



"The voice of Conservation in Central Florida"

OASis



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

VOLUME 40

DECEMBER 2004

NUMBER 4

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This Month's Program: December 16, 2004 - 7:00pm Whatever happened to the Galapagos tortoise? by Peter Pritchard, PhD

Dr. Peter Pritchard is the world's leading expert on turtles and tortoises, author of numerous book and articles, founder of the Chelonian Research Institute in Oviedo, and Time Magazine's Hero of the Planet of the year for 2000. Among the endangered tortoises Dr. Pritchard is studying and working to conserve are the famous Galapagos tortoises. The only known surviving tortoise on Pinta Island, nicknamed Lonesome George, will be the last of his race unless a mate is found. In October, Dr. Pritchard led a three-week expedition in conjunction with the Galapagos National Park Service to search for Pinta tortoises. He will share what he has learned with us on December 16. Join us for a fascinating program!
Deborah Green, Vice President

December Field Trip - Join a Christmas Bird Count

Orange Audubon Society and the National Audubon Society calls upon volunteers everywhere to join with birders across the western hemisphere and participate in Audubon's longest-running winter-time tradition, the annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC).

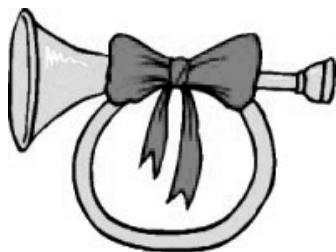
The data, 100% volunteer generated, have become a crucial part of the U.S. Government's natural history monitoring database. Conservation, scientific, and birding communities embrace CBC data for their value for long-term analyses and general interest. With the continuing data cleanup, minor protocol tweaks, and improvements to data output, the heralded efforts of all Christmas Bird Count compilers and participants will be of even more value to the birds we're all counting!

Because of three Christmas Bird Counts in the immediate area, we will not have a field trip in December. Instead, you are urged to participate in one of these worthwhile experiences and all levels of birders are encouraged to help out. Local counts and their dates and contacts are:

Wekiva River Basin – count will be held on Saturday, Dec. 18th. Contact Fred Harden (407-323-5678) or Kathy Hale (407-854-3550).

Econlockhatchee River Basin - count will be held on Sunday, Dec. 26th. Contact Lorne Malo (407-349-2536/407-659-4853).

Zellwood-Mt. Dora (Lake Apopka area) - count will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 22nd. Contact Wes Biggs (407-384-9766 or [cell] 407-376-6967).



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

President's Message LORETTA SATTERTHWAITE, PRESIDENT

I hope you are all enjoying a relaxing holiday season. This is a superb time of year to get out and enjoy nature. The weather is usually very nice — not too hot and not yet too cold. While you are out strolling along, be sure to have your camera ready to take that winning photo for our 17th annual Chertok Nature Photography Contest. You have plenty of time before the deadline, but you might see that spectacular shot now — perhaps on one of the Christmas Bird Counts. Sunrises and sunsets always make nice contest entries and since

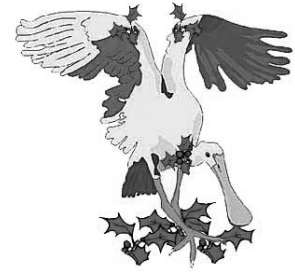
these are 24-hour counts (don't be scared off — not everyone goes for the full 24 hours!), it could be a perfect opportunity for you.

For you last minute shoppers, t-shirts and other nature items will be available at the December 16th Orange Audubon meeting. It's a great way to support the local chapter. (Sorry, we're unable to accept credit cards.)

Remember to keep your feeders filled and some water close by for our visiting feathered friends. What have you seen lately? We're seeing lots of

Cedar Waxwings and Goldfinches.

My sincere wishes to each of you for a safe and peaceful holiday season and the best of New Years.



Conservation News PEGGY COX, CHAIR

Good News - Florida voters in many locales overwhelmingly approved various ballot measures for land acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands, protection of rural areas and green space, and growth management amendments to establish limits on governments land uses that promote urban sprawl into rural areas. Miami-Dade county, Brevard county, Duval county and others around the State gave voter approval to measures that help protect our dwindling natural resources. In Seminole county a charter amendment to give the County the final control on any future development in the eastern half of the county, near Oviedo and Winter Springs, won support of 56% of the voters. The

County wants to limit growth into the rural areas of eastern Seminole county, while the cities want to annex lands for urban growth in those rural areas. Similarly, in Volusia county 71% of the voters approved a measure to establish urban-growth boundaries around their cities and towns to protect the county's rural lands, particularly in the center of the county. Osceola and Lake counties passed ballot initiatives to establish county land acquisition programs for protecting and preserving environmentally sensitive lands, open space, and parks and trails. Orange Audubon member, Terry Godts was one of the leaders of the Lake County campaign that resulted in 71% of the voters approving the bond issue. Also in Lake County, a local grass roots coalition, The Citizens Coalition of Lake County, successfully campaigned for a Charter amendment to the Groveland City Charter to limit building densities on city lands located in the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern. That amendment was approved by 72% of the voters in Groveland. Orange Audubon members Peggy Cox and Nancy Fullerton are founding members of the Citizens Coalition.

The Bad News is that there are legal challenges to several of these voter approved initiatives to control growth and protect environmentally important resources in several counties. Developers

and the Volusia Home Builders Association had sued Volusia County before the election saying the ballot language of the charter amendment was unclear. They won in Circuit Court and the decision was appealed to the 5th District Court of Appeals. On November 19th the District Court agreed with the Circuit court, saying the language was "political rhetoric" and violated laws requiring clear ballot language. 71% of Volusia county voters seemed to understand the language just fine, but the development interests have prevailed in Court at this time. A similar story in Lake county, where Banyan Construction & Development and several other local builders have sued the City of Groveland alleging the amendment wording is vague and misleading, and that it also unfairly restricts development in the Green Swamp area. 72% of Groveland voters seemed to think development SHOULD be restricted in the Green Swamp. What a concept that the voters of a community should have the right to tell their governments that they expect them to protect and preserve, not only important environmental resources, but protect their communities from the burdens of poorly planned, sprawling development! While these issues are still being litigated in Volusia and Lake counties, the development interests have the financial resources to eventually outspend

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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.

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

President.....Loretta Satterthwaite (lins-oas@att.net)
407-886-2925
Address Change.....Mike Daley (miked@atlantic.net)
386-668-5021
Editor.....Claire Hilliker (hilliker@iag.net)
407-677-5374

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

<http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org>

Volunteers Make Lake Eola Fundraiser Best Ever

Sincere thanks go to a dynamite team of volunteers who helped OAS during the two-day Lake Eola Fiesta in the Park Arts and Crafts Festival. This fun fundraising event on November 6th & 7th would not have been possible without Susan Anderson, Margie Brown, Chris Gandy, Claire Hilliker, Elsa Millard, Ellen Rocco, Kimberly Rougeux, Regina Russell, Leesa Sward and Suzie Warren's enthusiastic help. Bob Stamps also pitched in by 'pitching tent' Friday evening to make the initial set up for us girls on Saturday morning a breeze.

Free participation, courtesy of the City of Orlando, plus a premium location, courtesy of the Fiesta in the Park Committee, combined with beautiful weather and brisk sales (did I mention fantastic volunteers?) to make this our most successful Fiesta fundraiser ever.

OAS' next fundraising events: December 4th, Winter Park Farmer's Market, 7am until 1pm and February 26th, Orlando Wetlands Park Festival, 9am until 3pm. If you can handle enormous fun, contact Teresa: 407-644-0796 or mwilliams@cfl.rr.com. We hope to hear from you.

Loretta Satterthwaite and Teresa Williams

conservation... from p2

and outlast the environmental coalitions and citizens supporting these amendments to their government's charters. The voters seem to understand what good development and environmental protection are, but our elected officials seem mainly to hear the voices of development interests bent on covering us with roads and rooftops, no matter the cost to our communities and our natural resources. Please join us as we continue to educate everyone about our wonderful natural habitats in Central Florida. The next Conservation Committee meeting will be in January, time and place will be announced in the January OASis. For information please call me at 352-429-1042 or email pegcox@att.net.

Thanks to St. Johns River Water Management Staff

We want to thank the very friendly staff from St. John's River Water Management for their kind sacrifice of their weekends to escort our members and guests on exciting trips through their Lake Apopka properties. They are not just great stewards of this unique area, but are talented and entertaining hosts! We appreciate not only their time but also the great knowledge of biology and ecology that they so enthusiastically share with us on our field trips and course times at LANSRA. Thank you "team" for the privilege of touring this beautiful tract and the great wildlife experiences it offers us!

Your Orange Audubon board also wants everyone to know that our appreciation of this area needs to include special respect for the "sanctity" of the property. Please pass on to anyone that expresses interest in LANSRA to you that this is a locked property that can only be accessed with ESCORT of St. John's Water Management staff. This property was formerly farm property that was the unfortunate recipient of decades of pesticides and herbicides. St. John's has worked wonders in cleaning up the property and research projects are still in progress in many areas of LANSRA. It is for these reasons that you find locked gates on all road entrances. The LANSRA management is dedicated in their efforts to protect all visitors from any harm. It is for these reasons that while visiting we must stay on marked roads at all times and avoid intrusion on any of the fenced research areas. Let's work with this great staff that wants to kindly share the property with the public so that we can continue to enjoy access for years to come!

November Field Trip Report

BOB FERGUSON, FIELD TRIP CHAIR

What a beautiful day thirty members and guests found to tour the great "bird attraction" that we have on the north shore of Lake Apopka! In a state that boasts theme parks for any subject imaginable, this wonderful area is definitely one of our delightful "bird parks". We are truly privileged to be allowed to "tour" the berms, fields, and marshes that the St. John's Water Management District is so capably restoring! (please see related article) We enjoyed teaching and learning as we encountered over 57 bird species as well as bobcats (had to be there early), turtles, snakes, "gators", otters (had to be fast), many butterflies, and other Florida "critters". It was also a treat to have the time to participate in some "interpretive birding" as we had the vantage-point to observe birds of prey work the fields and air and smaller species glean their dinner from the plants and ground. The elevated berms always allow special viewing that is sometimes missed in scrub and forest. Some special sightings were: Dickcissel (a first for several), blue grosbeak, northern harrier, several eagles and cooper's hawks, loggerhead shrike, Bal-

timore oriole, Ring-necked duck, and a Krider's variant of the Red-tailed Hawk.

We want to thank Paul Ek from St. John's for his Saturday the he gave us in leading us through the property. He was a great help and a delightful "tour guide"! I want to personally thank the talented birder members of Orange Audubon that so patiently teach me and other "new birders" the names and behaviors of our many Florida birds. You are really a treasure of knowledge and a joy to be around!

If you missed this trip, be sure not to miss being a part of a Christmas bird count! You will find the same fun experiences and willingness to teach demonstrated there as you do on our field trips. Experienced or "new to birding", you're needed for these counts. We don't have a December field trip for this reason, so be sure to get away from the malls long enough to participate in a bird count this year! See you in January for the next Birds of Prey I.D. course (Jan. 15th) and our field trip to Merritt Island National Wildlife Reserve (Jan. 22nd). Great Holidays to you all!

Announcing 2005 Chertok Photo Contest A New Theme — A Pot Full of Prizes

The theme for Orange Audubon Society's 2005 (17th Annual) Chertok Open Nature Photography Contest is "Florida's Natives: Birds and Beyond".

Although the theme has changed, contest rules are the same. This is a 35-mm slide competition, open to all ages. Subject matter must be native to Florida and may not contain humans, human-made structures or artifacts or significant non-native (to Florida) fauna or flora. Enter up to 4 slides at \$2.50 each for Audubon members and \$4 each for non-members. Non-members who join Orange Audubon (OAS) when submitting a contest entry form (membership application on back) also pay just \$2.50 each.

Audubon organizations, while focusing on birds, are concerned with conservation and education about all wildlife and wild environments. OAS' mission, like the contest objectives, seeks to foster your interest in all of Florida's wildlife and natural areas, not just birds. Hence, we encourage entries depicting any of Florida's native animals, native plants, natural landscapes, seascapes, and the like.

Enter for the love of nature photography and for the chance to win a bounty of prizes totaling \$450! Locally owned Colonial Photo & Hobby will contribute three in-store gift certificates, values of \$100; \$50 and \$25, respectively, to complement OAS' cash prizes of \$125; \$75 and \$50, respectively for 1st through 3rd place winners. Winning entries also vie for placement on the cover of OAS' next annual brochure and the opportunity to be featured in a store display(s) at Colonial Photo & Hobby (CPH).

Pick up application forms at all future OAS meetings or at CPH, 634 N. Mills Avenue, Orlando, FL. You may also download and print a PDF file from OAS' website: www.orangeaudubonfl.org using free Adobe Acrobat. For additional information, contact Teresa: phone 407-644-0796 or e-mail mwilliams@cfl.rr.com.



New Bird Surveys in Need of Volunteers

A T-shirt in Every Stocking

If you attend the December meeting you'll have one final opportunity to purchase a 'must have' OAS T-shirt, tote bag or perhaps one of Dr. Poole's custom made nest boxes. They make great holiday gifts for you as well as for others. If you placed a special order, please pick up your item(s) at this meeting. Don't forget to bring cash or check, 'cause OAS doesn't do plastic. Thank you for supporting your local chapter through this and other fundraising efforts. Have a safe, happy holiday season.

Teresa Williams, Treasurer

LAKE LOUISA STATE PARK: Volunteers are needed for a new bird survey to be conducted once a month at Lake Louisa State Park, starting Saturday, February 12, 2005. Lake Louisa State Park is located in south Lake County, about 7 miles south of Clermont on US Hwy 27. The Park has a variety of habitats covering its 4,500 acres, including 6 lakes, 11 distinct natural communities and 105 acres of shoreline on Lake Louisa. Restoration of lands added to the original acreage of the Park that were previously planted for citrus and timber is an ongoing priority at the Park. The Park is part of the eastern boundary of the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern, a conservation priority for Audubon in this region. The bird surveys are tentatively scheduled to be conducted on the second Saturday of each month from approximately 7:30am to noon. If you are interested in volunteering for the first survey in February, please contact Peggy Cox, at 352-429-1042, or pegcox@att.net.

MEAD GARDENS: In order to compile a new bird checklist for one of our favorite local parks, Dexter Richardson will be conducting a monthly bird survey of Mead Gardens. Surveys will be held on the 3rd Saturday of each month at 8:00am. Anyone wishing to take part should meet inside Mead Gardens in front of the Garden Club building prior to the 8:00am start time. The survey will take approximately 2 hrs. Those interested should contact Dexter Richardson at 407-760-8193 or dex@dexwine.com for additional information about this survey.



Clary Elected to Soil and Water Conservation District

Congratulations goes out to OAS Board Member Susan Clary who was successful in her bid to become one of Orange County's Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors. Following the January 4, 2005 swearing in ceremony, she and four other locally elected district supervisors will begin their terms serving our citizens and conserving our resources.

The Orange County Soil and Water Conservation District was created in 1946 when residents of Orange County voted it in by referendum under the provision of Florida "Soil and Water Conservation Law" Chapter 582, enacted by the State legislature in 1937. It is one of 64 districts in Florida which were organized for the purpose of developing and carrying out conservation for Florida's soil and water resources, such as the preservation of local natural resources, flood control, maintaining the navigability of rivers and harbors, wildlife preservation, protection of the tax base, and protection of public lands.

The District is governed by a board of five locally elected supervisors. Supervisors are non-salaried public officials with an interest in the proper use and conservation of soil, water and other natural resources in order to benefit the people of the district and the state. Monthly meetings are open to the public and are held in the Orange County Council Chambers at the Orange County Administration Building on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 4:00pm.



Batchelor Foundation Gives Audubon of Florida \$3 Million

Miami, FL, Friday, November 12, 2004 - Audubon of Florida, a state office of the National Audubon Society, announces the largest single gift in its 104-year history. The Batchelor Foundation, based in South Florida, has awarded a \$3 million grant to support Audubon of Florida's new strategic vision.

\$1.5 million will be paid immediately. The second \$1.5 million is a dollar-to-dollar matching challenge grant for subsequent funds raised over the next two years. Initial funds will support and enhance Audubon of Florida's important science program work.

Audubon of Florida Executive Director David Anderson, the moving force behind the creation of the Strategic Vision since his arrival in April 2004, said:

"We cannot thank the Batchelor Foundation enough for this very generous gift. We appreciate the confidence the grant demonstrates in our new strategic planning process and in the capabilities of our exceptionally qualified science staff."

Aviation pioneer and philanthropist George Batchelor created the Batchelor Foundation. A self-made millionaire, Batchelor left nearly all of his fortune to the Foundation, primarily to promote research, treatment, and cures of childhood diseases and illness, and to preserve and protect the natural environment.

For the full story, visit www.audubon.org/news/press_releases/Batchelor_Gift.html.

Its That Time of the Year Again!

The City of Orlando and the Orange Audubon Society are hard at work collaborating on the next big Orlando Wetlands Festival. We are planning this year's festival to be bigger and better than ever. February 26, 2005, from 9am until 3pm is the date and time to remember. We will need all of the volunteers that we can muster. So make your plans to come out and experience this unique wetland area with the entire family. Along with the bird-watching and various other hikes and excursions we will be offering guided horseback rides and pony rides for the children. We will also have guided bus tours for those who like to sit back and take it all in from the comfort of a seat. Make your plans to come on out and experience first hand, Florida's wild wetlands. As always this event is free to all. If you have any questions, please call Olabisi Cox at 407-246-2213 or Mark Sees at 407-568-1706. More information will be coming in the coming months.



If this is your idea of nature....it's time to get outside!

Orlando Wetlands Festival 2005

Orlando Wetlands Park * Saturday - February 26, 2005 from 9am to 3pm
Admission is Free to All!

***Backyard Tree Giveaways* Refreshment Booths* Wildlife Shows
Face Painting Door Prizes* Exhibits**

Live Wild Animals* Interactive Displays* Guided Birding Hikes* Guided Wilderness Hikes* Guided Native Plant ID Hike* Guided Bus Tour of Wetlands*
Animal Catch & Release Demo* Out-on-a-limb Kids Tree Climbing* Rappelling Demo by Orlando Fire Dept* Canine Demo by Orlando Police Dept*
Mounted Patrol Demo by Orlando Police Dept
...and much, much, more!

Sponsored by The City of Orlando and the Orange Audubon Society - For More Info Call (407)246-2213 or (407)568-1706

OAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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MEMBERSHIP Mike Daley

NEWSLETTER Claire Hilliker

Calendar of Events

November 27, 2004 - Saturday
Hal Scott Regional Preserve & Park and Long
Branch Park Butterfly Survey.
Randy Snyder 407-851-5416

December 4, 2004 - Saturday
OAS Fundraiser - Winter Park Farmer's Market
7:00am-1:00pm. For more info or to volun-
teer, call Teresa Williams 407-644-0796

December 4, 2004 - Saturday
LANSRA Bird Survey; 7:30am-Noon.
Pam Bowen 386-329-4870
pbowen@sjrwm.com

December 16, 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

December 18, 2004 - Saturday
Mead Gardens Bird Survey; 8:00am-10:00am.
Dexter Richardson 407-760-8193
dex@dexwine.com

December 18, 2004 - Saturday
Wekiwa River Basin CBC. Contact Fred Harden
407-323-5678 or Kathy Hale 407-854-3550

December 25, 2004 - Saturday
Hal Scott Regional Preserve & Park and Long
Branch Park Butterfly Survey.
Randy Snyder 407-851-5416

December 22, 2004 - Wednesday
Zellwood-Mt. Dora CBC. Contact Wes Biggs
407-384-9766 or 407-376-6967 (cell).

December 26, 2004 - Sunday
Econlockhatchee River Basin CBC. Contact Lorne
Malo 407-349-2536 or 407-659-4853

January 15, 2005 - Saturday
Birds of Prey ID Class - Lake Apopka North Shore
Restoration Area, Zellwood
Bob Sanders 407-898-9798

January 15-17, 2005 - Sat-Mon
Everglades BirdFest, Everglades Nat'l Park
Broward Co. Audubon Society 954-776-5585.
www.browardaudubon.org/birdfest.htm

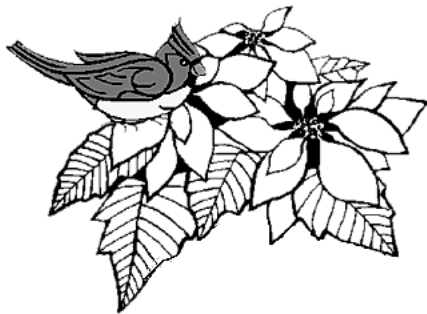
January 20, 2005 - Thursday
General Meeting, 7:00pm, Leu Gardens.
OAS Board Meeting takes place prior to the
General Meeting at 5:30pm. All welcome.
Loretta Satterthwaite 407-886-2925

January 22, 2004 - Saturday
OAS Field Trip - Merritt Island NWR, Titusville
Bob Ferguson 407-644-7850
rfergusonhsd@earthlink.net

February 12, 2005 - Saturday
Birds of Prey ID Class - Lake Apopka North Shore
Restoration Area, Zellwood
Bob Sanders 407-898-9798

February 18-21, 2005 - Fri-Mon
Great Backyard Bird Count
www.Birdsource.org/GBBC

February 26, 2005 - Sat
Orlando Wetlands Festival, Christmas FL
Mark Sees 407-567-1706, Olabisi Cox 407-246-2213



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

May you and yours have a safe and joyous holiday season.

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