



This Month's Program: November 17, 2022 Wekiwa Springs State Park and the History of the Florida State Park System by Robert Brooks



Orange County's longest-running tourist attraction, the azure waters of Wekiwa Springs, has been a popular retreat since the mid-19th century. The Apopka Sportsman Club bought the land that is now Wekiwa Springs State Park in 1941 from the Wilson Cypress Company, which had logged it for hardwoods, cypress and pine.

The Apopka Sportsman Club used it for hunting and fishing until 1969 when the club sold it to the state of Florida to become Wekiwa Springs State Park.

Orange Audubon Society is pleased to welcome Wekiwa Springs State Park Manager Robert Brooks as our presenter on November 17th. Besides telling us what is so special about Wekiwa Springs State Park and how park efforts are conserving habitats, he will tell us the history of Florida's award-winning state park system. Join us at 7:00 p.m. for a fascinating program. Location below.

Paula Duenas, Programs Chair



It's Fiesta Time!! November 4-6, 2022

Lake Eola Fiesta in the Park Arts and Crafts Festival is Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) biggest public outreach event for meeting new people, sharing with them the fabulous array of nature experiences offered by OAS, and selling nature-inspired merchandise to help cover costs of delivering OAS' programs.

We need pre-event help Friday afternoon setting up OAS' tent and during the event Saturday and Sunday from 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., displaying and selling merchandise, doing outreach and packing up each evening. To volunteer, please call or text me at (407) 718-1977. Thank you!

Teresa Williams, Treasurer

Orange Audubon Society Wins Chapter of the Year

Read about Orange Audubon Society's big honor from Audubon Florida on p.2

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

Programs are the 3rd Thursday of each month (September-June) at 7:00 p.m. and all but December are at

Harry P. Leu Gardens

in the Camellia Room at 1920 North Forest Ave., Orlando, FL 32803

For map and directions, visit:

www.leugardens.org/plan/directions/



Green PLACE Nature & Photography Hike November 5, 2022

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) is collaborating with Orange County Environmental Protection Division to offer a FREE guided Nature & Photography Hike at Savage Christmas Creek Preserve in east Orange County. Savage/Christmas Creek Preserve encompasses 1,126 acres with pine flatwoods, cypress domes and a sandhill community.

Hannah Edwards, Orange County Green PLACE naturalist, and Lee Ann Posavad, wildlife photographer, will co-lead this hike, ideal for youth and families.

The walk is at Savage/Christmas Creek Preserve, 11046 NW Christmas Road, Christmas, FL 32709, on November 5th, 2022 from 9:00-11:30 a.m.

Bring your binoculars and cameras to enjoy a walk focused on native species identification and nature photography. Open to all ages and hiking experience levels. FREE but limited to 20 participants. Call Beth Jackson at (407) 836-1481 to register.



Green Lynx Spider on Flattop Goldenrod at Savage Christmas Creek Preserve. Photo: Mary Keim



Birds Can't Vote But We Can

Join Audubon and bird lovers across the country

and pledge to vote. In addition to federal races, state and local elections happening nationwide will have a big impact on our communities and our birds. Decision makers have an



important influence on the ways that laws are written and enacted at every level of government. The best way to protect birds and the places they need is to make sure to vote on or before Election Day on Tuesday, November 8, 2022. Make a plan and do it!

Orange Audubon Honored at Audubon Assembly

Audubon Florida's Audubon Assembly—before the pandemic—was a wonderful gathering of leaders of Florida's 45 Audubon chapters with Audubon Florida staff. Planned in person for the first time in three years, this year's event was to be located in Fort Myers but sadly had to be cancelled due to the devastation from Hurricane Ian. Assembly is now being held in three sessions on Zoom.

The Chapters Celebration, to be held Wednesday, November 2nd at 6 p.m., is a slide show of highlights from each chapter with announcement of chapter award winners.

I am very proud to announce that Orange Audubon Society was selected Chapter of the Year for 2022. We actually share the award with Tropical Audubon Society, the Miami chapter that is the largest Florida chapter with an executive director and several other staffers.

In our application for the award, most of our accomplishments had to do with consistency in serving both our members and our local parks and preserves with online and in-person programs, field trips, and surveys. I also highlighted hiring of our part-time Education Coordinator Kathy Rigling in January 2022 (see report p. 4).

Our chapter is working to be more

inclusive, for example holding Spanish-speaking field trips, and our bird surveys are open to all. If you read this newsletter, you are aware of our efforts and accomplishments *and—through volunteering and your donations—are a part of them.*

Audubon Florida invites us all to the online Chapters Celebration November 2nd. See the chapters in action to save Florida's birds and habitats! Click [this link to register.](#)

There is still so much to do to fulfill OAS' mission—work must be ongoing—but we greatly appreciate Audubon Florida's recognition. It does give a welcome boost to our spirits!

Deborah Green, President



Catesby's Lily at Hal Scott Regional Park and Preserve, October 2022. Photo: Mary Keim

November 19th Field Trip Profiles Important Conservation Area

A scary thing happened last summer—surplusing a part of Hal Scott Regional Park and Preserve in east Orlando was put on the St. Johns River Water Management District governing board's consent agenda. Fortunately, an Audubon Florida staffer reviews the agenda, and as this was brought to light, the potential surplus was pulled from consideration.

Kevin Spear of the *Orlando Sentinel* [wrote an excellent article](#) reminding us of the history of how Hal Scott Regional Park and Preserve came to be protected. Fortunately Kevin has a long memory, as do Audubon Florida staffers (The late Hal Scott was the president of Florida Audubon Society). OAS' November 19th free monthly field trip takes us to Hal Scott to search for Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Brown-headed Nuthatches, Bachman's Sparrows and others. The trip requires carpooling and a 2-mile hike on a non-paved trail. RSVP to Susan at conservation@orangeaudubonfl.org.



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: membership@orangeaudubonfl.org

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A Great Mead Fall Migration Season

I worried about the timing of Orange Audubon Society's fall migration bird walks at Mead Botanical Garden (Saturdays in October) when we started to have great migration days in September. Would all the songbirds have passed through on their way south before our walks?

Despite epic flooding and tree damage from Hurricane Ian, augmented by a major rain event in late October, we had very successful fall bird walks. We had close looks at several less common migratory warblers: Blackburnian, Black-throated Blue, Magnolia, American Redstarts, and saw Painted Buntings, Swainson's Thrushes, Wood Ducks, Limpkins and Wood Storks. A good time was had by all. Special thanks to Linda Gaunt, Bob Siculo and Annemarie Smith for their invaluable help. See you for spring migration walks in April.

Larry Martin



Photographers capturing shots of a Tennessee Warbler at Mead Botanical Garden on September 17th, Photo: Deborah Green; Olive-sided Flycatcher, a rarity discovered by Ethan Landreville on September 17th, Photo: Brennan Landreville; Ethan and Brennan Landreville, Photo: Deborah Green.



Bay-breasted Warbler, part of the October 18th fallout of these warblers. Photo: Robert Sena.

A Fallout!

On October 18th, birders at Mead Botanical Garden were treated to a unique warbler "fallout." A group of about 30 Bay-breasted Warblers showed up at Mead in mid-morning near Alice's Pond (adjacent to the clubhouse).

Bay-breasted Warblers are abundant in the coniferous forests of northern Canada, where they nest at low-elevation and feed mostly on spruce budworms. In fall, they travel south to wintering grounds in Central America where they can find food that they could not find if they remained north in the colder months.

With the breeding season over, their showy plumage transforms into mostly green and white with a hint of bay on the flanks. Their attention is completely focused on finding caterpillars and other insects to fuel the rest of their journey.

More adults migrate west of the Appalachian Mountains, while first-year birds are more frequent east of the mountains and along the coast, according to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's *All About Birds*.

The birders and photographers followed the flock from the bike path to behind the garden club and wood bridge while the warblers continued feeding. As of the end of October, a few Bay-breasted Warblers lingered at Mead (although no one is sure if these are from the original flock or new ones).

In case you missed this sighting, our birding community is friendly and birding adventures are there for those who take the time to get out!

Backyard Biodiversity Day

On October 22nd, Orange Audubon Society (OAS) volunteers had the opportunity to educate Backyard Biodiversity Day visitors on Native Plants for Birds.

Tarflower Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, that runs this annual event, sold native plants and coordinated a fun day of hikes and talks.

Thanks to OAS volunteers Paula Duenas, Linda Gaunt, Susan Ledlow, Alan Shapiro and Sonia Stephens for staffing our booth at this event.

OAS enjoys supporting the Tarflower Chapter in this annual event at Mead Botanical Garden. Tarflower will also be at Mead for the [Growvember](#)



OAS volunteers (Linda Gaunt, Susan Ledlow and Sonia Stephens) at Backyard Biodiversity Day 2022. OAS' New Plants for Birds Display, Photos: Alan Shapiro.

A pair of breeding chickadees must find 6,000 to 9,000 caterpillars to rear one clutch. Doug Tallamy, professor of entomology and wildlife ecology at the University of Delaware.

Education Coordinator October Update

Here's what is new with Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) education programs: In October I taught a program about upland birds for the Florida Master Naturalist program at Oakland Nature Preserve and led students on a birding and native plant walk through the preserve's uplands.

Every month I give a Zoom program for formal and informal educators. On October 5th, it was about *Audubon Adventures* print and digital resources. The recording is currently on our [Orange Audubon Society YouTube channel](#)

On October 13th, OAS hosted a table display on the health benefits of birding at a health and safety fair at Cypress Springs Elementary. Parents and children were excited to learn about local areas where they could go to observe birds.

On October 15th, I assisted with the Florida Young Birders Club monthly speaker Zoom which featured Gainesville birding expert Adam Kent. This presentation will be available on the Florida Young Birders Club YouTube channel in the near future.

Susan Thome-Barrett and I presented a Birding 101 class for the Wild and Free homeschool group at Mead Botanical Gardens on October 20th. The children ranged in age from preschoolers to middle school. They were very excited to look at birds and other natural wonders such as a whole snakeskin and a softshell turtle in Alice's Pond. Two Eastern Phoebes landed in a tree calling loudly while we were talking about identifying birds by call!

Also on October 20th, I represented OAS at the Orange County Public Schools Green Schools recognition program. It was amazing to see all the projects that schools from elementary through high school are doing to become more sustainable. The Apopka Elementary School STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, math) event took place on October 22nd, and OAS had an interactive display on birds and their beak adaptations. Helping with the table were Gail Holdiman and Julianna Merotto, one of OAS' Conservation Leadership Initiative students. The children enjoyed trying to figure out which type of bird ate what type of food.



Left, Wild and Free homeschool group trip at Mead Botanical Gardens, Photos: Kathy Rigling. Right, Zellwood Elementary Birding Club, Photos: Pam Owens

On Monday, October 25th, I made my monthly visit to the Zellwood Elementary School Evergreen Club. This month I taught about migration and how to identify birds using size, shape, color, habitat, and behavior. I also taught them about community science and why we count birds. Out in the schoolyard, we used the new binoculars that were purchased through the FLEDGE Grant. Highlights were seeing a Pileated Woodpecker near a nest hole calling to another, several Red-bellied Woodpeckers flying from tree to tree, Turkey Vultures flying over and Palm Warblers feeding. The children kept a paper checklist and then, together inside the classroom, we compiled it to do an Ebird report online.

To schedule an educational visit for a school group, after school group, scout troop or any other interested party, please email education@orangeaudubonfl.org. Kathy Rigling



OAS Young Birders Club November Update

The next Young Birders field trip will be to Orlando Wetlands Park, Saturday, November 13th at 8:00 am. We will be inviting other Young Birders around the state to meet us at this event.

The field trip is free, and November should be beautiful weather for observing many of our winter resident wading birds, waterfowl and songbirds.

The Florida Young Birders Network, a program of the Florida Ornithological Society, is also hosting monthly free webinars about bird-related topics.

The October 15th webinar was by skilled Alachua County birder Adam Kent, about his journey in birding and his favorite birds, sparrows.

The November 13th field trip is free to parents and Young Birders, but you are required to register in advance. Please email riglingkathy@gmail.com to reserve a spot for you and your Young Birder. Loaner binoculars will be available upon request.

Kathy Rigling



White Pelicans with yellow plate on bill, showing the photo was taken in breeding season. Photo: North Dakota Game and Fish Department.

How the Dust Bowl Saved the Canvasback, Redhead and maybe the White Pelican

At the Florida Ornithological Society's 50th anniversary meeting, I had a chance to chat with an important scientist, Steve Nesbitt, who had presented for Orange Audubon Society probably 20 years ago. He was telling me about his early work experience before he moved to Gainesville to work for Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, with focus on Sandhill and Whooping Cranes.

When Steve was a young scientist, he worked at Des Lac National Wildlife Refuge in North Dakota. If you look up information about our country's national wildlife refuges, you will learn that the state with the most refuges is North Dakota.

That state is part of the Prairie Pothole Region, a glaciated landscape of shallow basins covering 5.3 million acres across five states (Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa) and three Canadian provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba).

Millions of migrating Canvasbacks, Mallards, Northern Pintails, Gadwall, Blue-winged Teal and other waterfowl flock to these seasonal wetland ponds to breed, earning the area the nickname "America's duck factory." The region produces nearly half the continent's ducks.

Expansion of grain agriculture drastically reduced the native prairie habitat.

Agriculture in the Prairie Pothole Region goes back to the bonanza farms in the Red River Valley originating in the late 1800s and lasting until the 1920s. Then in the 1930s severe drought and the Dustbowl brought widespread ruin to farmers. In North Dakota this ecological and social disaster had one good outcome: the establishment of national wildlife refuges.

Biologist J. Clark Salyer, hired in 1934 to manage the National Wildlife Refuge System, handpicked many of North Dakota's Dustbowl-era refuges. He crisscrossed the drought-parched state in his station wagon, sometimes driving 600 miles a day, to find distressed farmlands and buy those he could. In spring of 1939, President Franklin Roosevelt signed executive orders establishing 29 new purchases as wildlife refuges.

Although North Dakota's wildlife refuges account for only 1 percent of lands in the state, by partnering with farmers, ranchers and other landowners, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has been able to revive damaged habitat on a much wider scale. Without the construction of reservoirs and the restoration of habitat completed under the direction of USFWS, many wildlife species might not have survived.

If you read [the 2019 study](#) showing how 2.9 billion birds have disappeared through loss of habitat, you will see that grassland bird have declined the most as the prairies were lost to agriculture. Now the last of the patches of grassland are being converted to corn for ethanol production.

What can you do? Visit the National Wildlife Refuges. Speak up for their protection. And you can buy a Duck Stamp!

Deborah Green



Redheads and American Coots. Photo: Sam Mitcham

That Funny Bump

The *Birds of North America* Online describes the bump on the bill of American White Pelicans during the breeding season as "a highly fibrous, epidermal plate." It can vary in size, and no one is certain what its purpose is, although it is clearly part of courtship. Of the eight species of pelicans in the world, only the American White Pelican grows this plate.

North Dakota's Chase Lake National Wildlife Refuge hosts the largest colony of breeding White Pelicans in North America with an estimated 1/3 to 1/2 of the entire population of this species nesting there.

Duck Stamps

The migratory waterfowl we see in winter here in Florida depend on the Prairie Pothole Region for some aspect of their life cycle. Buying a Duck Stamp makes waterfowl production areas possible and ensures your children will have the opportunity to see the migrating duck, goose and shorebird species you enjoy today.

Waterfowl hunters 16 years of age or older are required to purchase a Duck Stamp, but anyone can contribute to conservation by buying one.

In addition to serving as hunting license and conservation tool, a current Federal Duck Stamp is also a free pass into any national wildlife refuge that charges an entry fee. Nearly all of the proceeds are used to conserve habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Although you can buy [Duck Stamps](#) at sporting goods stores, the American Birding Association suggests you [buy your Duck Stamp from them](#) so they can document the support by birders.



The 2022-23 Duck Stamp features the Redhead.

Beginners' Bird Watching Class

This October, Orange Audubon Society (OAS) held its annual Fall Beginners' Bird Watching Class. Taught by Susan Thome-Barrett and myself, we held three sessions at different hotspots in Central Florida.

The first session was held at Orlando Wetlands Park in which the participants were introduced to the basics of bird identification, how to get ready to go birding, safety tips, field guides and binocular use. The participants enjoyed observing the egrets and herons and other waders that were numerous along the walk. We were very surprised by a close sighting of an American Bittern, which disappeared into a small patch of reeds right before our eyes!

The second session was held at Mead Botanical Garden. The class learned about migration as well as tips for inviting birds to your yard using native plants. We spotted a few migrant birds, including American Redstarts, Black-and-White Warblers and a Northern Parula. We also had great looks at a hunting Cooper's Hawk and, after much searching, everyone got to see a male Painted Bunting that was quite hidden.

The final class was held at the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive where we talked about birding ethics and community science. We saw a lot of newly arrived ducks including Blue-winged Teal and a male and female Redhead duck. We also found a mudflat where we were able to observe shorebirds including Dunlin, Pectoral Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Least Sandpiper, and Wilson's Snipe.

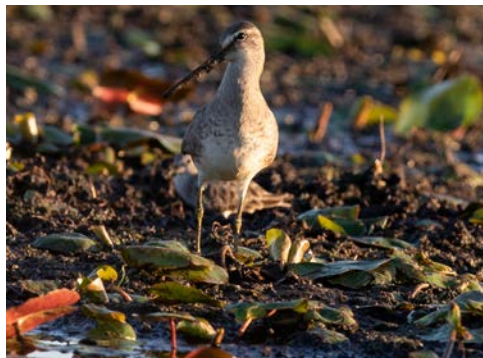
Another big treat was watching female Northern Harriers hunting over the marsh. Lastly towards the end of the drive we saw a Peregrine Falcon with its prey on the ground, and we got to watch it through the scope for several minutes.

The next Beginners' Bird Watching Class will be held January 8, January 15, and January 22. Spots are limited so reserve yours early by emailing Teresa at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com

New this year is Intermediate' Bird

Watching Class with esteemed local birder Bob Sanders. That two-part class will be offered March 18 and 25th.

Kathy Rigling



Fall Beginners' Bird Watching Class at Orlando Wetlands Park, *Photo: Kathy Rigling.*

Shorebirds at Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive and Long-billed Dowitcher seen on last day of class, *Photos: Jack Horton.*

Redhead and Fulvous Whistling-Ducks on the at Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive. Notice the large comparative size of the Redhead, *Photo: Kathy Rigling.*

Global Big Day Results

On October 8, 2022, many birders participated in the Global Big Day sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Swarovski Optik. As a result, 7,453 species were observed in 185 countries. There were over 80,000 checklists submitted by 34,670 people.

Locally in Orange County 124 species were observed on October 8th. With the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive closed after Hurricane Ian, the top birding spots on that day were Orlando Wetlands Park, Mead Botanical Gardens and Wekiwa Springs State Park.

The most abundant birds seen in Orange County were Red-winged Blackbirds and Boat-tailed Grackles

Several migrant birds were spotted including Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Philadelphia Vireo and Swainson's Thrush.

The data from events such as Global Big Day gives researchers a snapshot of how worldwide bird populations are doing so that conservation issues can be assessed more thoroughly.

To see more data about October Big Day go to: <https://ebird.org/news/october-big-day-2022-results>.

Limited Edition Field Trips

Our next Limited Edition field trip will feature another Lake County park, Pine Meadows Conservation Area in Eustis. At Pine Meadows we will search for sparrows, raptors and songbirds that are arriving for the winter season.

There are only a few spaces left so to reserve, please email riglingkathy@gmail.com. The cost is \$12 for Orange Audubon members and 17 for nonmembers.

There will be no Limited Edition Field Trip in December. The January trip is overnight, January 28-29 to Gainesville. Cost is \$85 members; \$110 non-members. To register, email Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com.

Project FeederWatch

Enjoy feeding birds at your home? No matter how small or large your feeding station you can provide valuable scientific data to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology with Project FeederWatch.

Project FeederWatch is a Community (Citizen) Science project. Running from November to April, it is different than using eBird in that very specific protocols must be followed. For example, birds counted must be seen in your feeding area. Flyovers are not counted, and the count is conducted over two consecutive days. There is also a small administrative fee to join this project.

You don't even need a feeder to participate. As long as you either have a bird bath or plantings to attract birds, you are eligible. Any age or skill level is welcome.



Indigo Bunting in backyard bird bath, November 2018. Photo: Mary Keim

It is a great way to engage children with observing nature. Data can be entered online or mailed. If you take part in Project FeederWatch, your data is saved for you to view from all the years that you have participated.

Project FeederWatch began in Ontario in the 1970s and was launched in the U. S in 1987. The number of participants has now grown to more than 20, 000 and it is a joint effort with Bird Studies Canada and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

FeederWatch data is used to study the distribution and abundance of over 100 bird species that winter in North America. Scientists are able to note declining populations such as the Painted Bunting in Florida so that local authorities can be notified and timely action can be taken.

To learn more about that worthy and fun project visit <https://feederwatch.org>.

Kathy Rigling

Eastern Towhee: Solitary Bird of the Undergrowth

A large, striking sparrow, the Eastern Towhee has gleaming black upper parts (male), rufous sides and a white belly. The female is mostly brown with rufous sides and a white belly. Its size—about 8 inches long—and dramatic markings should facilitate easy identification—if you can get a clear look at it. Since this species forages on, or near, the ground in dense brushy scrub, it is a challenge to see and to study. In many years of birding Florida, I have seen only one or two Eastern Towhees, the first when hiking around dense, snake-infested woods trying to locate a tantalizing “tow-hee” call and “drink-your-tea” song.

Eastern Towhees use a distinctive two-footed scratching method, at times hopping backwards, to dislodge loose litter and uncover insects, arachnids, and crustaceans.

They are monogamous and territorial. Females build the nests and incubate the eggs but both sexes care for the young with males doing most of the feeding. Both sexes also fend off predators. Eastern Towhees are common victims of the parasitic Brown-headed Cowbird which lays eggs in Towhee nests and leaves them for Towhees to brood and nurture.

Unlike some other species, these birds have no ability to recognize or remove the imposter's eggs.

Eastern Towhees are very similar to the more dramatic Spotted Towhee of our West, a bird with bold white spots on its scapulars (shoulders), making it easier to find in dense habitat. I saw many when hiking in Northern California; the conspicuous white-on-black feathers signaled their location in thick foliage. (These two species were once both considered Rufous-sided Towhees, but researchers split them into two species in 1995).

How to find these birds? Walk slowly along the edge of forests and thickets and overgrown fields. Listen carefully for their bright song and chewink call, or for a rustling of dry leaves. Naturalist Mary Keim has photographed Eastern Towhees at Split Oak Forest in Osceola County and at Savage Christmas Creek Preserve in Christmas. “Oak scrub and scrubby flatwoods are best for Towhees,” Mary says. Other veteran birders have said this species is plentiful at Hal Scott Regional Preserve and Park in East Orange County.

Widespread year-around throughout the Southeast, these birds also will come to feeders, and may visit your yard if you have brushy, shrubby overgrown borders. You can discover what type of food they prefer by visiting Project Feeder Watch at feederwatch.org. Check out the handsome Eastern Towhee, another habitat-specific species for your life list! What fascinating birds we have in Florida!

Linda Carpenter



Eastern Towhee. Photo: Mary Keim

New CLI Cohort

Audubon Florida's Conservation Leadership Initiative (CLI) program, that pairs college students with chapter leaders, has a new cohort. Linda Gaunt, Kathy Rigling, Susan Thome-Barrett and I have been assigned new student co-mentors and are just meeting them. We are still in contact with past co-mentors and appreciate their input.

Deborah Green



Julianna Merotto assists at Apopka Elementary School STEAM event. Photo: Kathy Rigling

NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL, December 1-5, 2022

The NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL on Lake Apopka highlights the St. Johns River Water Management District's 20,000-acre Lake Apopka North Shore, neck and neck with Fort DeSoto Park as Florida's top birding hotspot. The festival also visits other Central Florida birding hotspots.

For Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) seventh annual festival, December 1-5, 2022, seventy field trips will extend over 5 days, Thursday through Monday. We suggest you visit the festival website at <https://northshorebirdingfestival.com/> to see the field trips and keynotes. Registration opened in mid October and many trips are already full.

The great birding locations and the incredible trip leaders are what make this festival popular. Although we do not have an exhibit hall for vendors, the festival does bring together a critical mass of leaders and participants to catch up on their common interest— birding.



Lots of great local & returning guides



Participants on A-B Canal Bridge, Photo: Elza Phillips. Students at A-B Canal, Photo: Deborah Green. Luis Gles leading trip near Clay Island, Photo: Deborah Green

Before the pandemic, the NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL emphasized bringing participants from around the country, demonstrating the economic importance of birding and nature photography ecotourism. Out-of-town participants contribute to the local economy and may visit again after the festival. The 2019 festival had participants from 18 states and Canada, plus over 60 Florida cities.

The Fulvous Whistling-Duck, an interesting duck that has moved into Florida from the Southwest, is more easily seen on the Lake Apopka North Shore than anywhere else in Florida. Out-of-state visitors enjoy seeing Limpkins, Purple Gallinules, Painted Buntings, Florida Scrub-Jays, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Snail Kites, Peregrine Falcons, Crested Caracaras and Bald Eagles.

Local and in-state birders will also enjoy picking through the abundant waterfowl looking for rarities as well as seeing overwintering sparrows, all with the help of our expert guides. The start location for most field trips is the McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757.

Proceeds of the NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL support OAS' nature and environmental center fund and related educational programs. If you have any questions, email festival@orangeaudubonfl.org or call (407) 637-2525.

Bird Chats with OAS

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) continues its fun weekly "Bird Chats" on Zoom each Thursday at 7 p.m. (except the 3rd Thursday) with identification of mystery birds, discussion of new arrivals, and a topic of the week—generally a guest presentation. Register at [this link](#) to participate live. Past bird chats are archived on [OAS' YouTube channel](#). Please SUBSCRIBE to our channel to show your support. To see the schedule of upcoming Bird Chats, see p. 10.

2022 NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL Sponsors



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**Creatures of the Night
Orlando Wetlands Park
November 19, 2022**

On Saturday evening November 19th, from 4:30–7:00 p.m., Orange Audubon Society will tour Orlando Wetlands Park on a tram/trailer, led by park volunteers.

This is a unique opportunity to enjoy the sunset (5:30 p.m. that evening), see the return to the roost of ibis and other wading birds, see the ghostly flight of Wilson’s Snipe,



Alligator Eye Shine. 2015 Chertok Photo Contest, First Place Winner, Advanced Category, Photo: Larry Lynch. Sunset at Orlando Wetlands Park, Photo: Deborah Green.

see alligators active at night with eye shine, and enjoy the night sounds. Cost is \$17 per person with prepayment required to save your

space. Limit is 20 participants. Contact Teresa at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or (407) 718-1977 to register.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Bird Chats with OAS via Zoom

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

- The NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL by the Bird Chat Team

November 3, 2022

- Shorebird Monitoring at Manomet by Alan Kneidel

November 10, 2022

**Green PLACE Family Nature and Photography Hike
Savage Christmas Creek Preserve, Christmas**

November 5, 2022

Contact Beth Jackson at (407) 836-1481

**Limited Edition Field Trip: Pine Meadows
Conservation Area, Lake County**

November 5, 2022

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

Fiesta in the Park, Lake Eola

November 5-6, 2022

Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977

Wekiwa Springs State Park Bird Survey, Apopka

November 12, 2022

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

Young Birders Club, Orlando Wetlands Park

November 13, 2022

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

**November Program: History of Florida State Parks
by Robert Brooks**

November 17, 2022

Contact Paula at programs@orangeaudubonfl.org

**Creatures of the Night Tram Ride,
Orlando Wetlands Park**

November 19, 2022

Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977

**November Field Trip: Hal Scott Regional Preserve
and Park**

November 19, 2022

Contact Susan at conservation@orangeaudubonfl.org

Orlando Wetlands Park Monthly Survey

November 20, 2022

Contact Jeffrey at jeffreyg@knights.ucf.edu

Christmas Bird Counts: Contact the compiler to participate.

- **Bay Lake:** December 17, 2022
Contact John Thomton at jthomton@hotmail.com
- **Wekiva River:** December 17, 2022
Contact Jay Exum at jay.h.exum@gmail.com
- **Kissimmee Valley:** December 18, 2022
Contact Chris Newton at dexterdevon68@gmail.com
- **Zellwood/Mt. Dora:** December 15, 2022
Contact Gallus Quigley at gallusq@gmail.com
- **Econlockhatchee:** Date TBA
Contact Lorne Malo at Lorne.Malo@myFWC.com
- **Clermont:** January 2, 2023
Contact John Thomton at jthomton@hotmail.com

NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL, Lake Apopka

December 1-5, 2022

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

**December Program: Kissimmee Prairie Preserve
State Park by Catie Welch**

December 15, 2022

Contact Paula at programs@orangeaudubonfl.org