



Glacier National Park ranger showing glacier. Photo: National Park Service; Dr. Mike Gunter. Photo courtesy Mike Gunter

This Month's Program, May 16, 2024 **Climate Travels: How Ecotourism Changes Mindsets and Motivates Action by Mike Gunter**

For our May program, Orange Audubon Society will host Rollins College Professor and Political Science Chair Dr. Michael Gunter. This program follows his 2023 book, *Climate Travels: How Ecotourism Changes Mindsets and Motivates Action*.

Dr. Gunter will profile parts of the United States affected by the climate crisis. He argues that conscientious travel broadens understanding and makes the dangers of climate change concrete and immediate. His examples include sea level rise in Virginia, floods sweeping inland in Tennessee and Maine lobsters migrating away from American territorial waters. He will show us imperiled ecosystems in national parks, from the Alaskan permafrost to the Florida Keys.

Dr. Gunter will also show us inspiring initiatives to mitigate and adapt to these threats, including wind turbines, green building construction, and walkable urbanism. Such projects make a difference—and they underscore the importance of local action.

The program will be May 16th, 7 p.m. at Leu Gardens (address below). No reservations are necessary. We hope we see you.

Alan Shapiro, Programs Chair



Local Ecotourism

Where do you go for a quiet time in nature? Where do you take your out-of-town visitors on holidays to see alligators, river otters, bobcats, turtles and a vast diversity of birds? Thousands of Central Floridians take them to the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive, the 11-mile one-way drive through the Lake Apopka North Shore marshes.

The St. Johns River Water Management District's 20,000 acres of wetlands — once part of Lake Apopka and now a lake restoration area — provide a free site for nearly 170,000 people a year to get out in nature, driving, cycling, hiking and taking photos of wildlife.

The District's primary responsibility is to protect the natural resources and infrastructure, and when compatible, to allow for public recreation. On the Lake Apopka North Shore, this has really worked. While the wetlands each year contribute to improvement in water quality in Lake Apopka, the property provides recreation, money into the local economy, and conserves wildlife.

The Drive is open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, and federal holidays, from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., with exit by 5 p.m. It is closed Mondays through Thursdays while District staff and contractors do their restoration work. It first opened in May 2015 and is now known worldwide, based on the number of foreign visitors who stop by Orange Audubon Society's Ambassador station at the Drive's entrance. "The area has become a major destination for birdwatchers, wildlife enthusiasts, and other
continued next page

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/



Parent and baby Common Gallinules at the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive, Photo: Brian Miller



Continued from p.1
Ecotourism

recreationists looking to experience an area rich with biodiversity in an increasingly developed part of the state,” stated a 2018 University of Florida research study, commissioned by the District.

Cycling on the North Shore has grown since Orange and Lake counties collaborated with the District to develop the Lake Apopka Loop Trail, publicized on Facebook and through the Friends of Lake Apopka’s annual “FOLA 40” bike ride. There were originally five trailheads with parking lots from which cyclists could start a cycling adventure on the North Shore — Clay Island, Green Mountain, Jones Avenue, Magnolia Park, and the North Shore Trailheads. Counters recorded 18,900 visitors to these non-motorized entrances in 2022.

A new entrance, the pedestrian/cycling gate on Lust Road, is open 24/7, using a parking lot opened by the City of Apopka during the renovation of Magnolia Park. District staff conservatively estimate 15 people per day using this lot enter on foot or bicycle, which adds another 5,000 visitors to the total for 2022. If anyone didn’t realize the Drive is closed to vehicular traffic Monday through Thursday, walking in is a great solution. In fact, the first mile of the Drive is full of wildlife and provides a great sample of what the Drive offers. *In granting the lease to Orange Audubon Society for the Apopka Birding Park, the City of Apopka will keep and maintain the parking lot area.*

Including cyclists and hikers — some of whom are from out of area and spending money on gas, food, lodging, and incidentals — there has been a 66% increase in visitation since the 2018 UF study. **Extrapolating from UF’s data, Orange Audubon calculates an annual monetary benefit to the local economy of \$6 million.**

The International Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education.” Having this quiet place to go — although you may have to go very early to avoid the crowds — clearly improves quality of life for Central Floridians. Orange Audubon Society has secured grants to make attractive educational panels and offers bird walks and classes. In appreciation of having public access to this special place, Orange Audubon celebrates the anniversary of the Drive’s opening each year with bird experts at key locations sharing information.

The 9th anniversary celebration will be May 5, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., with experts at the shelter by the pump house. Address is 2850 Lust Road, Apopka.

When the District has to close the Drive — as it did after flooding from Hurricane Irma in 2017, from Hurricane Dorian in 2019, from the pandemic in 2020, or from flooding from hurricanes Ian and Nicole in 2022 — people who love the Drive await its reopening impatiently. Central Florida is lucky to have this ecotourism gem that benefits the local economy, environment and the community. *Reprinted from my May 2023 Guest Editorial in the Orlando Sentinel*

Apopka Birding Park Update

See the [April OASis](#) for the announcement of signing of the long-term ground lease from the City of Apopka to OAS for the Apopka Birding Park. This 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.” Next is a lot of volunteer work, a capital campaign and setting up an endowment, of which the interest will provide funds to operate the nature center. In April, OAS applied for three grants, two for the grounds and one for the building. If you hear of any grant opportunities, please let us know.

OAS 1st Vice President Jack Horton is exploring the property and planning trails, and we will soon put out an RFP for consultation on restoring bird habitat. One of the first efforts must be removing many of the concrete pads that were bases of the old greenhouses, and it was good news that the St. Johns River Water Management District North Shore needs concrete and will remove at least some. If interested in helping in any way on this project, email me at info@orangeaudubonfl.org. More next month. *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.

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The OASis (Orange Audubon Society information source) newsletter is published monthly, September–June, and posted on the OAS website. A link announcing new issues is e-mailed to subscribers.

Never miss out on OAS happenings. Add or update your email address by contacting newsletter@orangeaudubonfl.org.

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

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Oakland and Groveland Seek Bird City Designations

The Town of Oakland and the City of Groveland have engaged Orange Audubon Society (OAS) to assist in becoming more bird-friendly, as part of their sustainability efforts.

Bird City certification started in Wisconsin twenty years ago. Just last year, [Bird City](#) certification was rolled out nationally by the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) and the Environment for the Americas with major support from the US Fish & Wildlife Service.

Oakland reached out to OAS in 2023 when a Town commissioner became concerned about lights on their water tower. Night-migrating birds, like songbirds and shorebirds, can be disoriented by artificial light at night. Turning off or dimming lights can help birds [complete their migratory journeys safely](#). With our input, the town is modifying its lighting.

City of Groveland began working toward the challenging Dark Sky certification years ago, assisted by Pierce Harding, one of our Conservation Leadership Initiative students. In June 2023, Groveland became the first community in Florida and in the Southeastern United States to become a certified, international Dark Sky Community. Congratulations, Groveland!

OAS will partner with the City of Groveland for a Migratory Bird Day event on May 10th from 5 to 9, at its Friday Farmer’s Market, with our outreach display and a bird walk. If you live out that way or have been meaning to make a trip to Green Isle Gardens native plant nursery, join us.

We hope other cities in Central Florida become interested in Bird City certification, particularly those that are already Tree Cities. The most difficult aspect of this new program is dealing with feral cat colonies. Cats kill an estimated 1.3-4 billion birds each year in the U.S. alone, according to [All About Birds](#). This source of mortality, is far above the next worst source, collisions with windows.

Email info@orangeaudubonfl.org if your City or even your HOA wants OAS’ help in this sustainability effort.

Spring Bird Walks at Mead Botanical Garden

Eager birdwatchers gathered again at Mead Botanical Gardens to search for spring migrants during Orange Audubon Society’s April guided bird walks. We were excited to find a Yellow-Billed Cuckoo, an elusive, exotic bird with a hooked curved bill, long tail, and white belly. Often difficult to see, these birds slink among trees to forage, or sit and wait patiently for their favorite food—caterpillars—to move.

Other notables included: Baltimore Oriole, Cape May Warbler, Summer Tanager, Black-and-white Warbler, Cedar Waxwing, Prothonotary Warbler, American Redstart, Blue-Headed Vireo, Blackburnian Warbler, Great Crested Flycatcher and our Barred Owl family. .



Orange Audubon Society Mead Botanical Garden April migration walk. Photo: Linda Gaunt

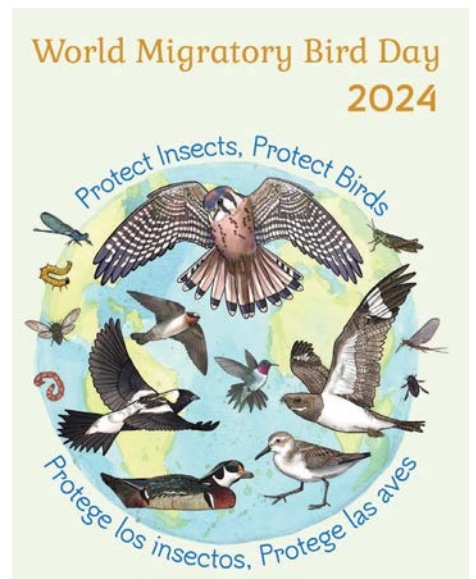
Three immature Pileated Woodpeckers peeked out from a pine cavity to beg for food from their parents.

And surprise! Bob Sicolo showed us a Swallow-tailed Kite nest in a large oak just east of Howell Creek. Some of us glimpsed a tail silhouetted against the sky at the edge of the nest, and observed an adult flying in with nesting material.

Guide Alex DeBear thrilled a curious group with his identification of a ring-necked snake as well as an array of avian species on April 20th.

Many other enthusiastic leaders contributed to the success of the Spring Bird Walks, including Kathy Rigling, the organizer; Jimena Aguirre, Libertad and Mark Anderson, Glenn Blaser, Linda Gaunt, Karen Hamblett, Susan Morris, Matt Richardson, Alan Shapiro and Susan Thome-Barrett.

With its diverse habitat, Alice’s Pond,



Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act

Both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate have approved the Migratory Birds of the Americas Conservation Enhancements Act (H.R.4389/S.4022).

The Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, once signed by President Biden, will again be one of the nation’s most important bird laws. It provides a federal grants program that funds migratory bird research and habitat restoration throughout the Western Hemisphere. Follow this critical legislation at <https://bit.ly/441qvLf>.



Parent bring food to hungry nestling Pileated Woodpeckers. Photo: Delsy Rodriguez

and Howell Creek, Mead Garden is an ideal birding spot. If you missed these Spring Bird Walks, hope to see you in October!
Linda Carpenter

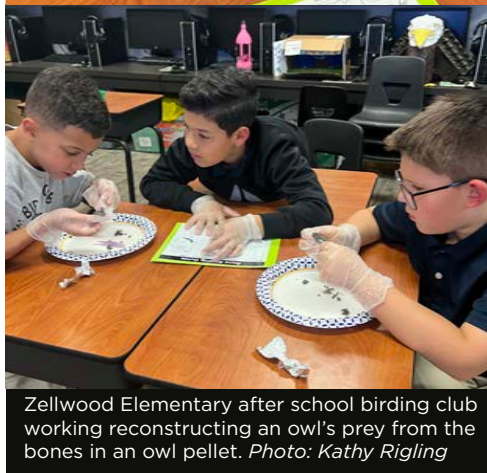
Education Coordinator Update

April was another busy month for Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) education program with ten schools visited, including for the first time Andover Elementary, Independence Elementary, Westpointe Elementary and Palm Lake Elementary.

Andover Elementary is bordered by a preserved cypress dome, and during the first graders' plant and animal field study lesson, they saw White-tailed Deer, Mallards and Palm Warblers.

Three of my visits—Independence Elementary 3rd grade, Palm Lake Elementary 5th grade and Blankner School 3rd grade—were bird surveys, using Orange Audubon Society's binoculars.

Newly fledged Mourning Doves, Red-bellied Woodpeckers building a nest and resting Cedar Waxwings



Zellwood Elementary after school birding club working reconstructing an owl's prey from the bones in an owl pellet. Photo: Kathy Rigling

created excitement at Palm Lake. At Independence Elementary, we observed a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks, a Great Egret feeding and a low-flying Swallow-tailed Kite! At



Eccleston Elementary after school birding club with Natasza Fontaine on Zoom. Photo: Kathy Rigling

Blankner School, students were excited to see and learn about the resident nesting Osprey, Northern Mockingbirds and visiting Cedar Waxwings.

I did outreach at three events: Wyndham Lakes Elementary's Everglades Night, Dommerich Elementary Family Garden Eco Fair and Westpointe Elementary's Academic Night.

Our after school bird clubs continued at Zellwood Elementary, Eustis Elementary, Rock Springs Elementary and Eccleston Elementary. Several students earned Wings Over Florida certificates from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for observing at least 25 native Florida birds.

For Eccleston, I had arranged a Zoom visit from our friend Natasza Fontaine, who talked to them about her work as a field biologist and artist. The students were very excited to talk with her!

In all, this month 487 students were reached with in-person programs. Alex DeBear has become a new education assistant for me, helping with 3 elementary school bird surveys.

I also participated in Audubon Florida's College Leadership Academy at Oakland Nature Preserve in which 16 college students were introduced to Audubon. My April online webinar for educators was about the City Nature Challenge. The link to sign up for our educational webinars is <http://eepurl.com/imGskM>

Please email education@orangeaudubonfl.org to request classroom or afterschool visits.

Kathy Rigling, Education Coordinator

Orange Audubon Society Elections

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) annual election of board members was held before the April 18, 2024 program at Leu Gardens.

For the sustainability of our chapter, OAS' board has been looking for successors for our two longest serving officers, President Deborah Green and Treasurer Teresa Williams.

We have concluded that replacement for most of Deborah's volunteer tasks should be a paid executive director, for which we will have to develop a sustainable funding source.

For Teresa, whom OAS has been fortunate to have shepherding our finances for nearly 30 years, the replacement is also challenging. One of our Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive Ambassadors, Sue Weidner, like Teresa is a Certified Public Accountant and has volunteered to step up. Outsourcing some tasks will be part of succession.

Elected officers for 2024 - 2026 are:

President - Deborah Green

1st Vice President - Jack Horton

2nd VP - Alan Shapiro

Secretary - Linda Gaunt

Treasurer - Teresa Williams

Assistant Treasurer - Sue Weidner

With several vacant board positions, I invite those interested to contact me. Our application collects information about your interests and skills to align them with OAS' needs. Prior to or concurrent with applying, we encourage you to join one of OAS' committees or volunteer efforts. Help is most needed with conservation, education, and outreach, but—with the new nature center project—you may have other skills that will help.

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. Thanks to this year's nominating committee members, Mary Soule and Bob Sena for their assistance.

*Rick Baird,
Nominating Committee Chair*

*Endangered Species Act
50th Anniversary*

More on Survival of Brown Pelicans

Brown Pelicans were part of the reason the U.S. National Wildlife Refuge System was created in 1903, with Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge being the first refuge. No sooner had this species recovered from plume hunters who shot them for the millinery trade than they suffered eggshell thinning from DDT and related pesticides. In 1970 they were placed on the Endangered Species list.

The majority of the Eastern subspecies of Brown Pelican nests in Louisiana. In 1966, Louisiana named the Brown Pelican its state bird (although the state seal oddly features a White Pelican).

In 1699, French Canadian explorers sailed the Gulf of Mexico's shores in search of the mouth to the Mississippi River and recorded enormous colonies of Brown Pelicans. In 1919, Brown Pelican populations in Louisiana were estimated at 50,000 individuals. In 1938 breeding pairs were estimated at only 5,000. And by 1963, there were no Brown Pelican sightings whatsoever in Louisiana.



Tropical storms in 1956 and 1957 destroyed their coastal barrier island nesting sites and may have caused this precipitous decline. An unknown pathogen sweeping the colonies or human encroachment in the form of energy exploration and shipping activities are other possibilities. Chemical pollutants, from pesticides to petroleum byproducts from oil production facilities, may have been to blame.

By 1968, Brown Pelicans from Florida were first re-introduced to Louisiana in a joint effort between the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. Fledglings from Florida's peninsula were released in southeastern Louisiana.

With the early 1970s ban on DDT and other organochlorine pesticides, Brown Pelicans began recovering nationwide. This species was removed from the endangered species list in Florida

The Unmistakable Brown Pelican

Awkward on land, the Brown Pelican is a marvelous creature in the air and water. With an uncanny ability to spot a fish from 65-feet above, it plunges headfirst, tucking and twisting to protect its trachea and esophagus from the impact of the dive. As it hits the water, its gular pouch—a large flap of skin on the lower mandible that expands to trap small fish—fills up with water.

These birds forage above estuaries and shallow ocean waters not far from shore, but also fly over deep waters past the narrow continental shelf of the Pacific coast. Resting on the waters' surface, they grab prey from a dense school of fish, steal food from other seabirds or scavenge dead animals. Although Pelicans usually forage during the day, they also may feed at night during a full moon.



Brown Pelican. Photo: Brian Miller

Highly social, Brown Pelicans breed in large colonies on small islands protected from terrestrial predators. The male selects a site on the ground, on bare sand or shell, or in an exposed tree top and the female builds a sturdy platform of sticks she embellishes with grass and leaves. While she toils, the male gathers small sticks for her and during incubation he brings new material to add to their creation.

Now common year-round in Florida, Brown Pelicans drastically declined in the past and were declared federally endangered in 1970 because of the negative effects of pesticides. Due to conservation methods, their populations expanded and the species is now of low concern. Although numbers have continued to increase, these pelicans still face many serious threats. Since they brood, roost and forage near shipping channels, they are vulnerable to oil spills. Human disturbances in their coastal nesting habitats may cause them to panic and abandon or accidentally destroy their nests. Sport fishing also threatens Brown Pelicans: more than 700 adult and immature pelicans in Florida get entangled in abandoned fishing lines annually and die.

How to find this species? Look for its large size, gray-brown or silvery back, black belly, large bill and unique gular pouch. Visit our Florida and Texas coasts, bays, lagoons, and mangrove islets where you may see them gliding gracefully in V-formations inches above the water's surface, executing a spectacular plunge-dive, or sitting on dock posts around marinas. Check it out! You will fall in love as I have with the amazing Brown Pelican.

Linda Carpenter



Brown Pelicans. Photo: Mary Keim

and along the Atlantic Coast in 1985. It was delisted in the rest of its range in November 2009.

But just five months afterwards, the Brown Pelican, the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill placed the eastern subspecies back in grave danger.

In addition to oil pollution, Brown Pelicans are threatened by reduced prey availability, hurricanes, global climate change, rising sea levels, offshore wind development, entanglement in fishing lines and numerous other forces and factors throughout their U.S. range.

Off the Skyway Pier in the Tampa Bay, entanglements with fishing rigs with multiple hooks is now a serious problem. The [Center for Biological Diversity](#) is the group most actively working on solutions. We can't take any species for granted.

Deborah Green

Earth Month Outreach

On April 11th, Orange Audubon Society (OAS) staffed a table at Earth Day at Valencia College East Campus. Rick Baird and Marian Lichtler conducted outreach to students and faculty.

On April 20th, OAS participated in the 19th annual Central Florida Earth Day at Lake Eola. OAS leads bird walks around Lake Eola each year at this event.

On April 27th and 28th, we did outreach at the Apopka Art & Foliage Festival. We had requests to be at other Earth Month events that we didn't have enough volunteers to accomodate. If you would like to help us with outreach, please email volunteer@orangeaudubonfl.org.



Earth Day at Valencia College East Campus, Rick Baird and Marian Lichtler. *Photo: Jim Adamski.* Central Florida Earth Day at Lake Eola, Rick Baird, Sonia Stephens and Marian Lichtler. *Photo: Deborah Green.* Apopka Art and Foliage Festival, Stephanie Nieves and Jimena Aguirre. *Photo: Deborah Green.*



Bird Blind Dedicated

Mayor Jerry Demings and District 1 Commissioner Nicole Wilson joined Orange County's Environmental Protection Division (EPD) to unveil the first bird blind installed at one of Orange County's Green PLACE properties. A bird blind allows birdwatchers to observe wildlife without being seen. The event was April 26, 2024, as Orange County celebrated Earth Month at the 138-acre Johns Lake Conservation Area.

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) and several local volunteer groups were present, along with several children of EPD staff, participating in Bring Your Son or Daughter to Work Day.

The event highlighted the importance of wetlands to the County's conservation efforts. In December 2023, the Board of County Commissioners voted to update the County's decades-old Wetland Conservation Areas Ordinance, with changes expected to slow the rate of wetland acreage loss in Orange County and improve the permitting process for applicants.

The Green PLACE (Park Land Acquisition for Conservation and Environmental Protection) program has 130 properties throughout Orange County. In 2021, the Mayor and Commissioners approved \$100 million to purchase new properties. Strategic land purchases take time, but 1,345.20 acres have been purchased since 2021. During the week of Earth Day, Orange County closed on 4 new parcels, which totaled 788.84 acres. 7 additional parcels will close between now and July.

OAS was recognized for its advocacy for wetlands and for birds [in the opening ceremony](#). We appreciate the preservation of key pieces of the remaining natural Florida in Orange County through the Green PLACE program.



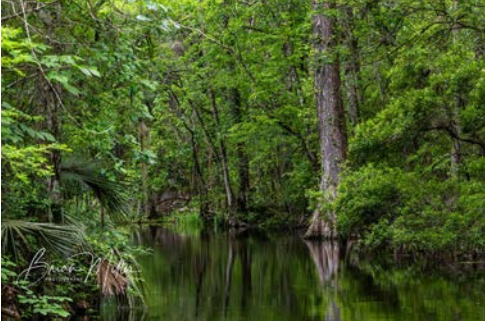
Left, Mayor Demings dedicates a new bird blind (seen in background) at Johns Lake Conservation Area, a Green PLACE property in Winter Garden. Left to right, Tonya Wilson, Orange County Planning Environmental & Development Services Director; Alicia Baxter, Environmental Program Supervisor, Green PLACE Program; Renee Parker, Manager, Orange County Environmental Protection Division; Nicole Wilson, Orange County District 1 Commissioner; Jerry Demings, Orange County Mayor; Deborah Green, Orange Audubon Society President; daughter of Carrie Black; Beth Jackson, Environmental Programs Administrator, Water and Land Resources Management; Carrie Black, Orange County Chief Sustainability & Resilience Officer. *Photo courtesy Commissioner Nicole Wilson.* Right, Birding from the new Bird Blind. *Photo: Orange County Newsroom*

City Nature Challenge Trip

Alianza, a group working on environmental justice issues for Hispanics, followed up Orange Audubon Society's Buscando Pajaros trip in March with a trip at Orlando Wetlands on April 28th. Led by Orlando Wetlands volunteer and skilled photographer Gilberto Sanchez in his native Spanish, the trip focused on the City Nature Challenge. Thank you, Gilberto. *Deborah Green*



Alianza City Nature Challenge Trip at Orlando Wetlands. *Photo courtesy Gilberto Sanchez.*



Wakulla River, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at Wakulla Springs. Clapper Rail at Bald Point State Park. Photos: Brian Miller



Long-billed Curlew at Alligator Point, Whimbrel at St. George Island, St. Marks lighthouse. Photos: Brian Miller

Northwest FL Panhandle Birding Trip

Orange Audubon Society's four-day Panhandle trip, April 10-14, 2024, allowed 7 lucky participants to see migratory and breeding songbirds and shorebirds, led by skilled birder and Audubon Florida shorebird steward Natasza Fontaine. We observed 160 species over four days!

Highlights included shorebirds such as the Long-billed Curlew, Whimbrels, American Oystercatchers, Wilson's Plovers, Marbled Godwits, and the rare Buff-breasted Sandpiper and American Golden Plover. Other favorites were the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, White-breasted Nuthatch, Yellow-breasted Chat, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Eastern Kingbirds and Summer and Scarlet Tanagers.

We had close views of a Bachman's Sparrow and three fledgling Brown-headed Nuthatches, banded at Tall

Timber's Research facility where we spent two nights. For myself, getting up in the morning was a personal highlight as when we stepped outside the front door, the birds were calling and singing all around. Listening to three owls call out to one another plus the calls of the Bobwhites in the background was indeed magical. Merlin Sound ID picked up 15 species of birds calling out over five minutes on numerous occasions.

Thanks to Teresa Williams and OAS for putting this trip together. I can't wait until next year to go again.

Glenn Blaser

Congratulations to Brian Miller for an amazing 2023 Photo Big Year! Brian was able to photograph 271 species within the American Birding Association area (U.S. including Hawaii). As of May 1, 2024, he is up to 223 species!

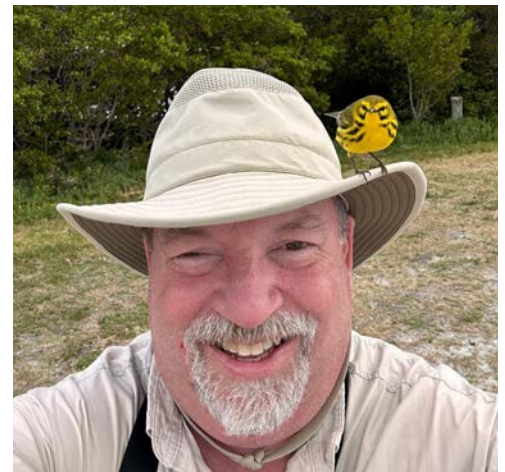
Fort DeSoto Trip

On April 22nd-23rd, Orange Audubon Society took our annual spring migration trip to Fort DeSoto Park in Pinellas County. Despite windy conditions, we had a wonderful time viewing beautiful migratory songbirds and shorebirds. Leaders Lori and Jerry Mathis, Lorri Lilja and Kathy Rigling guided the group in search of spring specialties.

Highlights were Kentucky Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Indigo Bunting, Blue Grosbeak, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Scarlet Tanager, Philadelphia Vireo, Chuck-Will's-Widow, Snowy Plover, Piping Plover, Whimbrel, Magnificent Frigatebird and Reddish Egret.

We had one very interesting experience with a very curious Prairie Warbler who at different times landed on Brian Miller, Lorri Lilja, and Alyssa Reed! This is one of our trips that fills up quickly, so put it on your radar for next year.

Kathy Rigling



At Fort DeSoto, Blackpoll Warbler, Brian with friendly Prairie Warbler, Photos: Brian Miller

June Challenge

The June Challenge is a fun birding event for the month of June.

Started by Alachua Audubon to encourage birders to get out and search for birds during one of the most difficult months of the year for birding. In the June Challenge, you pick a local county and try to see as many native bird species as possible. You must actually see the bird, not only hear it. No recorded calls may be used.

June Challenge is a great way to hone your birding skills and learn about our breeding species. Orange Audubon Society is offering a trophy to the member who sees the most native birds from in the month of June. There are two categories for this competition: 18 and under and over 18.

To kickstart the June Challenge we will have a Limited-Edition field trip on Saturday, June 1st at Orlando Wetlands from 7:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. We are excited to feature two young leaders, Alex DeBear and Jimena Aguirre, assisting with this trip.

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.

Beginning of June is a great time to get a great head start on the June Challenge, while some spring migrants may still be present.

Registration for the June 1st trip is [now open on our website](#), and spots are limited.

Details about how to report your sightings for the June Challenge will be posted in the June OASIS.

Kathy Rigling



Baby Owl Shower, Photo: Audubon Center for Birds of Prey

Baby Owl Shower, May 11, 2024

Each spring Audubon Florida hosts its Baby Owl Shower to raise funds to offset increased costs of baby season. Baby season is our busiest season for bird care, sometimes with over 100 injured or orphaned birds in May alone, tripling bird care costs.

Join Audubon Florida on May 11th 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., for crafts, games, a raffle and visits with the Center's Ambassador birds. Admission is free with an item from our [general wishlist](#). Orange Audubon will be there. Hope to see you!

MAY/JUNE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Bird Chats with OAS via Zoom

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

- 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

- Changing Bird Names by Andy Kratter

June 6, 2024

- TBA -

June 13, 2024

- The Florida Grasshopper Sparrow by Aline Morrow

June 27, 2024

Jay Watch Training

May 2024

Contact audrey.derosewilson@audubon.org

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

City of Groveland Migratory Bird Day event

May 10, 2024

Contact Deborah at info@orangeaudubonfl.org

Baby Owl Shower, Audubon Center for Birds of Prey, Maitland

May 11, 2024

Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977

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

May 16, 2024

Contact Alan at alangrandiflora@gmail.com

June Challenge Kickoff, Orlando Wetlands Park

June 1, 2024

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

OAS Online Auction

June 13 - June 24, 2024

Contact Linda at (941) 704-1189

36th Annual Chertok Nature Photography Contest Awards Program

June 20, 2024

Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977