator Kathy Rigling will work with teacher Pamela Owens on the club.

Do you have any binoculars or field guides to donate? We'll arrange pick-up. Email [info@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:info@orangeaudubonfl.org).

*Susan Thome-Barrett*

In Case You Missed It...

**Florida's Invasive Animals by Jim Duby**

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) April 21st program was in person at Leu Gardens with speaker Jim Duby, the Seminole County Natural Lands Program Manager. Jim is a reptile aficionado and expert on invasive animals. Jim brought a boa, a native Pine Snake, and an invasive Cane Toad to show us.

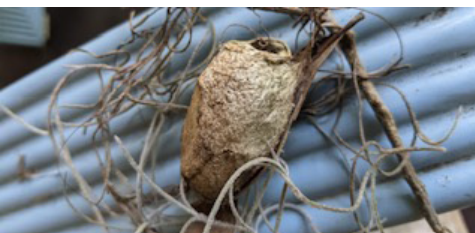


Top, Jim Duby holding invasive Cane Toad with cloth to protect from irritating substances. Bottom, Julianna Merotto, Conservation Leadership Initiative student holding boa. Photos: Stephanie Nieves

An interesting and sad fact Jim shared was how Fence Lizards had been outcompeted by the Cuban (Brown) Anoles. The Green Anoles, that are often mentioned as suffering from the introduction of Cuban Anoles, actually go higher in the trees and other vegetation. The program is posted on [YouTube at this link](#), thanks to recording by OAS member David Bottomley. Check it out.

Deborah Green

**What is it? Hummingbird Nest?**



Answer: Vagated Silk moth cocoon!

**Fort DeSoto Field Trip**

Seventeen intrepid travelers joined Orange Audubon Society's first two-day Fort De Soto field trip. We were in search of rarities, migrants and shorebirds at one of the Florida West Coast's premiere birding locations with leaders Lorri Lilja (Day One) and Karen Hamblett (Day Two). In total we saw 59 species of birds.

The highlight of Day One, led by Lorri Lilja, was the Black-legged Kittiwake on the Gulf Pier. The Black-legged Kittiwake is a true "seagull" spending most of its life at sea, fishing and sleeping. It returns to land during mating and nesting season. Somehow this younger gull made a wrong turn and ended up on the sunny west coast of Florida instead of the northern shores of the U.S. and Canada. It was a lifer for most of the attendees and was easily spotted on the pier and posed well for pictures.



Black-legged Kittiwake. Photo: Susan Thome-Barrett

We visited all of the hotspots at the park. At the North Beach picnic area we were treated to Hooded Warblers, a Wood Thrush, White-eyed Vireo, Palm Warblers, Prairie Warblers, Northern Parulas and Black-and-white Warblers. The highlight of the East Beach picnic area was a Scarlet Tanager and a Swainson's Thrush that was tinted red from feasting on mulberries. Of course, Nanday Parakeets were ever-present. At the fountain near the Ranger house we added a beautiful male Yellow Warbler. At the East Beach turn around we spotted Short-billed Dowitchers, a Wilson's Plover, Willets, a Common Loon, and Semi-palmated Plovers along with others shorebirds and warblers.

Our Day One walk through Arrowhead Picnic Area added Black-throated Green Warblers, more Hooded Warblers and a Summer Tanager, along with Palms, Prairies and Northern Parulas.

We moved to the beach at North Beach to watch a Reddish Egret dance in the surf and to catch the shorebirds and terns including Dunlins and Least Terns.

That evening we had a rendezvous on



Red Knots in April at Fort DeSoto Park. Photo: Susan Thome-Barrett

North Beach near a restricted area to watch the sunset and more importantly, to watch the gulls, skimmers, terns and shorebirds that were settling in for the evening.

Highlight of Day Two was undoubtedly the Kentucky Warbler sighting at Arrowhead. Leader Karen Hamblett was able to get almost all attendees a very good look at this typically elusive ground-skulker. We also got great looks at some adorable baby Great Horned Owls all decked out in fuzz and an Ovenbird. A scan at the sandbar off Arrowhead Picnic area added Marbled Godwits.

Revisiting areas of the park ensured everyone was able to see the birds and offered a chance for better sightings. At the North Shore picnic area, we re-sighted the Hooded Warblers and Wood Thrush. The Yellow-throated Warbler gave us even longer looks. Loggerhead Shrikes and Eastern Kingbirds were sighted on the lines along the road to Arrowhead.

Behind the Ranger's home we saw a beautiful Prothonotary Warbler, an Indigo Bunting and three Magnificent Frigate Birds as they headed back out over the water.

On my way out of the park, I watched the Magnificent Frigate Birds circling the Tierra Verde Pond. If you've never had a chance to watch them drink on the fly, this is a great experience.

Susan Thome-Barrett

**Bird Chats with OAS**

The Bird Chats with Orange Audubon Society (OAS) team has created a rich resource of programs archived them on OAS' [YouTube Channel](#), organized into Playlists to make it easy to find the talks you missed. Register at [this link](#) to receive the link each week to be able to view live and ask question.

Upcoming programs are listed in the calendar on p. 8. If you have requests for topics for programs or speakers, please email [info@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:info@orangeaudubonfl.org).

**May Field Trip: Lake Lotus Park, Altamonte Springs May 22, 2022**

Orange Audubon Society's last monthly field trip of the season will be to Lake Lotus Park. This City of Altamonte Springs' nature preserve encompasses approximately 150 acres, including 120 acres of woods and wetlands, spanning both sides of Maitland Blvd.

We will meet on the south side of Maitland Blvd in the parking lot (the sign will say off-site parking). Walking is mostly along boardwalks, and the trip is suitable for beginners. Lake Lotus Park, 1153 Lake Lotus Park Road, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714. Time: 8 a.m. until approximately 11 a.m. If any questions, contact Larry at (407) 252-1182.



Orange Audubon Society Young Birders Club at Mead Botanical Garden. Photo courtesy Young Birders Club

**Young Birders Field Trips**

On April 16th, the young birders met at Mead Botanical Gardens to search for spring migrants and other songbirds. We had a wonderful start with the sighting of a very secretive Yellow-billed Cuckoo. As the morning progressed we saw several warblers including the American Redstart, Northern Waterthrush, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Palm Warbler, Northern Parula, Common Yellowthroat and Prairie Warbler. We also got good looks at Blue-headed Vireo, some well-hidden Painted Buntings and a Swallow-tailed Kite.

For our next outing on May 21, 2022, we will travel to the East Coast to observe coastal species at Canaveral National Seashore and the surrounding areas.

We are pleased that Lorri Lilja will join us as one of our co-leaders. If you would like to sign up for this field trip with your young Birder please email Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com.

**Swallow-tailed Kite Nest**

Birders have been delighted to watch the courtship and eventual nesting of a pair of Swallow-tailed Kites at Mead Gardens in Winter Park. The nest has been registered with ARCI ([Avian Research and Conservation Institute](#)) in Gainesville, and voluntary observations are being recorded. As of press time, the kites are still sitting on the nest. Fish Crows that had constructed their nest above the kite nest have apparently been driven out.

Swallow-tailed Kites make their nests in an exposed site near the top of one of the tallest trees, building a new nest each year. They lay one to three eggs and incubate them 27-33 days, according to Cornell University's *All About Birds Website*.

Although we have the good fortune to see these beautiful kites flying overhead each spring and summer, finding a nest is a rare occurrence. Back in about 2001, birder Cheri Pierce found a nest in a tall pine at Orlando Wetlands Park. Other than that, most birders have no memory of seeing a nest in our area.

Swallow-tailed Kites' primary threat is loss of habitat from agriculture, urban development, logging and other landscape altering factors.

Roosting kites are also vulnerable to disturbance, including from low-flying aircraft. We'll be hoping the Mead family survives.

*Susan Thome-Barrett*

**Volunteer Thanks**

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) has participated in many outreach events this spring, starting with The Great Outdoors Weekend at the Orlando Science Center in mid March. Sonia Stephens, Marian Lichtler and I did outreach for that two-day event.

For Central Florida Earth Day at Lake Eola, volunteers were Rick Baird, Julianna Merotto., Kathy Rigling, and Sonia Stephens. For the Apopka Art and Foliage Festival, April 23rd and 24th, volunteers were Marian Lichtler, Stephanie Nieves, Ricardo Ortiz, Kathy Rigling, and myself. Young Birder's Club member Alex DeBear stopped by and helped for awhile.

For the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive (LAWD) Anniversary event May 1st, volunteers were Greg Gensheimer, Larry Martin, Cindy Monell, Ricardo Ortiz, Mary Soule, and myself at the 2nd and 3rd stations, adding to the outreach of LAWD Ambassadors Cecie Catron, Mo Cortese, Paula Duenas, Marian Lichtler, Dutch Perez, and Mary Van Egmond. Thanks so much to all, and especially to OAS past president Rick Baird for tent set up.

*Deborah Green, OAS president*



Swallow-tailed Kite. Photo: Susan Thome-Barrett. One of the kites on the nest. Photo: Delsy Rodriguez

**Spring Mead Walks**

The spring migration bird walks at Mead Botanical Garden this year went well. We started with a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks feeding two chicks and went on to see the Barred Owl family. Finished each day with the Swallow-tailed Kites. Other highlights were Summer Tanager, Wood Ducks, Great Crested Flycatchers and a variety of warblers. A good time was had by all. *Larry Martin, Field Trips Chair*



Young Birder's Club member Alex DeBear gets to know retired wildlife biologist and new OAS Board member Marian Lichtler, while staffing the OAS booth at the Apopka Art and Foliage Festival. Photo: Deborah Green

## Audubon Center for Birds of Prey: A Raptor's Paradise

Tucked away in the heart of Maitland, FL is one of the most impressive and intriguing stops on the Great Florida Birding & Wildlife Trail: The Audubon Center for Birds of Prey (CBOP).

Since 1979, this 42-year-old facility has been playing an integral role in raptor rehabilitation, research, and education. Besides providing unwavering care to the birds brought to the center, CBOP also focuses heavily on community outreach and raising awareness through various educational programs. Not only does the center bring forth the latter opportunities, but it also encourages those who might be interested in raptor conservation to become volunteers.



Juvenile Bald Eagle at Center for Birds of Prey that injured itself trying to fly and hitting his wing on the wall. Volunteers, including Ricardo Ortiz on right, had just stapled the wound before force feeding the raptor so it could gain strength. Photo: Center for Birds of Prey

I have been working at CBOP as a volunteer since November 2021. Every Sunday morning, I make my way to the center and begin my daily assignments. Usually you can find me cleaning aviaries or trying to befriend Uff-Da, one of the facility's oldest black vultures!

I have also had the opportunity to witness first-hand much of what goes on "behind the scenes", such as feeding, medical care, center logistics, and much more. I must admit that, at first, I was a little skeptical about working with birds given that I had absolutely no prior experience. However, staff members guided me every step of the way, and I became more confident in my abilities at handling raptors; it is safe to say that my appreciation for birds has since grown exponentially. If working with birds is something that interests you,

even remotely, I would highly encourage you visit the center one day and learn more about the different opportunities offered.

P.S. If you're ever visiting the Center, you must not forget to greet Henry, the Great Horned Owl. He might be a little grumpy at times, but his cuteness compensates for his moodiness.... usually!

*Ricardo Ortiz, Conservation Leadership Initiative Participant*



Henry, the Great Horned Owl. Photo: Center for Birds of Prey

## Crested Caracara: A Spectacular Scavenger

A large, distinctive falcon, the Crested Caracara can be easily identified by its shaggy black crest, bold black-and-white plumage, bright yellow-orange face, long white neck and long orange legs. Known by some as the "Mexican eagle," this raptor nests in open habitats and is often seen walking about fields, pastures, and road edges feeding on a carcass that vultures or other animals have eviscerated.

Resourceful foragers that eat just about anything, they wade in shallow water to grab fish, dig up turtle eggs with their feet, and turn over debris to uncover insects. They also grab fleeing animals or pick up dead ones. Unlike most raptors that pounce on prey, Caracaras generally fly low or run on the ground toward their prey until they overtake it. The name "caracara" ("traro-traro" in Spanish) may be of Guarani Indian origin derived from the unusual rattling vocalization the bird utters when agitated. (Guarani are the indigenous peoples of South America, where these birds are abundant.)

I first spotted Caracaras 10 years ago as they strutted about the green near the parking area at the Orlando Wetlands Park where they are common. Years later I observed abundant Crested Caracaras visiting the grassy lawns of large hotels in Brazil. Unlike vultures, they do not skulk but walk boldly with their heads held high. Not shy or reclusive, they are easy to spot in open areas or on a tall isolated tree. You also may see them flying low over the ground with wings held flat.

Crested Caracaras range from the southernmost U.S. and Northern Mexico to Tierra del Fuego; however, their range in the U.S. is limited to Southern Arizona, Southern Texas and Southwestern Louisiana, plus an isolated population in the southern peninsula of Florida. John James Audubon first described the species in 1831 and collected a specimen near St. Augustine. The North American Breeding Bird Survey suggests that Crested Caracara populations increased slightly between 1966 and 2015, and therefore is a species of little concern. Florida and Arizona, however, list this species as Threatened because rapid urban and agricultural development has destroyed or degraded nesting habitat. In some regions people with negative attitudes toward scavengers continue to shoot and poison these birds.

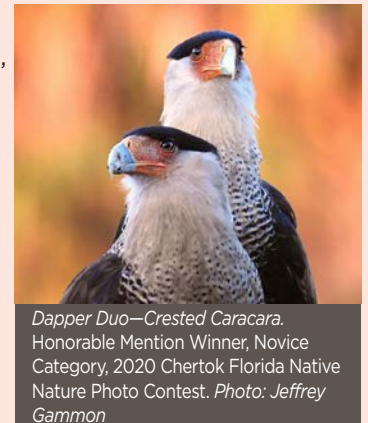
Check out this remarkable species! You will be enchanted as I am by its bold strut, shaggy crest, and long white neck. Another marvel of nature we cherish.

*Linda Carpenter*

## Baby Owl Shower May 7, 2022

Your absolute best opportunity to visit the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland is on [Baby Owl Shower Day](#), which will be Saturday May 7th this year. The Center will be open from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. to show off the baby owls and other raptors. Admission is free if you bring an item from the Center's [Wish List](#).

Orange Audubon Society will have nature merchandise for sale. If you'd like to help, contact Teresa at [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com).



Dapper Duo—Crested Caracara. Honorable Mention Winner, Novice Category, 2020 Chertok Florida Native Nature Photo Contest. Photo: Jeffrey Gammon

## Membership: A Little Complicated

As a member of Orange Audubon Society (OAS), you are also a member of National Audubon Society (NAS) and Audubon Florida in a “three-way membership.” NAS and Audubon Florida—that have paid staff—benefit OAS’ conservation and education efforts greatly through the quality and reach of their work. But OAS, NAS and Audubon Florida are all non-profits that must do their own fund-raising. Donations made to NAS and Audubon Florida do not directly benefit OAS.

Here’s how it works: In the three-way membership, if a person or household joins Audubon through OAS, NAS returns the initial dues to OAS as a “chapter-generated” incentive for recruiting the new member.

However, for any *renewals*, OAS is entitled to only a ‘baseline dues share,’ which, for nearly 20 years has been a flat amount of about \$2000, which is about \$1 per

member per year. This amount does not change with increased number of OAS members nor the renewal amount paid (be it \$20 or \$200).

NAS sends renewal notices — but generally too early and without an expiration date. Formerly, OAS stated that renewal payments must be made directly to NAS. However, so that our membership committee can track your membership, we now ask that you renew through OAS directly and we will send the base dues of \$20 to NAS. If you wish to donate at a higher level than \$20, you can now indicate what part of the amount above \$20 should go to OAS and what part to NAS.

How can you find out your renewal date? OAS receives a roster of our members each month, and if you email [membership@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:membership@orangeaudubonfl.org), we will check the date and email it you.

Member benefits of your three-way

membership include NAS’ bimonthly *Audubon* magazine, Audubon Florida’s *Audubon Florida Naturalist* tri-annual magazine and OAS’ September–June monthly *OASis* newsletter. If you are not receiving NAS publications, call NAS’ membership office at (844) 428-3826.

Currently OAS does not have a Sustainer (monthly donation) membership, and if you sign up online as a Sustainer, your donation goes entirely to NAS.

You can donate to OAS using the [DONATE button](#) on the top right of the OAS website or send a check to P.O. Box 941142, Maitland, FL 32794. The Donate button does include an option for monthly donations to OAS.

If you have any questions on this process, contact OAS treasurer Teresa Williams at [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com). Thanks for being a supporter of NAS, Audubon Florida and OAS!

*Deborah Green, Membership Co-chair*

## MAY/JUNE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### The City Nature Challenge

April 29-May 2, 2022

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

### Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive 7th Anniversary

May 1, 2022 (Sunday)

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

### Bird Chats with OAS via Zoom

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

### - Birding Indian River County by David and Dee Simpson

May 5, 2022

### - Dim the Lights for Birds at Night! by Carol Bailey-White

May 12, 2022

### - eBird Reviewing Your Observations by Gallus Quigley

May 26, 2022

### - June Challenge/Summer Birding with Bird Chat Team

June 2, 2022

### - A Story of Barred Owl Survival by Stephen Ramsden

June 9, 2022

### - Birding by Ear by Natasza Fontaine

June 23, 2022

### - Maine Birding with the Bird Chats Team

June 30, 2022

### Baby Owl Shower, Center for Birds of Prey, Maitland

May 7, 2022

Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977

### Limited Edition Field to Ocala Wetlands

May 7, 2022

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

### May Wekiwa Bird Survey

May 14, 2022

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

### May Program: Birds of Seminole State Forest by Ralph Risch

May 19, 2022

Contact Terry at (321) 436-4932

### Orlando Wetlands Park Monthly Survey

May 21, 2022

Contact Jeffrey at [jeffreyg@knights.ucf.edu](mailto:jeffreyg@knights.ucf.edu)

### Young Birders trip to Canaveral Seashore

May 21, 2022

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

### May Field Trip: Lake Lotus Park, Altamonte Springs

May 22, 2022

Contact Larry at (407) 252-1182

### Jay Watch Training

May 2022, dates TBA

<http://fl.audubon.org/get-involved/jay-watch>

### June Challenge Kickoff (location TBA)

June 4, 2022

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

### Oakland Nature Preserve Quarterly Survey

June 5, 2022

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

### Lower Wekiwa River Preserve Quarterly Survey

TBA

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

### June Wekiwa Monthly Survey

June 11, 2022

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

### June Program: Chertok Nature Photography Contest

June 16, 2022

Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977

### Orlando Wetlands Park Monthly Survey

June 18, 2022

Contact Jeffrey at [jeffreyg@knights.ucf.edu](mailto:jeffreyg@knights.ucf.edu)