



Mexican Free-tailed Bat at Orlando Wetlands. Photo: Mary Keim. Bat Box. Photo: Shari Blissett-Clark

Bats: Masters of the Night Skies by Shari Blissett-Clark **October 17, 2024 (Note Changed Location)**

Once, before development, bats were one of the most significant players in habitat health and darkened the evening sky with their nightly emergence to hunt insects; no habitat was left untouched by these fast-flying mammals that consumed their own weight in bugs each night. These masters of the night sky kept insect populations in balance and contributed to the overall health of Florida's landscapes.

But Florida is a very different place today; deforestation, agriculture, and the urbanization of Florida's land has led to compromised water quality, widespread flooding, and the accumulation of chemicals from nearly a century of pesticide use. These changes have contributed to the disappearance of countless plant and animal species.

Bats can help! Orange Audubon is lucky to have Shari Blissett-Clark of the Florida Bat Conservancy present a myth-busting presentation about the critical environmental services bats provide to both habitats and people.

Shari will educate us about basic bat biology, expose bat superpowers, and reveal conservation strategies that anyone can use to help bats thrive in their neighborhood.

Live Florida bats will accompany her presentation. Shari will also bring a limited number of bat houses available for purchase. All proceeds will support the conservation initiatives of the non-profit Florida Bat Conservancy.

Because of the Halloween events at Leu Gardens and limited parking, we have been moved to Dubsdread for the October 17th program.

This is the Dubsdread Golf Course at 549 Par Avenue, Orlando. Our program will be in the Historic Ballroom at 7 p.m. Please leave enough time to find the location if you are not familiar with it. See you there for a great program!

Alan Shapiro, Programs Chair

ORANGE AUDUBON SOCIETY programs are free. No reservations necessary.



**ORANGE
AUDUBON**

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/

Beginners' Bird Watching Class

Oct 19, 27 and Nov 2, 2024

Would you like to improve your bird identification skills? Take Orange Audubon's Beginners' Birdwatching Class starting October 19th and continuing October 27th and November 2nd.

If you have to miss one of the three Saturday mornings, you can make it up in the winter series (Jan 5, 11 and 23, 2025).

I have the pleasure of teaching this fun class, along with Susan Thome-Barrett.

All sessions are 8:00 a.m.–11:30 a.m.

An "outdoor" classroom session and mini-field trip will be October 19th at Orlando Wetlands Park. On October 27th and November 2nd, field sessions are at Mead Botanical Garden and the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive, respectively.

The class is limited to 12 students and registration is required. Total cost for all three sessions is: \$60 members; \$75 non-members; \$10 youth (12 & under) with a registered adult. Non-members can join when registering, directly through our website.

To reserve a spot in the class, use [this link](#). Click on the orange block where at the bottom it says Pay here.

If you have any questions about the class, contact me at riglingkathy@gmail.com or (407) 488-9559.

Kathy Rigling



Kathy Rigling teaching beginning birders at Wekiwa Springs State Park. Photo: Brian Miller.

Big Changes Coming to East Orlando

At the Orlando City Council on September 23rd, Mayor Buddy Dyer and Commissioners heard staff recommendations to annex 82 square miles (52,450 acres) of the Deseret Ranch into the City. The Deseret Ranch is an enormous cattle ranch, which the Mormon Church started in 1950 on cutover timberland and low-quality grassland and which since has grown to 295,000 acres in Brevard, Osceola and Orange Counties. The ranch also encompasses important wetland and upland ecosystems. As pointed out by Audubon Florida, this acreage is essential to the Florida Wildlife Corridor, provides important regional aquifer recharge services, and its wetlands help attenuate flooding and nutrient runoff in the Middle St. Johns River.

The proposed annexation area is bounded by SR 50 to the north, SR 520 to the east and Osceola County to the south and is only contiguous with the current City of Orlando at a narrow point south of SR 528. Considering that the existing City of Orlando is 119 square miles, the proposed 82 square mile annexation will significantly impact water and services for existing residents.

As reported by the [Orlando Sentinel](#), Orange County added more than 250,000 residents from 2012 until 2022, which is the most of any Florida county (data from Tampa Bay Times).

This annexation would [increase the footprint of Orlando by about 60 percent](#), allowing sprawl to the east with the addition of lands over 25 miles from city hall. The property, on which Deseret grows cattle, citrus or sod, is currently subject to Orange County zoning which includes regulations for development of rural lands and wetlands.

Orange Audubon had the opportunity to provide stakeholder input to the revised Orange County wetlands and tree protection ordinances over the last two years, and we believe these new regulations will provide significant environmental protections during new development.

Orange County is among the 20 Florida counties with a voter-approved charter, which is open to citizen-driven amendments and undergoes review every four years by a county-appointed commission that can also recommend amendments. Amendment 8, on the November ballot for Orange County voters, came from proposed Ordinance 24-1068, also known as the Rural Boundary Proposal, to establish a rural area and rural boundary. The idea of a Rural Boundary, beyond which City services would not be provided, has been around since land use planning became a part of local government. It used to be supported by the state's growth management agency, the Department of Community Affairs, before that agency was dismantled in 2011. In the 1990s, the Rural Boundary was the Econlockhatchee River, but County Commission approval of the Avalon Development began the steady march eastwards.

Amendment 8 to the County Charter would make it harder to approve dense developments in rural areas. It would require a majority-plus-one vote of the commission to either approve more urban development on property located within the rural boundary or to remove property from the rural boundary area altogether. The County has the ability to sell property it owns, but this amendment, if passed, would raise the bar for decisions to dispose of protected, sensitive or recreational land. See the [Orlando Sentinel](#) article on this.

Audubon Florida alerted Orange Audubon's Conservation Committee of the City's first reading of the annexation ordinance September 23rd, which appears as if rushed through before the Charter Amendment might pass in November. As pointed out in the [Orlando Sentinel](#) by Orange County Tax Collector Scott Randolph, growth doesn't pay for itself. Despite letters and public comments by Audubon Florida, Orange Audubon, Save Orange County, Sierra Club and many environmentalists, only Commissioner Patty Sheehan voted no. Second reading is October 21st. Please stay ready to engage, if there is an opportunity, and do your research on the Charter amendments. And vote! Thank you.

OAS Conservation Committee



Orange Audubon Society (OAS) mission: 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 OASis Editor:
Deborah Green
info@orangeaudubonfl.org
(407) 637-2525

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

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

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

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OAS welcomes those who wish to volunteer and become more involved in our efforts. Email volunteer@orangeaudubonfl.org.

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

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Audubon Florida's Executive Director Julie Wraithmell addressing the City of Orlando Commission regarding the annexation. Photo: City of Orlando YouTube

Donor Thank You

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) is profoundly appreciative of the generous donations toward our nature center this September from Susan and Hugh Morris, Dr. Louis Stern, Nancy Christman, Larry Martin, Bob and Flo Sena, Shirley Waggoner, Hubert Henry, Nancy Prine and many others.

Nearly 70 people came out to OAS' September 19th program at Leu Gardens on the Apopka Birding Park.

Since Orange Audubon announced its long-term lease from the City of Apopka for the Apopka Birding Park this April ([September OASis, p.1](#)), donors have begun to step up.

OAS has been fund-raising toward a nature center of its own since the early days of its 57-year history.

Our 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. Creating the Orange Audubon Nature Center at the Apopka Birding Park furthers this mission.

Donations will be used towards construction of our energy-efficient solar-powered renovated building, toward restoration of the Apopka Birding Park property into bird habitat and toward a sustainable endowment for operations.

Large donations can fund parts of our building, such as the annex or classroom, and come with naming rights. If you, or anyone you know, might want to know more, please email info@orangeaudubonfl.org.

Donations to OAS are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. For some of our members with IRAs, making qualified charitable distributions (QCD) directly to non-profits may count towards the required minimum distribution, thereby providing a significant tax benefit to you.

Please consult your personal tax advisor and IRA custodian to see if making a QCD will benefit you, and consider donating to Orange Audubon Society, Inc., an eligible 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

We would be deeply grateful to receive your donation to further OAS' tax-exempt mission. Thank you!

*Deborah Green, President
Teresa Williams, Treasurer*

Alan Shapiro (left) staffs Orange Audubon Society booth at the Oakland Nature Fest in September 2024. The booth featured our architect's renderings of our planned Nature Center (right).
Photo: Deborah Green



Disappearing Island Boat Trip, New Smyrna Beach

Disappearing Island is a sandbar island at the mouth of Ponce Inlet, between New Smyrna Beach and Ponce Inlet. The rich bird life of this site was discovered by gull expert Michael Brothers before he retired as Director of the Marine Science Center in Ponce Inlet. On September 29th, 30 intrepid Auduboners visited via the Marine Discovery Center's boat. Michael lead, along with David Hartgrove of Halifax Audubon, Alice Horst of The Village Birders and David Simpson of Space Coast Audubon. A similar trip will be offered, again led by Michael, on Thursday of the NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL (p.9).



Disappearing Island boat trip with Marine Discovery Center., September 2024. Photo: Deborah Green. Birders scoping: Photo Majonka Herlikofer

Dragonfly Field Trip Report

On Saturday, September 28, 2024, ten attendees went on a dragonfly adventure at Orlando Wetlands and Seminole Ranch Conservation Area. The first surprise of the day was being greeted by a tall rooster that was probably bred for fighting. Next was a pine near the sign-in kiosk with a Red-headed Woodpecker. After those surprises, we were ready for the star of the dragonflies, the Eastern Pondhawk with at least 40 individuals seen. For many in the group, that was a new dragonfly, so distinguishing the green and black females from the blue males was the first challenge.

We saw at least 10 species of odonates including a Cyrano Darner with its short flights and curved posture, the mostly red Carolina Saddlebags at the top of a cypress tree, a female Eastern Amberwing in the flowers and an orange morph female Rambur's Forktail. We saw Regal Darner, Needham's Skimmer (female), Blue Dasher (male), Variable Dancer and Blue-ringed Dancer (female).

The group also enjoyed finding shed exoskeletons of the nymphs of Wandering Gliders left behind on emergent vegetation. It was a great group of people, maintaining their enthusiasm despite the humidity.

Mary Keim and Randy Snyder

World Migratory Bird Day Theme is Protect Insects, Protect Birds

World Migratory Bird Day is being celebrated on two days in 2024, 11 May and 12 October, aligning with the cyclic nature of bird migration in different hemispheres. The theme this year is Protect Insects, Protect Birds.

Insects are the base of many food webs — supporting birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles and fish. They cycle nutrients, aerate soil, and help pollinate more than 80% of the world's flowering plants.

The campaign is a joint effort of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement and Environment for the Americas. The addition of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership to this Partnership strengthens engagement and awareness for migratory birds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.



Top left, Female Needham's Skimmer. Photo: Randy Snyder. Top right, Blue-ringed Dancer. Bottom right, Eastern Amberwing. Bottom left, Rambur's Forktail. Photos: Mary Keim.



Orange Audubon has been emphasizing the importance of caterpillars to feed songbird nestlings, but birds get their protein from many kinds of insects.

Cornell Lab of Ornithology joins with BirdLife International to celebrate Global Birding Day

also on October 12th.

If you use eBird, be sure to do at least one checklist that day. Just as on the May Global Big Day, you can observe checklist submittals from around the world. See <https://globalbirding.org/>

Fall Bird Walks at Mead Botanical Garden October 5, 12, 19, & 26, 2024

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

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

Linda Gaunt

Apopka Birding Park Bird Surveys Last Saturdays of the Month

Back in 2017, Orange Audubon trip leader and avid birder Bob Sanders led bird surveys at the Apopka Birding Park, which we called Hickerson, since the site had been the Hickerson Flowers Nursery. They saw over 100 species on the property or flying over.

As we work to restore the former nursery site to native vegetation and bird habitat, we will document the anticipated increase in bird species. On the kickoff survey, we saw 50 species.

Learn about our Birding Park project and improve your birding skills on these early morning surveys. Contact me if interested in joining us. I will make sure you know where to meet and fill out the waiver. Email me at alexdebear@icloud.com

Alex DeBear

If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder without any such gift from the fairies, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in. "Help Your Child to Wonder" in the July, 1956 issue of *Woman's Home Companion*, .

Green PLACE Nature & Photography Hike October 13, 2024

Orange Audubon is collaborating with Orange County to offer a FREE guided Nature & Photography Hike on Sunday, October 13, 2024 at Crosby Island Marsh Preserve, east Orlando in east Orange County. This walk is ideal for youth and families. OAS appreciates the Orange County conservation lands protected under the Green PLACE program and collaborates in promotion of these important preserves.

Alicia Baxter, Orange County Green PLACE manager and naturalist, along with Lee Ann Posavad and Alexander DeBear, wildlife photographers, will lead this hike.

Learn about the easy-to-photograph nature of this 272-acre Orange County Green PLACE property.

Time and date: October 13, 2024 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. The address is Crosby Island Marsh Preserve, 13601 Moss Park Rd, Orlando, FL 32832. The trip is free

Latino Conservation Week Paseo at Orlando Wetlands

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) in conjunction with Audubon Florida held a bilingual bird walk for Latino Conservation Week. One of the groups attending at OAS' invitation was Observatorio Ambiental Hispano (OAH), which brought 20 attendees.

Kathy Rigling, with OAS volunteers Delsy Rodriguez and Jimena Aguirre, assisted with the walk ,and Delsy and Jimena assisted with translation. The group from OAH enjoyed a slow birding walk to the new boardwalk and back. Roseate Spoonbills and Wood Storks were scarce in the rookery near the boardwalk at this time of year, but they observed the behavior of several Common Gallinules and other summer avian residents. The group took the heat and quiet in stride and by the end, they were ready to enjoy more of the Florida outdoors and have more bird walks.

As part of the IDEAL program ([September OASis, p.3](#)), OAS is working to increase participation in our events more representative of our local population. The focus of the IDEAL program is the Christmas



Green PLACE walk, spring 2024. Photo: Lee Ann Posavad

but limited in number of participants. To reserve your spot, call Alicia Baxter at (407) 836-1456 or email GreenPLACE@ocfl.net.



Paseo en el Wetlands. September 2024. Photo: Faruk Bagdah

Bird Count, but through our other walks and surveys, OAS is stepwise diversifying our programs and hopefully our organization itself.

OAS is collaborating again with OAH to offer a bilingual family walk on Saturday, November 3rd. It is free and will be held on the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive. Loaner binoculars will be available. We hope to engage some new people in birding that might join us for bird surveys and the Christmas Bird Count.

Susan Thome-Barrett

Plants for Birds: Two Wonderful Events
Backyard Biodiversity Day, October 19, 2024

The Florida Native Plant Society, Tarflower Chapter, again hosts Backyard Biodiversity Day on Saturday, October 19, 2024 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Mead Botanical Garden. The event features a plant sale of which the proceeds benefit habitat restoration projects at Mead Botanical Garden. [Link.](#)

As followers of the work of the entomologist and author Doug Tallamy, Orange Audubon has been promoting the importance of our native trees and shrubs for birds through their role as host plants to small caterpillars. Caterpillars are critical to the survival of songbirds, particularly to feed their young. One of Tallamy's graduate students demonstrated this, monitoring reproduction and survival of Carolina Chickadees within residential yards. Desiree Narango of the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute found that chickadee populations could only be sustained in yards where native plants make up more than 70 percent of plant biomass. For best plants for birds for our area, see Orange Audubon's [Bird- and Butterfly-Friendly Plants for Central Florida link.](#)

Meet Dr. Doug Tallamy, October 20, 2024

Friends of the Wekiva River invites members of Orange Audubon to attend its upcoming event featuring the esteemed and charismatic Doug Tallamy, ecologist and author of *Nature's Best Hope* and *Bringing Nature Home*, on October 20th at the Longwood Community Building. Dr. Tallamy is a renowned expert on the benefits of using native plants to enhance biological diversity and low maintenance landscapes in residential neighborhoods. The event is October 20, 1:30-4 pm, in the Longwood Community Building, 200 W Warren Avenue, Longwood. Cost is \$20. Please register here <https://fowr-doug-tallamy.eventbrite.com>.

BACKYARD BIODIVERSITY DAY & FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SALE
OCTOBER 19, 2024 **SATURDAY 9AM - 3PM**

TO BENEFIT UPLAND HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECTS AT MEAD BOTANICAL GARDEN
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Limited Edition Field Trip: Birding by Bike on the Lake Apopka North Shore

Join Alan Shapiro and Pete Johnson on a Biking and Birding Expedition starting at the Green Mountain Scenic Overlook and Trailhead. We will meet at 7:00 a.m. and pedal through beautiful parts of the North Shore that you cannot access by car. Traveling in early morning by bike, we can cover more territory than if hiking, so we are likely to see a greater number of bird species and other critters like otters, gators and bobcats.



Birding by Bicycle. Photo: Alan Shapiro

Bring your own bikes and plenty of water, sunscreen, bug spray, a snack, a good hat, binoculars, camera, and anything else you may need for a 3-4 hour bike ride. We will be going slow and stopping frequently, so you need not be an expert cyclist to participate. Pedal-assist bicycles are acceptable. All the roads are packed lime rock and somewhat bumpy, so skinny-tired bikes could be troublesome.

If you have questions, contact Alan Shapiro at alangrandiflora@gmail.com

Limited Edition Field Trips are limited to 12 people. Cost per trip is \$15 for members and \$20 for non-members. To reserve a spot visit our website at <https://orangeaudubonfl.org/activities/field-trips/> and click on the orange block where at the top where it says Pay here.

Merritt Island Rarity

On September 21st, Orange Audubon's monthly field trip to Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge was led by Brennan and Ethan Landreville, a father and son birding and photography team from Brevard County. Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge is one of the top birding locations in Florida. We saw migrant songbirds, shorebirds and the first of the overwintering waterfowl,

Hooded Warbler: A Migrating Beauty

As fall migration arrives I will be looking for tantalizing warblers that stop off in Central Florida on their flight south. Hooded Warblers are a favorite. The male of this species has bright yellow cheeks and forehead surrounded by a black hood and throat, an olive back, yellow abdomen, and a white spotted tail. Females lack a black hood but their bright yellow cheeks stand out from other species. These warblers are common throughout the eastern U.S. and in Florida during migration as they forage in shrubby undergrowth. They capture insects and spiders by picking them off leaves and the ground or by flying out to grab them. Their clever tail twitches reveal white flashes that facilitate their capture of prey by startling insects into flight.



Hooded Warbler, Photo: Brian Miller

Hooded Warblers don't visit feeders and may stop off in Florida only during migration; however you can attract them to your yard by planting native trees and shrubs. Native habitat provides excellent food for many birds and insects, requires less water, and is more beneficial to the environment. Check out your many options at the Florida Native Plant Society website: fnps.org.

Hooded Warblers nest near the edge of forests or near shrubby clearings. They place the structure in a shrub or sapling one to four feet above the ground and females weave together bark and grasses and stuff feathery down into a cup. They also may wrap dead leaves around the bottom of the nest making it look like a clump of dead leaves. Unfortunately Brown-headed Cowbirds lay eggs in the nests of these warblers and the unwitting warblers then raise the young Cowbirds. As a result the smaller warbler nestlings often perish because there isn't enough food to go around.

Despite this parasitism, the populations of Hooded Warblers increased one percent per year between 1960 and 2019 according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey. Partners in Flight estimates a global breeding population of 5.2 million and noted this species is of low concern to conservationists. How to find this exotic-looking warbler? Listen for its characteristic song—a short series of slurred musical notes with an emphatic ending tawee tawee teeoo. Or visit our many beautiful state parks and search for the dramatic yellow-and-black faces of these birds as they forage in the understory. Birders are already finding migrating warblers at Mead Botanical Garden in Winter Park and posting their sightings on ebird.org. Check it out!

Linda Carpenter

as well as resident birds like Roseate Spoonbills and Reddish Egrets. An exciting rarity found by Brennan, was a Smooth-billed Ani. This strange-billed relative of cuckoos and roadrunners is found in a few places in South Florida.

Join us on our next trip. We never know what we will find!
Kathy Rigling

Smooth-billed Ani found at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge on Orange Audubon trip September 21, 2024. Photo Kathy Rigling



Education Coordinator Update

Things are gearing back up for the fall Orange Audubon educational programs. I have been spending a lot of time working on our IDEAL proposal (see [September 2024 OASis, p.3](#)) with Deborah Green and Susan Thome-Barrett. We have made a great connection with the North Fork Audubon in New York. They are helping us to create a Spanish/English guide to Wetland Birds for our future bilingual outreaches. I have started to visit some schools again.



Above, Zellwood Elementary Birding Club, August 2024.
Photo: Kathy Rigling

This past month I went to Eustis Elementary to do the bird adaptations activity with the fifth-grade classes there. As always, the students really enjoyed doing the hands-on experiment on how different beaks are adapted to different food.

I've also visited Zellwood Elementary school for their monthly after school Birding club. This past month, the students learned some common bird song mnemonics, and then went outside to practice listening for birds. They were very excited to see an unknown raptor fly over and then land obscured in the woods. Everyone was very focused on figuring out what it was. It turned out to be a very light Red-tailed Hawk.

I also did a program for the Sandhill Collective homeschool group at Orlando Wetlands. The children learned about characteristics of birds and then went onto do a scavenger hunt down the boardwalk. There were 18 children ranging from ages two to about 10 years old. They really enjoyed watching an Anhinga as it was cooling itself on a log in the water. The numerous turtles were a big hit too.

We also did a bilingual trip to Orlando Wetlands with Audubon Florida. This was a collaboration with Faruk Bagsdah of Observatorio Ambiental Hispano. He brought over 20 adults and five children. He

also treated us all to some delicious fresh cut fruit and special tea. Everyone enjoyed taking a casual walk to the boardwalk and enjoying watching the Herons, Anhingas, Egrets and Gallinules as they fed in the water along the boardwalk.

Earlier in September, I assisted Boy Scout Troop 10, Apopka, as several boys completed their bird merit badge. I am a certified merit badge counselor for any scouting troops looking to complete that badge.

I also had my first of the year educational webinar on the Feathered Friends curriculum from the Cornell K-12 program. If you missed that webinar, you can watch it on our YouTube channel using [this link](#). Our next monthly free educational webinar will be on October 9th from 7:00-7:30 pm with a program about Audubon Adventures digital and print resources. The link to sign up is <http://eepurl.com/imGskMs>.

Lastly, I was able to attend the Green Schools awards program for OCPS and network with a lot of schools who are looking for resources to become more sustainable. I am very proud of Zellwood Elementary for being selected as the number one Green School in Orange County for 2023-24. They received that award for scoring the highest on a very rigorous application which showed how they were achieving sustainability in a wide variety of areas at their school. Our After School Birding Club photos of the students doing bird surveys were included.

Please email education@orangeaudubonfl.org to sign up for classroom or after school visits, or to request a class subscription to *Audubon Adventures* magazine.

Kathy Rigling, Education Coordinator



Delicious Dragonfly Snack—Great Egret with Halloween Pennants. 2024 Chertok Photo Contest Honorable Mention Winner, Youth Category. Photo: Lauren Chin

Young Birders Club Trip October 5, 2024

Orange Audubon Society is looking forward to a new season of activities for our Young Birders club. The Orange Audubon Young Birders Club has seasonal field trips for students from 8-17. Our trips are free for the young birders and their parent(s). We provide loaner binoculars as needed. Our kickoff event will be a field trip to Brownie Wise Park on October 5th. As of this writing, there are only six spots available. Brownie Wise Park is an excellent location in which one can bird many different habitats within a relatively small area.

In November, we will be going to the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge to visit various locations to look for early arriving wintering, ducks, shorebirds, songbirds, raptors and the plentiful wading birds that can be found there.

Leaders will be one of our top areas top young Birders, Ethan Landreville, and his father Brennan Landreville along with Lorri Lilja one of the top birders in our area, and myself, the Education Coordinator for Orange Audubon.



Young Birders Trip, April 2024. Photo: Susan Thome-Barrett

Registration is now open for both field trips on our website at this link: <https://orangeaudubonfl.org/activities/field-trips/> If you have a Young Birder in your family, you might want to consider joining the Florida Young Birders Club. It's a network of Young Birders and their families. Young Birders Club does offer some joint field trips, one overnight field trip, several Zoom programs throughout the season, and discounts on optics through Vortex. For more information and to join visit: <https://fosbirds.org/florida-young-birders-club/>

Please email me at riglingkathy@gmail.com to reserve a spot for you and your Young Birder or use the link. Loaner binoculars will be available upon request.

Kathy Rigling



NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL December 5-9, 2024

The NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL on Lake Apopka highlights the St. Johns River Water Management District's 20,000-acre Lake Apopka North Shore and other Central Florida birding hotspots. For Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) ninth annual festival, over 60 field trips extend

over 5 days, Thursday through Monday, December 5 through December 9, 2024. We suggest you visit the festival website at <https://northshorebirdingfestival.com/> and sign up for the mailing list to be notified of the start of registration, since many trips will fill quickly.

Our great birding locations and our incredible trip leaders are what makes this festival grow and participants return year after year. Although we do not have an exhibit hall for vendors, the festival does bring together a critical mass of leaders and participants to catch up on their common interest—birding.

Out-of-town participants contribute to the local economy and may visit again after the festival. The 2023 festival had participants from 18 states and Canada, plus over 60 Florida cities.

The start location for most field trips is the McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. Proceeds of the NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL support OAS' nature center fund and related educational programs. If you have any questions, email festival@orangeaudubonfl.org or call (407) 637-2525.

What's New This Year

The Saturday Dinner Keynote is by flamingo expert Steven Whitfield from New Orleans. Whitfield tells what he learned about flamingos being native to Florida and about Conchy, a flamingo from the Key West Naval Station that had to be rehabilitated and released.

If the flamingos flung by Hurricane Idalia are still at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, we will host kayak trips to see them.

The Friday Dinner Keynote will be a travelogue of our leaders' recent or favorite trips, moderated by popular trip leader Chris Newton.

A new trip is to Blue Springs State Park to see Florida Scrub-Jays and manatees, as well as take a boat trip on the St. Johns River. Connor Wagner, Blue Spring State Park biologist, along with Alan Shapiro, will lead. The trip includes a tram ride into Florida Scrub-Jay territory and is Thursday.

An additional new trip is to Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge in Volusia County. That trip is Friday and is led by new leader Danny Young (from New Smyrna Beach) along with new leader Tim Hardin (from Gainesville).

Another new trip is Birds in Flight, with Luis Gles and Mariah Hryniewich, the Florida Keys Hawkwatchers, and Maxfield Weakley, a photographer/birder. That trip is on Saturday.

Another new trip is St. Augustine Sparrows, put together by 17-year Young Birder Blair Clark, assisted by Susan Thome-Barrett. That trip is Sunday.

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

Deborah Green, Festival Chair

Bird Chats with OAS

Bird Chats are Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) weekly Zoom programs that include identification of mystery birds, discussion of new arrivals, and a topic of the week—generally a guest presentation.

Past Bird Chats are archived on [OAS' YouTube channel](#). We started these online offerings during the pandemic and seem to have found a niche, intermediate-level birders who love natural history.

Our programs receive hundreds and in some cases thousands of views, and we now have over a thousand Subscribers to our YouTube channel (it is free to subscribe and just is a way to show your appreciation for the channel).

Bird Chats are normally held each Thursday at 7 p.m., except the 3rd Thursday which is OAS' in-person program. Register at [this link](#) to watch and participate live and to be notified about upcoming programs. Please send suggestions for speakers and topics to info@orangeaudubonfl.org.



Early Morning American Flamingo. 2024 Chertok Photo Contest. Honorable Mention, Advanced Category. Photo: Daryl Roston



Scenes from the 2022 NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL. Above, photo: Luis Gles, below, photo: Jack Horton.

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Bird Chats with OAS via Zoom

Contact Deborah at info@orangeaudubonfl.org

- Bald Eagles and Snail Kites by Monica McKenzie

October 3, 2024

- Dry Tortugas National Park by Mitchell Walters

October 10, 2024

- International Shorebird Survey by Lisa Schibley

October 24, 2024

- Birding Central Florida by Maxfield Weakley

November 7, 2024

- Being a Seabird Observer on a Research Vessel by Allison Black

November 14, 2024

Mead Botanical Garden Bird Walk, Winter Park

October 5, 2024

Contact Linda at (941) 704-1189

Young Birders Field Trip, Brownie Wise Park

October 5, 2024

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

Oakland Nature Preserve Quarterly Survey

October 6, 2024

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

Mead Botanical Garden Bird Walk, Winter Park

October 12, 2024

Contact Linda at (941) 704-1189

Green PLACE Nature & Photography Hike

October 13, 2024

Contact Alicia at (407) 836-1481

Limited Edition Field Trip: Ferndale/Green Mountain

October 13, 2024

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

October Program: Bats, Myth and Reality by Shari Blissett Clark

October 17, 2024

Contact Alan at alanguardiflora@gmail.com

Backyard Biodiversity Day, Mead Botanical Garden, Winter Park

October 19, 2024

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

Mead Botanical Garden Bird Walk, Winter Park

October 19, 2024

Contact Linda at (941) 704-1189

Beginners Birdwatching Class

Orlando Wetlands Park, Mead and Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive

October 19, 22 and November 2, 2024

Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977

Wekiwa Springs State Park Bird Survey, Apopka

October 20, 2024

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

Rock Springs Reserve Survey Quarterly Survey

October 23, 2024

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559



Romance Rendezvous—Barred Owls. 2024 Chertok Photo Contest Honorable Mention Winner, Advanced Category. Photo: Amber Favorite

Apopka Birding Park Bird Survey

October 26, 2024

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

Mead Botanical Garden Bird Walk, Winter Park

October 26, 2024

Contact Linda at (941) 704-1189

Bilingual Walk at the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive

November 3, 2024

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

Birding by Bike: Green Mountain

November 9, 2024

Contact Alan at alanguardiflora@gmail.com

Wekiwa Springs State Park Bird Survey, Apopka

November 10, 2024

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

Young Birders Field Trip, Merritt Island

November 16, 2024

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

Monthly Field Trip Wekiwa Springs State Park

November 17, 2024

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

November Program: Wildlife and Nature Photography: Little things Mean a Lot by Wayne Bennett

November 21, 2024

Contact Alan at alanguardiflora@gmail.com

Apopka Birding Park Bird Survey

November 30, 2024

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL, Lake Apopka

Dec 5- 9, 2024

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

