



OASis

Orange Audubon Society
A Chapter of National and Florida Audubon Societies



Vol. 47

February 2012

Issue No. 6

February OAS Field Trip

Because of our involvement with nature events this month, there will be no OAS field trip in February. Please join us on a Lake Apopka North Shore Restoration Area bus tour at the Old Florida Outdoor Festival, Feb. 11–12 and/or the bus tours, nature hikes, etc. at the Orlando Wetlands Festival, Feb. 18th.

February OAS Events & Volunteer Opportunities

February is full of exciting events in which Orange Audubon Society (OAS) is a participant. We will be doing both bus tours and merchandise sales & outreach for new members at both the First Annual Old Florida Outdoor Festival (OFOF) in Apopka (Feb. 11 & 12) (see www.oldfloridaoutdoorfestival.com for more information) and the Orlando Wetlands Festival (OWF) at Ft. Christmas Park (Feb. 18) (for more information visit http://www.cityoforlando.net/public_works/wetlands). We really need lots of support at both of these locations. We still need bus tour guides for OFOF and help with our fundraising sales and outreach efforts at both events. Can you help us??

If you have questions or to volunteer a couple of hours to help with either event, please contact Loretta (LNS-oas@att.net; 407-886-2925). If you can't volunteer, you may still wish to come out to enjoy nature and the festivities; please try to do so.

**OAS Fundraising Boat Trip on
Saturday, April 7, 2012.
See page 2 for more details.**

This Month's Program: Feb. 16th @ 7 p.m.

Critters, Cows and Cowboys: A Photographic Exploration into the Wildlife & Work of a Florida Cattle Ranch by Bob Montanaro.

A Florida cattle ranch that provides an ideal environment for cattle also benefits other kinds of wild creatures and plants and might be called "Florida's outback." The Treasure Hammock Ranch in Indian River County is an example of a well-managed ranch that has, in addition to wildlife, many unique lineages of cattle and an important agricultural way of life. Indian River County a few years ago purchased development rights for the ranch, which has led to the protection of the land through a conservation easement.

Bob Montanaro, who presented for us on Osprey's several years ago, became interested in how Florida ranching preserves habitat for wildlife. For our February program, Bob will present for us with slides and video about the wildlife and work of a Florida cattle ranch. For a preview, visit www.floridacattleranch.org.

Join us February 16th for a fascinating program. Orange Audubon Society programs are free and open to the public. No reservations are necessary. Children are welcome. *Deborah Green, President*

**Orange Audubon Society meetings & programs
are free & no reservations are necessary.
Programs are held the 3rd Thursday of every
month (September - June)
usually at 7 p.m. in the Camellia Room at:
Harry P. Leu Gardens
1920 North Forest Avenue
Orlando, FL 32803-1537.
For directions call: 407-246-2620**

OAS Co-sponsors 12th Annual Orlando Wetlands Festival

The 12th annual Orlando Wetlands Festival will be held on February 18, 2012, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Ft. Christmas Park (1300 N. Ft. Christmas Rd.). While parking and vendors will be at Ft. Christmas Park, tour buses and shuttles will take visitors to nearby Orlando Wetlands Park. The City of Orlando, Orange County Parks and Recreation and Orange Audubon Society sponsor the event. OAS members lead nature and photography hikes as well as nature bus tours through Orlando Wetlands Park. OAS will also be selling nature-oriented merchandise including t-shirts, tote bags, and books (bring cash or checks).

OAS needs volunteers! No experience is necessary. To assist with bird watching hikes or nature bus tours, please contact Randy (407-851-5416 or rsnyder11@cfl.rr.com). To volunteer for AM or PM shifts at the kids' art table and/or to sell merchandise, please contact Loretta (407-886-2925 or lns-oas@att.net) or Teresa (407-644-0796 or mwilliams@cfl.rr.com).

Special OAS Fundraising Field Trip: A Boat Ride Through Old Florida Saturday, April 7, 2012

Spend a leisurely afternoon touring the backwaters of the St. Johns River and help OAS at the same time. Captain Gary Randlett, a knowledgeable naturalist, will guide us through parts of Florida that civilization forgot—but you never will. The prolific wildlife along the way calls this home just as they did before the European settlers arrived.



This is an Orange Audubon Society (OAS) fundraising field trip. We need to know that at least 30 people will sign up for this trip before we reserve the boat. The cost is \$25/person. Deadline fast approaching. Please contact Danielle Ponsolle at dponsolle@cfl.rr.com to make your reservation. Wheelchair-friendly, handicap accessible.

Limited Edition Field Trip—Sat., Feb. 25rd Shiloh Marsh Road, MINWR

Shiloh Marsh Road at the north end of Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge is the destination for Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) February Limited Edition field trip. This is a more remote area of the refuge and is very productive for waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors. Limited Edition field trips are limited to 15 people per trip and cost \$10/OAS member and \$15/non-OAS member. Reservations are required and will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis the week prior to the trip. For meeting place details, time of departure and return, and to make your reservation for this trip, please contact Bob Sanders at 407-454-0542.

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.

Environmental Permitting Streamlining Hits Home in Orange County

As we enter 2012 environmental protection seems to be assailed on all fronts. Audubon Florida is tracking legislation, already filed, that seeks to redefine shorelines (SB 1362), streamline environmental permitting (HB 503 and HB7003), keep local governments from enforcing stricter rules regarding fertilizer applicators (SB 604), change septic rules that may keep local governments from any oversight of septic tanks (HB 999), and delete reclaimed water from state rules making the resource accountable only to local utilities (HB 639) and other legislation. Locally, private interest groups want to build jet runways into the Lake Apopka North Shore Restoration area, lower Lake Apopka by connecting it with lakes to the west, and streamline local environmental protection rules.

Orange County created an Environmental Streamlining Task Force (ESTF), last year, with the mission “Promote job growth and sustainable economic development to enhance community well-being by streamlining environmental related processes and customer service while ensuring our commitment to environmental stewardship”. For the last few months the ESTF has focused on Chapter 15 the environmental codes of Orange County, specifically Article X, the wetland code. The ESTF considered a wide range of streamlining options, including doing away with the existing County codes or doing nothing. These two opposing positions were taken off the table recently, leaving some version of modifications to the code at staff’s discretion. The most recent recommendations made by the ESTF are to: 1. Seek delegation of the State Environmental Resource Permit (ERP), 2. Develop a comprehensive wetland ordinance that incorporates shoreline alterations, boat dock, boat ramp, seawall, dredge and fill, and conservation impacts, all currently separate permits required by Orange County, and 3. Replace the current classification system of wetlands in Orange County with a quantitative method of evaluating wetlands function with a unified mitigation and assessment method (UMAM). Orange Audubon has been attending the ESTF meetings and provided input aimed at holding the ESTF to its “commitment to environmental stewardship”.

Accepting delegation for the ERP will allow the County to continue to have a role in protecting its own resources, in the likely event that the State could soon restructure protection, at the state level, out of existence. Orange Audubon has suggested specific “add-ons” that we hope will make the ERP rules be better protective of the environment, at least in Orange County. Right now Orange County is working on language that will transition the current classification of wetlands narrative into the more quantifiable UMAM rule. At the last ESTF meeting the County was directed to prepare some draft language on this topic, within 60 days. Orange Audubon will continue to attend the ESTF meetings and bring to the Conservation Committee and Executive Board updates on these very sensitive topics. All Audubon members and the public are encouraged to attend the ESTF meetings. Please visit the webpage the County has set up regarding the ESTF progress. The site contains agendas, minutes and all material submitted to the ESTF by the public and staff.

<http://www.orangecountyfl.net/YourLocalGovernment/CountyDepartments/CommunityandEnvironmentalServices/EnvironmentalProtectionDivision/EnvironmentalStreamliningTaskForce/tabid/3378/Default.aspx>

*Rick Baird, Conservation
Committee Chair*

OAS' 2012 Nature Photo Contest Update

Orange Audubon Society’s (OAS) 24th Annual Kit & Sidney Chertok Nature Photography Contest has a category to fit your skill level and a theme to allow participants to explore, photograph and learn more about the amazing native animals, plants, landscapes and habitats of Florida.

Categories are: Amateur—for new and less experienced photographers; Advanced—for experienced nature photographers; and Youth—for participants age 17 and younger.

The theme for all categories is **Florida’s Native Nature**. In this competition discernible non-*native* (to Florida) fauna and/or flora is not allowed. Similarly, discernible non-*nature* subject matter such as humans and human-made structures or artifacts is not allowed. The Florida native nature requirements are consistent with contest objectives of promoting interest and concern for preserving Florida’s native wildlife and wild places and encouraging nature photography.

There are *two* submission deadlines. The **final deadline** for all entries (*received by date*) is May 17, 2012. Images may be entered by the **optional early deadline** of April 19, 2012 (*received by date*) for a *free* pre-screening and a *free* do-over if they did not meet the native, nature and other contest criteria.

Official application forms containing complete contest requirements and further category clarification are available online: www.orangeaudubonfl.org; at OAS meetings and at Colonial Photo and Hobby, 634 N. Mills Avenue, Orlando, FL; or by contacting Teresa: 407-644-0796 or mwilliams@cfl.rr.com.

Teresa Williams, OASNPC Chair

What's this about the Keystone XL pipeline?

The Obama administration on January 18 formally rejected a bid by Canadian energy company TransCanada to build a \$7 billion oil pipeline linking the tar sands of Alberta to refineries on the Gulf of Mexico. Environmentalists have been the major force convincing the president to reject this pipeline.

Tar sands (oil sands) are a dense and extremely viscous form of petroleum technically referred to as bitumen ("tar"). These occur naturally in mixtures of sand, clay, and water in certain areas of the world, particularly Venezuela and Canada. Making liquid fuels from tar sands requires energy for steam injection and refining. At least 90% of the fresh water used to extract the oil sands ends up in tailing ponds so toxic that propane cannons are used to keep ducks from landing in them. These ponds cover an area large enough to be seen from space. Further, the fossil fuel energy used in the refining process generates two to four times the amount of greenhouse gases per barrel of final product as conventional oil.

The Keystone XL pipeline threatened drinking water and the environment along 1,700 miles of the pipeline's route through farms, ranches, and towns from the Canadian border to coastal Louisiana. On top of that, as uncovered by www.350.org, Gulf Coast refiners planned to refine this cheap Canadian crude into diesel and other products for export to Europe and Latin America. Proceeds from these exports are tax-free. Much of the fuel refined from the pipeline's heavy crude oil would never even reach U.S. drivers' tanks.

Hundreds of thousands of people sent petitions to the White House and the State Department, some through the Audubon Action site (www.audubon.org/), others through any of the other major environmental groups around the country, asking for a stop to the plans for the pipeline. In August protests in front of the White House led to arrests of 1254 people. On November 6 over 12,000 people encircled the White House to demand President Obama stop the pipeline. Did you hear anything about that on the evening news or in our local newspaper? If I hadn't been a Facebook fan of the www.350.org site, I don't think I would have heard about it. See www.350.org for photos.

The pipeline means jobs, the proponents say. We aren't buying this as a reason to ignore the environmental impacts. A June 2009 report by the Pew Charitable Trusts, analyzing 13 independent reports and studies, finds that renewable energy generates 40% more jobs than fossil fuel per dollar invested. While renewables struggle to be cost-competitive, reducing demand for oil is the best way to improve our energy security. Efforts like consciously being careful with our energy use (bundling up rather than going to the thermostat), and making our homes more energy efficient allow us to contribute to this effort.

Last November, the U.S. Department of Transportation, EPA, and the White House announced new fuel economy standards for model year 2017-2025 vehicles that will require cars and light trucks to yield 54.5 miles-per-gallon by 2025. This is all a step in the right direction. Follow these issues and add your voice to the tens of thousands of people now speaking out for the environment.

Deborah Green, Climate Action Chair

Children (and Parents) Nature Journaling Field Trip - March 10, 2012

The nature journaling field trip still has plenty of spaces available. Cost for the workshop is \$12 for children of members, \$20 for non-members' children. Meeting place is at the Orlando Wetlands Park Nature Center at 8:00 a.m. Trip leaders are Certified Florida Master Naturalists Cynthia and Robert Amoruso. For reservations or more information contact Robert Amoruso at 407-808-7417 or ramoruso-oas@att.net. You can also download an informational brochure at www.wildscapeimages.biz/storage/natureOAS.pdf.

In The News

"The Senator" was a 138 feet tall bald cypress tree in Big Tree Park in Seminole County. It was once 165 feet tall and you could once see its top towering over the other trees as far away as the St. Johns River before it lost its top in a hurricane in 1925, according to historian Jim Robison. It was 35 feet in circumference. The Senator burned on January 17. We are all saddened by this loss.

Deborah Green, President

January Field Trip Report

Eighteen birders enjoyed spectacular weather, great scenery and some interesting birds during the Jan. 21st field trip to Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area and Joe Overstreet Rd. in Osceola County. Sixty-four species were tallied and included Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Brown-headed Nuthatches, Eastern Bluebirds, Whooping Crane (1), and many Bald Eagles. Many thanks to all who participated. You may be interested to know that the May 26th Limited Edition Field Trip will return to these two areas.

Bob Sanders, Field Trip Leader

Spring 2012 Beginners' Bird Watching Class Offered

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) former board member Bob Sanders will teach a spring 2012 Beginners' Bird Watching Class (BBWC). Bob began OAS' successful Limited Edition field trips and Birds of Prey ID Classes while serving on the board; he has taught for the Elderhostel/Exploritas program "Beautiful Birds of Central Florida" and is an independent birding guide who has escorted US, Canadian and European visitors to some of Central Florida's best birding spots.

Enroll in the class to learn new skills or sharpen your existing ability to name bird species using sight, sound, behavior or a combination of these and other clues. The course includes a classroom session March 17th at Orlando Wetlands Park (with mini-field trip in the park) and 2 field sessions on March 24th and 31st; all sessions are 8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Field session locales will be announced at the first class. Goals of the course are to increase knowledge and awareness of North American bird species; teach bird ID techniques, basic birding principles, bird habitat and anatomy; provide binocular basics and tips on using field guides and checklists; and discuss birding ethics.

Registration is required and class is limited to 20 students. Total cost for all three sessions is \$30 for Audubon members, \$45 for non-members and \$10 for children through age 12 with a registered adult, payable by check or money order to Orange Audubon Society. Non-members can join when registering and pay \$50 (\$45 for students), which includes BBWC registration (member price \$30) plus introductory 3-way annual membership in OAS, National Audubon Society and Audubon of Florida [promotional rate \$20 (students \$15)]. Such new memberships *must be paid directly to OAS as prescribed herein*. Visit www.orangeaudubonfl.org for a membership application. To reserve a space, contact Teresa: mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or 407-644-0796. For questions about the class, contact Bob: 407-454-0542.

Wildlife Surveys

- Savage Christmas Creek Preserve, Pine Lily Preserve, Long Branch Preserve and Hal Scott Regional Preserve and Park (north portion) butterfly survey. For more information contact Randy Snyder or Mary Keim at 407-851-5416 or rsnyder11@cfl.rr.com.
- Lake Apopka, North Shore Restoration Area bird surveys. Contact Pam Bowen at 386-329-4870 or Pbowen@sjrwmd.com or Jim Peterson at 352-735-1267 or JPeterson@sjrwmd.com.
- Emerald Marsh Conservation Area bird surveys. Contact John Stenberg at 386-329-4822 or jstenberg@sjrwmd.com.
- Ferndale Preserve quarterly bird surveys. Contact Gallus Quigley, Jr. at 352-516-8512 or gquigley@lakecountyfl.gov or gallusq@cfl.rr.com.

Bad Bills Introduced in Florida Legislature

The assault on Florida's environment and the dismantling of protections for our water and wildlife continue. These are loss of quality of life issues being made at the behest of special interests (\$). Below are three bad bills that deal with water quality issues. For information on other detrimental legislation being considered, visit the Audubon Florida Advocate website. To keep updated, sign up so that updates are emailed directly to you (http://fl.audubonaction.org/site/Survey?ACTION_REQUIRED=URI ACTION_USER_REQUESTS&SURVEY_ID=1425).

Perhaps the worst bill is one being introduced by Senator Alan Hays (Umatilla), SB 1362, which could trigger loss of tens of thousands of acres of state-owned sovereign submerged lands at the edge of rivers, lakes and streams by changing the definition of "ordinary high water mark" that specifies the boundary of state-owned lands. By lowering that mark, the ability of private interests to then claim these sensitive areas for their own use would be greatly increased. In addition to conflicting Florida case law, these actions would result in a loss in environmental protection as well as a significant loss of revenue from lease fees. Please let Hays know that you oppose this change.

Hays and Representative Drake (DeFuniak Springs) have introduced bills (SB 558 and HB 115) that seek to overturn a January 2016 statutory ban on the land application of minimally treated septage, which is the waste material pumped from residential septic tanks. Please let these two legislators know that you oppose the removal of this ban since it is needed to ensure that sensitive areas such as springs, lakes and rivers are protected from being degraded by this waste material.

Yet another threat to our water, HB 639 (Representative Young, Tampa), is a bill that would undercut the water management districts' (WMD) ability to control the distribution of reclaimed water from wastewater treatment plants. The utilities that produce reclaimed water would assume responsibility for these important determinations, even in the event of water shortages and emergencies. The bill also deletes "reclaimed water" from the statutory definitions of "water" and "waters in the state", which removes it from the public water supply formula and threatens to privatize water in Florida. **Please let these legislators and your own district legislators know that you oppose these bills because of the significant threats to Florida's environment.**

**Orange Audubon Society
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Bob Stamps (12) 407-886-2925

Calendar of Events

OAS EVENTS

February Field Trip - Orlando Wetlands Park Festival, Christmas, FL on Feb. 18, 2012, 407-851-5416. See article on Page 2.

Limited Edition Field Trip on Feb. 25, 2012, Shiloh Marsh Road (north end of MINWR). For trip reservations call Bob Sanders at 407-454-0542.

OAS' Beginner's Bird Identification - March 17, 24 & 31, 2012. Cost is \$30 for OAS members, \$45 for non-members and \$10 for 12 & under with registered adult. For trip information call Bob Sanders at 407-454-0542. For trip reservations call Teresa Williams at 407-644-0796.

SPECIAL EVENTS

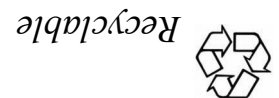
Great Backyard Bird Count, Feb 17-20, 2012 (www.birdsource.org/gbbc).

Old Florida Outdoor Festival, Apopka on Feb. 11-12, 2012. See Events & Volunteers Article on Page 1. Contact Loretta at LNS-oas@att.net or 407-886-2925.

Workday at Genius Drive Nature Preserve, Sunday, March 25, 2012, 9-11 AM, contact Teresa: 407-644-0796 or mwilliams@cfl.rr.com.

OAS Fundraising Boat Tour, April 7, 2012, dponsolle@cfl.rr.com

OAS Birdathon, April 29, 2012, 407-886-2925



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