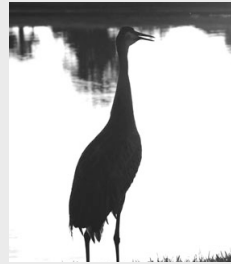


OASis Newsletter



Vol. 44 Issue No. 7

March 2009

Orange Audubon Society- A Chapter of National Audubon Society & Audubon of Florida--The regular monthly meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month at Leu Gardens, 7 pm, in Orlando. There are other activities: field trips, bird hikes & identification classes throughout the month. www.orangeaudubonfl.org

Okay, Walking and Nature Study are Good for You – Spring Edition *by Bob Stamps, President's Message*

Spring is a great time to observe wildlife—mild temperatures, few thunderstorms, wildlife exhibiting courting and denning/ nesting behavior, foliage still not fully flushed out so observation is easier—so get out and ENJOY! On the avian side, one of my favorite spring pleasures is watching the antics and listening to the raucous vocalizations of Purple Martins. Seek them out, they will put a smile in your heart. This gregarious bird is the largest swallow in Florida and, nowadays, depends very much on humans providing them housing since they are cavity nesters and fewer and fewer trees with cavities are available due to human activities. Contrary to popular myths, their diet is composed chiefly of beetles and dragonflies, not mosquitoes. Enjoy them while you can since they will leave Florida in late June, July and early August for Brazil. On the reptilian side, the Gopher Tortoise is another favorite. Listed as one of the 117 fauna endangered, threatened or a species of special concern (as of May 2008), this land turtle is one of the oldest living species in North America, perhaps with roots 60 million years old. This is the only living tortoise that occurs east of the Mississippi River and it is able to create burrows up to 40 feet long and 10 feet deep. It is these burrows that are so important in providing protection for more than 360 other species of animals from predators, freezing weather, fires and other hazards. In the spring, these herbivorous gladiators joust for territory and mates. I have spent much enjoyable time watching and photographing these ancient rituals. As with much of the fauna and flora of the world, the gopher tortoise's existence is threatened by habitat destruction as the human race continues to expand. These are just two of the thousands of intriguing animal and plant wonders you can observe and enjoy outdoors this spring.

Monthly Program, March 19, 2009, 7 pm Conservation of Florida Butterflies By Marc Minno

Florida has a rich butterfly fauna with about 170 resident species, including unique butterflies that occur nowhere else. Some of our rarest butterflies are in danger. In addition to habitat loss, exotic predatory ants, such as the red imported fire ant, are impacting even common species. With studies underway to help imperiled butterflies, volunteers are needed to find and monitor colonies.

Our March speaker will be Marc Minno, author, or co-author, of five books on butterflies. Illustrating these species, he will inform us on what is being done to save them and what we can do to help.

Marc has promised to have some of his books with him for sale. Join us on March 19 for a fascinating program.

Orange Audubon Society programs are free and held in the Camellia Room of Leu Gardens, 1920 N. Forest Avenue, Orlando (for directions call 407-246-2620).

Deborah Green
Vice President/Program Chair



Lake Jesup

March Field Trip ----

On Saturday, **March 21st**, OAS will visit Lake Jesup Wilderness Area in Sanford. (Please note change in location due to a hunt at Seminole State Forest). We

will hike about four miles, on a trail through wet prairie and hydric hammock. Parts may be muddy. For more information about this 490 acre Seminole County Natural Lands property,

see: <http://www.seminolecountyfl.gov/leisure/natland/jesup.asp>

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Lake Jesup Park (immediately adjacent to the Lake Jesup Wilderness Area) at 5951 Sanford Avenue on Lake Jesup in south Sanford. From the intersection of Ronald Reagan Blvd (CR427) and East Lake Mary Blvd. (near the Greenway), go east on Lake Mary Blvd., then turn right (south) on Sanford Avenue. Bring lunch, drink and birding gear. Be advised, there are no restrooms at the park. If you have questions about our trip, call us at 407-851-5416.

Mary Keim and Randy Snyder, Field Trip Committee



Orlando Wetlands

February Field Trip Report

Mary Keim, Field Trip Chair

Eleven birders attended the trip to Orlando Wetlands Park on February 21st, including one who joined us from Blackhills Audubon in Washington State. The group observed at least 59 bird species including Blue-winged Teal, Great Blue Heron (with young in nest), American Bittern, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Red-shouldered Hawk (carrying a siren or amphiuma), Bald Eagle (with young in nest), Crested Caracara (chasing a Red-tailed Hawk), Purple Gallinule, Sandhill Crane, Wilson's Snipe, Common Ground-Dove, Marsh Wren, Purple Martin, Tree Swallow, Savannah Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, and American Goldfinch.

Other animals seen were: River Otter and American Alligator. Flowers in bloom included Coastalplain Willow and Blackberry. The morning started out with frost, but warmed up to be a beautiful day.

Limited Edition Field Trips

There are two Limited Edition Field Trips (LE-FT) coming up. The next is scheduled for March 14th and our destination will be the **Shilo Marsh area of Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge**. This area was described in the February *OASis* (See archived February *OASis* at www.orangeaudubonfl.org) and it's a wonderful spot. **HOWEVER!**

There is a possible contingency for this trip. There is a shuttle launch scheduled for March 12th. Merritt Island NWR is usually closed during launches. If the launch goes as planned we won't have a problem entering the refuge. **BUT**, if the launch is delayed, we'll have to go somewhere else. In that case **Orlando Wetlands Park** in Christmas will be our back-up destination. If needed I'll make arrangements for us to drive into the park. It should be great and very "birdy" this time of year.

The April LE-FT will run on April 11th (also Birdathon Day) and we will visit the **Canoe Creek Road area of Osceola County**. We will bird the Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area, Joe Overstreet Road and Joe Overstreet Landing on the east shore of Lake Kissimmee. Scenically this area is gorgeous and one of my favorite places. Birds that we may see include: Snail, Swallow-tailed, and White-tailed Kite; Red-cockaded Woodpecker; Bachman's

and Grasshopper Sparrow; Brown-headed Nuthatch; lots of Bald Eagles including newly fledged young; Sandhill and Whooping Crane; etc.

Remember, LE-FTs are limited to ten people, there's a \$10 fee for members and \$15 for non-members and reservations are required. I will take reservations for the March trip starting on March 8th and for the April trip starting on April 5th.

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

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>

Beginners' Bird ID Class Returns

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) Beginner's Bird Watching Class (BBWC) is designed for novice and intermediate birders to enhance skills and enjoyment of the fast-growing 'sport' of birding. The spring class will coincide with bird migration. Course includes 2 classroom sessions April 18th and 25th, Rollins College, with mini-field trips to nearby sites, and 1 field session on May 2nd; time for all sessions is 8:30 AM–12:30 PM.

Class instructor Dr. Leesa Sward is a Biology professor with Valencia Community College (VCC), Winter Park; past vice president of OAS; and for the past 16 years has been an avid birder. Sward developed *Florida Birds*, a course she has taught four years for VCC and recently adapted for OAS' BBWC to suit your needs! The course increases knowledge and awareness of North American bird species; teaches bird ID techniques, basic birding principles, bird topography and anatomy; provides binocular basics and tips on using field guides and checklists and more.

Registration is \$25 for Audubon members, \$40 for non-members, payable by check or money order to OAS. Handouts and parking included. Non-members can join when registering and pay \$45 (seniors 62+ and f/t students pay \$40), which includes BBWC registration (member price \$25) and an introductory membership for annual

3-way membership in Orange Audubon and National Audubon Societies and Audubon of Florida [\$20 promotional rate (\$15 for seniors/students)]. For a membership application, visit OAS' official website: www.orangeaudubonfl.org.

Space is limited. For reservation, contact Teresa: 407-644-0796 or mwilliams@cfl.rr.com; then mail one check payable to OAS, with your name, address, phone and e-mail (if joining OAS, include your new member application) to: OAS/Attn: BBWC, PO Box 941142, Maitland, FL 32794-1142. For more information, contact Leesa Sward: 407-677-5374 or LSward@hotmail.com. You know what they say about the *early* bird! Teresa Williams, Treasurer

Peregrinations: with Bob Sanders, BIRDATHON 2009

April 11th, is the date for this year's Birdathon and one of the most important fundraisers. Our goal this year is 200 species and gather \$10,000 in pledges. Every member can participate, one of three ways: 1) Go birding! 2) Gather Pledges, 3) Make a pledge. Details, call Bob Sanders 407-766-5490, procrow@bellsouth.net or Tom Rodriguez at 407-905-0054, tom@oaklandnaturepreserve.org.

Audubon's Three-way Membership

It is time to remind all of our members about the way Orange Audubon Society (OAS) deals with its memberships. Although some Audubon chapters offer a 'chapter only' membership, OAS' board of directors elected several years ago to continue to provide only 3-way memberships to its subscribers. This allows us to enjoy the full power of all of the Audubon Family when we need to show strength on an issue and the reciprocal of putting all of our membership behind efforts of both National Audubon Society (NAS) and Audubon of Florida (AoF).

When you join OAS, you become a member of not only our local chapter, but also the national organization [NAS] and the state organization [AoF, formerly Florida Audubon Society]. You will receive *Audubon* magazine from NAS and *The Florida Naturalist* from AoF, as well as our newsletter, the *OASis*.

If you join through NAS, they will assign you to a local chapter,

based on your zip code and its proximity to the zip code of an Audubon chapter. Because of this arrangement, Orange Audubon's members are not all from Orange County and not all residents of Orange County who join Audubon are assigned to OAS. Our assigned members encompass some of Lake, Seminole and Osceola counties.

If you join OAS through the chapter (brochure, OAS website, photo contest entry form, etc.), you will be 'assigned' to OAS as a member unless you ask NAS to switch you to a different chapter (for convenience of attending meetings, because of a move, etc.). However, because of the 3-way membership, all renewal notices will come from NAS, not OAS.

Finally, although we are all one Audubon, we are separate entities and each of us (OAS, NAS, AoF) has separate budgets to fulfill. You may receive requests for support from each of us — e.g. just last

month, OAS sent you our *only* monetary request for the year (and if you have not yet contributed, please consider doing so now). When you send support money to any one of the three organizations, that money stays with that organization (i.e. it is not split among the three) and is used to fulfill that group's budgetary needs. [For your information, however, because of the vital services that they provide, OAS does budget monetary support to the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey rehabilitation center in Maitland and some other local rehabilitators. OAS also sends financial support for the conservation efforts of AoF.]

I hope this answers any questions that you may have about your membership. If you do have questions regarding your membership, please feel free to contact me LNS-OAS@att.net; 407/886-2925.

We are proud to have over 1600 local memberships and happy that you are one of those members!!

Loretta Satterthwaite,

KUDOS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Acclamations to You!!

Orange Audubon Society's co-sponsorship of the 10th annual Orlando Wetlands Park Festival was a big success thanks to our wonderful team of volunteers (of course, having a perfect day - weatherwise - didn't hurt either!). We may have had the biggest crowds ever and things went very smoothly for the most part. The change in venue (most activities were located or began at Ft. Christmas Park) caused a few problems, but those will be smoothed out and we'll look forward to seeing everyone there again next year.

Special thanks to the following volunteers for your efforts setting up/taking down tents, working the merchandise, conservation/education/outreach or the kids' art tables: Chris Gandy, Phyllis Gray, Deborah Green, Cyndi Kay, Carole Lamb, Tom Lamb, Joan LeMosy, Julia Pringle, Sharon Robbins, Ellen Rocco, Ayme Smith, Dick Smith, Gaye Smith, Ted Smith, Randy Snyder, Bob Stamps, Jennifer Weader, Teresa Williams. Working at our outreach booths this year was a pleasure

because we had enough helpers that each of us could take time to relax and enjoy the environs in whatever way we chose. Orange Audubon appreciates its members who continue to answer our appeals for a helping hand.

Loretta Satterthwaite, OWP volunteers coordinator

Welcome New Board Member

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) is pleased to introduce our most recent board member, Loretta Lynn Leda. Fulfilling our by-laws obligations, the board of directors of OAS has appointed Loretta Lynn Leda to fill the chair recently vacated by Claire Hilliker.

Not only did Loretta agree to join the board, but she willingly has consented to step into the position of Editor of the *OASis*. You are now reading her first endeavor for OAS!

Please welcome her to OAS' board. We look forward to working with you, Loretta Lynn!

Thanks for joining us.

Loretta Satterthwaite and Bob Stamps

Goodbye & Good Luck

It is with deep regret that the Orange Audubon Society (OAS) board of directors has accepted the resignation of our fellow member, Claire Hilliker. Claire joined the board in July 2002 and within a month, Claire was asked to serve as *OASis* editor; she did and the rest is history! For six and a half years, Claire was in charge of the *OASis*. Thanks Claire for your diligence.

Claire also served OAS as its Birdathon chair. Not only did she go into the field and help us find record numbers of species, but she also compiled the list of species seen and mailed it along with thank you letters to all those who contributed to this annual fundraiser for OAS.

We could always count on Claire to volunteer for our outreach events. We have already missed her smiling face and positive attitude at the Lake Eola Fiesta in the Park and the Orlando Wetlands Park festival. Orange Audubon Society wishes you well in your new environs near the Windy City! We know that as a Canadian, you're used to those colder temperatures found up north,

but remember that there will always be a warm welcome for you in sunny Florida. Thank you, Claire, for all that you brought to OAS; we miss you!

Loretta Satterthwaite and Bob Stamps

Ft. DeSoto Field Trip

Annual field trip to Ft. DeSoto, St. Petersburg, is April 24, 2009. Rooms are reserved at the Continuing Education Center at Eckerd College for Friday night, \$80 per room + \$10 for additional person in room. If attending during the day only, fee is only \$10. Sign up sheet at the meeting, or call Ted or Gaye Smith at 407-249-3969 or smith_ted_gaye@bellsouth.net.

Chertok Nature Photo Contest

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) encourages nature-loving shutterbugs to participate in its 2009 (21st Annual) Kit & Sidney Chertok Nature Photo Contest. Themes for this year's digital competition are: Florida Vertebrates and/or Scenics and Florida Invertebrates and/or Wildflowers.

Images must be of Florida native flora and/or fauna and can not show

any discernable trace of humans, human-made structures or artifacts, or non-native species. You may enter up to five images in total (limit three in a category). Entry fees are \$3 per image (17 & under), \$5 per image (Audubon members) or \$7 per image (non-members). Final deadline is May 21st, 2009 (postmark).

OAS will again provide its own brand of stimulus to participants whose images are received by April 16th: an optional, free pre-screening. Participants will be notified of any ineligible entry and given the opportunity for a free do-over! Replacements must be submitted in compliance with contest rules.

The Spring 2009 issue of Florida Naturalist magazine will feature images from the 2008 contest and next month's *OASis* newsletter will announce the images from the 2008 competition that were selected for featured displays at Colonial Photo & Hobby, 634 N. Mills Avenue, Orlando, contest co-sponsor since 2004. Entry forms & contest rules are available on OAS' website and at Colonial Photo & Hobby, or by contacting Teresa: 407-644-0796 or mwilliams@cfl.rr.com. Teresa Williams, Contest Chair



Audubon Academy

Time is flying. With the Audubon Academy only a month away it is important to REGISTER NOW and SAVE MONEY!

In fact the early registration incentive comes to an end this Friday!

One of the highlights of the Academy this year is "Natural Florida: In Word, Image and Deed". This program was developed by Florida Defenders of the Environment for the Florida Humanities Council, and is one of only nine programs to be shown in the

state. The 90-minute multimedia presentation will be accompanied by live presentations from some of the artists, including musicians Cathy Dewitt and Janet Rucker. Dr. Reed Bowman, Archbold Biological Station, will be the featured speaker.

The public is invited and there is no charge for the program only so PLEASE invite your chapter members and friends to attend. The program will begin at 7:30 p.m., March 28, at the FFA Center, 5000 Firetower Road, Haines City, FL.

For more information go to www.audubonoffl.org. For more information about the Natural Florida program, visit <http://naturalflo.fladefenders.org/> or call 352-378-8465.



Orange Audubon Society Offers Butterfly ID Class

Orange Audubon Society is offering a Butterfly Identification class on Saturdays, April 4, 11 and 18 from 2:30 PM to 5:00 PM. Class involves lectures, field observation and identification of butterflies at Orlando Wetlands Park and Seminole Ranch Conservation Area in east Orange County. Instructors are Orange Audubon members Randy Snyder and Mary Keim. For more information, including recommended field guides and binoculars, contact Randy: 407-851-5416.

Cost is \$25 for Audubon members and \$40 for non-members. Non-members who join when they register receive the member discount rate. To register, contact Teresa: mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or 407-644-0796. Class is limited to 15 participants. Don't let this opportunity flutter by.

Peggy Cox Receives Award Audubon of Florida

On January 31, 2009, at the Central Florida Regional Conservation Committee (CFRCC) meeting in Maitland, Audubon of Florida (AoF) presented Orange Audubon Society (OAS) member Peggy Cox with a certificate of recognition for her many years of service as a representative for the CFRCC on the AoF board of directors.

Peggy was unable to be present to receive a similar certificate for her service to OAS from in-coming President Bob Stamps at the June 2008 OAS meeting.

Peggy has served on OAS' conservation committee for at least 12 years, as Chairman for half of those years, and previously served as Secretary and President of OAS.



Thank you, Peggy, for your invaluable service to our chapter, our region, our state and to Audubon.

by Bob Stamps and Loretta Satterthwaite (photo by Larry Rosen) Pictured Peggy Cox, left, and Linda Bystrak.

Return to Roost at Gatorland

The hours before dusk at Gatorland are very special as the birds come flying in to the roost. Thousands of White Ibises and egrets, herons fly in to rest for the night on the trees surrounding Gatorland's Alligator Breeding Marsh. Gatorland has one of the most remarkable rookeries for wading birds and certainly the most accessible to public observation. On March 14 OAS members will be treated to return to the roost and you can arrive early to view the breeding marsh and any part of Gatorland you wish.

Our guide will be Mike Godwin, of the founding family of Gatorland.

Cost is \$10 and you must be a member to attend (you can join on the spot). Children under 13 are \$5. Registration is necessary. Call Danielle Ponsolle at 407-658-4869.

Gatorland Phone
1-800-393-5297.

**Orange Audubon Society
Board of Directors 2008-2009**

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Ted Smith (09)		407-249-3969
Randy Snyder (09)		407-851-5416
Pete Vogt (11)		407-855-4122

Calendar of Events

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 14, Saturday

Return to the Roost at Gatorland just before dusk, rsvp Danielle Ponsolle 407-658-4869

March 19, 2009 - Thursday

General meeting, 7 pm Leu Gardens, OAS Board meeting 5:30 pm, All Welcome. Bob Stamps 407-886-2925

March 21, 2009 Saturday

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

March 21, 2009 Saturday

Lake Jesup, 7:30 am, Mary Keim 407-851-5416

March 28, 2009 Saturday

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

March 28, 2009 - Saturday

Audubon Academy, Haines City,
www.audubonofflorida.org

April 4, 11, 18, 2009 - Saturdays

Butterfly ID Class, Randy Snyder
407-851-5416

April 11, 2009 - Saturday

BIRDATHON, see details inside

April 11, 2009 - Saturday

Charles H. Bronson State Forest – Lee Tract Bird Survey Contact Lorne Malo

April 11, 2009 - Saturday

LE-FT - Canoe Creek Rd, Osceola Co., Bob Sanders, 407-766-5490, or procrow@bellsouth.net

April 18, 25 & May 1, 2009, Sat.

BBWC - Leesa Sward
407-677-5374 or
LSward@hotmail.com

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