



Above, *Reddish Egret Fishing*, 2022 Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest, First Place winner, Advanced Category. Photo: *Tim Barker*. Below, *Mistress of Ceremonies* for the June 15th program will be Chertok Photo Contest Chair *Teresa Williams*, shown here at the new Magnolia Park EcoEducation Center after putting up framed past Chertok Photo Contest winners in the lobby. Photo: *Deborah Green*

35th Annual Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest In-person! June 15, 2023

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) will again celebrate the end of its season with an exclusive showing of eligible entries in the 2023 Kit and Sidney Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest.

This year the program returns to an in-person format following three long years of virtual programming only necessitated by COVID concerns. Please join us to see images of Florida's amazing native flora, fauna and natural areas that have been captured beautifully by the nature-loving shutterbugs who entered this year's contest. As we show images photographed throughout Florida, from the Panhandle to the Everglades and Florida Keys and points in between, members of the audience will pick their favorites and suspense will mount. At the end of the presentation, winners of the Youth, Novice and Advanced Amateur/Professional categories will be announced and prizes worth a combined \$1,350 in cash, gift cards and ribbons will be awarded. The event is open to the public. All are encouraged and welcome to attend and bring friends and family as we celebrate the 35th year of this much-loved Chertok photo contest and OAS's 57th year as your local chapter of Audubon.

We hope you will join us at 7:00 p.m. on June 15th and look forward to seeing you in person!

Teresa Williams, Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest 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 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/



Orange Audubon's Online Auction Opens June 8th!

From private birding experiences with experts to landscape consultation to gift certificates for restaurants and attractions, there is something for everyone on the 2023 Orange Audubon Society (OAS) Online Auction. All proceeds will benefit OAS' Nature and Environmental Education Center Fund and educational programs.

Although the Online Auction won't open for bidding until Thursday, June 8th at noon, you can check out what is available now by clicking on [this link](#). As new items are donated, they will be added to the easy-to-use BiddingOwl platform that has been utilized for the past two years.

Register on the BiddingOwl website or use your previous year's log in, select items to bid on and submit bids. The auction closes on Monday, June 19th at 7:00 p.m. If you are the highest bidder when the auction closes, you will win the item! Arrangements will then be coordinated to receive your winnings. Since the auction is virtual, please share [the link](#) with family and friends to help make this a great OAS fund-raiser!

Linda Gaunt, Online Auction Chair

Summer Planning Time

Orange Audubon Society programs go on hiatus in July and August as the board plans for our next program year. We want your input as we plan activities. Please fill out our very short survey at [this link](#).



Bad Hair Day—Cattle Egret, Honorable Mention, Youth Category, 2020 Chertok Florida Native Nature Photo Contest. Photo: *Levi Davis*



Conservation Needs Never Stop

A lot is going on in Orange County with revisions to the Wetlands and Tree Ordinances and the Vision 2050 Comprehensive Plan. Although OAS programs take a break in July and August, the board will be planning for next season and will be following conservation issues and hope you will as well. Email conservation@orangeaudubonfl.org to be put on an action alert list. Thank you!

Deborah Green, OAS President

Orange County Wetlands Protection Ordinance Public Meetings

The Orange County Environmental Protection Division (EPD) is working on an update to its [Wetlands Ordinance](#) (Chapter 15, Article X, Conservation Areas Ordinance). EPD will be hosting a series of stakeholder meetings on proposed conceptual Orange County wetland policy, which Orange Audubon Society's Conservation Committee and Charles Lee of Audubon Florida consider very positive.

If you wish to stay informed and provide feedback on the ordinance update initiative, please attend one of the last of these public meetings.

The meetings will occur on:

- June 12th from 5:00pm – 7:00pm,
- June 13th from 9:00am – 11:00am.

They are at the IFAS Extension offices, 6021 Conway Road, Orlando, FL 32812. You may submit questions or comments via email to WetlandPermitting@ocfl.net.

Help Our Waterways, Help Ourselves

Studies show some people consume an average of 5 grams of plastic (one credit card worth) a week. These micro plastics and nano plastics release chemicals in the body that potentially lead to cancer, chronic inflammations and other unknown effects. The 5 grams is an average and studies show ranges can go as low as .7 grams. How to join the .7 gram group?

Avoid Skin-Care Products with Micro beads

After rinsing off scrubs and face washes with plastic micro-beads, the particles travel through the wastewater system, eventually joining the watershed. These plastic particles are eaten by fish and other creatures, cycling back into the food system. Check labels.

Avoid using Plastic Eating Utensils, Plastic Water Bottles

Micro-particles are shed during the eating and drinking process so reducing usage of these items will help reduce your exposure to micro- and nano particles. Support eateries that use bamboo or reusable utensils and dishes. Encourage your favorite eateries to avoid styrofoam.

Avoid Single-Use Plastics

Many plastics show the "Chasing Arrow" symbol of recycling, but don't be surprised that only 5-6% of plastics in the U.S. are recycled. Many are separated by number, then delivered to the landfill. Most recycled are plastics marked with 1 and 2. Best bet is to reduce use of plastics overall.

Join a Beach or River Clean-Up

It makes you feel good, it looks great and it keeps plastics out of our waterways. And importantly, it gives organizations information on what items are causing the most problems in our area.

Other Ways to Help our Oceans

Eat Sustainable Sourced Fish

Destructive fishing and farming practices are putting many of the fish we love to eat in trouble. Choose a sustainable variety of fish that is not in danger. For Tuna, avoid Bluefin which is now at dangerously low levels. Select Albacore, Skipjack or Yellowfin that are troll or pole caught. Tuna from the U.S. is a good alternative.

Shrimp that are U.S. farmed are the best choice. Salmon farmed in New Zealand tops the most sustainable with salmon farmed in Maine or the Faroe Islands a good alternative.

Monterey Bay's "Seafood Watch" program offers an on-line guide to help with sustainable selection: [link](#)

Continued on p.3



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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Audubon Florida's Greenhouse Gas Inventory: 2023 Update

In spring of 2021, Audubon Florida held the state's largest, simultaneous local government greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory initiative in east central Florida. Audubon Florida and the East Central Florida Regional Resilience Collaborative (R2C) co-facilitated this effort. Eighteen students from Stetson University, Florida Institute of Technology, and University of Central Florida were paired with 18 local governments to complete a GHG inventory to help them identify emissions within their operations. In the Tampa Bay region in 2022, twelve students from University of South Florida and 12 local governments were paired. The completion of these baseline GHG inventories served as one of the first major steps towards improving energy efficiency and shifting to renewable energy sources. Since then, Audubon Florida has kept in touch with the local government participants and will continue to create ways for collaboration and assistance, creating opportunities for guidance and collaboration amongst alumni as they anticipate next steps in their climate action planning.

Audubon Florida also participates in the R2C's GHG Reduction Advisory Committee, which works to identify and plan next steps individual local governments can take towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Strategizing solar adoption and electrifying vehicle fleets are among the strategies. Audubon Florida's next pairing of students and municipalities in fall 2023 will be in the Indian River Lagoon region.

Halle Goldstein, Climate Initiatives Engagement Associate

Waterways, continued from p.2

Moisturizers Without Squalane

Newest trend in moisturizers and sun screens is the ingredient "squalane," a biomimic that is often obtained from shark's livers. Plant-based squalene and vegan squalene work just as well so check the label if you want to try this bio-mimic ingredient.

Sunscreen to Protect Reefs

Sunscreen bans in Hawaii are already showing effect with coral reefs coming back to life. While there is no agreement on "reef safe," avoiding ingredients known to be harmful is the best bet. The following list was compiled by Autumn Blum, cosmetic chemist and self-proclaimed obsessed scuba diver.

INGREDIENTS TO AVOID IN SUNSCREENS

- Avobenzone
- Benzophenones/oxybenzone
- Butyloctyl salicylate
- Clear or nano zinc/nano particles
- Cyclopentasiloxane/cyclomethicone
- Ecamsule
- Formaldehyde, diazolidinyl urea, quaternium-15, DMDM hydantoin and hydroxymethylglycinate
- Methylisothiazolinone
- Microplastic
- Octinoxate/octyl methoxycinnamate
- Padimate O
- Parabens
- Sodium lauryl and laureth sulfate (SLS/SLES)

Source: Autumn Blum/Stream2Sea

EAST CENTRAL GREENHOUSE GAS INVENTORY (GHGI) COHORT

College students worked with local governments and agencies in an environmental effort to tackle greenhouse gas emissions.

Audubon Florida partnered with the East Central Regional Resilience Collaborative (R2C) and ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability to organize the Spring 2021 Cohort.

EAST CENTRAL FLORIDA REGION

4 MILLION RESIDENTS OF FLORIDA'S POPULATION
20% OF FLORIDA'S POPULATION

60 MILLION VISITORS ANNUALLY

18 PARTICIPATING MUNICIPALITIES

Counties	Cities/Towns
Volusia	Cape Canaveral
Lake	Cocoa Beach
Orange	Satellite Beach
Osceola	Titusville
Brevard	Ormond Beach
Seminole	Rockledge
Osceola	Kissimmee
Brevard	Melbourne Beach
	DeLand
	Palm Bay
	Cocoa
	Apopka

Student and municipal teams received specialized training from ICLEI to assess the emissions produced by government operations in municipally-owned buildings, municipal fleet usage, and waste services, among others.

3 PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

- ▶ Stetson University
- ▶ Florida Institute of Technology
- ▶ University of Central Florida

90 HOURS PER STUDENT = **OVER 1,500** HOURS OF INVENTORY

Students not only gained internship credit, but also valuable skills working with their assigned local government and received a certificate of completion.

RESULTS!

At the end of the program, municipalities and counties received a detailed inventory report of their emissions that can be used to make informed decisions and compile climate action plans for their communities.

"We are thrilled to partner on this work to accelerate sustainability, save taxpayer dollars, and make Florida communities more resilient...all while providing on-the-job training for the next generation of leaders in this field."

Julie Wraithmell, Executive Director of Audubon Florida

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT AUDUBON FLORIDA'S EFFORTS, GO TO FL.AUDUBON.ORG

Rodent Poisons Threaten Birds of Prey

Rodenticides, or rat poisons, kill raptors that feed on small mammals like mice, rats, and squirrels. Ingesting anticoagulant rodenticides prevents raptors' blood from clotting, and causes excessive bleeding when birds are injured or trapped. Hawks and owls and other birds of prey are vulnerable.



Dory, a Great Horned Owl, in wing stretch. This owl and her family are being monitored by Safety Harbor Strong Owls & Nature. Photo: Mark Shocken

Professors at the Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, who have been studying rodenticide exposure in birds for more than a decade, have documented a steady increase in the number of raptors that come to the Tufts Wildlife Clinic with these poisons in their systems. ("Animal Health," A. Nelson, Sept. 16, 2020.)

In one study, 100 percent of the Red-Tailed Hawks tested positive for exposure to anticoagulant rodenticides. And 91 percent of these birds tested positive for two or more different anticoagulant rodenticides. The studies showed poisonous residues in songbirds and insects as well as raptors. Red-Tailed Hawks eat many small mammals, but they also eat birds, reptiles and amphibians.

"There is no such thing as a safe poison," said Maureen Murray, director of Tufts Wildlife Clinic and associate professor of Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine. Of course, no one wants mice or rats in their home. Her advice? Hire a pest management professional who will use alternatives to poisons. You also should plug holes around your house, remove food and water sources, and clean out rodent nesting sites.

For more information, see [Safety Harbor Owls](#) and [this article](#).

Linda Carpenter

Ecotourism and Conservation

In 2022, nearly 170,000 visitors enjoyed exploring the 11-mile one-way Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive (LAWD) and other parts of the Lake Apopka North Shore. Any weekend, you can see many out-of-state plates, and these LAWD visitors buy gas and supplies, eat in restaurants, and stay locally, which brings in ecotourism dollars.

The St. Johns River Water Management District staff have their hands full with lake and wetland restoration, and Orange Audubon Society (OAS) steps up, since ecotourism contributes to conservation. Using a District-commissioned University of Florida ecotourism study from 2018 and current LAWD visitation numbers, OAS estimates an economic benefit of \$6 million in 2022. As part of the 8th anniversary celebration (p.9), OAS president Deborah Green wrote an [Orlando Sentinel Op-Ed](#) on the local benefits of birding ecotourism. OAS emphasizes the "people" benefits of true ecotourism as well as benefits to the local economy and environment.

Education Update

Counting up Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) school visits now at the end of 2022-23 program year, I have made 54 visits. These encompassed 21 public schools, 2 private schools, and 2 homeschool groups, including 211 classrooms with 4,488 students reached. I participated in six Science/STEAM or Earth Day events, made 15 school club visits, two 4-H visits and 3 scout visits.

This May, because schools were teaching about ecology, there were many requests for our programs.

It has been extremely rewarding to use our 11 new KOWA youth binoculars (purchased through a National Audubon collaborative grant) to help the students do bird counts on their campuses. I was able to facilitate student bird counts at several schools from second grade through eighth grade. The expressions on the children's faces when they were handed a pair of binoculars to try out were priceless. A few remarked "are these really real?"

Some of the children showed an innate ability to spot birds. On May 11th at Ocoee Elementary School, we caught a bit of migration. In a very large Live Oak, we found American Redstarts and Black-throated Blue Warblers. We even had a singing Yellow-throated Vireo which, with patience, many of the children saw. Other exciting birds students have seen during school counts have been Chimney Swifts (we even saw some go down a chimney), Red-Shouldered Hawks, Black-Bellied Whistling Ducks (students were surprised that ducks can fly), Red-bellied Woodpeckers, White Ibis,



Ocoee Elementary students trying out OAS' new binoculars. Photo: Kathy Rigling

Eastern Bluebird families and Great Crested Flycatchers.

With the middle school students, some were initially reluctant to participate. One girl shared that she was scared of birds. But after about 10 minutes, she started to be able to see birds through the binoculars. Then she got really excited and started helping to spot them and was all smiles at the end.

This year OAS was able to grant 24 classrooms a three-issue subscription of *Audubon Adventures* magazine.

My work as OAS' part-time education coordinator and offering these free programs for schools and youth groups is made possible by OAS' fundraising.

As we plan for 2023-24, please consider donating toward OAS' education programs. You could specify that your donation go to purchasing *Audubon Adventures* subscriptions for teachers for the next school year or to purchase a new set of binoculars (we are still short 11 for a complete class set).

For more information, please email education@orangeaudubonfl.org.

Kathy Rigling, OAS



Is this a Black-bellied Plover or Golden-Plover? Your editor finds out. Photo: Deborah Green

Learn Through Mistakes

On a recent birding trip in coastal South Carolina, I saw the bird shown above, resting apart from a group of molting Black-bellied Plovers. It looked different and examining the photo at home, comparing with photos in books and online, I concluded that I had found an American Golden-Plover, which was flagged by eBird as a rarity.

From Cornell Lab of Ornithology's *All About Birds*: "During migration, American Golden-Plovers feed in lagoons and estuaries. For breeding they use arctic and subarctic tundra, both in lowlands and mountains. Tundra vegetation is seldom more than a few inches tall, which allows the birds to feed and nest where they can see predators at distance."

They fly all the way to eastern Brazil and Argentina for the winter and use agricultural fields, pastures, and grasslands. During migration, they show up on coastlines and in the interior.

Sure enough, a South Carolina eBird reviewer contacted me to correct my sighting to Black-bellied Plover.

Keith McCullough emailed: "The documentation you have provided shows a Black-bellied Plover. An important clue is the way the undertail remains white, while dark breeding plumage has come in for the rest of the underparts. Also, the bill is thick and large as with Black-bellied Plover. Some of them have pale "eyebrows" and a bit of a dark cap."

Among Orange Audubon's recorded Bird Chats is [one by Michael Brothers on Shorebirds of Florida](#) and I learned about the white rump in that. I fixed it on my eBird report and now I know what to watch for!

Deborah Green

Another Fascinating Flycatcher!

Great Crested Flycatchers have arrived for the summer.

I look forward to their return to my neighborhood where I see them during early morning and evening walks, usually in pairs cavorting in treetops.

Although Kingbird size, these splendid birds can be difficult to see because they are secretive and blend with sunlit foliage. Their frequent call—a loud whistled wheep—alerts me to their presence. I then look for a flash of bright yellow breast, cinnamon wings and tail, bushy crest on a large gray head and a short, broad, flattened bill distinctive to flycatchers. It is the most richly colored of four similar flycatchers belonging to the genus *Myiarchus* and included in the Tyrant Flycatchers, the largest family of birds in the New World with approximately 425 species. Many of these are similar and require careful attention to identify.

I sometimes find a Great Crested Flycatcher perched in clear view on a telephone wire searching for insect prey. They mainly eat butterflies and moths, beetles, grasshoppers and crickets, bugs, bees and wasps, flies, and spiders. Swift and agile, they swoop down, brake abruptly, hover, snatch a prey and fly off. Are flycatchers amazing birds or not?

Great Crested Flycatchers will swoop down from high perches to solicit females for mating. If the female retreats to a cavity, the male will hover before returning to a perch, then repeat the maneuver and try again. Males jealously guard mates during nest building and egg-laying by confronting intruders. If a loud call doesn't work to dissuade an unwanted visitor, the protective mate raises his crest, leans forward, pumps his head, and snaps his bill. He may even chase and attack an intruder and pull out his feathers!

These Flycatchers nest in the cavities of dead trees, abandoned woodpecker holes, hollow posts, even buckets, pipes, cans and boxes. A few years ago, one checked out a four-inch cavity in my dying holly tree, but did not settle there. Disappointed, I had hoped to observe them nesting and nurturing chicks.

Great Crested Flycatcher populations have remained stable across their breeding range from 1966 to 2014. Partners in Flight estimates the global breeding population is 6.7 million, with 91 percent spending part of the year in the U.S., 23 percent in Mexico, and 9 percent breeding in Canada.

Clean forestry practices, where dead snags are removed from woodlands, have reduced the number of suitable natural cavities for breeding however. And there could be competition for nesting cavities from Tree Swallows, House Wrens, Eastern Bluebirds, or squirrels.

You can help with conservation by not removing dying trees and snags and by providing manmade cavities. Great Crested Flycatchers are resilient and will nest in a variety of cavities in diverse habitats. They tolerate human presence and readily accept hanging nesting boxes. Consider putting one up in your yard to attract a breeding pair. Do it well before breeding season and attach a guard to keep predators from raiding eggs and young. Maybe you will be lucky enough to attract a breeding pair of handsome Great Crested Flycatchers to entertain you all summer long!

Linda Carpenter



Great Crested Flycatcher. Photo: Joe Mileyka

Young Birders Club



Orange Audubon Society (OAS) had a wonderful season with our Young Birders Club (ages 9-17).

And on May 25th, Alex DeBear from our chapter and Charles Law, a 16-year old from Lakeland, presented a [Bird Chat about the club](#). This was publicized to Audubon chapters around the state to encourage them to also start Young Birders Clubs. OAS plans more trips and experiences starting in the fall. Meanwhile your young birder can participate in the June Challenge's youth competition. See the June Challenge article (p.10).

For OAS' club, there are no dues, but we encourage you to have your young birders join the Florida Young Birders Club. For the low cost of \$10, your young birder will receive a monthly newsletter and email updates about all the Young Birder

Goals of the Club

- Create a Community of young birders throughout Florida
- Foster an interest in natural history and encourage young people to spend more time outside
- Introduce youth to career opportunities in wildlife, research and conservation fields.
- Connect young birders with adult mentors willing to share their time, knowledge and transportation.

events. They can participate in monthly virtual guest speaker programs and joint field outings. To join, visit: <https://www.fosbirds.org/birdingclubs.html>, pay the \$10 membership fee and fill out the application so FYBC coordinator Jim McGinity will know the young birder's

interests and location.

A perk of membership is that the young birder can receive a discount on Vortex binoculars. Correspond with Jim to hear which Vortex binoculars are best for small hands and how to purchase.

Kathy Rigling

LAWD Volunteers Needed Students With Parents Welcome

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 volunteering Saturdays and Sundays, the Ambassadors help keep the large number of LAWD visitors touring without incident.

A potential Ambassador had requested to serve with her nature-loving son. For college scholarships, students need volunteer hours and during the pandemic, it was extremely difficult to find where to volunteer, she reported. OAS is now able to accept students under age 16, accompanied by their parents, and students over 16 on their own with parent signature on application forms. Email volunteer@orangeaudubonfl.org to find out more.



Young LAWD Ambassador. Photo: Deborah Green

Young Birders Observe Purple Martin Banding

On May 6th, the Young Birders Club visited Lake Minneola to watch Purple Martin banding. The [Clermont Martin Watch](#) volunteers (that monitor Purple Martin houses at Clermont Waterfront Park) lowered the nest boxes and either removed the nestling portion (in the rectangular nest boxes) or, in the case of the gourd-type nests, the whole nest and walked them to the banding table. The volunteers then raised the remaining nest boxes to reduce stress on the other families (those with nestlings either too young to band or already banded). The boxes were a hive of activity as the adults flew in and out with food for the nestlings.

At the banding table, volunteer banders from the Wekiva Basin Banding Station measured, weighed and banded the baby martins. Purple Martins are banded between 12 to 20 days old, requiring a vigilant group to watch and age the young chicks. Too young and their legs are not long enough or thick enough to handle the banding. Beginning at age 12 days, Purple Martins have the leg size that will remain with them throughout their life. Birds older than 20 days are too mobile and make the banding much more difficult,

introducing a risk of a nestling hopping out of its nest box. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service banding permits are required, and experienced banders are needed to safely and expertly band and measure the birds to achieve the proper information for scientific studies.



Purple Martin volunteers at work. Photo: Susan Thome-Barrett

Young Birder Eleanor and her grandmother watched closely as the volunteers and banders worked. Roland of Tampa practiced his photography skills to catch the perfect photo of an adult Purple Martin in flight. Both had plans for the rest of the day, Eleanor planning to work on her Seek database of native plants at Oakland Nature Preserve and Roland and his mother planning to visit the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive. For information about Purple Martin banding, see [this link](#).

Susan Thome-Barrett

Grows with Natives

With a few enthusiastic residents planting the seeds, a downtown Orlando neighborhood north of Colonial is embracing native plants and working to remove its invasive non-native plants.

A \$5000 City of Orlando Mayor’s Grant was secured by Colonialtown North’s neighborhood association, thanks to the work of native plant aficionado Valeria Yon. The first part of the grant was an event for the neighborhood (and beyond), held in a “pocket park” on Fern Creek Avenue. The *Grows with Natives* Event on May 20th hosted many exhibitors, including Orange Audubon Society and the Tarflower Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, and native plant vendors.

The second part of the project will involve removing invasive plants and planting a native garden at an adjacent “pocket park” in Colonialtown North. Some of the invasives targeted are snake plant, Boston fern, skunk vine and air potato—Category I or II invasives.

The majority of the Mayor’s Grant went toward buying plants for the restoration project and to give away to the neighbors at the event. The first 100 neighbors to sign up received a free native plant. And there were plenty more native plants being raffled and for sale from vendors including Mockingbird Natives, a Deltona company, and Orlando Native Plants, an Urban Nursery, a small nursery started by neighborhood resident and realtor Rey Perez. Grounded Solutions, the landscape company of Amanda Martin, was also at the event. All three of these vendors have donated gift certificates to [Orange Audubon’s online auction!](#)

The grant involved a match from the neighborhood group, which was fulfilled by in-kind donation of time and donations of ink drums from a printers’ shop for rain barrels which were raffled off.

I presented a talk on Plants For Birds: The Caterpillar Connection and Kathy Rigling presented on Bringing Birds to Your Backyard.

According to Valeria Yon, the City of Orlando Mayor’s Matching Grant program found the proposal



Top and bottom left, Grows with Natives event in Colonialtown North. Right, invasive plants to be removed at Colonialtown North’s park. Shown are snake plant, Boston fern, skunk vine and air potato. Photos courtesy Grows with Natives.

unique. With the grant outcomes accomplished, there is the possibility for other neighborhoods within Orlando to apply for similar grants.

City of Orlando’s Greenworks Program has made sure over the past few years that the plants given away at the Orlando Wetlands Festival (a City event) are all native.

Dr. Doug Tallamy’s book *Nature’s Best Hope* says, because birds—and all nature really—are in trouble, it’s not enough to just quietly grow your native plants. You have to *teach about it* and *get your neighbors to do it* to create a [homegrown national park](#). Colonialtown North is making a great start!
Deborah Green

Thanks to the Contributors

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For timely editing, we are most grateful to Mary Keim and Kathy Rigling. Susan Ledlow, Sonia Stephens and Susan Thome-Barrett also provide comments. We will enjoy our two months off and then be asking for articles and use of your photos again for September. If you want to send an article or article idea, send to newsletter@orangeaudubonfl.org. Deadlines are always middle of the month before. Have a great summer and stay safe!

Deborah Green, OASis editor

Panhandle Trip Recap

Orange Audubon Society's trip to the Northwest Florida Panhandle, April 26-30, 2023, caught spring migration just right. Over four days, we saw over 130 bird species. I was able to photograph 43 species of which 10 were life birds for me. Day 1 started at Wakulla Springs State Park, where we took a boat trip on the beautiful Wakulla River and birded the grounds. We stayed to see the Chimney Swifts return to roosts in the chimney at the Wakulla Lodge. We then drove on to stay in the dorms at Tall Timbers Research Station near the Georgia border.

On Day 2, we birded Tall Timbers, guided by ornithologist Jim Cox. This well-known research station works with private landowners to protect longleaf pines and does research on Northern Bobwhites, Brown-headed Nuthatches, Bachman's Sparrows, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and others. Rains came in that afternoon, and a microburst took out power and water at the research station, but we made do. On Day 3, we went to St. George Island State Park, one of the best dark sky sites in all of Florida. Everyone saw a lot of life birds, including beautiful migrant warblers. On Day 4 on our way home, we visited St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, finding more great birds with guide Don Morrow. Thanks to Orange Audubon, especially Teresa Williams, for organizing a great trip. If you have a chance to go on this one next year, I recommend it.

Brian Miller, OAS member



First row, Broad-winged Hawk, Little Blue Heron and Chimney Swifts at Wakulla Springs State Park. Second row, Eastern Kingbird, Yellow-breasted Chat and Brown-headed Nuthatches at Tall Timbers Research Station. Third row, Snowy Plover, American Oystercatchers and Chuck-will's Widow at St. George Island State Park. Fourth row, Hooded Warbler, Cape May Warbler and Bay-breasted Warbler at St. George Island State Park. *Photos: Brian Miller*

Apopka Art and Foliage Festival

Orange Audubon Society had its annual presence at the Apopka Art and Foliage Festival in late April. This year on Saturday we shared a tent with The Nature Conservancy. Thanks to Rick Baird, Gail Holdiman, Myra Monreal, Stephanie Nieves, Christianah Oyenuga and Alan and Ellen Shapiro for help with set up and outreach at this festival.

Deborah Green



Dead Birds For Research

Orange Audubon Society board member Alan Shapiro had discovered about 25 dead warblers near the pickleball courts at Veterans Memorial Park, Winter Garden. They apparently collided with the fence around the courts during storms that late April night. The dead warblers included Cape Mays, Black-throated Blues, Northern Parulas, Black-and-Whites and Blackpolls.

I agreed to take them to Gainesville to Andy Kratter at the Florida Museum of Natural History to add to the museum's taxidermy collection.

That night I put labels on each and stored them in our freezer. It was interesting how much larger Blackpoll Warblers are than Black-and-white Warblers.

A month later I had occasion to go to Gainesville and pass them to Andy, who curates the collection. I apologized for their condition as they had been out of any freezer for nearly 24 hours. Andy explained that if they weren't in good enough



Top right, OAS tent at the Apopka Art & Foliage Festival shared with The Nature Conservancy. Bottom left, dead warblers found after a storm by Alan Shapiro. *Photos: Alan Shapiro.* Bottom right, Andy Kratter showing a drawer of the Florida Museum of Natural History's bird collection. *Photo: Deborah Green*

condition to be used for taxidermy, that the museum can still use their skeletons. They use dermestid beetles, housed in the entomology department, to clean the skeletons.

Andy showed me the collection, located in the old Museum of Natural History on Museum Road within the University of Florida. Many of the warblers in the collection were those collected by the volunteers in [Duval Audubon's Lights Out program](#).

Let's hope that some interesting information comes from this sad incident.

Deborah Green

Bird Chats

Orange Audubon Society's Bird Chats team has continued weekly programs on Zoom, posting these on [our YouTube channel](#) which now has 130 videos and nearly 750 subscribers. Register for Bird Chats [at this link](#).

City Nature Challenge

The global 2023 City Nature Challenge took place from April 28-May 1 with Orange County participating for its third year. In the City Nature Challenge people from all over the world find and record wildlife in their communities. Participants spanned 46 countries, 482 cities and over 1.9 million wildlife observations. Participating is a fun and easy way to contribute. iNaturalist information is available for use by scientists to inform conservation work.

The Nature Conservancy, Orange Audubon Society, and the Tarflower Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society co-hosted this year's challenge. Orange County participants recorded 3,118 wildlife observations during the 4-day period. Our observations include 928 distinct species of flora and fauna. The most observed species in Orange County include the American Alligator, Anhinga, and Great Blue Heron.

The Nature Conservancy has talked with OAS about being the main coordinator of this Bioblitz next year. To see who recorded the most observations and species, see [this link](#). OAS member Jeffrey Gammon was far and away the CNC champion with 574 observations and 300 species.

Kierstyn Cox



Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive 8th anniversary celebration, volunteers ready to share information. *Photo: Deborah Green*

8th Anniversary of LAWD

The Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive (LAWD) opened in May 2015, and Orange Audubon Society volunteers celebrate the anniversary. Now that Ambassadors serve each weekend at the welcome shelter by the Lust Road entrance, the anniversary celebration focuses on the second shelter by the pumphouse. Thanks to Charles Good, Lee Ann Posavad, Kathy Rigling and Mary Soule for doing outreach. The anniversary is also an opportunity to celebrate the ecotourism value of LAWD (p.4).

June Challenge 2023

The June Challenge begins Thursday, June 1st and extends through the month. June is historically one of the slowest months for birding in Florida. Back in 2004, Alachua Audubon originated this friendly competition, meant to build your birding skills and keep you engaged. Each birder picks any county in the state and tries to compile the largest list of species for that area during the month.

All native birds are countable and follow the [American Birding Association \(ABA\) checklist](#). If your local population of an exotic species is recognized as established by the ABA, then any member of that population is ABA-countable.



Red-whiskered Bulbul. This species is not ABA-reportable because it is not part of an established population but is an escapee found by Alan Shapiro after storms on the same night as the dead birds. Photo: Joe Mileyka

For instance, a bird belonging to

an established population of Monk Parakeets would be ABA-countable. An escaped Monk Parakeet would not be. A Mute Swan at Lake Eola is not part of an established population and would not be ABA-countable.

List your ABA countable species, and then your non-native non-ABA birds. An important twist for the June Challenge is that you *must see the bird*, not just hear it.

The Great Florida Birding Trail now posts [a complete set of rules](#). Orange Audubon is offering a trophy to the adult and youth (under 18) member who see the most ABA birds in June in one Florida county. To qualify, please submit your list to the previous link by midnight July 2nd. Also email your ABA countable/noncountable total and county to riglingkathy@gmail.com.

Orange Audubon Society will hold a June Challenge Celebration and bird walk on July 22nd at Trimble Park.

June Challenge Field Trip to Orlando Wetlands Park

Get a head start on your June Challenge list by participating in our June Challenge field trip at Orlando Wetlands Park on Saturday, June 3rd, with Lori Mathis and me. To register email riglingkathy@gmail.com.

Kathy Rigling



June Challenge winners, 2022. Photo: Brennan Landreville

Update Your Membership

Please join Audubon at the rate of \$20 (students \$15) for your 3-way membership in Orange Audubon Society (OAS), Audubon Florida and National Audubon Society (NAS).

It takes a few months for a new membership to show up on our chapter roster provided by NAS. So please join now so we will have your correct mailing address for OAS' one print-mailing of the year in September.

We ask that you join and renew directly with OAS, so that we can track any additional donations and your expiration date. Please use the form available from [this link](#) and mail a check. OR join or renew online [at this link](#) (scroll down to below ENTRY FORMS where it says Join or Renew Audubon-Membership).

If you have any questions, please email membership@orangeaudubonfl.org. Thank you!

JUNE/JULY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Bird Chats with OAS via Zoom

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

- Birding Coastal South Carolina by Craig Watson

June 1, 2023

- Birding Costa Rica by Alan Shapiro and Friends

June 8, 2023

- Audio Discussion with David Simpson, Alex Lamoreaux and Natasza Fontaine

June 22, 2023.

- Osprey Conservation by Mike Drew

June 29, 2023

June Challenge Kickoff, Orlando Wetlands Park

June 3, 2023

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Wekiwa Survey

June 4, 2023

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Oakland Nature Preserve Survey

June 10, 2023

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Orange Audubon Society Online Auction

Jun 8, 2023 noon-Jun 19, 2023 7 PM

www.biddingowl.com/OrangeAudubonSociety

35th Annual Chertok Nature Photography Contest Awards Program by Teresa Williams

June 15, 2023

Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977

June Challenge Bird Walk and Top Birder Celebration

June 24, 2023

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Summer Board Meeting

July 30, 2023

Contact Deborah at info@orangeaudubonfl.org

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL

November 30-December 4, 2023

Contact Deborah at festival@orangeaudubonfl.org

<https://northshorebirdingfestival.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/northshorebirdingfestival>