



"The voice of Conservation in Central Florida"

OASIS



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

VOLUME 44

February 2009

NUMBER 6

In this Issue...

This Month's Program p1
Field Trips p1,3
President's Message p2
Conservation News p2
Genius Ecological Workday Planned p2
Lake Apopka Trail Connection p2
Florida Master Naturalist Program p3
Butterfly ID Class p3
Birdathon 2009 Pledge Sheet p4
Peregrinations p5
2009 Chertok Photo Contest subjects p5
Volunteer Opportunities p6
Calendar of Events p6

Reminders...

Walking in nature is good for your body and your mind (see "Walking and Viewing Nature Can Improve Memory and Attention", p2) so take along your camera and shoot some pictures for Orange Audubon's Chertok Nature Photography Contest (see "All Florida Animals and More Can be Subject of 2009 Photo Contest", p5).

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

This Month's Program: February 19, 2009 - 7:00pm Our fascinating and all-important pollinating honeybees by Jean Vasicek

Einstein has been quoted as saying 'If the bee disappeared off the face of the earth, then man would have only four years of life left.' The honey bee is one of the most important pollinators known to humankind. About one third of human nutrition comes from crops grown through bee pollination. Jean Vasicek, known to many of us as editor of the Florida Native Plant Society Tarpaper newsletter, is founder of Winter Park Honey (www.winterparkhoney.com). For our February program, Jean will tell us about her experiences as a beekeeper in Central Florida and what we can do to keep honeybees on the face of the earth. Join us on February 19 for a fascinating program.

Deborah Green, Vice-President

February Field Trip - Orlando Wetlands Park

On Saturday, February 21st, OAS will visit Orlando Wetlands Park near Christmas. We will hike about three miles, mostly on dike roads through this artificial wetland constructed to treat reclaimed water. The wetlands attract wintering waterfowl as well as long-legged waders. For more information about this 1650 acre site see: www.cityoforlando.net/fpr/net/

[t_ParkRec.aspx?Park=341](http://www.cityoforlando.net/fpr/net/t_ParkRec.aspx?Park=341)

Meet at 7:30am in the back parking lot of Burger King on S.R. 50 (Colonial Drive) just east of S.R. 434 (Alafaya Trail). Bring lunch, drink and birding gear. If you have questions about our trip, call us at 407-851-5416.

Mary Keim and Randy Snyder
Field Trip Committee

January Field Trip Report MARY KEIM, FIELD TRIP CHAIR

Thirteen OAS birders braved the thirties to attend the trip to Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge on January 17th. The group observed at least 57 bird species including American Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Hooded Merganser, American White Pelican, Tricolored Heron, Glossy Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, American Coot, American Avocet, Greater Yellowlegs, Great Black-backed Gull, Caspian Tern, Black Skimmer, Tree Swallow, Palm Warbler and Common Yellowthroat. The

Bald Eagle nest near the end of Blackpoint Drive had two young. It was a thrill to watch hundreds of birds come up off the water (perhaps spooked by the eagles), circle, and then return.

Other animals seen were Raccoon and Great Southern White (a butterfly). Flowers in bloom included Spanish Needles, Indian Blanket and Beach Sunflower. Although our early stop on the causeway at Titusville was "freezing," the weather warmed up to be quite pleasant.

Walking and Viewing Nature Can Improve Memory and Attention

Last month I wrote about the economic, health and environmental benefits of walking. Now a recently published research report in *Psychological Science* (Volume 19, Number 12, December, 2008) by Berman et al. tells us where to walk, at least if we want to improve our attention and memory—in **Nature!** They conducted two controlled experiments that both lead to this conclusion. In the first, participants were given mood assessments and then tested for their ability to repeat digit sequences back in reverse order. They were then subjected to 35 minutes of further testing and then randomly assigned to a 55-min walk in either an arboretum (Nature) or an urban downtown area. After the walks, the participants were once again given the backwards digit sequence test. Performance on the follow-up tests was significantly improved for the participants that “walked in nature” but not for those that “walked downtown”. In the second experiment, participants again were given a mood test, the backwards digit sequence test, and then an attention network test (ANT). After that, participants viewed a series of 50 pictures, either of nature or urban areas. They were then given the backwards digit sequence, ANT and mood tests. Guess what, viewing the nature pictures improved performance on both the ANT and reverse digit tests; however, viewing the urban pictures did not. The authors state that “these experiments demonstrate the restorative value of nature as a vehicle to improve cognitive functioning”. Maybe that’s why so many people you run into on OAS field trips have such great memories. Hope you are able to get out and view and, hopefully, walk in Nature.

Bob Stamps, President

Conservation News SHARON ROBBINS, CONSERVATION CHAIR

Each of us can make a difference in improving our environment and create space for our rapidly declining wildlife. You may or may not know that roughly half of Florida’s drinking water is being utilized for irrigation. One way we can greatly reduce the need for irrigation is to eliminate or greatly reduce turf grass. Another way is to choose naturally drought tolerant plants from nurseries featuring locally grown plants and trees and shrubs. This is also a huge benefit to Florida’s wildlife as you are creating food, shelter and nesting areas for them. Educate yourself about the wildlife, birds and butterflies that frequent your areas and place nest boxes and feeders in appropriate locations. As an aside, do not allow cats to roam freely and keep dogs from chasing wildlife.

Stop using synthetic pesticides and gas powered lawn equipment whenever possible and, if applicable, utilize native trees and

plants to filter water before it leaves your waterfront property. Remove exotic pest plants but preserve native vegetation.

As we are all aware, we are in an economic slowdown and new development has slowed considerably. This is the time for all of us to take stock of what is truly important and lasting and to remember that we are supposed to be guardians of our earth and its creatures both great and small. The economy will improve and development will start anew. We need to be aware of what may be transpiring around us before it is too late and work with developers and governmental authorities to ensure that development does not occur in important and fragile Florida areas.

In the meantime, let’s improve and create the environments in our control not only for Florida’s wildlife but for us, our children and grandchildren.

Genius Ecological Workday Planned!

The next planned workday at Genius Drive Nature Preserve, Winter Park is Sunday, February 22nd, from 10am until noon. This is the perfect time of year for ‘gardening’ and the Genius DNP is the perfect ‘garden’ in which to do it.

All work, no play? No way! Most workdays end with a walk through the property, a treat for new and seasoned volunteers who simply wish to linger in ‘old Florida’ a while longer. Further details and a reminder will be e-mailed to those who volunteer. If you can help, please contact me at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or (407) 644-0796. Many thanks. Teresa Williams, Genius DNP Volunteer Coordinator

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.....Bob Stamps (RHS-OAS@att.net)
407-886-2925
Address Change.....Mike Daley (miked531@bellsouth.net)
386-668-5021
Editor.....Claire Hilliker (cphilliker@gmail.com)

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

<http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org>

Orange County Approves Lake Apopka Trail Connection

Speaking of walking (and bike riding) in Nature, a connection from Orange County’s Magnolia Park to the Lake Apopka North Shore Restoration Area (LANSRA, aka LARA) trail was approved at the January 13th meeting of the Orange County Board of County Commissioners. As many of you know, the LARA is a great place to view birds (as evidenced by the popular Birds of Prey Identification field trips) and other wildlife (alligators, bears, bobcats, coyotes, raccoons, snakes, etc.). Access has been limited due to the restoration projects being undertaken in the area. Thankfully, this marvelous resource will be opened to the public and will include an 18-mile trail along levee roads from the east side in Orange County to the west side in Lake County. And now, the vote by the county commissioners should provide public access (with bathrooms and parking facilities) at the east end of the trail. Eventually, we envision a trail completely circling Lake Apopka (Lake Apopka Loop) and connecting with the West Orange, South Lake and Green Mountain Scenic Byway Trails (and beyond). Please take time to phone, e-mail or otherwise contact your county commissioner and thank him/her for voting to make this jewel accessible to the citizens of Orange County and elsewhere.

Bob Stamps



Florida Master Naturalist Program Offered

The first offering of the Florida Master Naturalist Program in Orange County will be held on Mondays and Thursdays, 9am to 4pm, for three weeks, beginning February 23. The meeting place will be at the Orange County Agricultural Extension Center on Conway Road. The program has three modules covering upland, wetland, and coastal habitats. This module will be on upland habitats. Field trips to natural lands in the county will be part of the program.

If you are serving as a volunteer or professional in any nature center or park, or are just interested in what you can learn about Florida's outdoors, you should consider signing up. The cost is \$225, which will include two manuals on the upland habitat, videos and learning sessions, and field trips. Jennifer Ramos and Peggy Lantz are the instructors.

Deadline for registration is February 15, 2009. Visit the Florida Master Naturalist Program website for more information and to register: www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu.

Bird of Prey ID Class

The fourth and final Bird of Prey ID Class is scheduled for February 14th. As in other BoPID Classes we will explore the Lake Apopka Restoration Area (LARA). LARA is one of Central Florida's birding hot spots, attractive to many raptors and other interesting birds. Because of restricted access this is a great opportunity.

For more information, please contact Bob Sanders at 407-766-5490, or procrow@bellsouth.net.

Limited Edition Field Trip

The next Limited Edition Field Trip (LE-FT) is scheduled for March 14th. We will be exploring the Shilo Marsh Road area of Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. Shilo Marsh Road runs for about 15 miles along the east shore of the Indian River and is usually less crowded than other areas of the refuge. Birders should expect to see good numbers and varieties of waterfowl, wading birds, shorebirds, raptors, and interesting passerines.

LE-FTs are limited to a maximum of ten people, there is a \$10.00 fee to benefit OAS, and reservations are required. Reservations will be taken beginning March 8th.

For more information, please call or email Bob Sanders: 407-766-5490, procrow@bellsouth.net.

Ft. DeSoto Field Trip

The date is set for our annual field trip to Ft. DeSoto Park in St. Petersburg. We have reserved 15 rooms in the Continuing Education Center at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg for Friday night, April 24, 2009. Birding at Ft. DeSoto will be on Saturday, April 25, 2009. Plan to join us for a premier birding experience during spring migration.

The cost is \$80.00 per room plus \$10.00 per person. A room with 1 person is \$90.00, a room with 2 people is \$100.00 and a room with 3 people is \$110.00. The cost is \$10.00 per person to attend Saturday only for anyone not staying at the college.

The sign up sheet and more details will be available at our February meeting. For more information please contact Ted or Gaye Smith at (407) 249-3969 or smith_ted_gaye@bellsouth.net.

Butterfly Identification Class

Orange Audubon Society is sponsoring a class on Butterfly Identification. The 7.5-hour class (3 sessions of 2 ½ hours each) is being offered on Saturdays, April 4, 11, 18 from 2:30pm to 5:00pm. This class will involve lectures as well as field observation and identification of butterflies at Orlando Wetlands Park and Seminole Ranch Conservation Area in east Orange County. The class is limited to 15 participants. Instructors will be Orange Audubon members Randy Snyder and Mary Keim.

Cost is \$25 for Audubon members and \$40 for non-members. Non-members who join concurrent with registering for class pay member rate. For membership information and/or to register, contact Teresa: mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or 407-644-0796. Make check payable to Orange Audubon Society. Note on check "Butterfly Id Class" and mail to: OAS Butterfly Class, PO Box 941142, Maitland, FL 32794-1142.

Recommended field guide is *Butterflies through Binoculars: Florida* by Glassberg, Minno, and Calhoun, 2000, Oxford Univ. Also recommended are close-focusing (6 ft. or less) binoculars. Eagle Optics Ranger SRT 8x32 (www.eagleoptics.com/index.asp?pid=4699), for example, has a minimum focus of 3 feet. See www.birds.cornell.edu/Publications/LivingBird/winter2005/Age_Binos.html for other binocular suggestions.

Sessions will be held at the Orlando Wetlands Park classroom building on Wheeler Road in Christmas, FL. If you have questions, call or e-mail Randy (407-851-5416, rsnyder11@cfl.rr.com).



PEREGRINATIONS: WITH BOB SANDERS

BIRDATHON 2009

The 2009 Birdathon is coming soon. April 11th will be here before we know it. To reiterate: **Birdathon** is one the most important fund-raising events of our season. How does it work? Teams of birders and individual birders disperse across Central Florida to find and identify as many species of birds as possible in a 24-hour period. Per species or "flat-rate" pledges are gathered, much like the per-mile pledges of the familiar Walk-a-thons. We've set our goals a little higher this year and I want **EVERY ONE OF OUR MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE!!** Our goals: to locate and identify 200 species and to gather \$10,000 in pledges.

The advantage here is that you can participate **AS MUCH OR AS LITTLE** as you want — depending on your time, energy, or inclination. But, **PLEASE** participate. There are three ways to participate and you can do one **OR** all three.

1. Go birding! You can go out all day and bird your favorite place or places or just spend a few minutes in your backyard or neighborhood. Do you have an active feeder? Are you a bird-bander? Banders frequently catch some interesting species.

2. Gather pledges! We must have at least 500 of our members get at least one pledge of at least \$.10 per species. You can approach your friends, relations, co-workers, local businesses, your doctor, your lawyer, etc. Are you employed? Don't forget the BOSS! Corporate donations are always good and, even in these tough-times, it's important to remember that **all donations are tax-deductible!**

3. Make a pledge! This is the easiest and most low-impact way for **YOU** to participate. Simply pledge \$.10 per species.

SO GET BUSY! Organize your teams; start thinking about where you'll be birding and what species you'll target; start gathering pledges. **WE CAN DO THIS AND HAVE A LOT OF FUN IN THE PROCESS!**

For more information please contact either myself (Bob Sanders) at 407-766-5490. procrow@bellsouth.net, or Tom Rodriguez at 407-905-0054, tom@oaklandnaturepreserve.org.

Thanks. Whoo Hoo!

All Florida Animals and More Can be Subject of 2009 Photo Contest

To further the objectives of OAS' annual Chertok Nature Photography Contest, its rules require that subject matter of all entries be native to Florida and contain no trace of humans. Consistent with those objectives are the themes for the 2009 contest: **Florida Vertebrates and/or Scenics** and **Florida Invertebrates and/or Wildflowers**, which are described below.

Florida Vertebrates and/or Scenics: Vertebrates are animals with a backbone. Included in this group of animals are cyclostomes (huh?), bony fish (what you get in a cheap seafood restaurant), sharks (lawyers) and rays, amphibians, reptiles (more lawyer types), mammals and birds. Enough with the attempted humor, inquiring minds can visit <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vertebrates> to learn more about vertebrates. Scenics (a/k/a landscapes) are expanses of natural scenery visible in a single view such as a sunrise or sunset, a dry mudflat or a marshland.

Entries in the *Florida Vertebrates and/or Scenics* category can include vertebrates or scenics or a combination of both: a White Ibis close-up, a Florida sunset, or a Florida sunset with silhouettes of White Ibis in flight.

Florida Invertebrates and/or Wildflowers: Invertebrates are animals without backbones. Most animals are invertebrates; they comprise about 97% of all animals in the world and include corals, jellyfish, snails, mollusks, starfish, sea urchins, crabs, spiders, butterflies and dragonflies to name a few. And if worms are your fancy, you can enter them also. Everything you ever wanted to know about invertebrates can be found by visiting <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invertebrate>. Florida wildflowers are flowering plants that grow in a natural, uncultivated state, for example: Coreopsis growing at the edge of a pine forest.

Entries in the *Florida Invertebrates and/or Wildflowers* category can include invertebrates or wildflowers or a combination of both: a Monarch Butterfly, a field with native Milkweed or a Monarch nectaring on a native milkweed plant.

Regardless of the category you choose, remember that subject matter must be Florida native nature and can not contain any discernible trace of humans or species that are not native to Florida. For entry forms containing complete contest rules and requirements, visit www.orangeadubonfl.org or pick them up at Colonial Photo & Hobby, 634 N Mills Ave. (Orlando) or at future OAS meetings or contact me: (407) 644-0796 or mwilliams@cfl.rr.com.

Teresa Williams, Chair

**ORANGE AUDUBON SOCIETY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2008-2009**

PRESIDENT
Bob Stamps (10) 407-886-2925

VICE PRESIDENT
Loretta Satterthwaite (10) 407-886-2925

VICE PRESIDENT (PROGRAMS)
Deborah Green (10) 407-553-0028

SECRETARY
Dominique Shimizu (10) 407-278-4078

TREASURER
Teresa Williams (10) 407-644-0796

BOARD MEMBERS
Susan Clary (10) 407-968-2010
Maggie DeVane (11) devanem@aol.com
Michele Greco (10)
Milton Heiberg (10) 407-658-4869
Claire Hilliker (10) cphilliker@gmail.com
Mary Keim (09) 407-851-5416
Danielle Ponsolle (11) 407-658-5742
Sharon Robbins (11) 407-376-4930
Tom Rodriguez (09) 407-905-0054
Bob Sanders (11) 407-766-5490
Ayme Smith (10) 407-425-7504
Gaye Smith (09) 407-249-3969
Ted Smith (09) 407-249-3969
Randy Snyder (09) 407-851-5416
Pete Vogt (11) 407-855-4122

Calendar of Events

February 14, 2009 - Saturday

Lee Tract Bird Survey
Lorne Malo 407-349-2536/407-659-4853(w)

February 14, 2009 - Saturday

Bird of Prey ID Class #4 - LARA
Bob Sanders 407-766-5490

February 19, 2009 - Thursday

General Meeting, 7:00pm, Leu Gardens.
OAS Board Meeting takes place prior to the
General Meeting at 5:30pm. All welcome.
Bob Stamps 407-886-2925

February 21, 2009 - Saturday

OAS Field Trip - Orlando Wetlands Park
Mary Keim/Randy Snyder 407-851-5416

February 21, 2009 - Saturday

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

February 22, 2009 - Sunday

Genius Drive Workday, 10:00am-12:00pm
Teresa Williams 407-644-0796

February 28, 2009 - Saturday

Lower Wekiva River SR Butterfly Survey
Randy Snyder 407-851-5416

March 14, 2009 - Saturday

Limited Edition Field Trip - Shilo Marsh/MINWR
Bob Sanders 407-766-5490 / procrow@bellsouth.net

March 14, 2009 - Saturday

Lee Tract Bird Survey
Lorne Malo 407-349-2536/407-659-4853(w)

March 19, 2009 - Thursday

General Meeting, 7:00pm, Leu Gardens.
OAS Board Meeting takes place prior to the
General Meeting at 5:30pm. All welcome.
Bob Stamps 407-886-2925

March 21, 2009 - Saturday

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

March 28, 2009 - Saturday

Lower Wekiva River SR Butterfly Survey
Randy Snyder 407-851-5416

Orange Audubon Seeks Volunteers to Serve on Board

Thank you to the members who replied to our recent request to serve on the board; we still need two more volunteers. This is a great opportunity to get involved and help us fulfill our mission. To be eligible you must be a member of Orange Audubon and have an interest in wildlife and the environment that supports it.

The board is comprised of 20 members and includes individuals from all walks of life. Approximately two seats will become available for the next term beginning July 2009. The next board meeting will take place at 5:30pm in the Camelia Room at Leu Gardens on February 19, 2009. Feel free to join us if you are interested. You may also contact Tom Rodriguez at 407-905-0054 if you would like to serve on the Orange Audubon Board of Directors.

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

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

