

Vol. 50

December 2014

This Month's Program: Thursday, December 18, 2014, 7:00 p.m. **Optics and Digiscoping by Allan Jahner** of Wild Birds Unlimited and Frank Mardle of Colonial Photo & Hobby

A birder's best friend? Binoculars. of course! Whether you are a beginning birder, or an expert, binoculars are crucial tools to bring in the details for identification. Good binoculars and spotting scopes have become less expensive as technology has improved.



Photo: Deborah Green

Digiscoping is a unique kind of photography using a digital camera and a field spotting scope. Your ability to photograph the wonders of nature can be greatly expanded using this technology.

On December 18th we have a two-part program on Optics (choosing binoculars and spotting scopes) and Digiscoping. Allan Jahner of Wild Birds Unlimited will present on Optics and Frank Mardle of Colonial Photo and Hobby, Orange Audubon Society's major sponsor of the Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest, will present on Digiscoping.

This is our holiday program, so if time permits, we welcome short reports from our members on birds seen or birding trips taken. Your bringing holiday goodies for our hospitality table will also be greatly appreciated. Please let Hospitality Chair Charlie Kirby know at (407) 440-3448.

We look forward to seeing you on December 18th at 7 p.m. See box at right for directions.

Deborah Green, Programs Co-Chair

115th Christmas Bird Count Plan to participate!

From December 14, 2014 through January 5, 2015, tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas take part in a unique tradition. Armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists, they embark on an annual mission, often before dawn. The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is the longest running animal census on the planet. Audubon and other organizations use this data to assess the health of bird populations and to help quide conservation action.

In lieu of a December monthly field trip, please participate in one of the local CBCs listed below. Here are the nearest ones with whom to contact to participate:

Emeralda/Sunnyhill: December 15, 2014; Peg Lindsay at pegcondor@embargmail.com

Zellwood/Mt.Dora: December 19, 2014; Wes Biggs at birdsatfnt@bellsouth.net or (407) 384-9766

Wekiva River: December 20, 2014; Jay Exum at jay.exum@exumassoc.com or (321) 229-5653

Econlockhatchee: December 28, 2014; Lorne Malo at lornemalo@bellsouth.net (407) 349-2536

For CBCs in other parts of Florida, go to the Florida Ornithological Society's site http://www. fosbirds.org/.

Orange Audubon Society programs are free and no reservations are necessary. Programs are the 3rd Thursday of each month (September-June) and all but June start at 7:00 p.m. in the Camellia Room at Harry P. Leu Gardens 1920 North Forest Ave., Orlando, FL 32803 For map and directions, visit: www.leugardens.org/plan/directions/

\$64,000 in Toyota and National Audubon Innovation Grant Funding

We are very excited to announce that Orange Audubon Society (OAS) has been awarded a \$64,000 TogetherGreen Innovation Grant from Toyota and the National Audubon Society, the only Florida project to win funding this year.



This project will enable low-income Winter Park residents, defined as having less than \$25,000 household income annually, to implement energy efficiency measures. The project is based on the Orange County Homeowners Energy Efficiency Program (OCHEEP) that used American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 funding to provide energy efficiency education and retrofits to nearly 2,500 residents from 2010–2012.

Lack of publicity on the cost-effective energy savings achieved through the OCHEEP program led us to seek to repeat it and work to obtain and publicize the before and after data. We chose City of Winter Park because, although its energy comes from Duke Energy, the City has its own utility for billing purposes. The City has an active Sustainability program, and Sustainability staff and the City's Electric Utility pledged to work with us to secure data.

The City already has an audit and rebate program in which residents are reimbursed for approved energy efficiency retrofits through a bill credit; however, most low-income residents cannot afford to pay upfront. Many of these residents' homes were built in the 1920s or 30s and have air leaking through small cracks in building walls, roofs, doors and windows.

This grant will result in reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and provide data to promote the benefits of energy efficiency. It supports the City of Winter Park's Sustainability efforts as well as Orange Audubon Society's conservation mission. Low-income residents will attend an energy efficiency workshop, receive giveaways of caulking and weather-stripping supplies and an opportunity to practice using these supplies before booking an energy audit. Based on audit recommendations, residents may then secure energy efficiency retrofits by a trained licensed contractor.

Audubon and Toyota founded Toyota TogetherGreen in 2008 to foster and invest in conservation pioneers and ideas that impact the environment on a national scale. Over \$7.2 million in Innovation Grants funding has been awarded The purpose and dedication of Orange Audubon Society (OAS) is to promote public understanding of, and an interest in, wildlife and the environment that supports it. OAS' education programs foster the recognition of the tangible and intangible values in the remaining natural areas of Florida and the world, and our responsibility for the conservation of the Earth's natural ecosystems and the services that they provide for the health of the planet.

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

to more than 260 environmental projects nationwide. This year \$565,000 in funding is being awarded to 19 projects around the country. For more details about the 2014 Audubon & Toyota TogetherGreen Innovation Grants projects, visit www.togethergreen.org.

We will keep you posted on progress of the grant and share tips on how you can reduce your own energy use. Some tips already appeared in the November 2013 *OASis* available online at http:// orangeaudubonfl.org/oas_oasis.html. *Deborah Green, Climate Chair*

Amendment 1 – It Ain't Over 'til It's Over

It was so rewarding that 75% of Florida voters supported Amendment 1! Because of a well-run campaign and our collective efforts, Florida has a dedicated, stable, funding source for restoring and protecting water, wildlife, and natural areas for the next 20 years. But now it will take our watchful eyes and readiness to ensure that the Governor and Legislature strictly adhere to what 4.2 million Florida voters intended: funding to protect natural treasures like our springs, the Everglades, and the 2 million acres of Florida Forever lands.

When the Mets were trailing the Cubs by 9½ games for the National League pennant race in 1973 Yogi Berra famously said "It Ain't Over 'til It's Over." This phrase applies perfectly to Amendment 1's implementation. We got the amendment on the ballot (phase 1) and then got it passed (phase 2).

Now comes phase 3, working to make sure our legislators do not pull a "smoke and mirrors" move (ala Florida Lottery) whereby Amendment 1 funds are used to replace general revenue funds that would normally go to the agencies that provide services (Department of Environmental Protection, Water Management Districts, etc.). Another challenge is to make sure that Amendment 1 funds are used appropriately as stated in the Amendment.

You can help by attending meetings, reading newspapers and being constantly alert for any indications that our legislators are trying to misuse or manipulate the intent of Amendment 1. As soon as you become aware of any such infractions, please let me know. Join our Central Florida Conservation Network if you're available to write letters or emails. Contact me at rhs-oas@att.net or (407) 886-2925.

Bob Stamps, OAS Conservation Chair

November Field Trip Report

Twenty-nine attended the Orange Audubon Society field trip on November 22nd to Lower Wekiva River Preserve State Park, west of Sanford, despite the threat of rain. At least 17 bird species were observed including Redtailed Hawk, Pileated Woodpecker, Blue-headed Vireo, American and Fish Crows, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Black-and-White Warbler. Other animals seen included Southern Toad, termites, and Barred Yellow. Evidence of animals included gopher tortoise scat and burrows, pocket gopher mounds, wild hog rooting, deer tracks, squirrel nests and chewed pine cones and oak gall-wasp galls.

Wildflowers in bloom included Pinewoods Milkweed, Dogtongue, Wild Buckwheat, Tall Jointweed, Yellow Buttons, Elliott's Aster, Rice



Field trip participants with Southern Toad Photo: Deborah Green

Button Aster and Hammock Snakeroot. We enjoyed seeing fall colors in Shining Sumac and Huckleberry. A few in the group tested the leaf-closing response in Sensitive Brier. One attendee jokingly asked if we needed to be careful about what we said around Sensitive Brier.

Some of the topics discussed along the trail were the value of snags, the decreasing acreage of Sandhill community because of development and the mutualism between algae and fungus in the lichens such as Deermoss, British Soldiers and Christmas Wreath Lichen.

Thanks to the experienced naturalists that attended for helping beginners spot and identify new Mary Keim, Field Trip Chair species.

In case you missed the November program: Capuchins, oilbirds, and more: In Venezuela with an expert

Bruce Anderson, a leading Central Florida bird expert, spoke about his recent trip to Venezuela at Orange Audubon Society's November meeting, also sharing photographs of many exotic and endemic species found there. The co-author of *The Birdlife of Florida*, a reference guide of Florida's avifauna, Anderson has studied birds for 57 years.

Anderson flew to Caracas and then traveled to Cuidad Bolivar and further southeast to La Gran Sabana or The Great Savanna. This area is part of Canaima National Park, the second largest national park in Venezuela.

The location offers one of the most unusual landscapes in the world, with stunning waterfalls and gorges, deep valleys, and jungles hosting large numbers and varieties of plant species, a diverse fauna and the isolated table-top mesas locally known as tepuis. Venezuela is also home to 76 percent of the Orinoco River, one of the longest rivers in South America.



Guianan Cock-of-the-rock Photo: Almir Candido de Almeida

Among the many unusual birds Anderson noted was the thickset Capuchin

bird, an Orange-brown Cotinga with a bare vulture-like blue head and a hood like a Capuchin monk. The birds gather in leks, or groups of alpha males to display and attract females for mating. Their odd song has been compared to the distant sound of a chainsaw or a cow mooing, hence its alternative name, Calfbird. He also saw the unusual Oilbird, which lives in caves in Venezuela and Trinidad, and is the only nocturnal flying fruit-eating bird in the world.

Most strikingly beautiful is the Guianan Cock-of-the-rock, a bright orange bird with a prominent half-moon crest. Like the cotingas and tiny manakins, these birds also form leks, and create "courts" by clearing wooded areas where they can display and attract mating females. Other species include the endemic Buffy Hummingbird, Scarlet Ibis, Red-billed Woodcreeper, Plumbeous Kite, Paradise Jacamar, Black and White Bellbird, White-throated Toucan, King Vulture, Gray-headed Kite, Hook-billed Hawk, the gaudy Yellow-tufted Woodpecker, and finally, the amazing Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Anderson's "second favorite bird!" All in all it was a most interesting and entertaining evening, so we hope Anderson returns soon with tales of another exotic birding trip to South America, or anywhere really!

Linda Carpenter, Publicity Committee Member

Kudos to Lake Eola Volunteers

Thanks are extended to 11 intrepid volunteers who made the 2-day Lake Eola Fiesta in the Park outreach, fundraising and Vote YES on 1 advocacy event a success despite wind and brisk temperatures and if noted with an '*' also helped with merchandise sales at the November meeting: Rick Baird, Sherri Brown, Phyllis Hall*, Cyndi* and Michael Kay, Wayne Kennedy*, Dana Lyon, Brook Rohman, Loretta Satterthwaite*, Randy Snyder and Bob Stamps. OAS appreciates your efforts. Thank you!

Teresa Williams, Treasurer

Now That the Elections are Over, Get To Know Your Elected Officials

One of the best ways to help the environment is to develop relationships with your elected officials and discuss conservation issues with them before code changes, bills, and other changes are drafted or instituted. Oftentimes, citizens do not learn about matters affecting the environment until damaging changes have already been approved. You likely will not agree with all the positions of your elected officials, but at least by having civil discussions with them on a regular basis you can provide them with viewpoints and information that they might not get otherwise.

Bob Stamps, OAS Conservation Chair

Coyotes in our Neighborhoods

Recently, many neighborhoods in Central Florida have been colonized by a familiar predatory species: the coyote. These highly versatile animals have begun moving into suburban and urban areas where their search for food has led them to prey on small dogs and cats. Aggrieved citizens recently petitioned Orange County to find a proactive solution to this issue. While governmental services search for answers, there are a few things that citizens can do to protect their pets and peace of mind.

The first priority is to keep pets indoors. Small dogs need to be properly controlled or leashed when they venture outside for their protection, and free-ranging cats must be kept inside. Free-ranging cats are more susceptible to disease, injury, and malnutrition than their indoor counterparts, and are now at risk from deadly coyote attacks when they stay outside. Additionally, there is no question that feral cats represent the most destructive non-native invasive species released in North America to date. A recent study published by Nature Communications condemns free-ranging cats, feral and domestic, for contributing to over 1 billion bird deaths each year. Even if they don't hunt, their presence will diminish the attention that adult birds give to their nests.



Coyote. Photo: Andrew Boyle

Introduced feral cats have been implicated in the extinctions of as many as 33 species across the globe, and that number may increase as bird populations continue to dwindle in the face of habitat destruction. While it is by no means the key to restoring bird numbers, this is an action that individuals can make to properly ensure better stewardship of the environment.

If you do see a nuisance coyote roaming your neighborhood, please contact the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at (352) 732-1225, to discuss options such as capture and release. A licensed trapper may be able to remove the coyote from the area without killing the animal. Coyotes are highly adaptable to new environments and can learn new behaviors to find food in all manner of habitats. It is important to recognize that coyotes are a native species to North America, and it is up to us to adapt and find inexpensive strategies to coexist with their presence.

Danny Raleigh, Conservation Committee Member

Help Needed!! Save the Date!! Saturday, February 7, 2015–Lake Apopka Wildlife Festival & Birdapalooza

The Lake Apopka Wildlife Festival & Birdapalooza—celebrating Lake Apopka and its North Shore (a Globally Important Birding Area)— was co-founded and is co-sponsored by Orange Audubon Society (OAS). This festival brings attention to the great birding and wildlife watching opportunities of the North Shore and allows attendees to visit areas normally closed to vehicle traffic. The event will be on Saturday, February 7th from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Orange County's Magnolia Park (Lakeside), 2929 S. Binion Rd., Apopka, FL.

Birdapalooza is free but there are first-come, first-served bus tours of the North Shore and boat rides on Lake Apopka. There will also be guided nature hikes, a tree giveaway, lots of nature-oriented information, music and other entertainment, several kids' activities, merchandise and food sales. Check out the list of participating exhibitors at the website: http://www.birdapalooza.com/.

As a co-sponsor of the event, OAS contributes numerous volunteers rather than money; therefore, your chapter needs lots of you to help. If you can volunteer to lead trips or help with sales and outreach, please contact Loretta at LNS-oas@att.net or (407) 886-2925 or Teresa at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or (407) 644-0796. Don't hesitate; save the date, but please sign up to volunteer now. Thanks.

Birds and Wolves and A Blimey Brit-the Florida Panhandle Beckons

After a great weekend trip last March to the Red Hills area of the Florida Panhandle, Orange Audubon Society (OAS) is planning another Panhandle adventure May 1–3, 2015. The trip begins with a return visit to Birdsong Nature Center, Thomasville, GA, for early afternoon birding on Friday. Birding continues Saturday morning at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge with guide Andy Wraithmell and ends Sunday with a private, hands-on tour at Seacrest Wolf Preserve near Chipley, FL. The weekend trip cost is \$60 for OAS members/\$75 for nonmembers and covers admission to Birdsong and Seacrest and picnic lunches on Saturday and Sunday. The Sundayonly cost for touring Seacrest and a picnic lunch is \$35 OAS member/\$45 nonmember.

Early registration is recommended as three college graduations occur that weekend in Tallahassee, driving up demand and cost of lodging. A limited



number of reasonably-priced rooms near St. Marks are blocked for OAS and primitive camping is available at Seacrest. Contact Teresa to register and for lodging details: mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or (407) 644-0796 or howl with regret for missing this unique opportunity to bird with blimey Andy (Office of Public Access and Wildlife Viewing ~ The Great Florida Birding & Wildlife Trail) and get up close and personal with North American wolves like Kiowa, shown here.

OAS Co-sponsors 15th Annual Orlando Wetlands Festival

The 15th annual Orlando Wetlands Festival will be held on February 21, 2015, 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 (OWP). 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-inspired merchandise including t-shirts, tote bags, signs and mugs (cash, checks and credit cards accepted).

OAS needs volunteers! To lead bird watching hikes, please contact Randy [rssmhk@gmail.com or (407) 851-5416]. To volunteer for shifts at the kids' art table, OAS' outreach table and/or to sell merchandise, please contact Teresa at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or (407) 644-0796. No experience is necessary.

Randy Snyder, OAS-OWP Liaison

Youth Field Trip and Classroom Visits

OAS Board member Brook Rohman led our first official Youth Field Trip at Orlando Wetlands Park on November 8th. While one enthusiastic child, who along with his parents has been a regular at Mead Botanical Garden field trips, participated, we clearly need to do some recruitment to get more children on these trips. If you have a child or grandchild that would like to go on young people oriented field trips, contact Brook at (407) 921-8008 or brookrohman@gmail.com. We would like to offer classroom presentations on birds and nature.

If you are a retired teacher or otherwise can present well to children, please volunteer to join our Education Committee. Contact Dominique Shimizu at shimizu_wcs@yahoo.com or (407) 287-4078, if you are interested in these or other Education efforts.





Savannah Sparrow *Photo: Jack Rogers*

Jack Rogers' Photography Workshop

On November 8th award-winning nature photographer Jack Rogers led a Photographer's Workshop at Orlando Wetlands Park to benefit the Orange Audubon Society (OAS). The in-the-field session was followed by a classroom session where photos taken by Jack that morning, including the Savannah Sparrow shown here, were used to demonstrate nature photography techniques. Along with emphasis on lighting angles, perspective, composition and backgrounds, Jack taught that students should observe their subject. Watching the movement of sparrows along the shoreline allowed Jack to anticipate the direction of movement of one bird, select the proper place, height and light angle at which to set up a

camera and tripod and wait patiently for the subject to move into view. A photographer working quietly and alone can capture excellent images far more successfully in this manner rather than by "chasing down" small songbirds.

Thank you, Jack for donating your time and talent in leading this workshop to benefit Orange Audubon Society financially and to complement the annual Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest (CFNNPC). Your generosity is sincerely appreciated.

Teresa Williams, OAS' CFNNPC Chair

Thrifty Gift Ideas for the Holidays

National Audubon Society field guides come in an App format, from www.audubonguides.com, or as a gift from the iTunes store. The iTunes store allows you to actually send an App directly to someone on your list. In addition to the wonderful "*Audubon Nature Florida - the Ultimate Florida Nature Guide*," there are individual Apps for those passionate about birds, butterflies, trees, insects and mammals. These Apps are only \$4.99 each and can be used on smart phones or iPads.

A gift registration for the Panhandle trip next May (see page 6) will put something unique in every stocking: world class birding and a hands-on North American wolf encounter.

Orange Audubon Society membership is a terrific gift for \$20. Basic membership supports efforts to safeguard Florida's natural environment and members receive three great publications: National Audubon's bimonthly magazine, *Audubon*; Audubon Florida's triannual publication, *Audubon Florida Naturalist*; and OAS' monthly newsletter, *OASis*. Membership application forms are on the OAS website: http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org/FORMS/MEMBER%20APP%20FORM_2014_2015.

Gifts of financial support to Orange Audubon Society (OAS) are tax deductible. Donors who wish to make a 2014 tax-deductible donation to OAS should mail their gift by December 31, 2014 (postmarked by date). Thank you for your continued support! *Maria Paasch, Newsletter Editor*



Peregrine Falcon. Photo: Mary Keim

Birds of Prey Identification Classes

Popular Bob Sanders will lead a series of field trips at the Lake Apopka Restoration Area to enhance a birder's ability to identify raptors using a holistic approach and further the appreciation of these fascinating birds. Field trips are on Sundays: December 7, 2014, January 4 and February 1, 2015.

You can attend single or multiple days and no early registration is required. Cost each day is \$5 for members and \$10 for nonmembers. Meet at the Lust Rd. Field trip is 7:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. If you have questions, contact Bob at (407) 454-0542.

Welcome New and Returning Members

Welcome or welcome back to these new or returning members: Frank Allen, Mary Allen, Sherry & Liz Anderson, Rebecca Arnot, Ana Balderrama, Kathryn Barnes, Bob & Jill Bendick, Angela Bowman, Kevin Chase, Viola Clemis, Ashton Dohany, the Dougherty family, Keith Douglas, John Duncan, William Duncan, Lynn & Rance Ellis, the Graham family, Amanda Froelich, Victoria Gonzalez, Peggy & Terry Gotter, Jennifer Henton, Robin Huck, Gregg Huston, Viola Keskinen, Anastasia Kuntiak, Jennifer Leslie, Cooper Library, Alvin McWhorter, Megan & Lisa Milks, H. Miller, Selena Moshell, Bev Mundt, Stephanie O'Malley, Lynda Oyler, Eddie Pipkin, Sharon Robinson, Beth Scott, Ginny Seibert, Suzanne Serio, Prem Subrahmanyam, Marnie Thompson, Michael Urban, Virginia Watts, Phyllis Way, Lesley White, Bruce Wiley, Valerie Williams, Shelby Woods, and Marcia Zdanys.

Thanks for joining OAS. We look forward to seeing you at our programs and events!

Effective September 2014 the *OASis* is only available in electronic form. If we do not have your email address, please contact our membership data chair, Mike Daley (<u>miked129e@gmail.com</u>) with the subject: "*OASis* GOING GREEN"

JOIN OAS' <u>MEETUP</u> GROUP

LIKE OAS ON FACEBOOK

Calendar of Events

| | Birds of Prey Identification Classes: Lake Apopka Restoration Area Sundays: December 7, 2014, January 4 and February 1, 2015, 7:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. Meet at Lust Road entrance. Contact Bob at (407) 454-0542 |
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| | Christmas Bird Counts: Contact the compiler in your area to participate. Emeralda/Sunnyhill: December 15, 2014; Peg Lindsay at pegcondor@embarqmail.com Zellwood/Mt. Dora: December 19, 2014; Wes Biggs at birdsatfnt@bellsouth.net, (407) 384-9766 Wekiva River: December 20, 2014; Jay Exum at jay.exum@exumassoc.com, (321) 229-5653 Econlockhatchee: December 28, 2014; Lorne Malo at lornemalo@bellsouth.net, (407) 349-2536) |
| 1 | December Program: Optics and Digiscoping by Frank Mardle of Colonial Photo and Hobby and Allan Jahner of Wild Birds Unlimited December 18, 2014, 7:00 p.m., Harry P. Leu Gardens, Camelia Room |
| • | December Field Trip: Join a Christmas Bird Count (see above) |
| | January Program: Ephemeral Wetlands and Rare Amphibians - Rebecca Means January 15, 2015, 7:00 p.m., Harry P. Leu Gardens, Camelia Room Genius Drive Work Day January 18, 2015. Contact Teresa at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or (407) 644-0796 |
| | Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival, Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, Titusville January 21–26, 2015 |
| | Lake Apopka Wildlife Festival & Birdapalooza, Magnolia Park, Apopka February 7, 2015. Contact Loretta at LNS-oas@att.net or (407) 886-2925 or Teresa at mwilliams@ cfl.rr.com or (407) 644-0796 |
| 1 | Great Backyard Bird Count February 13–16, 2015. www.birdsource.org/gbbc |
| i | February Program: Radar Birding 101–Angel and Mariel Abreu February 19, 2015, 7:00 p.m., Harry P. Leu Gardens, Camelia Room |
| I | Orlando Wetlands Festival, Ft. Christmas Park, Christmas February 21, 2015. Contact Randy at (407) 851-5416 |
| 1. | |

Best Wishes for a Safe and Peaceful Holiday Season!!