



"The voice of Conservation in Central Florida"

OASis



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

VOLUME 42

March 2007

NUMBER 7

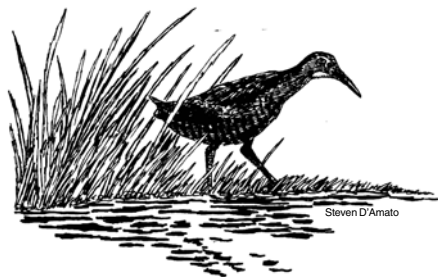
In this Issue...

This Month's Program p1
Field Trips p1, 5, 6
Join us for a Special Event in March p2
Conservation News p2
Volunteers Needed for Lake Eola Festival .. p3
Past President's Article p3
Subject Matters for CNPC p3
OAS Birdathon Pledge Sheet p4
OAS Birdathon 2007 p5
Calendar of Events p6

This Month's Program: March 15, 2007 - 7:00pm Florida Bats by George and Cindy Marks

Thirteen species of bats are either year round or seasonal residents within our state, some forming colonies and some roosting alone. Poorly known because they come out at night, bats tend to be feared rather than appreciated. But all of our bat species eat insects. Our March speakers George and Cindy Marks of the Florida Bat Conservancy in the Clearwater area will educate us on these beneficial creatures. George and Cindy will bring their new book *Bats of Florida* for sale and signing. They will also bring several bats, so this is a good program for children. Bring your questions on bats of our area and how we can help bats maintain their habitat.

Join us March 15 for an interesting and informative program.
Deborah Green, Vice President



March Field Trip - Lyonia Preserve

On Saturday, March 17th, OAS will visit Lyonia Preserve in Deltona. Lyonia Preserve is a 380-acre Volusia County property featuring a restored scrub ecosystem. The restoration was designed to provide suitable habitat for scrub-dependent species, including the Florida Scrub-Jay. You may want to consider wearing a hat when you visit as protection from head pecks by Florida

Scrub-Jays.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot of McDonalds just north of SR 46 and just east of I-4. Bring lunch, drink and birding gear. For more information about the trip, call us at 407-851-5416.

Mary Keim and Randy Snyder
Field Trip Committee

Reminders...

- ... OAS Birdathon 2007 will be on March 31. See page 4-5 for details.
- ... Volunteers are needed for Lake Eola event. See page 3 for details.

February Field Trip Report MARY KEIM, FIELD TRIP CHAIR

Twelve OAS birders attended the trip to Orlando Wetlands Park on February 17th. Although the day began with ice on the windshield, it warmed up to be a beautiful day. The group observed at least 67 bird species including American Bittern, Green Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Wood Stork, Blue-winged Teal, Osprey, a Red-shouldered Hawk carrying a snake, American Coot, Common Moorhen, Purple Gallinule, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe,

Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Common Yellowthroat, Savannah Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, and Brown-headed Cowbird.

Thanks to all attendees for their help with finding birds. We kept track of numbers as well as species to submit the data to the Great Backyard Bird Count sponsored by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society.

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

The Swamp: The Everglades, Florida, and the Politics of Paradise by Michael Grunwald, The Washington Post

Join us on March 27th as author Michael Grunwald presents his recent book *The Swamp: The Everglades, Florida, and the Politics of Paradise*, in an event sponsored by Orange Audubon Society, Central Florida Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Nature Conservancy, and the Florida Humanities Council. The Everglades was once reviled as a liquid wasteland, and Americans dreamed of draining it. Now it is revered as a national treasure, and Americans have launched the largest environmental project in history to try to save it. The Swamp is the stunning story of the destruction and possible resurrection of the Everglades, the saga of man's abuse of nature in southern Florida and his unprecedented efforts to make amends. Michael Grunwald, a prize-winning national reporter for The Washington Post, takes readers on a riveting journey from the Ice Ages to the present, illuminating the natural, social and political history of one of America's most beguiling but least understood patches of land.

The talk will be on March 27 at 7pm at Leu Gardens in the Camellia Room. Books will be available for sale and signing. Leu Gardens is located at 1920 N. Forest Ave, Orlando, phone: (407) 246-2620. The talk is free and open to the public. For further information, call 407-553-0028.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY:

Michael Grunwald is a reporter on the national staff of The Washington Post. He has won the George Polk Award for national reporting, the Worth Bingham Prize for investigative reporting, and the Society of Environmental Journalists award for in-depth reporting. He has covered everything from AIDS in Africa to Hillary Clinton's Senate campaign to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina; he wrote the Post's lead news story about the September 11 attacks.

In March 2006, Simon & Schuster published his first book, the critically acclaimed *The Swamp: The Everglades, Florida, and the Politics of Paradise*. Publishers Weekly called it "enthraling," the Palm Beach Post called it "magnificent," the Washington Post called it "a brilliant work of research and reportage," and the New York Times called Grunwald "a terrific writer."

Mike lives in Miami with his wife, Cristina Dominguez, and their Boston terrier, Shamu.

Conservation News

PEGGY COX, CHAIR

Orange Audubon and Audubon of Florida commented on the proposed Gopher Tortoise Management Plan that is currently being formulated by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). The Gopher Tortoise Stakeholder Committee that has met to come up with the new plan proposed uplisting the tortoise to a threatened species in Florida. The policy of "incidental take" would be eliminated except in very rare circumstances. Audubon agrees with the majority of stakeholders that "incidental" take should be eliminated and serves no conservation purpose. The cruelty aspect of burying the tortoises alive in their

burrows is what "incidental take" actually means. A developer of a parcel of land can buy a permit to "take" the tortoises by covering over the burrows and leveling the property. A practice that should have been stopped long ago and only exists as the most expedient method for development of land inhabited by tortoises.

Sand hill and scrub habitat favored by gopher tortoises is also home to other imperiled species in Florida like the Scrub-jay and sand skink. Tortoises can be relocated to a gopher tortoise preserve or appropriate habitat on State lands. Another option is part of a parcel of land can be preserved with habitat that will accommodate the tortoises and other species on the parcel that is being developed.

Public Comment is still being accepted by FWC until April 4, 2007, before the new Gopher Tortoise Management Plan is finalized. You can read the plan at the FWC website: www.myFWC.com. Comments may be emailed to: gt_plan@myFWC.com or mailed to GTMP; 620 S. Meridian Street; Mail Station 2A; Tallahassee, Fl. 32399-1600.

Another species management plan is being changed by FWC. Alligator management and protection has some significant changes being considered by FWC. Public comment is being solicited through public meetings all over the State. Audubon is concerned that many of the proposals will harm

the alligator population further and also harm species dependent on the habitat favored by alligators. 2 meetings in the Orlando area for public input – Mar. 27th, 6:30-8:30pm at the FDOT building at 133 S. Semoran Blvd., Orlando with the main topic Public Safety and March 29th, 6:30-8:30pm at the same location, main topic Alligator Conservation.

The Florida Legislature will begin the first week of March and the property tax reform ideas that are being discussed will effect conservation programs and environmental programs state wide and locally. The Orange Wild Lands Committee (OWL) met with the Trust For Public Lands on the feasibility of a long term environmental land acquisition program for Orange county after the recent 5 year GreenPlace acquisition program is finished. We agreed that Legislative actions could greatly influence our proposals and we will wait until the Legislature finishes before moving forward with our proposal.

PROPOSED FEDERAL BUDGET SHORT-CHANGES THE ENVIRONMENT

President Bush has submitted his budget request for the Fiscal Year 2008 budget cycle to Congress. The request proposed cutting funding for most environmental and conservation programs more than previous budgets. It also AGAIN proposes opening

.....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.

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

President.....Dick Smith (RLS-OAS@earthlink.net)
407-257-7361
Address Change.....Mike Daley (miked531@bellsouth.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.

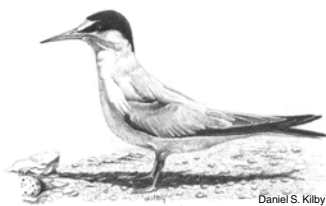
<http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org>

Still Room for Wildlife in Florida? BOB STAMPS

Did you know that from 1990 to 2000 more than 1,000 square miles (>640,000 acres) of Florida changed from rural to urban use and that Florida has a total land area of less than 54,000 square miles? You are probably aware that Florida's population is growing by at least 280,000 people every year. And how many Florida panthers are left? Tragically, only about 80, making it one of the rarest animals in the world. These figures are not unrelated. Does this mean that wildlife in Florida are doomed? Not if we keep up the pressure to preserve natural areas and work to get more Floridians involved in the natural world.

On the positive side, Florida has had aggressive environmentally sensitive land acquisition programs (Preservation 2000, Florida Forever), greater than those of the Federal government, in attempts to preserve wildlife habitat, conservation areas, ecological greenways, natural floodplains, significant bodies of water, fragile coastlines, functional wetlands, ground-water recharge areas, recreational trails, and sustainable forest lands. 1,781,489 acres of lands were protected under the Preservation 2000 program. To date, Florida Forever has acquired more than another 1 million acres. To maintain our quality of life, and the quality of Florida's environment, we all need to actively support these and future similar programs.

One of the keys to maintaining the quality of life for wildlife (and humans) in Florida is to help more Floridians, both native and immigrant, become aware and appreciative of the natural world here in Florida. By far, most of the population increase in Florida is due to immigration. Here is where you can make a real difference. The next time you go outdoors, take someone with you. Whether you are looking at native plants, birds or butterflies (or other indigenous fauna), strive to promote an interest in the all of Florida's living creatures and the environment they inhabit. Once you connect people with the environment, they will then see the wisdom of preserving it for future generations. And while you are outdoors, enjoy the wonder and beauty that is Florida. We have come a long way since I was president of OAS, but we still need an informed and engaged population to guarantee Florida's future.



.....Conservation (from p2)

the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas development. Also in the President's budget proposal:

EPA budget is proposed to cut clean air and climate change program funding by \$22 million. The Land and Water Conservation Fund would be funded at a 7 year low of \$58 million and State programs completely zeroed out in the President's request.

This budget process is just beginning for FY 2008, so it's important to let your Representative and Senators know your concerns on shortchanging conservation.

Several positive bills have been introduced including; The Global Warming Pollution Reduction Act of 2007 (SB309) that would add programs to the Clean Air Act to deal with climate change; and HR39, the Udall-Eisenhower Arctic Wilderness Act to preserve the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. There are 112 co-sponsors so far in Congress – is your Representative one of them? Let them know we are concerned and want ANWR preserved.

Volunteers Needed for Lake Eola Festival

About 100+ 'volunteer hours' will be needed to cover OAS' participation in the Lake Eola Fiesta in the Park Arts and Crafts Festival on April 14th and 15th in downtown Orlando.

You can help with a variety of activities that include: talking with event-goers about your Audubon chapter; helping promote Orange Audubon's nest box program (with gratitude to Dr. Richard Poole), and selling those Audubon t-shirts. With an adequate volunteer staff, we can also instruct children in the making of nature collages.

No experience is necessary. Coverage is needed on Friday, from 5:30–7pm (for basic tent set up), Saturday and Sunday from 8am–6pm each day. Shifts from 8am–1pm or from 1pm–6pm are preferred, but any amount of time will be sincerely appreciated. Please help make this event a big success. For more details and to reserve your volunteer time slot, contact me (407-644-0796 or mwilliams@cfl.rr.com). I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Teresa Williams, Treasurer

Subject Matters in 2007 Photo Contest

OAS' 19th Annual Kit & Sidney Chertok Nature Photography Contest (CNPC) will, for the first time since 1992, offer two competition categories with the themes of "Florida's Birds!" and "No Birds Allowed!"

Although contest themes change each year, one thing is constant: the subject matter must be native to Florida and cannot contain humans or human-made structures or artifacts, which is consistent with contest objectives of promoting interest in and concern for Florida's [remaining] native fauna and flora and the wild places they call home. Hence OAS' CNPC is the biathlon of photo contests, testing not only your skills behind the camera's lens, but also your knowledge of Florida's native species.

Did you know that to be native, a plant or animal species must occur naturally in Florida? Consider birds — many native species are year-round residents; others spend only their winters in Florida; still others merely pass through during spring and fall migrations. So long as a species arrived in Florida unaided by man, it is native. By contrast, many non-native birds are year-round residents. For example, the Black Swans that call Lake Eola in downtown Orlando their home are native to Australia, not Florida. So it is not how long they will be here, but how they came to be here that counts.

Did you know that Brazilian Pepper trees are highly invasive South American plants that supplant native species and often disrupt or destroy the quality of native biotic communities? It is also to blame for disqualification of many past contest entries, so beware the Brazilian Pepper tree and other non-natives that creep into your images. Check reputable resources such as University of Florida, plants.ifas.ufl.edu and edis.ifas.ufl.edu; Florida Ornithological Society, www.fosbirds.org; Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission, www.floridaconservation.org; and your local chapter of Florida Native Plant Society, www.fnps.org for aid in plant and/or animal identification.

Still not certain your subject matter is native to Florida? Do not despair. As a courtesy to participants and to enhance the educational value of the contest, OAS will provide pre-screening of all images **received** by April 19, 2007. Participants will be notified as soon as possible thereafter to allow the opportunity for replacing nonqualified images at no additional charge. Replacements must be submitted by the contest deadline of May 17, 2007 (postmark date) and meet all other contest requirements. For entry forms and other information, visit www.orangeaudubonfl.org or call 407-644-0796. Teresa Williams, Chair

January 27th Field Trip Report

BOB SANDERS, FIELD TRIP LEADER

Eleven fortunate folks enjoyed a wonderful morning. Conditions were just about perfect for birds and birders. The day started off cool but soon warmed to near 70 degrees with a soft SW breeze.

We covered the Duda wetlands portion of the property plus the pools and wetlands just west of the Apopka-Beauclair Canal north through CC Ranch. **Seventy three** species were seen or heard and nearly all deserve to be highlights. Non-avian species of interest include a marsh rabbit and several large alligators. The following numbers are estimates:

Waders, 12 species including:

- American Bittern - 3
- Black-crowned Night Heron
- Wood Stork

Waterfowl, 8 species including:

- Gadwall
- American Wigeon
- Mottled Duck
- Blue-winged Teal
- Northern Shoveler
- Ring-necked Duck
- Hooded Merganser - 5, all female

Raptors, 7 species including:

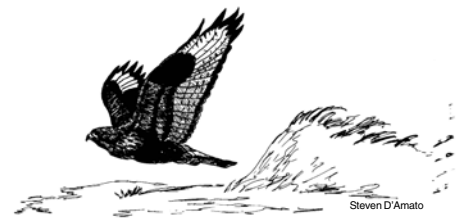
- Osprey
- Bald Eagle - 15
- Northern Harrier

- Cooper's Hawk - 1
- Red-shouldered Hawk - 20
- Red-tailed Hawk - 5
- American Kestrel - 2

Other Species:

- American White Pelican - 1
- King Rail - heard
- Sora - heard, glimpses
- Limpkin
- Sandhill Crane - 60
- Black-necked stilt - 8
- Greater Yellowlegs
- Belted Kingfisher
- Marsh Wren
- Eastern Bluebird
- Swamp Sparrow

Also, after the group dispersed, I scanned the sod farm on the north side of Jones Rd. and found Black-bellied Plover (30), Killdeer, and American Pipit (6). Many thanks to Dick Smith and Bob Wheeler who helped lead this field trip, and to Jim Peterson of the SJRWMD who hosted our group on District lands.



Third Birds of Prey ID Class Review

On Saturday January 13th, twenty members and friends of Orange Audubon took advantage of another great day to be outdoors. The weather was unusually balmy, even for Florida, with light easterly breezes and temperatures that quickly rose to the low seventies.

Although no rarities were seen, there were plenty of raptors (nine species) to study and enjoy. The following numbers are estimates:

- Osprey - 15
- Bald Eagle - 10
- Northern Harrier - 25
- Cooper's Hawk - 3
- Red-shouldered Hawk - 30
- Red-tailed Hawk - 30
- American Kestrel - 3
- Black Vulture - 30
- Turkey Vulture - 100

Forty other species of birds were seen including: Black-crowned Night Heron, Hooded Merganser, Purple Gallinule, and Barn Owl. Near the end of the session, a River Otter briefly entertained us.
Bob Sanders, Class Instructor



Get Ready for Birdathon on March 31st!

Calling all Birders and Birding Teams!!! Remember to mark your calendars for this upcoming Saturday, March 31st!!! Whether you decide to take off at the crack of dawn for a day of marathon birding or simply stroll your local birding sites before heading for a cappuccino, please get out and help us with our annual Birdathon fundraiser. A pledge sheet has once again been included for your convenience. Don't forget to ask your neighbors, co-workers, and friends to sponsor your efforts! Remind them of all the candy, wrapping paper, and cookies you've purchased over the years if you must! It'll be a grand time so join us in helping raise much needed funds. See you out in the field!
Claire Hilliker, Birdathon Chair

Fourth Birds of Prey ID Class Review

On February 10th, twenty one brave birders found their way to the Lust Rd. gate at the Lake Apopka Restoration Area. A chilly morning with dense fog reduced visibility to less than 200 feet. We waited patiently for over an hour for the fog to lift and then the show began. Although we saw no rare raptors, there were plenty of the eight species we did see to study and enjoy. The following numbers are estimates:

- Osprey - 10
- Bald Eagle - 6
- Northern Harrier - 50 (including 2 males)
- Red-shouldered Hawk - 20
- Red-tailed Hawk - 50 (including 3 Krider's)
- American Kestrel - 5
- Black Vulture - 20
- Turkey Vulture - 100

Additionally, a total of 56 species were seen including waders, Hooded Merganser, Purple Gallinule, Barn Owl, a few early Purple Martins, 1 Western Kingbird, and 1 Cassin's Kingbird.

I want to thank all who participated in this season's classes. We'll do this again next year.
Bob Sanders, Class Instructor

**ORANGE AUDUBON SOCIETY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2006-2007**

PRESIDENT	
Dick Smith (08)	407-257-7361
VICE PRESIDENT	
Leesa Sward (08)	407-677-5374
VICE PRESIDENT (PROGRAMS)	
Deborah Green (08)	407-553-0028
SECRETARY	
Mary Anne Freyer (08)	407-298-2642
TREASURER	
Teresa Williams (08)	407-644-0796
BOARD MEMBERS	
Susan Clary (08)	407-575-8036
Peggy Cox (08)	352-429-1042
Milton Heiberg (07)	407-658-4869
Claire Hilliker (07)	407-677-5374
Mary Keim (09)	407-851-5416
Susan Ledbetter (07)	407-740-0829
Danielle Ponsolle (08)	407-658-5742
Ellen Rocco (07)	407-282-8547
Tom Rodriguez (09)	407-405-3113
Ayme Smith (07)	407-425-7504
Gaye Smith (09)	407-249-3969
Ted Smith (09)	407-249-3969
Randy Snyder (09)	407-851-5416
Bob Stamps (08)	407-886-2925
Pete Vogt (08)	407-855-4122

Calendar of Events

March 3, 2007 - Saturday

LARA Bird Survey; 7:30am-Noon.
Pam Bowen 386-329-4870/pbowen@sjrwmd.com

March 10, 2007 - Saturday

Wekiva River Buffer Conservation Area Bird Survey
Lorne Malo 407-349-2536/407-659-4853(w)

March 15, 2007 - Thursday

General Meeting, 7:00pm, Leu Gardens.
OAS Board Meeting takes place prior to the
General Meeting at 5:30pm. All welcome.
Dick Smith 407-257-7361

March 17, 2007 - Saturday

OAS Field Trip - Lyonia Preserve
Mary Keim 407-851-5416

March 17, 2007 - Saturday

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

March 30-April 1, 2007 - Fri-Sun

Big O Birding Festival, Moore Haven, FL
www.bigobirdingfestival.com

March 31, 2007 - Saturday

Orange Audubon Society Birdathon 2007
Claire Hilliker 407-677-5374

March 31, 2007 - Saturday

Rock Springs Run State Reserve Butterfly Survey.
Randy Snyder 407-851-5416

April 7, 2007 - Saturday

LARA Bird Survey; 7:30am-Noon.
Pam Bowen 386-329-4870/pbowen@sjrwmd.com

April 7, 2007 - Saturday

OAS Field Trip - Lower Wekiwa River State Preserve. Mary Keim 407-851-5416

April 19, 2007 - Thursday

General Meeting, 7:00pm, Leu Gardens.
OAS Board Meeting takes place prior to the
General Meeting at 5:30pm. All welcome.
Dick Smith 407-257-7361

April 20-22, 2007 - Fri-Sun

FOS 2007 Spring Meeting (in conjunction with
the Georgia Ornithological Society)
Brunswick, GA
www.fosbirds.org

April 21, 2007 - Saturday

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

Fort DeSoto Trip on April 13-14

The Fort DeSoto Park Field Trip in St. Petersburg is scheduled for April 13-14, 2007. Arrangements have been made for us to stay at the Continuing Education Center at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg on Friday night, April 13th. This will allow us to get an early start for birding Saturday morning. You will need to provide your own transportation to St. Petersburg. The cost of a room which can accommodate two persons is \$80.00.

Anyone who has other accommodations in the area may join us at the Administration Building in Ft. DeSoto Park on Saturday morning at 8:00 a.m. for a registration fee of \$10.00 per person.

We already have reservations for 19 rooms at the college, and a few more are still available. The last day to make a reservation is March 31st. Payment is due by March 31st, but a full refund will be provided if you need to cancel until April 10th.

For reservations please sign up at the meeting on March 15th or contact Ted or Gaye Smith at (407) 249-3969 or smith_ted_gaye@bellsouth.net.

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Orlando, FL
PERMIT NO. 790

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

