



"The voice of Conservation in Central Florida"

OASis



*Orange Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society and Audubon of Florida*

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This Month's Program: February 19, 2004 - 7:00pm Saving the Whoopers, by Pat Casselberry

North America's largest bird, the whooping crane, was on the brink of extinction in the 1940s, when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began efforts to ensure its survival. One surviving wild population migrates between Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas, and Wood Buffalo National Park, Canada. Now we have a nonmigratory population started near Lake Kissimmee. You may have heard about cranes following ultralights and new efforts to establish a migratory population wintering in Chassaswitzka National Wildlife Refuge. Citrus County Audubon Society Vice President Pat Casselberry volunteers for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, providing outreach and other assistance to the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership (WCEP). Having been recognized last year by Audubon of Florida for best chapter education project, Pat Casselberry will share with us the story of this effort to save the whoopers.

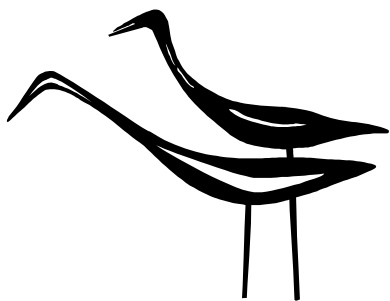
February Field Trip - Orlando Wetlands Park

On Saturday, February 21, 2004, we will travel to Orlando Wetlands Park in Christmas for our monthly field trip. We have been given permission to take motor vehicles on the berms so we will be able to cover much more of the property than we would normally be able to on foot. This also means those individuals who cannot do a 3 or 4-mile hike get to go on a field trip and enjoy this outstanding birding location.

Meet at the parking lot behind the

Burger King at the Hwy 50 (Colonial Dr.) and Alafaya Trail in time to get signed up, assigned to a vehicle and LEAVE at 7:30 A.M. Bring your binoculars, spotting scopes, field guides, water and lunch. We will bird until approximately noon and then enjoy a picnic lunch at one of the pavilions. Please join us for a fun time in the great outdoors.

If you have any questions, contact Dick Smith 407-834-2197 (Home), 407-257-7361 (Cell) or dick.smith@zepamfg.com.



Orange Audubon Society meetings are held the 3rd Thursday of every month (Sept - June) at 7:00pm in the Camellia Room at

*Harry P. Leu Gardens
1920 North Forest Avenue
Orlando, FL 32803-1537*

For directions, call 407-246-2620

January Field Trip Report DICK SMITH, FIELD TRIP CHAIR

As always, the field trip to Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, was one of the best of the year, and one of the best attended, with 21 birders partaking of this magnificent location. The weather was great and the birds plentiful. It has been many years since we had this many ducks on this property. Our count for the trip was 90 species. Some of the more notable species were: Common Loon, Northern Gannet, American Bittern, Reddish Egret, Roseate Spoonbill, Mottled Duck, Canvasback, Red-breasted Merganser,

Clapper Rail, Sora, American Avocet, Marbled Godwit, Bonaparte's Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Sandwich Tern and Florida Scrub Jay. But most important of all, we had a good group of experienced birders who made sure that the more inexperienced birders got to see everything! This is what makes these field trips successful, and I thank each and every one of them. All in all, it was a great day to be in the great outdoors with good birding friends.

President's Message LORETTA SATTERTHWAITE, PRESIDENT

In mid-January we had an oven bird in our yard under the hanging birdfeeders. That's a first for us at home. What exciting finds have you been seeing? Keep your binoculars handy for the upcoming Great Backyard Bird Count from February 13 to 16. Details can be found on page 6 of this month's OASis, or contact me (407/886-2925 or LNS-oas@att.net) if you need more information on this activity.

Have you had a chance to join any of the special 'field trips' that have been arranged this year? We appreciate the plan-

ning that went in to these events and the many hours spent by volunteers to make them available to you. There is one more hawk ID trip; why not take your favorite Valentine 'sky gazing' on February 14th? Check out the other field trip notices in this issue and try to join OAS for these events.

We're moving into a peak time for our fund-raising activities. We need volunteers for events this month, again in March and in April. Look for the articles in this and upcoming newsletters and please contact us to volunteer.

I'm looking for at least two non-board Orange Audubon members to serve on OAS' nominating committee. If you have an interest in serving in this way, please contact me. Thanks.



Conservation News PEGGY COX, CHAIR

One of the most important issues facing Florida is the need to adequately provide water for a growing population and to protect and preserve our natural systems and wildlife habitat. These 2 needs have been on a collision course for a while, and now the desires of the development/growth proponents and conservationists and environmentalists are at greater odds than ever before. The decisions that are made now about water, on all levels, will decide the future of our natural environment in Florida. Immediate threats include the never-ending proposals to local governments and water management districts to impact wetlands for development and increase consumptive use of water from the aquifer. We recently saw the WalMart proposal in east Orange County withdrawn before it was brought before the County Commission for a vote, due to the fierce opposition to the filling and mitigat-

ing of 17 acres of Class 1 wetlands. The WalMart argument, like so many others, is that it was to the public benefit to do so, and that mitigating the loss was adequate. The loss of functioning wetlands is never mitigated adequately, no matter how hard we try, especially when the mitigation usually is not on the site and the function of the impacted wetland is lost forever. Habitat loss, flood control, recharge and water storage are too important to continue this trend. OAS members monitor our local governments for these proposals, and I urge each of you to stay informed on development proposals in your local area and to let your elected officials know of your concern of loss of wetlands and upland buffers and the importance of these habitats.

To try and stop these trends, The Florida Water Coalition, Inc., formed last year by several environmental organizations including Audubon of Florida, 1000 Friends of Florida, Defenders of Wildlife, LEAF, Florida Wildlife Federation, Clean Water Network, was formed to:

1. Educate and communicate with official decision makers;
2. Interpret and propose policies and decisions for the benefit of the public;
3. Educate and mobilize local leaders, groups, allies and new constituencies; and
4. Publicize issues, proposals, and decisions through the media.

The Coalition helped host the recent Florida Water Congress, held in Alachua County on December 4th. I attended the Water Congress, and was encouraged by the commitment expressed by these organizations to protecting Florida's water resources and insuring adequate water for the viability of natural systems. Several panel discussions

were centered on the recent Council of 100's Water Task Force Report, "Improving Florida's Water Supply Management Structure". The report maintained that since water in Florida is a public entity, it is a State resource and should be managed as such, essentially to insure that adequate water will be available for the growing demand for more water for public supply. The report recommended a reorganization of State Water Policy, including establishing a State Water Commission, appointed by the Governor, to oversee Water Management District policies and decisions. Needless to say, most of the 300 attendees at the Water Congress opposed these recommendations. The problem of supplying water to our growing population was discussed at length, as was the necessity of protecting and preserving natural systems dependent on an adequate supply of clean water. The Florida Water Coalition Water Policy Plan to Protect Florida's Water from the Impact of Growth states several actions needed to protect Florida's water including:

1. Prohibit inter-basin transfers of water supply or transfer of permits to insure that water is continued to be treated as a public resource, not a commodity;
2. Limit guarantees of water for new growth so that development abides by the sustainable limits of local sources;
3. Prohibit state subsidies for water supply for new growth.
4. Protect water resources for the benefit of natural systems, fish, and wildlife by directing water managers to prioritize protecting and restoring natural water systems;
5. Put Florida's Nature based economy on par with the Growth Economy;

.....Continued on p3

The Orange Audubon Society (OAS) promotes the understanding of and an interest in wildlife and the environment, recognition of the intangible values in the remaining natural beauty of Florida and the World, and the responsibility for the conservation of these remaining resources.

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The OASis is published monthly from September through June and is sent free to all members of Orange Audubon Society.

<http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org>

Work/Play Volunteer Opportunity

OAS now has openings for volunteers at the Orlando Wetland Park Festival on Saturday, February 28, 2004, to assist with fundraising, membership, leading bird tours, and kids art activities. No experience is necessary. Event time is 9am-3pm, but we need coverage from 8am-4pm. You'll earn Double Rewards! You'll help OAS reach its revenue and outreach goals, while treating yourself to a "Must Attend" event that offers a unique glimpse of a city water treatment system that rivals other locales as a premiere wildlife/birding spot. If you can help, please call Teresa (407-644-0796) to sign up from 8am-12noon, 12noon-4pm, or name your time. All help is sincerely appreciated and earnestly needed.

Teresa Williams

Conservation.....from p2

6. Clean Water must be the highest priority in permit decisions and planning;
7. Investment in protecting, restoring and cleaning up Florida's Water should precede growth subsidies by redirecting State spending to the multi-million backlog of clean-up and protection projects.

You can access all of the Florida Water Coalition's policy papers at the following websites: www.floridacongress.org, or www.audubonofflorida.org, or the 1000 Friends of Florida website at www.1000friendsofflorida.org. Several bills dealing with water supply and environmental protection issues are being introduced soon in the upcoming Florida Legislature, that begins March 2nd. We all must keep informed on legislative actions, and let our concerns be known to our local legislators. You can follow important issues at the State level through the Audubon of Florida Advocacy Center at www.audubonofflorida.org, and get information on National issues at www.capitalconnect.com, the advocacy website of National Audubon.

To experience the one of the innovative ways to help insure adequate water for public needs, treat wastewater, and help provide water for natural wetland systems, be sure and attend the Orlando Wetlands Park Festival on Saturday, February 28th. Orange Audubon Society continues to support the innovation and promise this wetland treatment system has provided for water conservation and preserving wetland habitats for birds and wildlife. Join us and enjoy this unique system.

Don't Miss These Upcoming Field Trips

April 2004 Fort DeSoto Field Trip

Space is still available on the Ft. DeSoto Spring Migration Field Trip, but it is not a good idea to wait until the last to make your reservations. We can always cancel up until the last week, but we cannot get rooms that don't exist. We already know that at least one other Florida Audubon chapter is going to be at Eckerd College the same night. Seventy dollars (\$70.00) gets you a very nice room that sleeps two (2) people, or you can have your own room for the same price. The date is the Friday night, April 23, 2004, birding all the next day at one of the premier migration locations on the East coast. The sign up sheet will be in the lobby at the OAS meetings in February and March.

Birds of Prey ID Field Trips

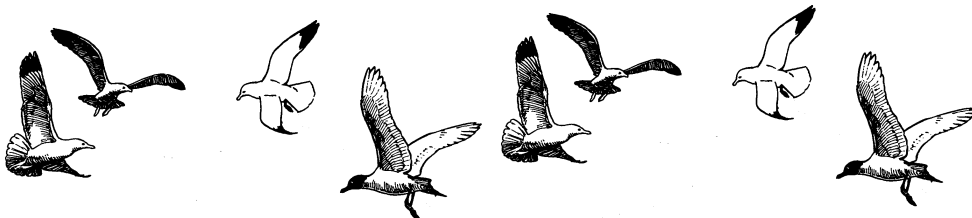
We have had two of the Birds of Prey ID Field Trips, which are led by Bob Sanders, with the third and final field trip coming on Saturday, February 14, 2003. The first two field trips have been very well received. If you want to learn more about hawks and other raptors, or just sharpen your identification skills, be at the old Bass Sod Farm gate at 9:00AM sharp. The gate is 1.1 miles west of Hwy 441 on Jones Ave. in Zellwood. This is an excellent location to see lots of these birds on the wing and working the fields.

Return to Roost Field Trips

The first Return to Roost Field Trip was a real delight. We didn't see as many birds as we would have liked, but it was a beautiful evening to get together. We sat around and socialized while enjoying snacks while flocks of Ibises and other returning birds entertained us. The sunset was absolutely glorious, and the photographers got some great shots. The next one of these trips will be the evening of the Orlando Wetlands Park Festival, February 28, 2004, weather permitting.

For all of these field trips, bring binoculars, spotting scopes, field guides, folding chairs, water and snacks to learn or just enjoy the great outdoors. If you have any questions, contact Dick Smith at 407-834-2197 (Home), 407-257-7361 (Cell) or email dick.smith@zepamfg.com.

Dick Smith, Field Trip Chair



Birdathon 2004

It may not feel like it now, but spring is quickly approaching, and with it, spring migration. That can mean only one thing: our yearly **Birdathon** fund-raiser!

This year's fund-raiser will be held on **Saturday, April 17th, 2004**. Now's the time to start planning your schedule, your strategies...and get a team together. Not only can you be out in nature having fun, you can help Orange Audubon Society at the same time!

Next month's OASis will contain a pledge sheet so that you can begin obtaining pledges to help us raise much needed funds for Orange Audubon Society. Start thinking about which of your friends, co-workers, and local businesses you can ask for help.

Claire Hilliker, Birdathon Co-chair



The Audubon Camp in Maine - Summer 2004 Programs at Hog Island For Adults, Youth, Teachers, and Families

Falmouth, Maine, Friday, January 16, 2004 - Since 1936, Hog Island in Midcoast Maine's Muscongus Bay has been a summer sanctuary and learning center for thousands of people from all parts of the country. At one time or another, many of the most noted names in Audubon's history have taught here, including Roger Tory Peterson and Alan Cruikshank. That tradition continues today at the Audubon Camp in Maine, where top instructors engage participants in a schedule of exceptional programs offered throughout the summer. For those who attend, this "Audubon Experience" becomes a treasured lifetime memory.

Programs for varied interests and ages - Audubon Camp offers a summer-long schedule of excellent programs. Adult workshops are designed for people who want to expand their knowledge and appreciation of nature in a focused and collegial environment. Programs in bird biology, coastal ecology, field drawing and journals, education, and sea kayaking are suitable for novice and experienced alike.

Camperships: A worthy fund-raising project for chapters - Every year, many Audubon Chapters, nature centers, and other compatible organizations provide camperships for local teachers, students, members, and other deserving individuals to attend a session at Hog Island. For many of these organizations, this is an important annual fund-raising project. Come as a group to one session, or spread the opportunities out over the course of the summer.

For a schedule and more information, contact The Audubon Camp in Maine, Maine Audubon Society, 20 Gilsland Farm Road, Falmouth, ME 04015, (888) 325-5261, www.maineaudubon.org/explore/camp/ .

Audubon Newswire, January 20/04



Audubon Center of the North Woods Announces Programs for 2004

Sandstone, Minnesota, Friday, January 16, 2004 - The Audubon Center of the North Woods and Hamline University are offering a number of exciting courses this winter, spring, and summer. While these courses are of great interest to teachers, they are also open to everyone who is curious about nature, loves to be outside, and who likes to learn.

This year, there is something for everyone, including online courses on Minnesota Natural History or Integrating Environmental Education, weekends on birds, winter, wolves, Native American Crafts, and much, much more. Summer offerings include the opportunity to study animal behavior in the badlands of South Dakota - learning about prairie dogs, bison, bighorns, coyotes, swift fox, birds, as well as the topography of this marvelous landscape. Or, you can canoe the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, discover the biomes of Minnesota, delve into the mysteries of Minnesota's aquatic systems, or explore the Lake Superior's shore from Duluth to Thunder Bay. Full program details can be found at www.audubon-center.org/College_programs.htm#graduate .

Current semester registration should be done through Hamline University, Registration and Records, 1536 Hewitt Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55104-1284. For advanced registration, scholarship recipients, non-credit pricing or further information, contact the Audubon Center of the North Woods at 1-888-404-7743 or Audubon1@audubon-center.org, or visit their web site at www.audubon-center.org. *Audubon Newswire, January 20/04*

Wekiva Recommendations to go to Legislature, Again!

On January 29th, members of the Wekiva Coordinating Committee approved 20 recommendations that will provide some much needed protection to the Wekiva River Basin if the legislature, which convenes on March 2, 2004, moves forward on the agreed upon measures. Of course, we all remember the disappointing handling of previous recommendations by last year's legislators, but the new committee had a broader representation and was still able to come to nearly unanimous consensus. The only holdout was Commissioner Bob Sindler, representative from northwest Orange County. Commissioner Sindler could not support the recommendation to build the Wekiva Parkway, a toll road to connect S.R. 429 in Apopka to I-4 in the Sanford area. Holding true to his commitment to his constituents who do not want the rural area developed, he said that the toll road was development-driven and that it would spur more development than would have otherwise occurred in the environmentally sensitive area. Other recommendations include land-use and environmental regulations for the area that would be some of the most comprehensive in Florida. Final wording of the report will be voted on in February; the bill will then be sent to Governor Bush and the bill will be filed. More information can be found at www.wekivacommittee.org.

Loretta Satterthwaite

OAS Board of Directors Volunteers

In September, Mary Keim was approved by the Board of Directors to fill the open board position that expires in June 2006 and in January, Kimberly Clough was approved to fill the final non-officer board vacancy, which expires in June 2005. Thanks Mary and Kimberly for volunteering.

We are still looking for someone who could serve as Secretary through June 2004; being able to attend the board meetings from 5:30 to 7:00 before the general meetings (third Thursday of each month, Feb-May) is a necessity. Please contact me (407/886-2925 or LNS-oas@att.net if you can help OAS in this way. Thanks.

Loretta Satterthwaite

Orlando Wetlands Park Festival February 28th, 2004 9am-3pm

Come and enjoy the Orlando Wetlands Park Festival on Saturday February 28, 2004, from 9am-3pm. This world renowned example of Wetlands Engineering is a 1,650 acre oasis for flora, fauna, and feathered friends near the Ft. Christmas Park in Christmas, Florida.

The Orlando Wetlands Park represents the world's first large scale wetlands treatment system. This wetland treatment system is a series of impoundments, which were planted with many different species of aquatic plants. These impoundments are now treatment marshes that polish excess nutrients from the reclaimed wastewater before it is discharged to the St. Johns River. The water that is sent to the St. Johns River is cleaner than the water within the river. So in a sense, the Wetlands are serving to help cleanup the St. Johns River.

On February 28, 2004, come and experience this unique Wetland Treatment System with the entire family. Event co-sponsor, the Orange Audubon Society, will lead guided birdwatching excursions; expert-guided nature photo shoots. The Florida Native Plant Society will lead native plant identification hikes and wilderness hikes will also be available by the Florida Trail Association. For those who like to sit and ride, guided bus tours will travel along the wetland berms, giving riders a chance to experience first hand, Florida's wild wetlands.

In addition to the numerous guided tours, there will be bird banding and mist-netting demonstrations, a rappelling demonstration, police canine demonstration, live folk music and Native American demonstrations. Featured in the various wildlife shows, many different live animals will be present such as alligators, Florida panthers, snakes, birds and many others. Food will be available for purchase.

There will be many interactive children's activities so bring the whole family and invite your friends and neighbors to this fun, free, educational festival. Bring your cameras, off-road bikes or sturdy hiking shoes, and prepare for an adventure in the wilderness. Horse Back ride and pony rides for the children will also be available. Free admission and free door prizes! For more information call The Orlando Wetlands Park at (407) 568-1706 or (407) 246-2213 or visit the City's website www.cityoforlando.net.

Directions:

To get to the Park, take S.R. 50 to Christmas, Florida. Turn north onto 420, Ft. Christmas Rd and travel 2.3 miles, then turn onto Wheeler Road and travel 1.5 miles.

Rain Date: March 6, 2004

Web Site Information: www.nbbd.com/festivals/OrlandoWetlands/index.html



Connect children to nature in your community with AUDUBON ADVENTURES!

Do you know a student (grades 3-6) who might be interested in the environment, perhaps your child or grandchild?

AUDUBON ADVENTURES is an environmental education program for children in grades 3 to 6. Developed by professional environmental educators, AUDUBON ADVENTURES presents basic, scientifically accurate facts about birds, wildlife, and their habitats. It comes to you packaged as a Classroom Kit (serving 32 students) or Individual Kit (serving 1 student). The program is used by classroom teachers, after-school program coordinators, special education instructors, language arts teachers, and homeschoolers.

The goal of AUDUBON ADVENTURES is to develop in young people an appreciation, awareness, and understanding of the natural world -- birds, other wildlife, and all living things; the habitats, systems, and interplay of forces that affect living things; and the connections between people and nature.

Sponsor an AUDUBON ADVENTURES classroom! A check to Orange Audubon in the amount of \$41.50 will send a package of environmental lessons for the children, a teacher's guide, a poster, and other materials to the Orange County classroom of your choice. Note on your check that the (tax deductible) donation is for AUDUBON ADVENTURES and mail it to OAS at the address listed on page 2.

Thanks!

IN MEMORIAM

Orange Audubon Society is saddened by the loss of one of our longtime members and a past board member, Alex Alexander, on January 3rd, 2004.

Born in Yugoslavia and educated at the Technical University in Munich, Germany, Alex immigrated to the United States in 1951. Alex worked as an engineer in both New York and Florida before moving on to work for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for 24 years. He retired as Director, Central District in 1994.

After retiring from DEP, Alex continued with his passion for protecting the environment. He was actively involved with the Orange Audubon Society, having served on the Board of Directors, and as Conservation Committee chair.

Alex's tireless efforts on behalf of the environment earned him countless honors and awards, including a Key to the City of Orlando, the Florida Engineering Society's Engineer of the Year award, and an environmental engineering professorship established in his name at the University of Central Florida.

Our thoughts go out to his family. He will be sorely missed.

OAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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EDUCATION Deborah Green & Leesa Sward
FIELD TRIPS Dick Smith
FINANCE Milton Heiberg
HOSPITALITY Tom & Ruth Williams
MEMBERSHIP Mike Daley
NEWSLETTER Claire Hilliker

Calendar of Events

February 7, 2004 - Saturday
LANSRA Bird Survey; 7:30am-Noon.
Pam Bowen 386-329-4870
pbowen@sjrwmd.com

February 13-16, 2004 - Fri-Mon
Great Backyard Bird Count
<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>

February 14, 2004 - Saturday
Field Trip - Birds of Prey ID @ LANSRA
Dick Smith 407-834-2197
dick.smith@zepamfg.com

February 14, 2004 - Saturday
Hal Scott Regional Preserve & Park and Long Branch Park Bird Survey. Call Lorne Malo (407-349-2536)

February 19, 2004 - Thursday
General Meeting, 7:00pm, Leu Gardens.OAS Board Meeting takes place prior to the General Meeting at 5:30pm. All welcome. Loretta Satterthwaite 407-886-2925

February 21, 2004 - Saturday
Field Trip - Birds of Prey ID @ LANSRA
Dick Smith 407-834-2197
dick.smith@zepamfg.com

February 21, 2004 - Saturday
Dr. Kelly Day, Kelly Park, Apopka FL
Loretta Satterthwaite 407-886-2925

February 21, 2004 - Saturday
Hal Scott Regional Preserve & Park and Long Branch Park Butterfly Survey. Call Randy Snyder (407-851-5416) or Lorne Malo (407-349-2536)

February 28, 2004 - Saturday
Orlando Wetlands Park Festival; 9am-3pm.
Mark Sees 407-568-1706

February 28, 2004 - Saturday
Return to Roost - Orlando Wetlands Park
Dick Smith 407-834-2197
dick.smith@zepamfg.com

March 27-28, 2004 - Sat-Sun
Leu Gardens Plant Sale, Happy P. Leu Gardens
Teresa Williams 407-644-0796

April 2-4, 2004 - Fri-Sun
Big "O" Birding Festival; Lake Okeechobee FL
www.bigbirdingfestival.com

April 23-24, 2004 - Fri-Sat
Ft. DeSoto Field Trip; St. Petersburg FL
Dick Smith 407-834-2197
dick.smith@zepamfg.com

Have Fun with the 2004 Great Backyard Bird Count!

As in years past, Audubon, in conjunction with the Cornell Lab or Ornithology (CLO), wants to take a snapshot of North American bird populations and YOU can help them during the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) on February 13-16, 2004. Everyone's contribution is important. It doesn't matter whether you identify, count, and report the 5 species coming to your backyard feeder or the 75 species you see during a day's outing to a wildlife refuge.

All you need is basic knowledge of bird

identification and access to the Internet at home, a friend's house, local library, school, or anywhere you can get access to the web. Count the birds in your backyard, local park, or other natural area on one or all four count days. Then simply go to the GBBC web site (www.birdsource.org/gbbc) and enter your data. That's all there is to it!

You can do it at your leisure so it can be a fun family activity that even the kids can participate in. And the more people who participate in this project, the more data will

be able to be collected to help researchers help our feathered friends, so join us won't you?



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