



Dr. Daisy Fiore with a Barred Owl from the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey. *Osprey with Fish*. 2023 Chertok Photo Contest, Youth 2nd Place Winner, *Photo: Lauren Chin*. *Flight Through Cypress—Barred Owls*. 2023 Chertok Florida Native Nature Photo Contest, Honorable Mention, Advanced Category. *Photo: Mark Hainen*



This Month's Program, April 18, 2024

Our Fabulous Raptors by Dr. Daisy Fiore

For over 40 years, the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland has treated sick, injured and orphaned, birds of prey. The Center rehabilitates over 700 raptors a year, most able to be released but some with injuries so severe that they are trained as education birds.

On April 18th at 7 pm. at Leu Gardens, for Orange Audubon Society's monthly program, Dr. Daisy Fiore, Senior Coordinator of Education, will share the Center's work rehabilitating these birds. With her will be several of the Center's education raptors ("ambassadors").

The program, suitable for all ages, is in-person April 18th, 7 p.m. at Leu Gardens (address below). No reservations are necessary. Join us to learn how we can all keep these amazing creatures flying high.

Alan Shapiro, Programs Chair

Northwest FL Panhandle Birding April 10-14, 2024

Orange Audubon Society's four-day trip to see migratory and breeding songbirds and shorebirds in the Florida Panhandle, April 10th-14th, has space.

With a great itinerary developed over the past several years, plans are to stay at the Tall Timbers Field Station, visit St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, St. George Island State Park, Wakulla Springs and other locations.

On last year's trip, participants saw over 130 bird species. Cost is \$300 for members; \$350 for non-members, and includes local expert guides, a Wakulla Springs boat tour and some picnic meals. Photos of last year's trip are in the [June OASis](#), p. 8. Register at this [link](#). For lodging and details, contact Teresa Williams at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com. Don't miss a great trip!

2024 Chertok Contest Deadline is April 30, 2024

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) Kit and Sidney Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest promotes interest and concern for preserving the native fauna and flora of Florida.

The deadline for the 36th annual contest has been extended to April 30th (postmarked by or submitted electronically by midnight).

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.

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

The entry fee is \$5 per image for Novice and Advanced for Audubon members and \$10 for non-members. It is \$2 per image for Youth Audubon members, and \$4 for non-members. For details on prizes and how to submit your photos, see the [Chertok page on the OAS website](#). If you have any questions, contact mwilliams@cfl.rr.com.

OAS' annual fund-raising auction will be held from June 13, noon-June 24, 2024, 7 PM [online](#). If you have auction questions, call (941) 704-1189. All proceeds will benefit OAS' Nature and Environmental Education Center Fund and educational programs that connect people with nature.



Peekaboo—Great Horned Owls. 2023 Chertok Photo Contest, Novice Category, Honorable Mention Winner, *Photo: Melissa Erdos*.

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

Programs are the 3rd Thursday of each month (Sept-June) at 7:00 p.m.

All but October and December (which are on YouTube LIVE) 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/



Apopka Birding Park Lease Secured!



After 8 years of effort, Orange Audubon Society (OAS) has taken a major step toward its long-time goal of creating a nature center on the Lake Apopka North Shore!

An old nursery site north of Lust Road in Apopka, to the right of the entrance to the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive, had been purchased in 1999 by the St. Johns River Water Management District as part of the farm buyout to reduce nutrient input into Lake Apopka ([our March program has a great summary of the Lake Apopka restoration program](#)). Because the nearly 70-acre former nursery site is upland, it was deemed non-essential for the Lake Apopka restoration. In 2012, it was put on a District surplus list, which means it can be deeded to a municipality if the proposal fits with the District mission.

In 2015, the District opened the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive, and interest in the property increased. OAS member and field trip leader Bob Sanders came to our summer board meeting in 2016 and said “we have to save this property.” Upland habitats are increasingly rare and are critical for sparrows and other overwintering grassland birds. The property could be a buffer to the Wildlife Drive and rest of the North Shore from development and is the perfect site for a nature center.

Our board understood, and we got to work. In 2018, the property was deeded to the City of Apopka, following a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with OAS to work together toward a nature center and birding park. Deed restrictions specified that the property would be used for nature recreation and education.

A second MOU in 2022 specified that a long-term ground lease would be developed.

On March 20, 2024, the Apopka City Council approved a ground lease to OAS for the majority of the site, for \$1 a year. The lease specifies that OAS will invest its own funds in developing the site as the Apopka Birding Park and that the improvements will eventually revert to the property owner, the City. The lease is for 30 years, with unlimited 5 year renewals.

As such, OAS’ Apopka Birding Park Working Group and rest of the OAS board, along with our attorney, believe this is adequate

protection for us to use the funds that have been donated by our loyal members and raised by our volunteers through our fundraising programs.

OAS plans to restore habitat by removing invasive plants and planting native, bird-friendly plants, including native grasses, and also to renovate the old Truck Shop on site for our nature center.

Development of the Apopka Birding Park allows OAS to better fulfill our mission, “to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and their habitats, for the benefit of humanity and the earth’s biological diversity.”

A lot of volunteer work, a capital campaign and setting up an endowment to operate the nature center will follow.

If you are interested in helping OAS with this major effort, email me at info@orangeaudubonfl.org. We thank everyone for past contributions which have made this big step possible!



Apopka City Commissioners after approval of the lease to OAS, March 20, 2024. Left to right, Commissioner Nick Nesta, OAS Board member David Bottomley, Commissioner Kyle Becker, OAS President Deborah Green, Commissioner Diane Velazquez, Parks and Recreation Director Radley Williams, Mayor Bryan Nelson, Commissioner Alexander Smith. Photo: City of Apopka

Deborah Green, OAS President



Orange Audubon Society (OAS) mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and their habitats, for the benefit of humanity and the earth’s biological diversity.

Orange Audubon Society
P.O. Box 941142
Maitland, FL 32794-1142
www.orangeaudubonfl.org

President and OAS*is* Editor:
Deborah Green
info@orangeaudubonfl.org
(407) 637-2525

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

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

Land in Seminole and Osceola Counties to be Protected

Congratulations to Seminole Audubon, other environmentalists in Seminole County, the Seminole County Commission and Charles Lee, director of advocacy for Audubon Florida for a big conservation win! On March 26, 2024, Florida's Governor and Cabinet approved using \$34.5 million of Florida Forever funding to purchase and protect from development the 1,362-acre Yarborough Ranch in east Seminole County.

The property, which has wetlands and old growth forests, is located south of State Road 46 and east of Snow Hill Road. Used by the Yarborough family for over 150 years to raise cattle, it will be added to the neighboring Little Big Econ State Forest, one of several large conservation parcels purchased by the state near the banks of the Econlockhatchee River through Florida Forever and earlier state land-buying programs.

The Yarborough Ranch sits entirely atop an underground source of freshwater for east Seminole called the Geneva freshwater lens. It is surrounded by existing conservation land, providing a critical linkage for many imperiled species, including the Florida black bear.

This acquisition was under [Florida Forever's Partnerships & Regional Incentives category](#). Seminole commissioners last June voted to establish a countywide program to purchase environmentally sensitive natural lands for conservation and passive recreation, called Seminole Forever. In August, commissioners and environmentalists testified at an Acquisition and Restoration Council meeting in Deland about the importance of this purchase.

At the same March 26th meeting in Tallahassee, the Cabinet approved spending nearly \$12.7 million for the development rights to the 3,000-acre Heart Bar Ranch in Osceola under the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program. Under that deal the Partin family, who have raised cattle there since 1847, will keep their land from development. Growing concerns over the ranch's proximity to expanding urban growth, made the land increasingly vulnerable.

Purchase, Conservation Easement, Restoration

Besides purchase of land and ongoing management by a public agency (the best method to conserve) and a conservation easement which allows a private landowner to continue his or her agricultural endeavors but prevent development, a final option is restoration of previously altered habitats.

Restoration science has come a long way, and many projects are very successful. At Orlando Wetlands a former wetlands that had been canalized and converted to a cattle ranch was restored to wetlands using treated wastewater, which needed to be disposed of somewhere. This innovative City of Orlando project from 1988 has been the model for many other such wetlands, like Green Cay and Wakootahatchee Wetlands in Palm Beach County and Sweetwater Wetlands in Alachua County. The concept works.

Ocala Wetlands, in Marion County, site of the May 4th Limited Edition Field Trip, is another wastewater treatment recreated wetlands.

The wetland plants clean the water. And "bring the water and the birds will come."

The Lake Apopka North Shore wetlands, once part of Lake Apopka, canalized and farmed for 50 years, are now are undergoing restoration as wetlands, and are a wildlife magnet.



Orange Audubon Society field trip on the Kissimmee River from the Riverwoods Field Station. Photo: Deborah Green.

Kissimmee River Restoration

Orange Audubon Society took a boat trip on a restored section of the Kissimmee River on March 2, 2024, from Florida Atlantic University's Riverwoods Field Station. Hear the [Kissimmee Restoration story on our YouTube channel](#). Restoration can be successful, but preservation of intact habitat is the ideal.

Green PLACE Program Grows

Acquiring and preserving environmentally sensitive land is the aim of the Orange County's Green PLACE (Park Land Acquisition for Conservation and Environmental Protection) Program.

Established in the 1990s, Green PLACE has acquired nearly 24,000 acres, often in partnership with other agencies. Fourteen properties are open for hiking, picnicking, fishing, kayaking, and birdwatching.

In 2021, the Orange County Board of County Commissioners approved \$100 million to expand the Green PLACE Program. Between 2021 and 2023, the County approved 22 new purchase contracts, established a seven-member Green PLACE Advisory Board, and amended administrative regulations for improved oversight.



Orange Audubon Society's Green PLACE family photo trip this February to Johns Lake Conservation Area in Winter Garden. Photo: Lee Ann Posavad.

The East Central Florida Regional Planning Council recently awarded the Green PLACE program its Executive Award of Regional Significance.

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) partners with the Green PLACE program each year to offer a fall and spring field trip to a Green PLACE property. In recent years, photographer Lee Ann Posavad has led for OAS.

Beth Jackson, Green PLACE manager with whom OAS partnered for so many years in promotion of these properties, is now Environmental Programs Administrator for Water and Land Resources Management for the County's Environmental Protection Division. Alicia Baxter now leads the Green PLACE program. Welcome and, as always, thanks Orange County for this conservation effort.



City Nature Challenge, April 26 – April 29, 2024

Bioblitzes are biological surveying events that attempt to record all the species within a designated area. Most bioblitzes are on preserved land to document success of land management practices. But how much of the United States is preserved land? In his book, *Bringing Nature Home*, Dr. Doug Tallamy estimates only 5% of the U.S. is in parks and preserves, 41% while 54% is urban/suburban. Converting the 54% to better habitat is the impetus to plant natives in our own landscapes and create the Homegrown National Park ([March OASis](#), p. 5).

In the meantime, and optimistically to document success of the Homegrown National Park effort, scientists need data on animal and plant populations in urban areas.

The City Nature Challenge is an international effort for people to find and document plants and wildlife *in cities*. It's a bioblitz but with a twist. Cities or counties are in a friendly competition with each other to see which can make the most observations of nature, which can find the most species, and which can engage the most people.

The Los Angeles' Natural History Museum and San Francisco's California Academy of Sciences dreamed up the City Nature Challenge in 2016 as a fun way to hold an event around urban biodiversity using their cities' friendly rivalry. In 2017, the City Nature Challenge went national, and in 2018, the CNC became an international event with [thousands of participants and observations](#).



iNaturalist

An essential part of the success of the City Nature Challenge as a community science effort is an easy-to-use mobile app called [iNaturalist](#). First created in 2008 as a Master's project by three students at University of California, Berkeley, iNaturalist has grown into a nonprofit social network of naturalists, citizen scientists, and biologists. It maps and shares observations of biodiversity across the globe. iNaturalist capitalizes on the amazing technology available on mobile phones, both Apple and Android, with GPS tracking to make locations of observations easy, their great cameras and recording ability. With iNaturalist on your phone, you hit the Observe tab, and then Camera, to take a photo that then can be sent directly to the database. In iNaturalist other users assist in identifying organisms from photographs. Here's a [good reference on how to use it](#).

<p>Find Wildlife</p> <p>It can be any WILD plant, animal, or any other evidence of life found in your city.</p>	<p>Take a Picture or Record a Sound</p> <p>Take a picture or record the sound of what you find. Be sure to note the location of the critter or plant.</p>	<p>Share</p> <p>Share your observations through iNaturalist or your city's chosen platform. If it's planted or taken care of by people it is not WILD. Mark it captive/cultivated!</p>

Orange County's City Nature Challenge

For the past three years, The Nature Conservancy has led the City Nature Challenge effort in Orange County with partnership of Orange Audubon Society. The Tarflower Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society is partnering also this year in publicizing this fun opportunity to contribute to scientific knowledge. We could use many more participants!

First, download the [iNaturalist](#) app on your mobile phone from wherever you download apps, and start practicing making observations. To join our 2024 project and be ready for April 26-29, [follow this link](#). To see how many observations, species and observers we had in 2023, follow [this link](#). We hope you participate, even a little bit! Thanks. *Deborah Green*



Reddish Egret in breeding plumage, Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. Photo: Delsy Rodriguez

*Endangered Species Act
50th Anniversary*

Reddish Egret

The Reddish Egret is one of the rarest egrets in North America. It's easily distinguished from other egrets and herons by its shaggy appearance, hyperactive feeding and pink-and-black bill. This species was decimated by plume hunters in the 19th century, and populations have never fully recovered.

The Reddish Egret depends on coastal habitats for successful foraging and breeding—areas that are vulnerable to sea level rise. Mariculture, the shipping industry, coastal development, recreational use, and environmental contamination pose everpresent threats to coastal habitats. A habitat specialist, the Reddish Egret has nowhere else to go when its habitat is lost

While feeding, the Reddish Egret aggressively defends its feeding territory from a variety of other birds. But otherwise it is a social species.

The Reddish Egret is protected by the U.S. Migratory Bird Treaty Act and as a State-designated Threatened species under Florida's Endangered and Threatened Species Rule. It is also listed as Threatened under Texas regulations.

Due to its ecological specificity and small population size, the Reddish Egret is currently a "Category 2" species for listing under the Endangered Species Act (Dept. Inter. 1989), but petitions for federal listing have so far not been successful.

Rare in Florida, Cooper's Hawk Elegant, Stealthy, Fearless

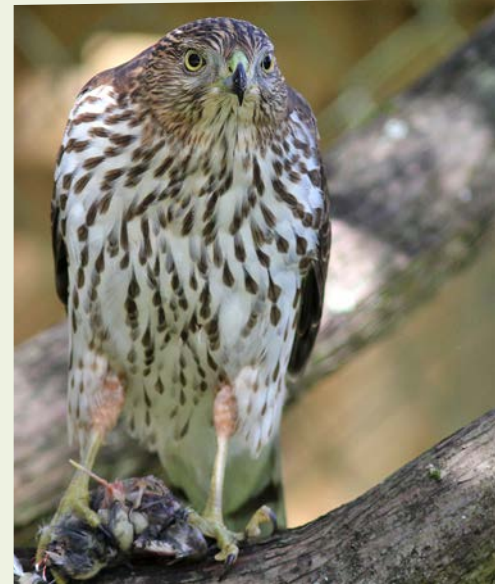
Slender, long-tailed raptors, Cooper's Hawks live a dangerous life dashing through dense tree canopies capturing smaller birds and rodents with a sudden burst of speed. An expert flier, this elegant hawk searches for small-to-medium-sized species, especially Rock Pigeons and Mourning Doves. It captures prey with its feet and squeezes them until they die or holds them underwater until they drown.

Found year-around in most of the U.S., adult Cooper's Hawks are 14-to-20 inches long, about the same size as our more common Red Shouldered Hawks, and they have similar orange barring on their chests. Cooper's Hawks, however, have a long gray-on-gray striped tail, slate gray back and head and dark gray cap. Almost identical to the smaller Sharp-Shinned Hawk, they have a larger, longer head. Both Cooper's and Sharp-Shinned Hawks have short, rounded wings making it difficult to identify these raptors in the field.

Adapted to a wide range of habitats, Cooper's Hawks are common in urban and suburban areas that provide plenty of their favorite foods. Urban backyard feeders attract Mourning Doves, other birds and their predators. When breeding, male Cooper's build the nest in a tree 25-to-50-feet high and they provide all the food to females and young during the following 90 days until the young fledge.

Once known as "chicken hawks" and "bloodthirsty villains," Cooper's Hawks were persecuted and relentlessly hunted, trapped, and poisoned by pesticides. Listed as an imperiled species or of Special Concern by many states in the 1980s, they have since recovered well and have not been listed by any states since the early 2000s.

How to find these remarkable birds? Look for the long tail, slender body, slate-gray back, dark cap and red eye (older adult). If you have bird feeders as I do, you may find a Cooper's Hawk prowling around, sitting on your fence, or hiding in trees waiting for the perfect moment to snatch a bird. I have seen them in city parks and at Mead Botanical Garden during the OAS bird walks (starting April 6). In years past we often saw a pair of Cooper's nesting in a tall pine tree near the entrance to Mead. Check out this beautiful raptor! Another fascinating hawk for your life list. Florida has amazing birds!
Linda Carpenter



Immature Cooper's Hawk. Photo: Mary Keim.

Wildside Nature Tours Trip, Warblers and More in Ohio May 13-18, 2024

See neotropical birds in the peak of spring migration at what is described as "the Warbler Capital of the World" - Magee Marsh, on the south shore of Lake Erie. Orange Audubon Society's May trip with Wildside Nature Tours will provide excellent up-close opportunities for birders and photographers!

Gabriel Lugo, who led our fun Puerto Rico trip three years ago, will lead. Cost is \$2,200 for lodging and guiding; flight and meals additional. [Visit Wildside's link for details and to register](#), and please also email info@orangeaudubonfl.org.

To preview the beautiful birds we will see on this trip, tune in to our January 25th [Bird Chat on Wood Warblers of Ohio by Tammy Martin](#).

Education Coordinator Update

March was a bustling month for Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) educational programming. This month we added a new school, Hungerford Elementary School in Eatonville. Our visit included 2 days of programming for the 5th grade science classes in which they explored food chains and food webs along with bird beak adaptations.

Another new school for OAS was Baldwin Park Elementary in which we hosted a table at their Spring Fling. Well over 300 students and parents enjoyed a pleasant afternoon on the school grounds with many displays and vendors. At the OAS table they explored different types of bird beaks and the types of food that they could pick up. The children really enjoyed this interactive activity.

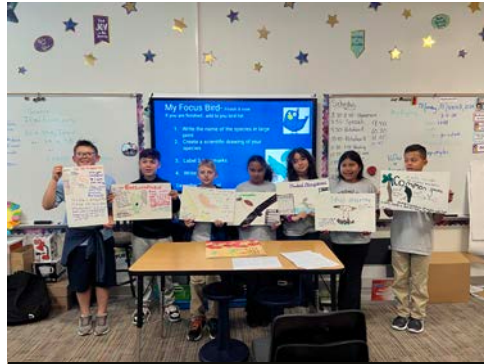
Lastly, I did a high school level bird beak program at the Orange County Academy in Bithlo. The students enjoyed exploring the Florida birds field guides and discovering the various beak adaptations of our local birds.

Other programs this month included a state birds program at Dommerich Elementary and a wetlands birds program at Orlando Wetlands for the Forest Friends homeschool group.



Eccleston Elementary afterschool birding club showing their Focus Birds. Photo: Kathy Rigling

I continued the after school birding clubs at Eccleston Elementary, Zellwood Elementary, Rock Springs Elementary and Eustis Elementary. Some highlights were a Great Blue Heron and a Little Blue Heron



Zellwood Elementary afterschool birding club showing their Focus Birds. Photo: Kathy Rigling

together at Eccleston Elementary and a Chipping Sparrow low in a small oak tree eating a big caterpillar at Zellwood Elementary.

This month our programs reached 355 students and 128 adults.

OAS' monthly free educational webinars will continue April 10th from 7:00-7:30 pm with a program about participating in the City Nature Challenge with Students. The link to sign up: <http://eepurl.com/imGskM>

Please email education@orangeaudubonfl.org to sign up for classroom or afterschool visits.

Kathy Rigling, Education Coordinator

Young Birders Trip, April 28, 2024

Orange Audubon Society's next Young Birders field trip will be to the Wekiva Basin Bird Banding station at Lake Lotus Park in Altamonte Springs on April 28th from 7:15- 9:00 am.

This trip is for 8 to 17 year-olds who are interested in learning more about birds. Visiting the bird banding station, we will see the process of documenting the birds that are caught and released back to their habitat.

Lorri Lilja, Alex DeBear and I will lead. In addition to observing the bird banding, we will look for newly arrived migrant birds at this beautiful park. The trip is FREE but advanced registration is required, and space is limited. Loaner binoculars will be available. Registration is [open on our website](#). Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. If you have any questions, contact me at riglingkathy@gmail.com.

Kathy Rigling

Orange Audubon Society Elections April 18, 2024

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) annual election of board members will be held before the April 18, 2024 program at Leu Gardens. I chair the nominating committee with committee members Mary Soule (msoule43@aol.com) and Bob Sena (robs32812@yahoo.com).

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 at Leu Gardens or on Zoom 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 or concurrent with applying for the board, please join one of OAS' committees or volunteer efforts. Most help is needed with conservation, education, and outreach. Other committees are Birdathon, brochure, Chertok photo contest, climate, equity, diversity and inclusiveness, field trips, finance, hospitality, membership, nature center, nominating, newsletter, plants for birds, publicity, sanctuaries, auction, speakers' bureau, website and wildlife surveys.

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, please contact me at rbaird4@att.net.

*Rick Baird,
Nominating Committee Chair*

Additional Help Needed

Do you use WordPress? OAS' webmaster Sonia Stephens may be retiring from her webmaster role and we are looking for a replacement. With the signing of the lease for the Apopka Birding Park, OAS suddenly has many more volunteer needs. Do you work with architects? Do you have carpentry skills and tools? We will be seeking volunteers to build nest boxes and possibly a bird blind. Please let me know your interests. Thanks so much.

Deborah Green, OAS President

March Field Trip Reports



Gilberto orienting the participants about Orlando Wetlands. Photo: Faruk Baghdad, Participants viewing a bird. Photo: Deborah Green. Roseate Spoonbills. Photo: Faruk Baghdad. Belted Kingfisher. Photo: Delsy Rodriguez

Buscando Pajaros

For the 3rd year, Orange Audubon Society hosted a March tram ride at Orlando Wetlands led by Gilberto Sanchez in his native Spanish. Gilberto is an Orlando Wetlands volunteer and skilled photographer. Called Buscando Pajaros, which means “looking for birds,” this has turned into a fun tradition. Thank you Gilberto and Rachel Kessler of Orlando Wetlands, our driver. *Deborah Green*

Disappearing Island Boat Trip, March 23, 2024

During the NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL, the new boat trip to Disappearing Island in Ponce Inlet, to see Black Skimmers, terns and shorebirds, was so popular that we set up another one for March 23rd. The trip was again led by our amazing shorebird and gull expert Michael Brothers. Additional leaders were Chris Newton and Reinhard Geisler. We traveled in the Marine Discovery Center’s large pontoon boat from New Smyrna Beach.

The most exciting sighting was an Iceland Gull pointed out by Michael Brothers. Smaller than Laughing Gulls and almost entirely white, it was easy to pick out. It was a lifer for most of us.



Marine Discovery Center’s boat unloading at Disappearing Island. Birding on the island. Photos: Deborah Green. Iceland Gull, a lifer for most participants. Photo: Kathy Rigling

LGBTQIA+ Bird Walk

LGBTQIA+ is the abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual. The additional “+” stands for all of the other identities not encompassed in the short acronym.

The Center for Birds of Prey (CBOP) joined OAS in hosting a March 10th bird walk at Orlando Wetlands led by Kathy Rigling, other OAS volunteers and CBOP staff. Another fun outing.

Interfaith Alliance Bird Walk

On February 25th, the Interfaith Environmental Alliance of Central Florida went on a wildlife walk, led by Orange Audubon Society’s Education Coordinator Kathy Rigling and other OAS volunteers. A good time was had by all.

New Field Trip SignUp Procedures Are Working!

If you didn’t hear about some of the March field trips, they may have filled up quickly. Orange Audubon Society (OAS) now has easy procedures to sign up online, pay for trips, provide your emergency contact information and sign your photo permission and liability waiver.

Go to the OAS website and click on the Activities button.

Then click the Field Trips button. In the yellow block that says “OAS has transitioned to online signup for field trips. Field trips are released (open for sign-up) bimonthly, except for overnight trips, which are released early. SIGN UP for classes and PAY here.” Click on *Pay Here* and choose if you are an OAS member or not.

Particularly OAS’ Limited Edition Field Trips fill up quickly, so plan ahead.

Thanks very much to OAS’ webmaster Sonia Stephens for her hard work to make registration easy.

[Here is the direct link to sign up for field trips](#)

Note that with field trips filling up, OAS could offer more trips if we had more qualified trip leaders. Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com if interested.



Just Before the Strike—Reddish Egret, 2023 Chertok Photo Contest, Youth 5th Place Winner, Photo: Ethan Landreville; Osprey Increasing Altitude, 2023 Chertok Photo Contest, Novice Honorable Mention Winner, Photo: Jack Berkstresser

Update Your Membership

Now is a great time to join or renew your 3-way membership in Orange Audubon Society (OAS), Audubon Florida and National Audubon Society.

Please pay directly to OAS, and we transmit the funds to National. If you want to include an additional donation, which goes to OAS, you can. The base rate is \$20 (\$15 for students). Go to OAS' website and click the [Join/Renew link](#). If you need your expiration date, email membership@orangeaudubonfl.org.

APRIL/MAY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Bird Chats with OAS via Zoom

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

- Birding Behaviors in the Yucatan and Beyond by Cherie Pittillo

April 4, 2024

- Costa Rica by Pieter Wiestra of Aratinga Tours

April 11, 2024

- Birds and Wildlife of West Antarctica, South Georgia and the Falkland Islands by Marianne Korosy-

April 25, 2024

- Audubon Florida Coastal Bird Stewardship by Audrey DeRose-Wilson

May 2, 2024

- Clermont Martin Watch by Meredith Bradshaw

May 9, 2024

- Everglades Wading Birds by Mark Cook

May 23, 2024

- Cyclobirding in Scotland by Mathieu Soetens

May 30, 2024

Spring Migration Walks, Mead Botanical Garden

April 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2024

Contact Linda at info@orangeaudubonfl.org

Oakland Nature Preserve Survey, Oakland

April 7, 2024

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Wekiwa Springs State Park Bird Survey, Apopka

April 14, 2024

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Getting To Know Our Fabulous Raptors by Daisy Fiore

April 18, 2024

Contact Alan at info@orangeaudubonfl.org

Central Florida Earth Day at Lake Eola

April 20, 2024

Contact Deborah at info@orangeaudubonfl.org

Rock Springs Run State Park Bird Survey, Sorrento

April 24, 2024

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Apopka Art and Foliage Festival

April 27 and 28, 2024

Contact Deborah at info@orangeaudubonfl.org

City Nature Challenge

April 27 and 28, 2024

Contact Deborah at info@orangeaudubonfl.org

Young Birders Club Trip, Lake Lotus Park, Altamonte Springs

April 28, 2024

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Chertok Photo Contest Deadline

April 30, 2024 (extended deadline)

Contact Teresa at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com

Limited Edition Field Trip, Ocala Wetlands

May 4, 2024

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Wekiwa Springs State Park Bird Survey, Apopka

May 5, 2024

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive, 9th Anniversary

May 5, 2024

Contact Deborah at info@orangeaudubonfl.org

Climate Travels How Ecotourism Changes Mindsets and Motivates Action by Mike Gunter (in-person)

May 16, 2024

Contact Alan at info@orangeaudubonfl.org

Bird Chats and YouTube

See [Orange Audubon Society's YouTube channel](#).

With over 160 videos, we have over 940 subscribers!

Here's the link [to sign up](#) to watch Bird Chats on Zoom and be able to ask questions. OAS has some fantastic speakers lined up in April and May, listed above.