



This Month's Program: Swallow-tailed Kites and Short-tailed Hawks: Conserving Two Rare Raptors by Ken Meyer April 20, 2023

The gorgeous Swallow-tailed Kites arrive here in spring to breed and leave for South America in late summer.

Swallow-tailed Kites once nested throughout the Mississippi and Ohio River valleys, but now almost all breeding sites are in Florida. Virtually all of what is known about them comes from the research of Dr. Ken Meyer, co-founder, Executive Director, and Research Ecologist at the nonprofit [Avian Research and Conservation Institute \(ARCI\)](#) in Gainesville.

Dr. Meyer also studies the even rarer Short-tailed Hawks. Florida's isolated population of Short-tailed Hawks migrates southward to spend the

Top, Swallow-tailed Kite. Photo: Mary Keim. Middle, Short-tailed Hawk, Light Morph. Photo: Chris Newton. Below, Short-tailed Hawk, Dark Morph. Photo: Delsy Rodriguez

winter in the southern peninsula and Florida Keys.

For our April program, he will fill us in on current knowledge of biology of these two raptors and possibly ask for our help in locating nests.

Paula Duenas, Programs Chair

2023 Chertok Photo Contest Deadline

April 20, 2023

Have you been out photographing nature? It's still not too late! The deadline for Orange Audubon Society's 35th annual photo contest is Thursday, April 20th (postmarked by or submitted electronically by midnight). The Kit and Sidney Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest promotes interest and concern for preserving the native fauna and flora of Florida and enhancing enjoyment of Florida's natural wonders through photography.

Subject matter must be native to Florida, images must not contain human components and must have been taken while complying with North American Nature Photography Association ([NANPA](#)) [ethical field practices](#).

Photographers can enter up to five images. There are three divisions: Novice, Advanced and Youth (open to photographers 17 years of age or younger, as of the entry deadline). Entry fees for the Novice and Advanced Categories are \$10 per image for non-Audubon members, \$5 per image for Audubon members or non-members who join concurrently. For the Youth category, entry fees are \$4 per image for non-Audubon members and \$2 per image for Audubon members. For more details including prizes, see the updated entry forms now posted on the [OAS website Chertok page](#). If any questions, email me at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or call (407) 718-1977.

Teresa Williams, Photo Contest Chair



Gopher Tortoise, 2011 Chertok Florida Native Nature Photo Contest, 2nd Place Winner, Youth Category. Photo: Cole Frederick

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/





Join OAS' Local Conservation Efforts

The Florida legislative session started March 7, 2023. Audubon Florida's (AF) policy team in Tallahassee follows legislation closely and lobbies lawmakers to improve legislation. Are you signed up for the [Audubon Advocate](#) that is sent by email weekly during the session? Please read the updates and contact your legislators when AF requests. Please also join Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) conservation network to be available to act on local issues as they arise. Email conservation@orangeaudubonfl.org.

Hydrilla Treatment Requested

Two OAS board members joined Friends of Lake Apopka members at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) meeting in Winter Garden on hydrilla in Lake Apopka, and OAS wrote to FWC requesting treatment of this fast-growing invasive water weed in most of the 10,000 infested acres (which make up 1/3 of the lake). Fishermen and hunters lobbied FWC to keep some hydrilla for habitat for fish and ducks. But native eelgrass and other native submerged plants are equally as good for fish and waterfowl, and the St. John's River Water Management District is working to replace invasive hydrilla with native vegetation. The high cost of hydrilla treatment appears to have factored into the disappointing final [FWC plan](#).



Eelgrass in the Wekiva River. This native submerged species has come back in Lake Apopka as lake restoration efforts have brought down nutrient levels and light-blocking algae in the lake. Photo: Deborah Green

April is Water Conservation Month

In April, May and June, Florida's temperatures increase, but the state's rainfall tends to lag behind plants' water needs. April is typically Florida's driest month. As temperatures rise, so does outdoor water use.

- Make sure you have a functioning hose nozzle for hand watering.
- Water only when necessary (when plants are wilted).
- If you have an automatic irrigation system, know your St. Johns River Water Management District [watering restriction](#) irrigation days.
- Use a rain sensor device or turn the system off when it rains or has rained.
- For irrigation system tune-ups, choose a contractor who is a certified member of the Florida Irrigation Society, www.fisstate.com.

Water-Wise Rebates and Rain Barrel Classes

Water is a potent force in nature and conserving water is growing in importance daily. Most of us have already installed low-flow toilets and shower heads. Here are a few offers from local utility companies related to water usage that you can consider to help minimize potable water usage.

Free Rain Barrels: Periodic classes that include free rain barrels are offered both by Orange County Extension and the City of Orlando (depends on your water provider). [Check the websites for timing of classes.](#)

Need a new irrigation controller? OUC will pay 100% (up to \$200) if you purchase a Smart Irrigation WaterSense Controller (must be a standalone system). Rebates are only for OUC potable water customers with existing in-ground irrigation systems. [Check website for details.](#)

Rain Barrels have rebates of \$0.02 per gallon up to \$200. Not enough to persuade you to take the plunge but if you have already made the purchase or plan to, the rebate is there. (\$2 on a \$100 rain barrel).

Florida Friendly Landscape and Irrigation (100% of cost, up to \$200). This rebate applies only to existing homes that use potable water for irrigation and currently have 50% or more of their irrigation area served by high-volume components (spray heads and rotors). Improvements must reduce the total irrigated area using high-volume components to less than 50% and must be verified by a landscaping professional. The rebate can only be used towards Florida Friendly plants up to \$200.

OAS Conservation Committee



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

JOIN OAS' [MEETUP](#) GROUP

LIKE OAS' [FACEBOOK](#) PAGE

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

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

Mead Botanical Garden Spring Bird Walks

April 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29, 2023

For the past 12 years, Orange Audubon Society has hosted free bird walks at Mead Botanical Garden in Winter Park each Saturday in April.

Songbirds pass through Central Florida en route to forests of the Appalachians, the northeastern U.S. and Canada, after wintering in the Caribbean or Central or South America. Mead is a great migrant trap, supplying insects and berries to eat and shelter in a variety of habitats — including open water, wetlands and uplands with oaks and tall pines. On Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird over [200 species have been documented](#), including 35 species of warblers, most of which should be in their colorful breeding plumage by April.



Mead Botanical Garden Spring Bird Walk. Participants are looking at a Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Photo: Deborah Green

The walks, each Saturday in April starting at 8 am. in the parking lot, are FREE. Contact me at lmartin5@msn.com or (407) 252-1182. Mead Botanical Garden is at 1500 S. Denning Drive, Winter Park. Good birding!

Larry Martin

Central Florida Earth Day, Lake Eola, April 22, 2023

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) again will have a booth at Central Florida Earth Day, now in its 18th year. It is the 54th anniversary of Earth Day! OAS will lead bird walks around Lake Eola at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. OAS' tent will be on the lake at the end of Washington Street. Please stop by to say hi, and if you want to volunteer to help us do outreach, email Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com.

House Finch: A Remarkable History

I enjoy the bright twitter of House Finches every morning in my neighborhood. One of the most widespread species throughout the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, these birds have a remarkable history.

Their expansion from the dry hot deserts of the Southwest U.S. started in 1939 when a few California House Finches were released from a pet store in New York. Despite enormous population fluctuations the species colonized many types of landscapes in North America in just a few decades.

They now occupy one of the most diverse ecological ranges of any existing bird and are probably the most common bird on backyard feeders.

Gregarious and highly social, House Finches almost always travel in flocks. They are small and have a short stubby bill and long tail. The male has an orange-red face, red breast and rump and a brown cap, brown wings streaked with white and a white belly with a heavily streaked white chest. The female is a plain brown bird with a heavily streaked white chest. The female builds the nest, sometimes in cavities, or in buildings, and incubates the eggs for 12-to-14 days. Both male and female feed the young—with exclusively plant foods, a rare occurrence in the bird world. Juveniles resemble the female.

The red color of the male House Finch results from pigments in the food it eats while molting: the more pigment in its food, the redder the male. That is why you may see orange or yellowish male House Finches. Of course, females prefer to mate with the reddest male they can find! The oldest known House Finch was a female about 11 years old when she was captured and released during a banding procedure in 1985.

How to find the lovely House Finch? Follow its persistent warble in the early morning. If you aren't familiar with their song, you can use the Merlin Bird ID, a free app available from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Offer black oil sunflower seeds in a backyard feeder, or visit Project FeederWatch to find out what kind of feed they prefer. Since these finches enjoy perching in the tops of large oak trees, they can be hard to find; however, you may still enjoy their sweet, cheerful song. And they surely will turn up at the next bird feeder you encounter. Check it out! Florida has many marvelous birds to enjoy!

Linda Carpenter



House Finch in bird bath. Photo: Mary Keim

Plants for Birds

Orange Audubon Society's March 16th in-person program at Leu Gardens was on Plants for Birds by Jacqui Sulek of Audubon Florida. The program is [archived on OAS' YouTube channel](#). Some good Plants for Birds tips can also be found in the [April 2022 OASis](#) p. 6 and in the [Bird- and Butterfly-friendly Plants](#) brochure prepared by native plant gardeners Mary Keim and Randy Snyder. As we add native plants to our yards, more birds will come.



Volunteers at the 2015 Central Florida Earth Day. Photo: Deborah Green

From Mirrors to Bird Board

The Winter Park Chamber of Commerce celebrates its 100th year with Full

Sail University's "Fun 100" displays throughout Mead Botanical Garden. A corridor of mirrors installed on "the island" between Alice's Pond and Howell Creek [worries many birders](#), since it is to be in place through April 30th which includes the height of songbird migration. After our queries, the Chamber put up chicken wire behind the mirrors, that birds would see and thus avoid the mirrors. Volunteers will soon be marking the mirrors using some of the techniques in the next article. Mead staff, as always, has been very responsive, but the Chamber had no idea of Mead's role as a birding hotspot and how large the birding community has become. And how many out-of-town birders, guided around by locals, put money into the local economy through their visits. Upon Orange Audubon Society's suggestion, Mead staff have put up a new Bird Board to record sightings and will be printing bird articles for the Mead newsletter and social media. Thanks to all who engaged!



New Bird Board at Mead Botanical Garden. Photo: Mary Soule

Reducing Bird Strikes

Millions of birds die from window strikes annually, with migration periods most dangerous as birds navigate unknown territories on their way to/from breeding grounds. Even if you haven't had a strike in the past, changes in lighting caused by tree removal or trimming can make your windows more reflective and more dangerous. The glass treatment ideas below range from inexpensive how-to's all the way to products that can be applied by professionals. (Remember any window treatments must be done *to the outside of the windows*. The reflective nature of glass negates anything done on the inside!)

1. The funniest tip is never clean your windows - let them get dirty, real dirty. Dirty windows will definitely



Mead Botanical Garden Mirrors. Photo: Sam Mitcham

block both invisibility and reflectivity.

2. Take a yellow highlighter and a ruler and draw a 2" x 2" grid on the outside of your windows. Marker lines are more visible to birds than to us.
3. Using T-shirt paint (matte finish), dab dots in a 2" x 2" grid. Make sure to measure first.
4. Use bar soap to draw vertical lines 2" apart on your windows (horizontal lines are less effective).
5. Got a small stencil you like? Grab some tempura paint and stencil away in a 2" x 2" grid pattern.
6. Make window clings using either pre-made window cling liquid from the craft store or make-it-yourself with white glue. Home-made clings can be colored with markers after they've set. Directions are on the internet. This is a great child-friendly activity. Just remember you need to make enough to space them in a 2" x 2" pattern over your window and make sure to place on outside of windows - not inside!
7. For inset windows - Buy an adjustable curtain rod large enough to hang above your windows on the outside. Attach 550 paracord string lines every 4" (every 2" if you have hummingbirds), then hang it in front of your windows. Ta da -- you've made an Acopian Bird Saver window treatment. These can also be purchased pre-made.
8. Want something that the neighbors can't see? For \$20 WindowAlert UV Liquid comes in a bingo marker applicator and can be applied in the 2" x 2" grid and dries clear. Birds can see the marks, people can't.
9. Glass Pen Window Markers are liquid chalk markers for glass. Find them

MetroPlan Orlando and West Orange Trail

MetroPlan Orlando released its final report on the West Orange Bike Trail extension, including the proposed Ponkan Road and Welch/Wekiwa Spring Road Spur Trails. OAS offered support for the West Orange Trail Extension and Ponkan Road Spur, but members who commented opposed taking acreage from Wekiwa Springs State Park for the Welch/Wekiwa Springs Road Spur Trail. Despite input from Audubon, other conservation organizations, and local community members, MetroPlan's final report had no significant changes following the Public Meeting. The plan's final statement was "While MetroPlan Orlando's work on these studies has finished, the City of Apopka and Orange County will take the lead on the next steps." The only good news in this report is that the funding to date only covers the connection of the West and East Orange Trails. We will continue to monitor Apopka and Orange County's actions of the Welch Road/Wekiwa Springs Road Spur Trail.

OAS Conservation Committee

online in a variety of colors although the fine line white marker looks best. Under \$10 for one marker. Remember to space vertical lines 2" apart or make designs in a 2" x 2" grid.

10. Window film - a little pricier but the lines and dots will be perfect so best for the windows where you want to look your best. Bird Safety Film, Casper-Block Window film, Reflect Protect window film are some of the options with dot patterns, lines, decorative elements. Can be applied by professionals.

11. CollideEscape Window decals are narrow decal rolls with dots or line patterns allowing you to space the dots or lines and apply. A little more professional than freehand dots and lines, less work than full window film.

12. Go ahead and buy those window decals of owls and hawks...just make sure you have enough to put in a 2" x 2" grid pattern. Skip the rubber snake on the window sill and the big plastic owl on the roof. Those are interesting but not really effective.

*Susan-Thome Barrett,
Conservation Chair*



**City Nature Challenge
April 28 - May 1, 2023**

Join The Nature Conservancy, Orange Audubon Society, Tarflower Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, and others in an exciting global challenge to observe and record wildlife from April 28 - May 1, 2023! Help us document the amazing WILD organisms in parks and green spaces all across Orange County using the [iNaturalist app!](#) Follow these simple steps:

- Download the iNaturalist app from Google Play Store or App Store
- Create your own iNaturalist account
- Join our project called [CITY NATURE CHALLENGE 2023: ORANGE COUNTY](#)
- From April 28 - May 1, sign into your iNaturalist account on your phone and use the app to photograph WILDLIFE in parks and greenspaces in your community! Make sure you note the location.
- Share your observations with iNaturalist.

Last year The Nature Conservancy and Orange Audubon presented a Bird Chat on the City Nature Challenge and how to use iNaturalist. It can be seen at [this link](#). The April 27th Bird Chat will again feature the CNC.

Start now using iNaturalist, so that you are ready for the CNC in late April. It's fun.

The City Nature Challenge is organized by the California Academy of Sciences and the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.

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

Young Birders Club

On March 19th, Orange Audubon Society held a Young Birder Club field trip to Lyonia Preserve in Deltona. The day was unseasonably, cold and overcast as we headed into the Florida scrub. At first the birds were very vocal but elusive to see. A small family of Florida Scrub-Jays eventually called out, and we caught glimpses of them at a distance.

Later, after walking quietly, we were rewarded with close-up looks at these Florida endemics. At one point two flew low over two of the students, providing a thrill. Another highlight was seeing a male Eastern Towhee, sitting up singing after hearing them all morning in the bushes. We also got to view a Brown Thrasher vocalizing its mimic song.

We saw blooming Shiny Blueberry, Rusty Lyonia and Sky Blue Lupine. After our walk, several students and families visited the adjacent well-equipped nature education center to learn more about the Florida Scrub Jay and its habitat.

A big thank you to Sherri Brown for serving as our local guide and to Alex DeBear for assisting.

Gainesville Visit

On April 22 we will join Young Birders from throughout the state to visit Sweetwater Wetlands in Gainesville. Three University of Florida students, members of the GREBE Audubon chapter, will help guide this trip. This is a free trip for Young Birders age 8-17 and their families. For more information or to reserve a spot contact me at riglingkathy@gmail.com.

Kathy Rigling



From top to bottom, Young Birders Club exploring Lyonia Preserve. Photos: Kathy Rigling.

Documentary Review

All That Breathes

When birds start falling from the skies in Delhi, India, two brothers rescue them in a makeshift home clinic. Black Kites (*Milvus migrans*) start arriving by the boxload for treatment—victims of urban pollution, climate change, and human population growth. With some medical training and limitless patience, the brothers struggle to feed, house, and treat untold numbers of kites and other birds. In one harrowing rescue, the brothers swim a wide river where a desperate kite languishes on the other bank. Personal interactions between the brothers and their assistant are poignant throughout, but especially when the clinic's future is in question. The quiet simplicity of this film is matched only by the complexity of the problems it uncovers. Fans of movies and birds alike will be glad to see this moving film.

Susan Thome-Barrett

Balloon Release Ban

In 2022, the Florida Legislature voted that release of balloons inflated with lighter-than-air gases poses a danger to the environment, particularly to wildlife and marine animals. [The 2022 rule](#) prohibits 10 or more balloons inflated with a gas lighter than air to be released within a 24-hour period. This year [SB 1512: Release of Balloons](#), accompanying [HB 91](#), seeks to have this ban strengthened. Jacksonville has just passed a local ordinance, part of the City’s litter ordinance, that anyone releasing any number of balloons or sky lanterns in Jacksonville will face a \$50 penalty.

The ties to balloons entangle birds, and seabirds often ingest plastic thinking it is food. [A 2019 study published in the journal Nature Scientific Reports](#) found that ingested balloons are 32 times more likely to kill seabirds than hard plastic pieces that birds have eaten.

Balloons don’t just “go away” when they float into the sky; they will eventually come down somewhere and may kill or injure wildlife. Even one balloon landing in a tree can cause a bird to become entangled and die a horrible death from strangulation or starvation.



Flyaway balloons collected in a few hours by boat along the Lake Apopka North Shore. Photo courtesy Deborah Green

Balloons are apparently cheap to produce, and grocery stores, dollar stores and party stores all feature them near the register. They are very festive, but please think twice before purchasing them, even for planned indoor use. Give a plant, plant a tree in honor or give something consumable instead.

OAS Conservation Committee

Education Coordinator Update

This has been a very productive time for Orange Audubon Society’s (OAS) educational programs. Since the last report, we held a virtual program for the Orange County Library System on Backyard Birding in the Winter Months.

For the Great Backyard Bird Count, I visited the Environmental Science classes of Edgewater High School. Two teachers had invited me, and throughout the day each of the teachers’ classes came outside and conducted a bird count. The students were excited to see the birds that were on their campus that they were unaware of, including nesting Ospreys, Hooded Mergansers fishing in the retention pond, as well as Palm Warblers on the sidewalk and in the bushes.

They saw both a Loggerheaded Shrike and an American Kestrel on the ball fields. The students shared OAS’ loaner binoculars and by the end of the day, 276 Edgewater students had participated in community science with birds.

On February 20th, I joined Zellwood Elementary School to complete the Great Backyard Bird count with three classes. The highlight was seeing two Bald Eagles perched in a tree the playground. On March 8th, I held my monthly educational zoom. The topic was gardening for wildlife. Currently we’ve had 44 views of this program on YouTube. Since September OAS’ educational programs have had over 400 views.

I traveled to Ocoee Elementary on March 9th to do a habitat program for four different classes. The children enjoyed the story of *On Meadowview Street* on how a little girl found ways to improve the habitat in her backyard. Then we played a lively habitat matching game where the students had to match different components of habitat.

On March 15th, I presented for the Orange County 4-H Explorers Group. I worked with the younger children and presented on characteristics of birds, how to identify birds, and then we did a bird count in their native garden. They enjoyed watching some Palm Warblers feeding, Cedar Waxwings perched in an oak tree, and a Little Blue Heron hunting in the retention pond.

I returned for our monthly program at Zellwood Elementary school on March 20th. The theme this month was Eagles. The students were very interested in



Dommerich Elementary First-graders trying out OAS’ new binoculars. Photo: Kathy Rigling

Eagles because that is their school mascot. We also conducted a bird count; the highlight was a very close flyover of a Red-tailed Hawk.

New Binoculars

On March 21st, OAS was very excited to receive 11 brand new KOWA binoculars purchased under a National Audubon Society Collaborative Grant with discounted pricing from optics dealer Land, Sea and Sky in Houston.

Two days later, I used these child-friendly binoculars with the Dommerich Elementary Eco Garden Club. These first graders were excited to be the first group to use our brand-new binoculars, as they watched two Northern Mockingbirds and some Northern Cardinals. At the end of our walk, we had an amazing flyover of two Red-shouldered Hawks and a Red-tailed Hawk.

The new binoculars were also put to good use for Audubon Florida’s Conservation Leadership Initiative regional event, in which college students from UCF, Rollins, and Stetson learned about Audubon and participated in a career panel. On the bird walk at Wekiwa Springs State Park, students were able to use the binoculars to view the special birds of Wekiwa’s well-burned pinelands.

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 Education Coordinator*

Bird Chats Continue

Each 1st, 2nd and 4th Thursday tune in to Orange Audubon Society’s (OAS) Bird Chats on Zoom. To register [use this link](#). OAS’ YouTube channel is at [this link](#).

Plants for Birds Garden

When the St. Johns River Water Management District Governing board agreed in late 2020 that it was appropriate to accept online donations at the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive (LAWD), it specified that these donations should be used for amenities on LAWD.

The Lake Apopka North Shore is a lake restoration area for Lake Apopka and is not staffed and funded as park, which is why Orange Audubon Society (OAS) collaborated with the District to start the LAWD Ambassador program in July 2020 and why the Ambassadors have helped so much to keep the increasingly popular drive running smoothly.

After one of the Ambassadors gives his or her spiel to a first-time visitor about what to expect, many visitors want to donate a few dollars to the Ambassador directly. We collect the money and transfer it to the District by credit card. The land manager consults us on what amenities we think would be enhancements using these donations.

The picnic shelter at Laughlin and McDonald, raptor perches and a bench in the Welcome Shelter have been built using this funding.

There had been a small native plant pollinator garden by the first kiosk on the left. OAS had taken on its maintenance when the young District staffer who had originated it moved out of the area. But it became increasingly difficult to maintain.

Last year we had the idea of moving it or starting a new garden near the Ambassador Welcome Shelter. Then Ambassadors could water and weed, and visitors would see the garden and ask questions. It would feature all native plants and provide an example for local homes.

OAS Board Member Alan Shapiro had owned a native plant nursery in Gainesville before moving to the Winter Garden area to be near grandchildren. Alan took charge of this project, worked with District staff to prepare a large area and purchased plants from nursery owners he knew.

Evan Krumper of Apopka Boy Scout Troop 10, needed a project for his Life level, which is precursor to Eagle Scout. He organized a small planting/mulching project for March 18th, including securing mulch from Davey Tree. OAS will be watering and eagerly watching this garden as it grows in!

LAWD Volunteers Needed

The Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive (LAWD) Ambassador Program is an Orange Audubon Society program in coordination with the St. Johns River Water Management District. By volunteering Saturdays and Sunday, the Ambassadors help keep the large number of LAWD visitors touring without incident. Email volunteer@orangeaudubonfl.org to find out more. Requirement: That you know and love LAWD and wish to share.



LAWD Ambassadors sharing tips with first-time visitors. Photo: Jack Horton

Bird Seed Donation

An advantage of living in one of the top convention localities in the country is that Orange Audubon Society (OAS) occasionally receives offers to take displayed materials from trade shows, like bird seed. Team Marketing LLC that was displaying for Global Harvest Foods offered OAS to take away all of the seed from their display at the Orange County Convention Center, after the show. In mid-March, four OAS members picked up three carloads of bird seed and suet.

Thanks to Marian Lichtler, Alan Shapiro, Susan Thome-Barrett and Jeff Horst for doing the pickup and organizing the seed giveaway. Seed has been donated to the Haven for Injured and Orphaned Wildlife in Altamonte Springs, Back to Nature Wildlife Sanctuary near Lake Nona, some assisted living homes, and to schools in conjunction with OAS' Education Coordinator's programs.

Some may be given away at upcoming OAS programs at Leu Gardens.



Top two photos, Alan Shapiro instructs scouts and parents on how to plant. Photos: Deborah Green. Third from top, During a break, Alan shows the scouts how to use the Merlin app. Bottom, the planting crew poses. Photos: Lee Ann Posavad

Town of Oakland to Declare World Migratory Bird Day

The Town of Oakland, established in 1887, is one of the oldest municipalities in Orange County. Proud of its tree cover, Oakland has been certified through the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA program since 2003.



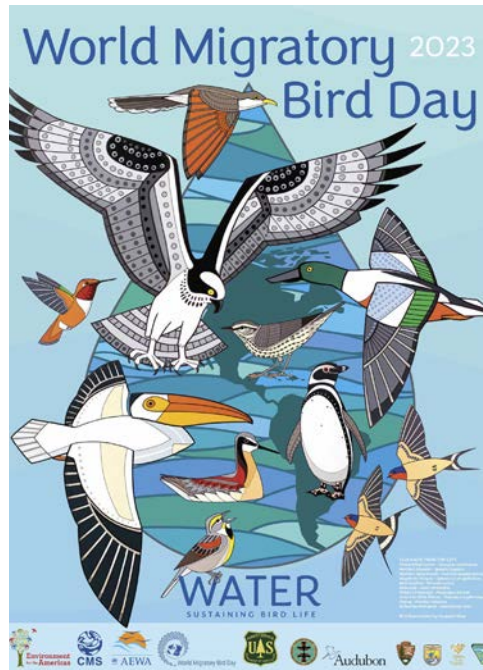
Preserved tree canopy. Photo courtesy Town of Oakland

The Oakland Nature Preserve (ONP) was founded after the Friends of Lake Apopka created a non-profit entity, ONP, in partnership with the Town of Oakland. ONP encompasses 128 acres - 48 acres of uplands and 80 acres of forested wetlands on Lake Apopka. Orange Audubon Society (OAS) leads quarterly bird surveys at ONP currently. With all that Oakland has done to preserve the local environment, OAS was not surprised at the town manager's request to do a bird-friendly city proclamation.

Several OAS board members looked for model Bird-friendly Community programs around the U.S. within the Audubon network. We found the Bird City Wisconsin program, which provided a detailed certification with now 96 Wisconsin municipalities certified. OAS has passed this information to Audubon Florida in hopes they will at some point develop such a program statewide.

Requirements of a Bird City are: Plants for Birds, Limiting Pesticide Use, Lights Out during migration and preventing window strikes (see p. 4). Cats Indoors is a program that Bird City Wisconsin emphasizes: *Communities that officially support cat colonies, encourage feeding or housing for outdoor cats, or explicitly permit free-roaming cats are not eligible.*

One of the first items that a town or city does towards Bird City Wisconsin is to do a proclamation for World Migratory Bird Day. Pioneering this effort with OAS, the Town of Oakland will do a Migratory Bird Day Proclamation on April 25th. A great beginning!



World Migratory Bird Day

In 1993, the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center created International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD), an educational campaign focused on the Western Hemisphere. Since 2007, IMBD has been coordinated by Environment for the Americas (EFTA), a non-profit organization that strives to connect people to bird conservation.

In 2018, EFTA joined the Convention on Migratory Species and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds to create a single, global bird conservation education campaign, World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD).

WMBD celebrates and brings attention to one of the most important and spectacular events worldwide - bird migration. [WMBD is celebrated on May 13th in the U.S. and Canada.](#)

Great Backyard Bird Count

A big thank you to everyone who submitted a bird checklist for the recent Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). The results are in and 7538 species of birds were listed globally. 555,291 people participated from 202 countries. There were 390,652 eBird checklists submitted.

Locally in Orange County, 168 species were listed during the GBBC period. The top Orange County eBirders for the GBBC were Julia Nadeau Gneckow and Sylvie Nadeau Gneckow with 101 species for the day!

The top hotspots for the GBBC in Orange County were the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive with 111 species, Orlando Wetlands Park with 98, Oakland Nature Preserve with 77, the Lake Apopka North Shore with 73 and Mead Botanical Gardens with 72. Thanks all for contributing to Community (Citizen) Science.

Kathy Rigling

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

One of the country's first and most important wildlife conservation laws, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 didn't happen without a lot of work.

All of us that love birds know how difficult it often is to communicate with those who aren't into birding. Can you imagine what it would take to get a bird protection act through Congress?

Senator George P. McLean is not a household name among birders. Dr. Frank Chapman who was ornithologist at the American Museum of Natural History and who started Christmas Bird Counts is much better known. On Bird Chats with Orange Audubon Society (OAS), we recently hosted author James Huffstodt who wrote *The Man Who Loved Birds*, a biography of Chapman. Huffstodt's presentation is [archived here](#).

The only reason we now know about Senator McLean's work to get the MBTA passed is due to research by his great great nephew Will McLean Greeley. Greeley became curious about the mysterious pride his family had about the name McLean (at a family reunion he found that half the attendees had the middle name McLean), and, after much research, he has published *A Connecticut Yankee Goes to Washington: George P. McLean, Birdman of the Senate*. The book puts McLean's victory for birds in the context of his distinguished forty-five-year career during a time of widespread corruption and political instability. The MBTA, which is still in effect today, has saved billions of birds from senseless killing and likely prevented the extinction of entire bird species. Tune in to Greeley's Bird Chat on May 4th at 7pm. Here's the link to [join the Bird Chats mailing list](#) to be sent the Zoom link.

Orange Audubon Society Election Month

The Orange Audubon Society (OAS) annual board elections will be held before the April 20, 2023 program at Leu Gardens. I chair the nominating committee with committee members Mary Soule (msoule43@aol.com) and Robert Sena (robs32812@yahoo.com). OAS' five officers continue their two-year terms, as follows:

President: Deborah Green

1st Vice President: Jack Horton

2nd Vice President: Paula Duenas

Secretary: Linda Gaunt

Treasurer: Teresa Williams

Current board members with expired terms who have agreed to be nominated for continuing board positions are Marian Lichtler and Alan Shapiro. There are several OAS board positions available for nominations.

To serve on the board, you must be an OAS member, have an interest in wildlife and the environment that supports it and be able to attend monthly one-hour board meetings either on Zoom or at Leu Gardens on the third Thursday of each month (except July and August). Board members are expected to attend an all-day summer planning meeting, usually in late July.

Prior to applying for the board, please join one of OAS' committees. Most help is needed with conservation, education, and outreach. Volunteering as a LAWD Ambassador is a great way to contribute and for us to get to know each other.

The OAS Board Application collects information about your interests and skills to align them with OAS' needs. If you wish to give back to your community through the conservation and nature education initiatives of OAS, contact me at lgaunt246@gmail.com.
*Linda Gaunt,
Nominating Committee Chair*

YouTube Channel Reaches 700 Subscribers

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) now has over 700 subscribers to its [YouTube Channel](#) and 120+ videos. These include over 100 feature presentations from weekly Bird Chats that OAS continues since the COVID-shutdown. All are sorted into Playlists by topic. Check it out and subscribe!

Audubon Keeps Name

Whether John James Audubon's contentious past as a slave holder reflects poorly on our organization or is distant history has been debated over the past two years. Several chapters have elected to drop the "Audubon" moniker from their names.

Audubon's major work, a color-plate book titled *The Birds of America* (1827-1839), is considered one of the finest ornithological works ever completed, including 25 new species.



American White Pelican from *The Birds of America*.
Painting: John James Audubon

National Audubon Society (NAS) solicited input from members and task forces to understand the enormous scale of a name change since implications affect numerous organizations. [Link](#) Last month the NAS board decided that the organization transcends one person's name. "Audubon" has come to symbolize our mission and significant achievements that this organization has made in its long history.

NAS CEO Elizabeth Gray said "it is critical to empower and resource work to fully realize our values of equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging (EDIB). We have therefore announced a new \$25 million commitment to fund the expansion of EDIB-specific work in both internal and conservation initiatives over the next five years."



Conservation Leadership Initiative students at Wekiwa using OAS' new binoculars. Photo: Kathy Rigling

Spanish Field Trips Launched

At Orlando Wetlands Park (OWP), one of the outstanding volunteers is Gilberto Sanchez-Perez, whose native tongue is Spanish. Orange Audubon Society (OAS) took National Audubon Society's FLEDJE training last year, and we know how important it is to make participation in our events more reflective of demographics of the Central Florida Community.

Last March we held OAS' first Buscando Pajaros trip by trailer/tram at OWP with 26 participants. Gilberto really enjoyed leading the trip in Spanish, and the 2022 NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL included a Spanish-led trip at OWP also. At the Orlando Wetlands Festival in mid-February, Gilberto led two bus trips in Spanish.



On 2023 Buscando Pajaros trip, young participant views Bald Eagle fledgling on nest. Photo: Deborah Green

This year's Buscando Pajaros trip was not the best scheduled, falling during Spring Break for college students, and we didn't have help from our Conservation Leadership Initiative students as we did last year.

But six participants plus Gilberto enjoyed a wonderful tour March 11th using a smaller tram. Gilberto is willing to do these trips for OAS in spring and fall, and we have additional strategies planned for publicity.

Thanks to OWP staff for hosting us, Gilberto for leading, and Delsy Rodriguez and Dutch Perez for assistance!

Deborah Green



Limpkin with 4 fledglings at Orlando Wetlands Park, late March. Photo: Jack Rogers

Spring Florida Panhandle Trip, April 26-30, 2023

Orange Audubon Society's Panhandle Trip will be 4 days and 4 nights, April 26-30, 2023. 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. For group lodging details and to save your place, contact me at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or (407) 718-1977.

Teresa Williams



"Pinkie," the American Flamingo still residing at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, will be seen on Florida Panhandle Trip. Photo: Deborah Green

APRIL/MAY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Bird Chats with OAS via Zoom

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

- Talking Birds, A Podcast by Ray Brown

April 6, 2023

- Birding Cuba by Paul Baicich

April 13, 2023

- City Nature Challenge by Christiana Oyenuga and Kierstyn Cox

April 27, 2023

- Connecticut Yankee (1918 Migratory Bird Act) by Will McLean Greeley

May 4, 2023

- Scrub-Jays, Gopher Tortoises and Manatees: Wildlife of Blue Spring State Park by Connor Wagner

May 11, 2023

Spring Migration Bird Walks at Mead Botanical Garden

April 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2023

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Wekiwa Survey, Wekiwa Springs State Park, Apopka

April 8, 2023

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Oakland Nature Preserve Survey, Oakland

April 9, 2023

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

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

Monthly Program: Swallow-tailed Kites and Short-tailed Hawks: Conserving Two Rare Raptors by Ken Meyer

April 20, 2023

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

Chertok Photo Contest Deadline

April 20, 2023

Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977

Young Birders Club Field Trip to Gainesville

April 22, 2023

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Central Florida Earth Day: Lake Eola

April 22, 2023

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Rock Springs Run State Reserve Bird Survey

April 26, 2023

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Spring Florida Panhandle Trip

April 26-30, 2023

Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977

City Nature Challenge with The Nature Conservancy

April 28 through May 1, 2023

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

Apopka Art and Foliage Festival

April 29-30, 2023

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

Bird & Kayak/Canoe Wekiva Island, Orange County, Limited Edition Field Trip

May 6, 2023

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive 8th Anniversary

May 7, 2023

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

Baby Owl Shower, Center for Birds of Prey, Maitland

May 13, 2023

Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977

Monthly Program: Free the Ocklawaha by Margaret Spontak

May 18, 2023

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525