

Top left, Mexican free-tailed bat, Orlando Wetlands Park; Top right, mosquito, Tosohatchee State Reserve. Bottom right, Golden Silk Orbweaver, Orlando Wetlands Park. Photos: Mary Keim. Bottom left, Lee Bloomcamp.

This Month's Program **October 19, 2023** **Bats, Birds and Bugs** **by Lee Bloomcamp**

Mostly, we at Orange Audubon Society try to dispel fears about wild creatures through knowing about them and what they do. But since Halloween is approaching—just for fun—we are emphasizing the scary! Lee Bloomcamp, an entomologist from Gainesville, will come to us remotely on YouTube LIVE to share spooky stories about nighttime creatures.

We will hear how bats terrorized a Florida governor and ended up creating a world-famous tourist destination! And what most people get wrong about the deadliest animal on earth, which nighttime flier is truly a farmers' friend, and just how many nocturnal bloodsuckers we have here in Florida. Lee will tackle these and other creepy tales with a combination of myth, science and fun facts.

Lee is retired from a career in entomology and is active in Alachua Audubon. Join us October 19th at 7 p.m. for a fascinating program, suitable for all ages. Just open YouTube and search for Orange Audubon Society at 7 pm October 19th and the program will appear live.

Alan Shapiro, Programs Chair

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 October and 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/



Fall Bird Walks at **Mead Botanical Garden** **October 7, 14, 21 & 28, 2023**

To celebrate fall migration, Orange Audubon Society (OAS) will host bird walks at Mead Botanical Garden each Saturday in October. We are sure to see many species of songbirds in the oaks and other trees, as well as woodpeckers, owls and Wood Ducks.

Each walk will be led by a skilled birding guide. Walks start at 8:00 a.m. and last 2 to 3 hours with lots of stopping to look at birds. Location is Mead Botanical Garden, 1300 S. Denning Drive, Winter Park. We will meet in the parking lot. If you have any questions, contact me at (941) 704-1189.

Linda Gaunt

Beginners' **Birdwatching Class** **October 15, 22, & 29, 2023**

Would you like to improve your bird identification skills? Take Orange Audubon's Beginners' Birdwatching Class starting Sunday, October 15th, and continuing October 22nd and 29th. If you have to miss a class, you can make it up in the winter series (January 6, 21 and 27, 2024). All sessions are 8:00 a.m.–11:30 a.m. An "outdoor" classroom session and mini-field trip October 15th will be at Orlando Wetlands Park. On October 22nd and 29th field sessions are at Mead Botanical Garden and the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive, respectively.

I will be teaching along with Susan Thome-Barrett. The class is limited to 12 students. 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. For questions about the class, contact me at riglingkathy@gmail.com or (407) 488-9559.

Kathy Rigling



October: Always a Busy Month!

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) has just launched a new website after many years (thanks to our webmaster Sonia Stephens). It makes joining our chapter and renewing easy online and provides links to register for most trips. Note that links are launched closer to the field trip date, except for overnight trips.

OAS continues partnering with the local Tarflower Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society on their signature event, Backyard Biodiversity Day (see p. 3).

The statewide Audubon Assembly will be held at the end of the month down in Brandon, and college students will be matched up with co-mentors in the Conservation Leadership Initiative Program. OAS' Thursday [Bird Chats](#) have launched again to supplement OAS' 3rd Thursday programs (all of which are in-person this season except this month and December). And [OAS' YouTube Channel](#) just passed 800 subscribers! OAS' Education Coordinator Kathy Rigling is starting classroom visits again (see p. 6). And registration is launching for OAS' NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL! (see p. 9).

If you would like to get more involved with OAS as a volunteer, possibly as a member of one of our committees, please follow [this link on our website](#) and tell us about your interests. With the exception of our Education Coordinator, who works part-time, OAS is run entirely by volunteers, and we can use everyone's support.

Deborah Green, OAS President

Endangered Species Act Turns 50

The U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA) will turn 50 in December. President Nixon signed it into law on December 28, 1973. This year the Orange Audubon Society Conservation Committee will profile a bird species that we might never see, much less know that its population has increased, if it were not for the ESA. This month we will profile the California Condor, which eight of us saw on our Wildside Nature Tours California Trip (see p. 5).

Orange County Draft Wetlands Ordinance Progresses

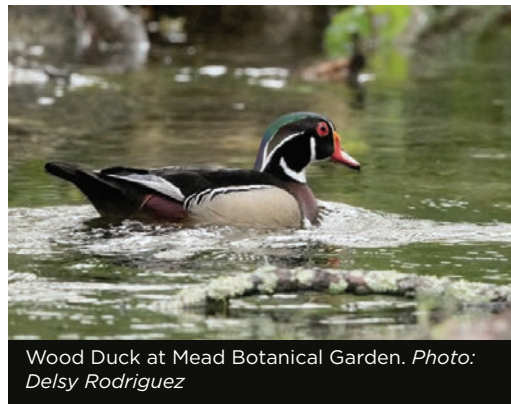
Tim Hull, Environmental Program Administrator, EPD of Orange County, presented a nearly final draft of the new Wetlands Ordinance to the County Commissioners on September 26th.

The Wetlands Ordinance was originally established in 1987 (35 years ago) and needed updating to address current concerns. Next steps will include discussing the ordinance with the various County Boards that will be involved (Planning & Zoning, EPC, Sustainability, Development) and presenting the Ordinance back to the Board of Commissioners in mid-December for codification.

According to Hull, a recently completed "State of the Wetlands" for Orange County showed increasing degradation and fragmentation of wetlands overall with a 5.6% loss of wetlands, most significantly impacted were "wetland prairies". And it found degradation even in current wetland mitigation areas which will be addressed in the new ordinance.

Other issues found that all current wetland cases—from a small infringement of a fence several feet into a wetlands area to a large multi-acre development involving significant wetland involvement—were handled the same way. A tiered system will be used to add predictability and ensure County staff can concentrate on the most significant wetlands.

One of the more controversial aspects of the ordinance was a proposed 100-foot buffer to avoid wetland impacts. To balance the



Wood Duck at Mead Botanical Garden. Photo: Delsy Rodriguez

Continued next pg.



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 OAS*is* (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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Continued from p.2. rights of small property owners, the 100-foot buffer will apply to properties greater than 5 acres. Those less than 5 will have 25-50 foot buffers. After discussion with several Commissioners, Hull indicated they may include verbiage to create buffer zones larger than 200 feet in properties that have shown significant flooding history. Hull also mentioned that “Upland Buffers” are not even included in current code but will be added to the new ordinance.

Another area not covered in the current code is language and criteria to evaluate wetland mitigation. Water monitoring was removed 5 years ago but will be replaced. The code will include measures for wildlife fencing and signage and trash removal for mitigation areas. Such areas will also be monitored “in perpetuity”.

In response to Commissioner questions, Hull stated that when the Ordinance is codified, they will also review current local municipalities ordinances to determine compliance. He noted all municipalities have been invited to the various sessions and a specific session was held just for municipality input.

We are hopeful this new Ordinance is a step in the right direction to protect our wetland areas.

Susan Thome-Barrett

Backyard Biodiversity Day, October 21, 2023

For the 8th year, OAS is teaming up with the Tarflower Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society and Mead Botanical Garden, Inc. to sponsor Backyard Biodiversity Day. This event is an opportunity to buy native plants and learn from the Tarflower Chapter members.

This year’s event takes place Saturday, October 21, 2023 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Mead Botanical Garden. Walks, talks, vendors, music and food trucks will make it fun. Members of the Tarflower Chapter have been working on habitat restoration at Mead Botanical Garden, and proceeds of their plant sales go to that project.

If you would like to help at OAS’ outreach table, please contact Deborah at volunteer@orangeaudubonfl.org or 407-637-2525. See you there!

Global Birding Weekend

Global Birding Weekend, October 13-15, 2023—sponsored by Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Swarovski Optik—inspires people to get outside to enjoy nature and raises funds for BirdLife International for global bird conservation. It is an extension of World Migratory Bird Day on October 14th in which people all over the world record their sightings on eBird to give a snapshot of bird movements. You can even join a global team or create your own team. In 2022, more than 51,000 people from 192 countries submitted 134,000 checklists! Learn more about this event at <https://globalbirding.org/home>. For more information about getting started with eBird, visit <https://ebird.org/about>. To watch the OAS Bird Chat video on eBird, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-M66Fw7qpc0>.



Birders viewing a Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Mead Botanical Gardens. Photo: Deborah Green

BACKYARD BIODIVERSITY DAY & FLORIDA NATIVE PLANTS SALE
OCTOBER 21, 2023 **9AM-3PM**

TO BENEFIT UPLAND HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECTS AT MEAD BOTANICAL GARDEN
1300 S DENNING DR, WINTER PARK, FL 32789

- WILDLIFE EXHIBITS**
- GUIDED HIKES**
- EXPERT SPEAKERS**
- KIDS ACTIVITIES**
- WORKSHOPS**

PRESENTED BY THE TARFLOWER CHAPTER OF FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY, ORANGE COUNTY



California Birding Trip with Wildside Nature Tours

While Central Floridians were gearing up for Hurricane Idalia, eight intrepid birders from Orange Audubon Society traveled to coastal Central California for a birding adventure with Wildside Nature Tours and guides Alex Lamoreaux and Chris Brown. Covering six counties from south of San Francisco to Monterey, we tallied approximately 161 species with many lifers for all of us.

Our Pelagic

On our second day we had the amazing experience of going out on pelagic birding trip—taking a boat way out into the ocean to find birds that can only be seen there—with Alvaro Jamarillo Adventures. Our group and guides were joined by birders from San Francisco and Alvaro’s skilled assistant spotters, as we headed out in a sturdy 50-foot

fishing boat out of Half Moon Bay. Alvaro has been taking pelagic trips from Half Moon Bay since 2009 and found that to see storm-petrels and other birds that feed on fish of deeper cooler waters, you have to go out 35 miles (as we did). Our destination was Pioneer Canyon, a steep-sided gorge a mile and a half deep off the continental slope that is part of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

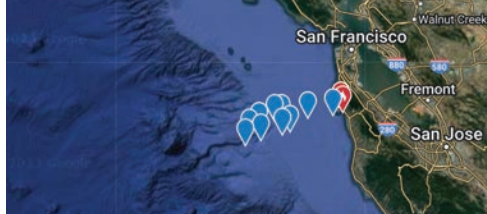
The sheer joy of seeing Black-footed Albatross, Rhinoceros Auklet, Northern Fulmar, Scripps Murrelet, Sabine’s Gull, as well as a mega rarity, an Hawaiian Petrel (just to name a few of the best ones) is hard to describe. The highlight for many was seeing the pod of eight Orcas swimming, breaching, and tail waving alongside the vessel. They put on quite a show for us! The trip was cold, a bit rough, but worth every minute.

Rails and Condors

Every day on the tour we visited different habitats and saw new species. Highlights included Tri-colored Blackbirds, a Surfbird, California Quail, Yellow-billed Magpie, Red-footed Booby, Golden Eagles, and many, many more wonderful species.



Wandering Tattler. Wildside's van going up La Gloria road to Pinnacles National Park. Photos: Susan Thome-Barrett. OAS trip participants. Photo: Alex Lamoreaux



OAS' group on the Pelagic Trip. Photo: Deborah Green. Our route 35 miles off Half Moon Bay to the edge of the continental shelf and Pioneer Canyon, from Alvaro Jaramillo Adventures eBird Report. Black-footed Albatross. Photo: Susan Thome-Barrett. Viewing the Orcas. Photo: Deborah Green



Alex Lamoreaux photographing a Baird's Sandpiper. Ridgway's Rail out in the open. Listening and watching for Black Rails. Photos: Deborah Green

We got close views of a couple of Ridgway's Rails, a west coast species that was only separated from Clapper Rail in 2014. Ridgway's is federally endangered due to wetland degradation and loss.

Wildside has purchased a big green van, and with it and a SUV, Alex and Chris drove us to Alex's known birding hotspots. At Pinnacles National Park we had distant views of California Condors.

But the next day at Big Sur, purple number 46, "Kodama" (Alex's favorite Condor) flew in shortly after we arrived and cruised over our heads to land on a nearby cliff. She gave us all fabulous close-up looks and photo opportunities!

We finished the trip spotting a Wandering Tattler at Point Pinos beach. Alex and Chris were amazing guides that took us to see all of the area's target birds. They knew the area's mammals as well as local plants. The weather was great as was the scenery, especially our visit at Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park. Those trees are spectacular. It was a wonderful trip all the way around!

Gigi DelPizzo



Condor #46 also called Kodama, hatched in the wild and living near Big Sur. Photo: Susan Thome-Barrett.

California Condors

California Condors ranged from Canada to Mexico, across the southern United States to Florida and north on the east coast to New York until about 10,000 years ago. They survived along the Pacific coast from British Columbia to Baja California.

But habitat degradation, power line collisions, poisoning from cyanide traps set for coyotes and lead poisoning from ingesting fragments of lead ammunition in the carcasses that they feed upon had reduced their populations. The California Condor was placed on the federal endangered species list in 1967.

Condors don't reproduce until they are about six years old and produce only a single egg every year or two, so population growth is very slow. A decision was made to bring the last remaining condors (only 27) into captivity, and the last wild bird was captured on April 19, 1987.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began a captive breeding program in 1983, with the Los Angeles Zoo and the San Diego Wild Animal Park (later with The Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey in Boise, Idaho and the Oregon Zoo in Portland, Oregon.)

Eggs are removed as they are laid, usually causing the captive condors to lay a second and sometimes a third egg. The extra eggs are incubated and the chicks are raised by caretakers using a hand puppet shaped like a condor head to prevent imprinting on people. Some condor chicks are raised by their parent birds. Captive bred condors were released into the wild in California beginning in January 1992. Today over half the condors are in the wild

Baltimore Oriole: A Winter Beauty

Medium-sized with a brilliant orange chest and belly, jet-black head and back, and bold white wing bars, Baltimore Orioles are familiar songbirds. In September thousands of them depart North America for Central America; smaller numbers will overwinter in Florida, however, and we can enjoy their melodious songs and striking plumage for many months. Tolerant of humans, these birds forage in parks, orchards and backyards. They often visit flowering trees and vines in search of fruit and nectar and a variety of insects, including beetles, crickets, grasshoppers, moths and flies as well as spiders and snails

Acrobatic feeders, Baltimore Orioles comb the high branches of trees to forage and clamber across twigs, hang upside down, or flutter to extend their reach. They also fly out from perches to snatch insects from the air like clever flycatchers. Females weave sock-like pendulous nests by poking and darting their bills to make knots and tangles from thin fibers, as if crocheting, and they anchor these remarkable structures high in a deciduous tree. Materials may include grass, bark, wool, horsehair and cellophane, twine or fishing line. About four inches deep, these design wonders have a bulging bottom chamber that holds a soft cushion of downy fibers and feathers to cradle her eggs!

You will see nesting Baltimore Orioles and many warblers on the Wildside Trip to Ohio in May. Although common and widespread, Baltimore Orioles declined 42 percent from 1970 to 2014 according to Partners in Flight.

Like many avian species, they are vulnerable to deforestation and habitat loss in many different countries; thus their conservation requires international cooperation.

How to find these spectacular birds? Listen for their charming song, a short series of clear rich whistles. The more colorful males often sing from conspicuous posts at the tops of trees where their bright orange breast is hard to miss. More challenging to identify, the yellow-and-gray female is often mistaken for a goldfinch.

Install a fruit or nectar feeder in your yard to attract them, or join an Orange Audubon Society bird walk at Mead Botanical Garden Saturday mornings in October and again in April. With the help of other birders, you will surely find one or two of these amazing creatures. Check it out! Florida has abundant natural treasures to cherish!

Linda Carpenter

in Arizona, California, Utah and Baja California. In 2022, there were 561 condors with 347 in the wild and 214 in captivity. Each one has a number tag, and you can learn about any condor you see on the website of the [Ventana Wildlife Society](#). Extensive information on this Endangered Species Act success story is available on [the USFWS page](#).

OAS Conservation Committee

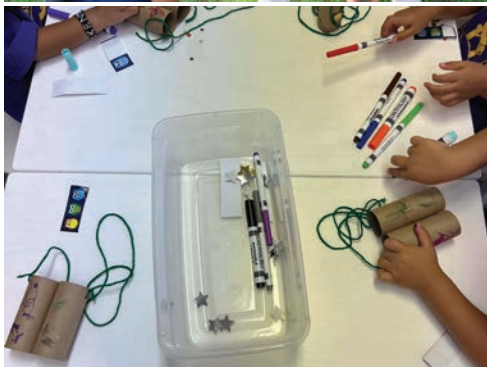


Top, Male Baltimore Oriole at Jelly Feeder. Photo: Alan Shapiro. Middle, Female or Juvenile eating peppervine berries. Photo: Joseph Mileyka. Bottom, Male Baltimore Oriole eating mulberries at Mead Botanical Garden. Photo: Sam Mitcham

Education Coordinator Update

Our Orange Audubon Society (OAS) educational programs are off to a strong start for the fall. This month I returned to Zellwood Elementary to continue their after-school birding club. In addition, I've added three more schools for after-school birding clubs, Eccleston Elementary, Eustis Elementary and Lakeville Elementary.

For all the school birding clubs, I did a program on characteristics of birds and why people watch birds. Then we played bird bingo in which they went outside to look for specific things on their bingo card like finding two birds together, hearing a bird song or finding a feather. The children also practiced using binoculars at the same time.



Above, Zellwood Elementary Birders Club. Below, Toilet paper roll into binoculars at Montessori School. Photos: Kathy Rigling

OAS now has a class set (22) of amazing KOWA youth binoculars, thanks to a National Audubon Society Collaborative grant with a match from Land, Sea & Sky Optics in Houston, and a matching set purchased through approval by the OAS board.

Highlights of the schoolyard birding included a Sharp-shinned Hawk that flew over us at Zellwood, a Yellow-throated Warbler feeding actively in Spanish moss in an oak tree at Eustis and a female Belted Kingfisher at Eccleston! The children are very excited to be using binoculars.

My first classroom visits took place at Dommerich Elementary School, in which I visited all of the first grade classes and did a program on observing habitats closely.

Using their outdoor classroom, which is located by a small pond, I read them the story *On Duck Pond*, which details a noisy mixed flock of ducks disturbing the residents of a pond.

Afterwards I had the children quietly observe the pond and draw pictures of the different things living there and draw the connections to the interactions among them.

I also visited Montessori World in Orlando and presented for all the preschool and kindergarten classes. The program was on characteristics of birds, and I concluded the lesson with them decorating toilet paper tube binoculars.

Then we took each class outside and had them look for birds and other things of interest in nature and describe their characteristics.

The young children were excited to make their binoculars and then explore their schoolyard. They enthusiastically looked at everything around them finding nests, flying flocks of Common Grackles, many lizards, beetles and Mourning Doves on the power lines. They were even more excited to find out that they were going to be able to take their binoculars home!

This month I was also able to participate in the Orange County Public Schools Green Schools recognition program during which I networked with several schools to plan future visits.

Our first online educational webinar featured the Feathered Friends curriculum on September 13th and is now available [at this link](http://eepurl.com/imGskM). The next educational webinar will be October 11th and will be about all the free digital resources for *Audubon Adventures*. Use this link to register.: <http://eepurl.com/imGskM>

For more information on educational programs or to schedule a class or after-school club visit, please email education@orangeaudubonfl.org.

Kathy Rigling, Education Coordinator

Dragonfly Fun

It was a beautiful sunny morning at Orlando Wetlands as we set out to hunt darting dragonflies and dainty damselflies at Orange Audubon Society's Dragonfly Field Trip, taught by Mary Keim and Randy Snyder.

Mary and Randy are skilled at sharing identification tips on the many species of Odonata at Orlando Wetlands. Mary pointed out the body parts of dragonflies and described how they differ from damselflies. The spacing between the eyes and the coloring of the body and wings aided our identification.

Before Mary started her ID tips, we were seeing dragonflies and damselflies fluttering about and we were anxious to set out and start finding and photographing our quarry. The tiny Rambur's Forktail and Blue-ringed Dancer were difficult to spot, but as soon as you have them in view their colors really pop out. The Eastern Amberwing was also showy with its golden body and wings. This small dragonfly mimics wasps to dissuade predators from making a quick meal of it.

We were followed by Eastern Pondhawks and Needham's Skimmers. When we went down the road to Seminole Ranch Wildlife Management Area, darners flitted about.

We finally had a great view of a Regal Darner that had landed on the fruit of a Virginia Creeper.



Regal Darner on Virginia Creeper, Seminole Ranch Wildlife Management Area. Photo: Val Alm

We spotted ten different dragonflies and four damselflies on this excursion. This was the second time Val and I had the opportunity to attend this class with Mary and Randy, and we continue to learn more about these beautiful insects.

Bert Alm, Space Coast Audubon Society

Wekiwa Springs State Park Bird Survey October 8, 2023

Orange Audubon Society's bird surveys at Wekiwa Springs State Park help park biologists by documenting the healthy populations of fire-dependant bird species, like Bachman's Sparrows, Brown-headed Nuthatches and Red-headed Woodpeckers.



Bachman's Sparrow. Photo: Joseph Mileyka

Fall is not only a good time to see migratory birds at Wekiwa Springs State Park, but it is the height of wildflower season. and there are some great wildflowers

You don't have to be an expert birder but should be willing to hike on sandy trails while birding for several hours. To participate, contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559 or riglingkathy@gmail.com.



Wayne Osborne showing techniques to mark turtles. Photo: Deborah Green. 28-year old Eastern Stinkpot turtle, shown by Wayne Osborne. Photo: John Heinsen.

Turtle Program

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) September 21st program was by Wayne Osborne, a volunteer with the [Turtle Survival Alliance](#). Wayne shared about the survey-and-tagging program and how to identify our common freshwater turtles. If you missed the program, it was recorded by OAS board member David Bottomley and [posted here](#).



Northern Cardinal, Isle of Pine Preserve. Photo: Mary Keim

Green PLACE Nature & Photography Hike November 4, 2023

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) is offering a FREE guided Nature & Photography Hike on Saturday, November 4, 2023 at Isle of Pine Preserve in east Orange County. Beth Jackson, naturalist and Orange County Green PLACE manager, and Lee Ann Posavad, wildlife photographer, will co-lead this hike.

This walk is ideal for youth and families. Learn about the easy-to-photograph nature of this 464-acre Orange County Green PLACE property. This continues a long-standing partnership between OAS and the Orange County Green PLACE program in promotion of these important preserves.

The walk will be from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m., November 4, 2023. The address for Isle of Pine Preserve is 14032 Lacebark Pine Rd, Orlando, FL 32832.

The trip is free but limited in number of participants. To reserve your spot, call Beth Jackson at (407) 836-1481 or email GreenPLACE@ocfl.net.



Thanks to Nature Fest Volunteers

Thanks to Alan Shapiro, Brian Miller, Lee Ann Posavad, Marian Lichtler and Alex DeBear for staffing Orange Audubon Society's display at the Oakland Nature Fest on September 23rd at Oakland Nature Preserve. It was a great event.

OAS Young Birders Club October Update

Orange Audubon Society's Young Birders Club had their first field trip for the season on Saturday, September 30th to Central Winds Park. We were thankful to be joined by leaders Lorri Lilja, Alex Debear, Susan Thome-Barrett and Kathy Rigling.

It was overcast all morning, but we had a wonderful time. Before we started on our walk we talked about migration and the different types of birds that would be moving over our landscape during the season. The previous night had been a time of high migration and hopes were high as we set out.

Not long after we started looking through the oak trees, Ethan spotted a beautiful, female Blackburnian warbler. We also spotted several American Redstarts, Yellow-throated Warbler, Tufted Titmice, and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in the trees.



Young Birders trip to Central Winds Park. Photo: Kathy Rigling

On the soccer field before all the activity started, we were able to view an American Kestrel on the goal post

Other notable birds that we were able to get good looks at included, Downy Woodpeckers, Pileated Woodpeckers and a Bald Eagle.

We were also fortunate to see several species of warblers, including Ovenbird, Worm-eating Warbler, Black and White Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Northern Parula, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Prairie Warbler and Palm Warbler.

Several of our participants started keeping their Florida bird checklist and began working on their Wings Over Florida certificates.

Our next field trip will be November 5 to Clay Island. For more information, please email me at riglingkathy@gmail.com or register directly on our website at this link: <https://orangeaudubonfl.org/field-trip-signup/rip>.

Kathy Rigling

2023 Chertok Florida Native Nature Photo Contest Results

Winners of Orange Audubon Society's 2023 (35th Annual) Kit and Sidney Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest were announced on June 15th at Harry P. Leu Gardens at our first in-person awards presentation since 2020! For those who could not attend or who wish to see the fabulous entries again, a virtual edition can still be viewed on [Orange Audubon Society's \(OAS\) YouTube channel](#).

There were three competition categories—YOUTH, NOVICE and ADVANCED AMATEUR/PROFESSIONAL—and the theme for subject matter was Florida Native Nature. Winners' names and image titles, by category, are listed below. Images with an asterisk (*) are featured on OAS' 2023-2024 Annual Brochure.

YOUTH CATEGORY

1st PLACE

Lauren Chin, Windermere
Drinking Kite—Swallow-tailed Kite

2nd PLACE

Lauren Chin, Windermere
One-handed Catch—Osprey with Black Crappie

3rd PLACE

Matthew Chin, Windermere
Spoonbill Stickup—Roseate Spoonbill

4th PLACE

Ethan Landreville, Melbourne
Sun-kissed Sparrow—Grasshopper Sparrow

5th PLACE

Ethan Landreville, Melbourne
Just Before the Strike—Reddish Egret

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Lauren Chin, Windermere
**Anhinga Trio—Anhinga Nestlings*

Matthew Chin, Windermere (2)
Vampire Osprey and Whistling-Duck Liftoff

Ethan Landreville, Melbourne (2)
Majestic White Pelican and Thoughtful Scrub-Jay

NOVICE CATEGORY

1st PLACE

Jeanne Polarolo, Windermere
**Clowning Around—Reddish Egret*

2nd PLACE

Scott Ball, Tallahassee
Tricolored Foggy Morn—Tricolored Heron



Easy-peasy Breezy—Long-billed Dowitchers. 2023 Chertok Photo Contest. Third Place, Novice Category. Photo: Jeanne Polarolo

3rd PLACE

Jeanne Polarolo, Windermere
Easy-peasy, Breezy—Long-billed Dowitchers

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Jack Berkstresser, Winter Garden
Osprey Increasing Altitude

Heather Earl, Winter Haven (2)
**Snack Time—Yellow-throated Warbler and Busted—Pied-billed Grebe with Shrimp*

Melissa Erdos, Winter Garden
Peekaboo—Great Horned Owls

Lucy Golebiewski, Orlando
Reddish Egret Silhouette

Caitrine Hellenga, Orlando
All Puffed Up—Red Knot

Donald Martin, Melbourne
Good Morning—Great Egret Chick

ADVANCED AMATEUR/PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY

1st PLACE

Marina Scarr, Sarasota
Sunset Siesta—Eastern Screech Owl

2nd PLACE

David Rose, Cocoa Beach
Royal Romance—Royal Terns

3rd PLACE

Melodi Roberts, Winter Springs
Morning Routine—American White Pelicans

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Jan Addison, Orlando
Splashes of Pink—Roseate Spoonbill

Tim Barker, Orlando

We have Liftoff—Black Skimmer Chick

Wei-Shen Chin, Windermere

The Pink Cape—Roseate Spoonbill

Carol Darling, Cocoa Beach (2)

Emergence—Northern Gannet and Moment of Truth—Snowy Egret

Amber Favorite, Winter Garden

Don't Worry, Beach Happy—Reddish Egret

Mark Hainen, Groveland

Flight Through Cypress—Barred Owls

Daryl Roston, DeLand (2)

American Avocets and Reddish Egret at Sunrise

Marina Scarr, Sarasota

**Sour Puss—Burrowing Owllet*

Carol Smith, Antelope, CA

Supping in the Surf—Sanderling

Thank you to all photographers who entered. We look forward to your participation in 2024 when OAS will sponsor the 36th Annual Kit and Sidney Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest, entry deadline: April 18, 2024.

We also look forward to presenting the 2024 awards program in person on June 20th, 7:00 p.m., at Harry P. Leu Gardens in Orlando, Florida.

Teresa Williams
Chertok Photography Contest Chair

Thanks to the Chertok Photo Contest Judges

Winners of the 2023 Kit and Sidney Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest were selected by a panel of three independent judges—professionals in the fields of art, nature and photography. They were Susan Gernyn-Francis, Bruce Anderson and Wayne Bennett, respectively.

Susan Gernyn-Francis' visual communications degree is the basis for her artistic photographic expression. Her work combines photography, scanography and fine art that often incorporates the use of painted backgrounds and textures. As a teacher, Susan offers positive critiques of color, composition and light to help novice photographers develop an artistic eye and make their images more art-worthy. Visit Susan's Instagram site: Instagram @q_isme to see how she incorporates fine art and photography into her own body of work.

Bruce Anderson is the bird aficionado that other expert birders call on when they encounter difficult to identify birds. He has traveled to all continents except Antarctica in quest of life birds on a life list that now exceeds 3,000. Bruce earned a degree in biology, studied graduate level zoology (focusing on avian zoology), and co-authored with Henry M. Stevenson the comprehensive state bird book, *The Birdlife of Florida*—a must-have resource for serious birders and naturalists in Florida.

Wayne Bennett is an award-winning nature photographer whose images have been recognized by the likes of *Nature's Best Photography Magazine* and displayed at the Smithsonian in Washington, DC. He is a charter member of North American Nature Photography Association and a past president of Orlando Camera Club. Wayne continues to teach nature photography, give presentations and lead workshops. Visit his website: waynebennettphotography.com/ to enjoy the incredible nature photography of Wayne Bennett. Our sincere thanks go to Susan, Bruce and Wayne for judging the 2023 Chertok competition!

Teresa Williams, Chertok Photography Contest Chair

NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL, November 30-December 4, 2023



The NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL on Lake Apopka highlights the St. Johns River Water Management District's 20,000-acre Lake Apopka North Shore, Florida's top birding hotspot, and other Central Florida birding hotspots. For Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) eighth annual festival, over 60 field trips extend over 5 days, Thursday through Monday, November 30 through December 4, 2023. We suggest you visit

the festival website at <https://northshorebirdingfestival.com/> and sign up for the mailing list to be notified of the start of registration, as many trips will fill quickly.

Our great birding locations and our incredible trip leaders are what makes this festival grow and participants return year after year. 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.

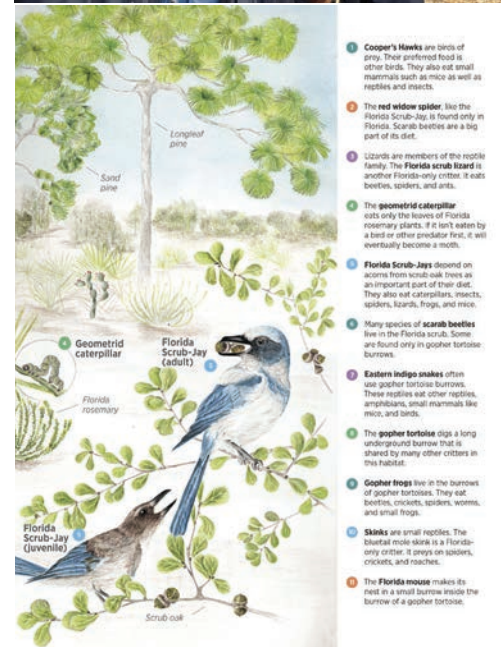
Out-of-town participants contribute to the local economy and may visit again after the festival. The 2022 festival had participants from 18 states and Canada, plus over 60 Florida cities.

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.

What's New At the Festival

- The Friday Dinner Keynote is by Kevin Loughlin, photographer and owner of Wildside Nature Tours. Kevin has been to the Galapagos over 40 times and has recently published a book on it. His topic is Galapagos Natural History.
- Kevin will lead a two-part photo workshop Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. Photographers, this will be fun with things to learn.
- The Saturday Keynote Dinner is by Luis Gles and Mariah Hryniewich, the Florida Keys Hawkwatchers. Their topic will be Birding St. Paul Island in the Pribilofs.
- The keynote dinners will be at Wekiwa Springs State Park, and you have to enter the gate before the park closes at 5 p.m. Sign up for a workshop before dinner or a trip after dinner at the park. We now have discounted combo pricing for dinner with an afternoon workshop or an evening trip.
- A new offering Sunday morning will be a boat trip from New Smyrna Beach to Disappearing Island, led by Michael Brothers with Luis and Mariah.
- Natasza Fontaine will be giving three workshops on Learning About Birds Through Drawing.

[Check it out](#) and sign up! Being on the [mailing list](#) is the best way to receive notification of the opening of registration.



Above, Luis Gles and Mariah Hryniewich on St. Paul Island, Alaska. The Saturday Keynote will be their account of this birding hotspot. Below, Natasza Fontaine illustrated this *Audubon Adventures* issue and will teach *Nature Journaling*.

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Bird Chats with OAS via Zoom

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

- Bachman's Sparrows and Brown-headed

Nuthatches by Jim Cox

October 5, 2023

- The NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL by the Bird Chats Team

October 12, 2023

- The Limpkin by Dana Bryan

October 26, 2023

- Roseate Spoonbills by Emily Johnson

November 2, 2023

- Wildlife Photography by Kirsten Hines

November 9, 2023

Oakland Nature Preserve Quarterly Survey

October 1, 2023

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

Limited Edition Field Trip: Oak Hammock and Weather Tower Road, Merritt Island

October 7, 2023

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

Mead Botanical Garden Bird Walks, Winter Park

October 7, 14, 21 and 28, 2023

Contact Linda at (941) 704-1189

Wekiwa Springs State Park Bird Survey, Apopka

October 8, 2023

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

Beginners Birdwatching Class

Orlando Wetlands Park, Mead and Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive

October 15, 22 and 29, 2023

Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977

October Program: Bats, Birds and Bugs by Lee Bloomcamp (online on YouTube LIVE)

October 19, 2023

Contact Alan at alangrandiflora@gmail.com

October Field Trip: Mead Botanical Garden Bird Walk, Winter Park

October 21, 2023

Contact Linda at (941) 704-1189

Backyard Biodiversity Day, Mead Botanical Garden, Winter Park

October 21, 2023

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

Rock Springs Reserve Survey Quarterly Survey

October 25, 2023

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

Audubon Assembly

October 26-28, 2023

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

Limited Edition Field Trip: Bird & Bike, Lake Apopka Loop Trail

November 4, 2023

Contact Alan at alangrandiflora@gmail.com

Green PLACE Nature & Photography Hike

November 4, 2023

Contact Beth at (407) 836-1481

November Program: Restoration of the Kissimmee River by Amber Moore

November 16, 2023

Contact Alan at alangrandiflora@gmail.com

NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL, Lake Apopka

Nov 30-Dec 4, 2023

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525



Glenn Crawford calling out a bird, Belize 2018. Photo: Deborah Green

Belize Tropical Birding with Wildside Nature Tours, November 12-20, 2023

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) has set up trips with Wildside Nature Tours to Belize, guided by Glenn Crawford, a gifted naturalist and trip leader from Belize.

The first one—which still has space—is November 12-20, 2023. The second one is February 3-11, 2024.

Both trips are 9 days and cost \$3,300, including food, lodging and guiding. The trips are to the northern part of Belize with a new extension to add some Yucatan endemics.

For more about Glenn, see the [September OASis](#), p. 9. [Visit this link for more details and to register](#), and please also email info@orangeaudubonfl.org.