



This Month's Program: January 19, 2023 Flora, Fauna and Photography by Lee Ann Posavad

With Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) Chertok Photo Contest deadline coming up in April (p. 4), OAS presents its annual photo tips program. This year OAS has recruited our own board member Lee Ann Posavad, an accomplished nature photographer and photo trips leader.

Lee Ann enjoys working with young photographers, having taught her grandchildren photography, and has led family photo workshops for the NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL. As part of OAS' collaboration with Orange County to publicize the Green PLACE program, Lee Ann co-leads walks including the upcoming February 25th family photo walk.

She continues learning by working with other photographers and taking photo workshops to improve her skills. See Lee Ann's photography at [this link](#).

Paula Duenas, Programs Chair



Top, Egret Landing. Center, Ol' Blue Eyes Anhinga. Bottom, Harvest Time—American Bumblebee on Spanish Needles. Honorable Mention Winner, 2021 Chertok Nature Photography Contest. Photos: Lee Ann Posavad

Beginners' Bird Watching Class, Jan. 8, 15 and 22, 2023

Would you like to improve your bird identification skills? Take Orange Audubon's Beginners' Bird Watching Class starting January 8, 2023. It's three Sunday mornings, and if you have to miss one, you can make it up in the fall 2023 series. Instructors are Susan Thome-Barrett and myself.

All sessions are 8:00 a.m.–11:30 a.m. An "outdoor" classroom session and mini-field trip is January 8th at Orlando Wetlands Park. The January 15th and January 22nd field sessions are at Oakland Nature Preserve and the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive, respectively.

The class is limited to 12 students and registration is required. Total cost for all three sessions is: \$50 members; \$65 non-members; \$10 youth (12 & under) with registered adult. Non-members can join when registering, directly through OAS, as instructed when you register. To register, email Teresa at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com. For questions about the class, contact me at riglingkathy@gmail.com or (407) 488-9559.

Kathy Rigling

Birds of Prey ID Trip January 8, 2023

Winter is the time to see raptors on the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive (LAWD), and on Sunday, January 8th, Bob Sanders will lead the first of two Birds of Prey Identification Classes (the second class is February 5th). Bob co-founded the Chimney Rock Hawk Watch in Martinsville, New Jersey before moving to Central Florida and is well known locally for his raptor expertise. Time is 7:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. Cost per person per class is \$10 (Audubon members) or \$15 (non-members). Visit www.orangeaudubonfl.org and use the secure PayPal PAY NOW button at the bottom of the main page to pay, then contact mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or (407) 718-1977 and provide your name, email address and cell number. You will receive a liability waiver to be completed and delivered to Bob when you arrive at LAWD.

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/





To Do In the New Year

Personal actions toward being more energy efficient, water conserving and living lighter on the land do add up.

Particularly plastic waste requires a concentrated effort by all of us to reduce. I took several tours of the Orange County Landfill with my Valencia College environmental science students in the 1990s and 2000s. Three years ago on a Space Coast Birding Festival Gulls trip to the Brevard County landfill, I was very disheartened by the increase in plastic waste, despite years of recycling. For a few ideas on how to get away from using plastic and reduce one's footprint, see [The ECO-Hub](#).

Scientific American in 2009 laid out [How Meat Production Contributes to Global Warming](#). According to a [2021 Guardian article](#), meat production accounts for 60% of all greenhouse gases from food production. Meatless Mondays is a little something everyone can do.

If you are ambitious, try Veganuary (yes, a combination of "vegan" and "January"). A UK-based non-profit organization each year challenges people to eat only vegan foods for the entire month of January to promote health, protect the environment and end animal farming. Find out more from [this link](#). *Deborah Green*



Sunset on Lake Apopka from 2021 NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL. Photo: Carol Sluzevich

International Agreement to Save Biodiversity

The 2022 United Nations [Biodiversity Conference](#) of the Parties (COP) in Montreal, Canada closed December 19th with an agreement on major goals and 23 Target Actions to be taken by 2030. Representatives of 188 governments discussed and approved measures to arrest the ongoing loss of terrestrial and

marine biodiversity. Read more about the commitments [at this link](#).

City Nature Challenge

Documenting populations of plants and animals is a first step to prioritization of conservation efforts. By 2050, two-thirds of the world's population will live in urban areas, so a survey of biodiversity in urban areas is needed (and a "re-wilding," see Homegrown National Park, p.3).

The City Nature Challenge (CNC) has become a way to engage people in documenting biodiversity in urban environments through friendly competition between cities and counties. The first CNC in 2016 was an eight-day competition between Los Angeles and San Francisco. In 2017 the CNC went national, and in 2018 became an international event!

Orlando's first City Nature Challenge in 2021 was co-sponsored by The Nature Conservancy's Sustainable Cities Program and the City of Orlando. In 2022, the Orlando/Orange County CNC had 249 observers who made 3,603 observations and identified 1,078 species.

In 2023, the CNC will take place on Friday, April 28 through Monday, May 1. This is a great activity for people of all ages. Orange Audubon Society's Education Coordinator Kathy Rigling will be bringing the idea to schools.



To document species seen in the CNC, we use the free phone app iNaturalist that can be downloaded from [this link](#). Last year The Nature Conservancy and Orange Audubon presented a Bird Chat on the CNC and how to use iNaturalist. It can be seen at [this link](#).

We encourage everyone to start now using iNaturalist, so that you are ready for the CNC in late April. It's fun. More details to come.

Deborah Green, OAS, with Christianah Oyenuga, The Nature Conservancy



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.

For other membership information, contact: membership@orangeaudubonfl.org

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Homegrown National Park

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

Dr. Tallamy's latest project is called the Homegrown National Park (see his lovely website that features webinars, podcasts, and additional presentations at <https://homegrownnationalpark.org>). If you've read any of his books, you will recognize major themes:

1. Landscaping with native plants benefits all wildlife, but especially wild birds. Planting host plants & trees that are used by moth and butterfly species to reproduce will provide soft & nutritious caterpillars for hungry baby birds. Almost all bird species feed caterpillars to their nestlings.



Chestnut-sided Warbler with caterpillar. Photo: Joseph Mileyka

2. In this country, urban and suburban areas make up more area in acres than almost all the national parks combined. If the majority of us were to add native plants to our yards, we could create a wildlife habitat larger than our national parks—a “homegrown national park.”

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

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

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

Terry Piper, Reprinted from
March 2021 OASis

Chuck-will's-widow: A Mysterious Nightjar

My passion for birds began 15 years ago in Costa Rica with the Common Pauraque, a nightjar. I saw flocks of them every evening fluttering around the paths to our cabins foraging for insects. Their large reddish-orange eyes gleamed and their white wing bars flashed in the dark. I was fascinated. Our naturalist guide was blasé. Pauraques are common in Costa Rica.

Also nocturnal, Chuck-will's-widows actively hunt for insects at dusk and dawn by fluttering low over the ground searching for moths, beetles, and dragonflies. Occasionally they eat other birds: warblers, sparrows, wrens, hummingbirds, and bats. During full moon, or under street lights, when visibility is good, they may forage much of the night. Buoyant and maneuverable, they catch flying insects with a short dive and snap of the bill. Long, stiff feathers called rictal bristles surround their mouths and help guide prey into their wide gapes.

The largest nightjar in North America, this species is solitary, has a large head, long pointed wings and a dappled brown or grayish plumage that blends with its environment. Said to be common year-around in much of Florida, it is not so easy to find because of its nocturnal habits and clever disguise. These birds don't build nests but simply lay their eggs on the ground among dead leaves in

dense thickets near road edges or forest clearings. Nesting adults are incredibly well-camouflaged and virtually invisible until you almost step on them. Territorial males chase each other long distances while making a growling sound. When courting they drop their wings, spread their tail feathers, ruffle their feathers and puff themselves up while calling to the female.

Chuck-will's-widows are in steep decline according to Partners in Flight. Their numbers declined by about 1.6 percent per year for a cumulative decline of about 58 percent between 1966 and 2019 according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey. Since this species relies so heavily on insects for food, they may be vulnerable to pesticides. They also are very sensitive to disturbances of their nests.

How to find the remarkable Chuck-will's-widow? Birdwatchers report seeing or hearing them at Rock Springs Reserve State Park, Cape Canaveral National Seashore and other locations. Listen at dusk and at night for its rolling, endless call. If you are lucky and have a keen eye, you may find one during the day resting on the ground or on a horizontal branch. I saw one years ago at Mead Botanical Garden; however, I wasn't the lucky one to discover it. I had walked right past the low branch where it perched motionless and perfectly camouflaged in a thicket. I haven't seen one since; however in 2010, while traveling in the Ecuadorean Andes, I saw the fantastic Lyre-Tailed Nightjar and marveled at its 24-inch tail and foraging acrobatics!

You must see the enchanting Chuck-will's-widow. Its large gleaming amber eyes, superb camouflage, and charming call will captivate you, and you will fall in love as I have with this mysterious species and with the entire exotic nocturnal family of birds known as nightjars.

Linda Carpenter



Chuck-will's-widow. Green Cay Wetlands, Palm Beach, late November 2022. Photo: Jeremy Cohen

Additional Plants For Birds Resources

OAS Plant List: [Bird- and Butterfly-Friendly Plants for Central Florida by Mary Keim and Randy Snyder](#)

Videos: [Creating a Homegrown National Park by Doug Tallamy](#)
[Plants for Birds: the Caterpillar Connection by Deborah Green](#)

Where to Buy: [Florida Association of Native Nurseries](#)

2023 Chertok Photo Contest

Deadline: April 20, 2023

It's time to get out and start photographing nature!

Orange Audubon Society's 2023 (35th Annual) Kit and Sidney Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest was created to promote interest and concern for preserving the native fauna and flora of Florida and enhance enjoyment of Florida's natural wonders through photography.

There are three contest divisions: Novice, Advanced and Youth (open to photographers 17 years of age or younger, as of the entry deadline).

To be eligible, subject matter must be native to Florida, images must not contain human components and must have been taken while complying with [NANPA ethical field practices](#).

Please watch for prize details and other entry requirements to be posted soon and meantime start shooting and preserving Florida's natural wonders.

If you have questions, contact (407) 718-1977 or mwilliams@cfl.rr.com.

Teresa Williams, Chertok Florida Native Nature Photo Contest

NANPA Ethical Standards

The North American Nature Photography Association (NANPA) was officially incorporated in 1994, following a meeting of over 100 nature photographers at the Roger Tory Peterson Institute in Jamestown, New York.

Roger Tory Peterson—the famous ornithologist, artist, and nature photographer—convened the group to discuss the future of nature photography. In contrast to photo clubs, NANPA focuses on environmental issues and became a critical advocate for the rights of nature photographers on issues from intellectual property to public land.

NANPA established a set of [Ethical Field Practices](#) that Orange Audubon Society requires that you follow in taking photos for the Chertok Photo Contest. Examples are: *Learn patterns of animal behavior, so as not to interfere with animal life cycles. Do not distress wildlife or their habitat. Respect the routine needs of animals.* Learn more [at this link](#) and visit [NANPA's Facebook page](#).



Top, *Male American Kestrel Feeding Young*, 2022 Chertok Nature Photography Contest, Advanced Category, Honorable Mention Winner, Photo: Marina Scarr. Bottom, *Dragonfly Rest—Four-spotted Pennant on Lotus Bud*, 2022 Chertok Nature Photography Contest, Youth Category, Honorable Mention Winner, Photo: Nicole Chin

Limited Edition Field Trips

Orange Audubon Society's Limited Edition field trips are restricted to 12 people. Cost is \$12 for Orange Audubon members and \$17 for nonmembers. The February 12th trip is Bird and Bike to Clay Island on the Lake Apopka North Shore. To register, email Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com.

LAWD Ambassador Program Can Use Help

The Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive (LAWD) Ambassador Program is an Orange Audubon Society (OAS) program in coordination with the St. Johns River Water Management District. By giving maps and visitation tips to first-time visitors to LAWD each Saturday and Sunday, the Ambassadors help keep the large number of visitors touring without incident.

In 2020, the SJRWMD Governing Board awarded its highest volunteer service award, [the Bob Owens Award](#), to OAS primarily for this effort.

OAS contributed a total 1,814 hours in 2022. This consisted of:

- Ambassador duties: 950 hours
- Gate closing: 208 hrs
- Sweeps: 416 hrs
- Kiosk cleaning: 240 hours

Since some of our Ambassadors have been serving since July 2020, we could use some additional volunteers.

Email volunteer@orangeaudubonfl.org to find out more. Requirement: That you love LAWD and wish to share. *Deborah Green*



Top, Ambassador Cindy Hall explains the route to a first-time visitor. Bottom, Changing of the morning and afternoon shift plus one extra person creates an Ambassador photo opp. Photo: Deborah Green



**Orlando Wetlands Festival
February 18, 2023**

The Wetlands Festival is back and this time it will be held entirely at the Orlando Wetlands Park!

This free event is Saturday, February 18, 2023 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Since 2001, the Orlando Wetlands Festival has promoted community awareness of the Orlando Wetlands Park and the importance of Florida's ecological and water resources.

Environmental exhibits, guided hikes and tours, live animals and presentations, kids' activities and native plant give-away are all part of the festival.

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) is among the sponsors. OAS volunteers guide bus trips, birding walks and photo walks, and OAS supports the festival participation by Audubon Center for Birds of Prey with live raptors.



Bald Eagle ambassador brought by Audubon Center for Birds of Prey to the Orlando Wetlands Festival with support from Orange Audubon Society. Photo: Orlando Wetlands Festival

Bring the whole family for a day of outdoor fun and learning.

OAS is currently gathering volunteers to staff a booth with nature merchandise sales. Would you be willing to help us with that? No experience necessary. If so, contact Teresa at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com.

Location is the Orlando Wetlands Park, 25155 Wheeler Road, Christmas, FL, 32709. Join the fun!

Boardwalk Now Open

Orlando City leaders celebrated the completion of a new 2,200-foot boardwalk at Orlando Wetlands Park with a ribbon-cutting December 19th. It's an amazing addition.



New boardwalk. Photo: Orlando Wetlands Park

Education Coordinator Update

On December 7th, I held my 4th webinar of the season for teachers, this one on Counting Birds for Science. That recording can be found at [this link](#). Our next educational webinar will be on Wednesday, January 11th from 7:00-7:30 PM on Ways to Support Student Investigations Using Birds and Nature. To sign up for the monthly educational webinars, please register at [this link](#).

On December 9th, I spent all day near Avalon in southern Orange County at Timber Lakes Elementary School. That school is fortunate to have a large tract of St. Johns River Water Management District conservation land adjacent. I was a guest at their Green Club presenting on bird identification and community science. After a lesson on both topics, we migrated out to the school yard to complete an eBird count.

The students were excited to see the variety of species right on their campus. Some highlights were Palm Warblers on the playground, Yellow-rumped Warblers feeding on Wax Myrtle berries, several Killdeer in the P. E. field and a flock of Cedar Waxwings flying overhead.

After the Green Club, I presented for the whole third grade about the classification of birds with an interactive PowerPoint. Following that I did short nature walks with some kindergarten and second grade classes helping them use observation to find interesting things in nature.

After school, the Green Club met again and we did a second bird count. We discussed the reasons for the differences in the number of species seen.

On December 11th, I did a bird identification mini class and bird walk with Cub Scout Pack 110 at Orlando Wetlands Park. Prior to our walk out into the wetlands, we played a few games about birds and how to use clues to identify birds. The scouts enjoyed seeing the wading birds and waterfowl, especially a Great Blue Heron eating a siren.

On December 12th, I made my monthly visit to the Zellwood Elementary Evergreen Club. We arranged that students could count the birds on their campus for the Zellwood Christmas Bird Count on December 15th. I went over the history and purpose of Christmas Bird Counts and then practiced doing an eBird count for the day. On December 15th Pam Owens, the sponsor of the Evergreen Club coordinated 72 3rd graders and 18 kindergartners to count birds on Zellwood's campus. It was a very overcast and rainy morning, but they persevered and completed their count.



Zellwood Elementary Evergreen Club using new binoculars to survey birds on their campus. Photo: Pam Owens

This month we received the news that Orange Audubon Society's application for a National Audubon Society Collaborative Grant for student binoculars was successful. We will be buying them from Land, Sea and Sky Optics in Texas (a NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL sponsor) with a discount, so we can receive an 11th one through the \$1000 grant. Unlike the binoculars that we were able to buy under the FLEDGE grant that were donated to Zellwood Elementary, these will stay with the OAS Educational Program to use at various schools. Thanks to Susan Ledlow for help with the grant-writing.

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*

**Panhandle Trip:
Save the Date!**

Orange Audubon Society's fun Panhandle Trip will be April 26-30, 2023. Over 4 days and 4 nights, our local guides will lead us to see migratory warblers, southern breeding songbirds, shorebirds and St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge's avian star, the American Flamingo! Cost, exclusive of lodging, is \$300 for members/\$350 for non-members. Group lodging details are being developed. To save your place, contact me at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or (407) 718-1977. *Teresa Williams*



At St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, American Flamingo in flight, Photo: Lisa Elton Baggett. Vermilion Flycatcher. Photo: Karen Willes

Costa Rica Trip

Orange Audubon Society's Wildside Nature Tours Costa Rica trip will be March 27th to April 4th, 9 days, 8 nights. Cost is \$3000, exclusive of your flight to San Jose. To learn more, email info@orangeaudubonfl.org.

Bird Chats with OAS

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) continues 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 guest presentation. Register at [this link](#) to participate live. Past bird chats are archived on [OAS' YouTube channel](#). Schedule below.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Your Biggest Year Yet Listing Field Trip, Orlando Wetlands Park, Kathy

January 1, 2023
Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Christmas Bird Count, Clermont

January 2, 2023
Contact John Thomton at john.thomton@gmail.com

Bird Chats with OAS via Zoom

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

- Florida Shorebird Monitoring by Holly Short

January 5, 2023

- Winter Birding in Washington State by Ed Pullen

January 12, 2023

- Bird Chat TBA

January 26, 2023

- St. Augustine Alligator Farm, Monitoring Wading Birds by Jen Anderson

February 2, 2023

- "Pelandgics" and Pelagic Birding by David Simpson

February 9, 2023

- Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Merlin App

February 23, 2023

Birds of Prey Identification

January 8, 2023

Contact Teresa at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com

Beginners Bird Identification Class

January 8, 15 and 22, 2023

Contact Teresa at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com

Wekiwa Springs State Park Bird Survey, Apopka

January 7, 2023

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Oakland Nature Preserve Survey

January 14, 2023

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Clay Island Trailhead, Astatula, Regular Field Trip

January 21, 2023

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Rock Springs Run State Reserve Bird Survey

January 25, 2023

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Limited Edition Field Trip: Gainesville Hotspots

January 28-29, 2023

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Young Birder's Club Field Trip

February 5, 2022

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Birds of Prey Identification

February 5, 2023

Contact Teresa at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com

Sunrise Photo Shoot at Orlando Wetlands Park

February 5, 2023

Contact Teresa at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com

Limited Edition Field Trip: Bird & Bike - Green Mtn to Clay Island

February 12, 2023

Contact Alan at alangrandiflora@gmail.com

Great Backyard Bird Count

February 17-20, 2023

gbbc.birdcount.org/

Orlando Wetlands Festival

February 18, 2023

Contact Teresa at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com

Family Green PLACE Nature and Photography Hike at Pine Lily Preserve, Bithlo

February 25, 2023

Contact Beth at (407) 836-1481

SAVE THE DATES!

Kissimmee Prairie Preserve Limited Edition Field Trip

April 15, 2023

Contact Deborah at info@orangeaudubonfl.org

Fort DeSoto Limited Edition Field Trip

April 17-18, 2023

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com