



"The Voice of Conservation in Central Florida"

OASis

Orange Audubon Society
A Chapter of National and Florida Audubon Societies



Vol. 49

January 2014

Issue No. 5

**This Month's Program:
January 16th—7:00 p.m.**

Conservation of Fox Squirrels in Florida by Daniel Greene

Over the past several decades, fox squirrels in the southeastern U.S. have been in a decline, primarily as a result of habitat destruction, fire suppression, and over-harvesting. Throughout the U.S., 10 subspecies of fox squirrels are recognized, and 4 of these subspecies occur in Florida, but little is presently known about their distribution across the state, or how they respond to varying habitat conditions. Presently, the University of Florida has graduate students conducting research through a combination of citizen science projects, population-level surveys using live-trapping and cameras, and roadkill collection for a statewide genetics study. Daniel Greene, UF Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Program PhD candidate, will provide information about the combination of research techniques being used to study the ecology and genetics of fox squirrels in Florida and the data gathered, which should lead to improved management and conservation of the species.

Please join us on Thursday, January 16th to learn about Florida's fox squirrels.

Loretta Satterthwaite, Programs Chair



Saturday, February 15th

9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

OAS Co-sponsors 14th Annual Orlando Wetlands Festival

The 14th annual Orlando Wetlands Festival will be held on February 15th, 2014, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Ft. Christmas Historical Park (1300 N. Ft. Christmas Rd.). While parking and vendors will be at Ft. Christmas Historical 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 (OAS) 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, signs and mugs (plastic accepted; but for faster service, please bring cash or check).

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

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) meetings & programs are free & no reservations are necessary. Programs are held the 3rd Thursday of every month (September–June) usually at 7:00 p.m. in the Camellia Room at:

Harry P. Leu Gardens
1920 North Forest Avenue
Orlando, FL 32803-1537

For map and directions, visit:

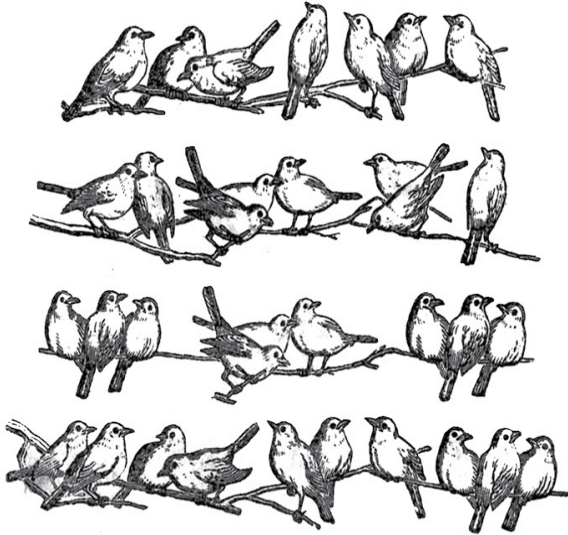
www.leugardens.org/plan/directions.htm

Saturday, January 18th, 7:30 a.m.
Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge

OAS will visit this 140,000-acre refuge known for its wintering water fowl. Although this is primarily a driving field trip along Black Point Wildlife Drive, we will hike about 1 mile. For more information about the property see: <http://www.fws.gov/merrittisland/>

Meet in the back parking lot of Burger King on S.R. 50 (Colonial Drive) just east of S.R. 434 (Alafaya Trail) no later than 7:30 a.m. Bring lunch, drink and birding gear (spotting scopes are helpful) and \$5/carload refuge entrance fee. Dress with wind across the marsh in mind. No registration is required. If you have questions about the trip, contact us at rssmhk@gmail.com or (407) 851-5416.

Mary Keim and Randy Snyder, Field Trip Committee



February 14th–February 17th
Great Backyard Bird Count

Get ready for the 17th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). This four-day event, led by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, engages birdwatchers of all ages in counting birds. Everyone is welcome from anywhere in the world. Participation is free, takes as little as 15 minutes and it helps birds. Participants tally the number of individual birds of each species they see during their count period and then enter the numbers on the GBBC website.

The GBBC helps us learn where the birds are during this four-day period. No single scientist or team of scientists could document the distribution of so many species in such a short time. Last year, nearly 135,000 checklists were submitted. These lists reported 4004 bird species from 111 countries. Scientists use GBBC information, along with observations from other citizen-science projects, to learn interesting things about bird populations such as: how weather influences bird populations; how bird diseases affect birds in different regions; and what differences in bird diversity exist in cities versus suburban, rural, and natural areas.

Please consider participating in this fun event. For details about the GBBC, see www.birdsource.org or watch the GBBC video at: <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/press/news-stories/2014Video>.

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 areas of Florida and the World, and the responsibility for the conservation of these remaining resources.

Orange Audubon Society

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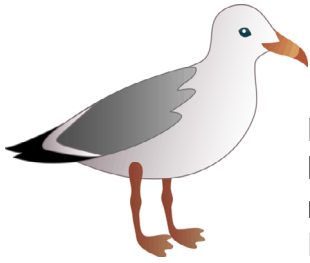
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The *OAS* is published monthly from September through June and is sent free to all members of the Orange Audubon Society.



Saturday, January 25th, 9:00–11:00 a.m
Limited Edition Field Trip
Smyrna Dunes Park, New Smyrna Beach

Located on the south side of Ponce Inlet, Smyrna Dunes Park can be an excellent spot in winter to see various coastal species of birds—gulls, terns, Common Loons, Northern Gannets and the shorebirds, including the endangered Piping Plover and scarce Purple Sandpiper. Wintering song birds also can be found in the dunes and mangroves. Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, and lots of Ospreys are usually here as well.

This trip is limited to 15 people and has a cost of \$10 per person per trip for members and \$15 per person for non-members. Reservations are required and will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis the week prior to the trip. For trip questions or reservations call Bob Sanders at (407) 454-0542.

Bob Sanders

SIGN UP FOR THE ELECTRONIC VERSION OF OASIS AND LET'S GO GREEN!
 SEND YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS TO OUR MEMBERSHIP DATA CHAIR, MIKE
 (MIKED129E@GMAIL.COM): SUBJECT TITLE "OASIS GOING GREEN"

Orange Audubon Society offers Florida Master Naturalist Program Scholarship

For the third year, Orange Audubon Society (OAS) is pleased to offer a scholarship that pays \$100 toward the \$225 tuition for an environmental educator and/or volunteer in Central Florida to attend a Florida Master Naturalist Program (FMNP) Core Module class (Freshwater Wetlands, Coastal Systems or Upland Habitats). FMNP is an adult education program developed by the University of Florida. The mission of the program is to promote awareness, understanding, and respect of Florida's natural world. For more information about FMNP see <http://www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu/about/>.

Scholarship applicants must be OAS members and reside in Central Florida. New memberships are welcome in order to apply. FMNP module completion must be between July 1st, 2013 and June 14th, 2014. The scholarship recipient is strongly encouraged to complete a course-related project (such as a brochure or display or slide show) and present it to a local school class, civic group, park or other group to help fulfill Orange Audubon Society's environmental and educational mission. For ideas, see: http://www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu/students/final_projects/default.aspx

Last year's winner, Sondra Driscoll recently completed her second FMNP module and is now a volunteer Interpretive Naturalist at Orlando Wetlands Park (OWP). Previous winners of the OAS-FMNP scholarships, Jutta Geisler and Reinhard Geisler completed the Master Naturalist program and have since written a Bird Guide for Orlando Wetlands Park. Jutta is the webmaster for the Friends of the Orlando Wetlands. Reinhard recently taught a well-attended bird photography class. At least seven other OAS members have taken FMNP courses to further their environmental education efforts. Among their projects are trail guide writing, native plant garden signage, bird presentations, bird-friendly gardening projects, and nature journaling classes.

To apply for the scholarship, send OAS your (1) name, (2) address, (3) phone number, (4) e-mail address and (5) a short essay describing your current environmental education role and how you hope to use what you learn in the FMNP course in your job and/or volunteer efforts. The above information should be sent by February 19th, 2014 to Mary Keim, OAS Scholarship committee at rssmhk@gmail.com. The scholarship committee will notify the winner no later than March 19th, 2014. The winner will then be reimbursed \$100 following OAS's receipt of proof of completion of an FMNP module class (receipt of proof must be no later than June 15th, 2014). For questions about OAS's FMNP scholarships, contact Mary Keim at rssmhk@gmail.com.

Saturday, March 1st, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
Lake Apopka Wildlife Festival & Birdapalooza

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) is helping to organize the 2nd Lake Apopka Wildlife Festival & Birdapalooza—celebrating Lake Apopka and its North Shore. The event will be at Orange County’s Magnolia Park (Lakeside), 2929 S. Binion Rd., Apopka, 32703 on Saturday, March 1st from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Some of the activities at this free admission event include bus tours of the North Shore and airboat rides on Lake Apopka, nature and photo hikes (reserve a spot in advance for tours and hikes at www.birdapalooza.com/tours/), tree giveaway, lots of nature-oriented information, music and other entertainment, kids’ activities, and merchandise and food sales. Check out the list of participating exhibitors at the website.

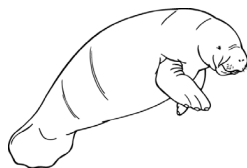


Last year’s inaugural Lake Apopka Wildlife Festival and Birdapalooza was an overwhelming success with an estimated attendance of ~4,400 people. Eighty-two bird species were reported by trip leaders to the OAS booth during the one-day event. All walking tours were well attended and all eight buses were standing room only. We expect the March 1st attendance to be just as good, so we need your help to make this event a success.

Because OAS is one of the co-sponsors of the event, we need lots of volunteer help such as two guides for each of the nine bus tours, people to assist with bus and airboat ‘boarding’, birders at lakeside, and lots of people to help with our t-shirt, tote bags, sign and mug sales, our outreach and conservation issues space, and our kids’ art/nature collage activity. If you can volunteer for any of these activities, please contact Loretta at LNS-oas@att.net or (407) 886-2925 or Teresa at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or (407) 644-0796. Please don’t hesitate; we need your help. Thanks.

Audubon Academy 2014 Coming Soon

SAVE THE DATE and register as soon as possible! The 2014 Audubon Academy is being held at DaySpring Episcopal Conference Center located in Parrish, Florida, near Bradenton. DaySpring, with 92-wooded acres on the north shore of the Manatee River, offers hiking, biking and canoeing/kayaking opportunities and is near some great birding areas. This year’s Academy is being held April 11th–13th and the theme is “Walking the Walk—Making Conservation Real”. Academy will offer outdoor and indoor workshops and information sharing sessions to enhance the abilities of both current and future Audubon chapter leaders to build stronger and more effective chapters. Regardless of your chapter size or location, the fun activities—entertainment, chapter displays and poster sessions, conservation training, hospitality and more—can help enable chapters to expand and invigorate their outreach and conservation activities. Information—including the schedule, descriptions of the workshops and registration—will be sent out in January and posted on the Audubon Florida website. Registration is by mail. Note that early registrations, received by February 7th, will help the organizers make arrangements. Do not miss this once a year opportunity to network at this “for the chapters, by the chapters” event, dedicated to protecting and conserving Florida’s natural resources.



Bob Stamps, Audubon Academy 2014 Co-coordinator

Happy New Year from Orange Audubon Society! Hope you are ready for a brand new year of nature advocacy, education, and enjoyment!

Congratulations to OAS-Sponsored 'The Art of ReUse' Contest Winners

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) was a proud sponsor of prize packages provided to some of the 9th- through 12th-grade winners who entered Orange County's Pollution Prevention Calendar Art Contest, "The Art of ReUse." You can view all of the wonderful art submitted this year and some of the participants on this video link: http://www.orangetvfl.net/orange-county-update/art-of-reuse-vid-eo_f16708f50.html.

OAS-sponsored 9th- through 12th-grade winners, respectively, were: Danica Erickson, West Orange High School; Lena Wiesner, Cypress Creek High School; and Megan Simas and Michael Cuadrado, Freedom High School. OAS extends congratulations to all participants and winners.

March 28th–March 30th

A Weekend Field Trip to the 'Red Hills' of the Panhandle

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) is sponsoring a weekend trip to Tallahassee, FL to explore Tall Timbers Research Station (TTRS) and nearby Birdsong Nature Center (Birdsong) in the 'Red Hills' area of the Panhandle.

The weekend will include a guided tour traversing 3.5 miles of TTRS, known for its milestone research on fire ecology, plus Northern Bobwhite, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, native plant communities, longleaf pine, ornithology, herpetology and invertebrates. Our guide, TTRS scientist and Vertebrate Ecology Program Director Jim Cox, will show us fire research plots, provide a first-hand look at banding of nuthatches and wintering sparrows, a tenant farm and, of course, have us birding all the while! We will enjoy lunch on the grounds and guided tours of the on-site museum housing a number of rare specimens and the historic Beadel House, circa 1895, developed and used when vast areas that had been plantations were occupied by Northerners who hunted quail.

About nine miles away from TTRS across the GA line is Birdsong Nature Center, where we will spend time on Sunday before departing for home. Like TTRS, Birdsong is another former hunting plantation where pioneering activities in fire experimentation and wildlife management began and continue today.

Arrive Friday, March 28th; birding and guided tours Saturday at TTRS and Sunday at Birdsong; depart Sunday after lunch. Field trip cost is \$40 (Audubon members), \$55 (non-members) and \$15 for youths ages 4–17 accompanied by paid adult, which includes admission to TTRS and Birdsong, lunch Saturday and snacks during socials on Friday and Saturday evenings 5:30–7:30 p.m. Participants should make their own hotel (special rate for OAS group at Cabot Lodge) or camping reservations. For full details including itinerary, and hotel and camping information, visit OAS' website: www.orangeaudubonfl.org, or contact Teresa: mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or (407) 644-0796.



Florida's Water & Land Legacy Update

Good news! On Friday, December 20th, we received news that "we're 73% of the way to having the required number of validated petitions, and we wouldn't be here without you"! Regarding the required voting district qualifications, it was announced that District 7, which includes all of Seminole and parts of Orange and Volusia counties, has qualified; we now stand at 6 down and 8 to go! What a great holiday gift!! We hope that more of the needed districts will qualify shortly.

We'll continue to keep you informed. Again, thank you all for your hard work and dedication in collecting signatures; we appreciated all your help and/or signatures.

Orange Audubon Society Board of Directors 2013–2014

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Calendar of Events



- January Program: Conservation of Fox Squirrels in Florida.** January 16th 7:00 p.m. at Harry P. Leu Gardens.
- Field Trip to Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge.** January 18th. For trip reservations or questions, call Mary Keim or Randy Snyder at rssmhk@gmail.com or (407) 851-5416.
- Limited Edition Field Trip to Smyrna Dunes Park.** January 25th. For trip reservations or questions, call Bob Sanders at (407) 454-0542.
- Birds of Prey Identification. Lake Apopka Restoration Area.** February 2nd. For trip reservations or questions, call Bob Sanders at (407) 454-0542.
- Audubon Academy preferred registration deadline.** February 7th. Visit <http://fl.audubon.org/> for details. Bob Stamps or Loretta Satterthwaite at (407) 886-2925.
- Orlando Wetlands Festival.** February 15th 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. See page 1.
- OAS 5% profit day at Ethos Vegetarian Kitchen.** February 22nd. More details coming in February newsletter.
- Lake Apopka Wildlife Festival and Birdapalooza.** March 1st, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. See page 4.