



Dragonfly at Sunrise. 2008 Chertok Photo Contest, Honorable Mention Winner.
Photo: Kevin Barry

This Month's Program:

December 21, 2017

Hidden Wildlife: Garden Jewels by Dena Wild

The garden is populated by creatures that seem insignificant but have an important role for garden health. Lady beetles and dragonflies are among the insects that prey on plant-feeding insects. Anoles help keep unwanted insects in control. Lowly worms are essential to the richness of soil. Black racers are slithering garbage cans eating unwanted garden inhabitants.

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) December 21st program will be presented by OAS board member and gardening enthusiast, an Orange County Master Gardener, no less, who presents talks and workshops on all aspects of home horticulture. This entertaining presentation will share history and folklore of beneficial insects and other welcomed crawling critters, will help you identify these

"garden jewels," and appreciate their roles in our gardens. Suitable for naturalists and gardeners of all ages.

Join OAS Thursday, December 21, 2017 for a fascinating program. Location details below.

*Deborah Green,
Programs Committee*



Anchor Stink Bug preying on Gulf Fritillary larva on passionvine. Photo: Mary Keim

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/



December Field Trip: Citizen Science: Christmas Bird Counts

Instead of leading a field trip in December, Orange Audubon Society encourages you to participate in one or more Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) between Thursday, December 14, 2017 and Friday, January 5, 2018. The annual Audubon CBC, now in its 118th year, is the longest-running Citizen Science survey in the world.

Each year the Audubon CBC mobilizes over 70,000 volunteer bird counters in more than 2,400 locations across the Western Hemisphere. This effort tracks the health of bird populations at a scale that professional scientists alone could never accomplish. Each CBC is performed by at least 10 volunteers in a count circle that is 15 miles in diameter. The volunteers are broken up into small parties and follow assigned routes counting every bird they see. The natural competitive spirit of birders drives them to do the most thorough job possible. If you have never done a CBC, the compiler will group you with experienced birders. See page 8 for CBC dates and contact information. For Florida results of the 2016-2017 CBC, see [this link](#).

Larry Martin, Field Trips Chair

End of Year Donations

Thank you to all who have already donated in response to Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) once-a-year Letter Appeal sent to you in September. If you have not already done so, you can mail a check to Orange Audubon Society, P.O. Box 941142, Maitland, Florida 32794 or use the [link on our website to donate](#).

IRA Distribution

If you are 70 1/2 or over and are required to take a distribution from an IRA, you can donate to OAS without tax penalty. See [this link](#).



Conservation Ongoing Efforts and Successes

Each local environmental group has its own focus, and Orange Audubon Society (OAS) has long focused on protecting, preserving and/or restoring four major areas in Central Florida: the Econlockhatchee River Basin, Lake Apopka Basin, Wekiva River Basin, and the Butler Chain of Lakes. OAS works with other environmental groups against threats to public lands. If you support our work, please join as a volunteer, responding to the call to write letters and appear at public meetings, and/or support our chapter financially. To join OAS' Central Florida Conservation Network for email alerts and calls to action, please email Conservation Chair Mike Jones at conservation@orangeaudubonfl.org.

Vigilance Needed for the Wekiva River Basin

On October 24, 2017 Lake County Commissioners approved Commissioner Leslie Campione's resolution to make the SR 435 (Plymouth-Sorrento Road) temporary on-ramp to the SR 429 extension (Wekiva Parkway) a permanent interchange, with all the accompanying development. [Making this ramp permanent](#) would require the Florida legislature to modify the [2004 Wekiva Parkway Act](#). On October 17th Mayor Joe Kilsheimer of City of Apopka and the Apopka City Council passed a resolution opposing reopening the Act. On November 14th Seminole County Commissioner Lee Constantine convinced the Seminole County Commission to reject any move to open the Act. On the same date, Orange County Commissioners briefly considered Commissioner Bryan Nelson's proposal to make the interchange permanent, but the other Commissioners, led by Mayor Teresa Jacobs, declined to consider the proposal.

Coached by Charles Lee of Audubon Florida, OAS, Friends of the Wekiva River, Seminole Audubon Society, the St. Johns Riverkeeper, other groups and individuals have written letters and spoken at meetings. [The Orlando Sentinel editorial board supports our position](#). The Wekiva Parkway's final section joining SR 429 to I-4, along SR 46, still remains to be completed by the Florida Department of Transportation. This is the section to be elevated. All Wekiva advocates have to remain vigilant that this final section is completed as planned.

The 70,000+ acres of the Wekiva River Basin are an ecological treasure and an asset to our region. These public lands were purchased starting in 1969 (nearly 50 years ago) using documentary stamp taxes. This is the same funding mechanism of Florida Forever, its predecessor programs and new programs under Article X, Section 28 of the Florida Constitution, Land Acquisition Trust Fund (the 2014 Amendment 1 that passed with nearly 75% of the vote).

We never really thought we would have to defend *existing* public lands! OAS and its allies in the Wekiva Basin Coalition are trying to secure additional conservation land purchases in the Wekiva River Basin, already identified in the Wekiva-Ocala Greenway [Florida Forever](#) project. This project has been highly ranked on the approved Florida Forever list for years. The Wekiva River Basin, with its springs and its diversity of habitats, including habitats well-managed through prescribed burning, nearly connects to the Ocala National Forest. This large ecological area allows Florida Black Bears, an "umbrella species," to safely travel, and along with them other animals.

The Wekiva River Basin state lands ([Wekiwa Springs State Park](#), [Lower Wekiva River Preserve State Park](#), and [Rock Springs Run State Reserve](#)), plus [Seminole State Forest](#) encompass substantial amounts of upland area. Although damage from Hurricane Irma was significant in wetland areas, upland areas have reopened quickly. Don't forget these parks when looking for places to get out in nature. For Rock Springs and Seminole Forest, [check hunt dates at this link](#). Bob Sanders' December 17th Limited Edition Field Trip will now take you to the Seminole State Forest (p.7).



Fox Squirrel, Lower Wekiva River State Preserve. Photo: Mary Keim



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 (Orange Audubon Society's information source) newsletter is published monthly from September through June. The newsletter is posted on the OAS website and the link e-mailed to OAS members.

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Audubon Florida's Draper to Head Florida State Parks

At the end of November, Eric Draper became the new director of the Florida State Parks system and its 164 state parks. Eric is a strong conservation advocate who was Audubon Florida's (AF) executive director for 18 years. During that time, he assembled a strong staff to work for conservation in Florida. Florida's three-time award winning park system has been under threat from past Florida Department of Environmental Protection directors who thought that grazing, hunting, and other "multiple uses" were acceptable in our parks. Eric does not.

Julie Wraithmell is serving as AF Interim Director. She has been Deputy Director since March 2016 and before that Director of Wildlife Conservation. Julie led Florida's efforts to respond to the Gulf oil spill, built an impressive program of coastal citizen science, stewardship, and advocacy, advocated for Florida Forever, and worked with Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) to revive the Critical Wildlife Areas program.

Critical Wildlife Areas

On November 16, 2016, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) approved 13 new Critical Wildlife Areas (CWAs) and re-established 5 existing CWAs, after extensive feedback from stakeholders. The closest proposed CWA to us is on Bird Island by the Dunlawton Bridge on the Halifax River (Port Orange in Volusia County). This proposed Port Orange CWA is the northernmost rookery for Brown Pelicans and a breeding site for American Oystercatchers, egrets and other birds.



Brown Pelican. Photo: Mary Keim

Establishment of this CWA was delayed by the Florida Inland Navigation District to resolve ownership and easement issues. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection Division of

State Lands has now clarified that the State of Florida owns the island and surrounding submerged lands. Staff is presenting the Port Orange CWA for final Commission approval to the December 6th FWC meeting. OAS will be submitting another letter in support.

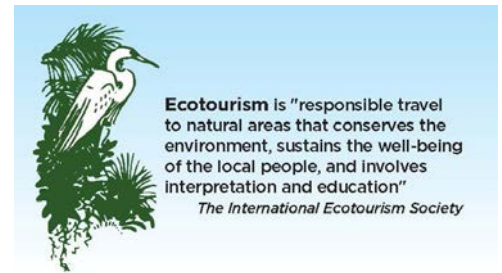
No Zoning Change for Seaplane Base

The Lake Apopka North Shore and its wildlife are a focus of OAS' conservation efforts, with the planned site of OAS' proposed Nature and Environmental Education Center intended to be the North Shore. Consequently, OAS opposes a zoning change proposal from a private entity for a seaplane base on 1.38 land acres, less than a mile south of Magnolia Park. This was the old Johnson's Fish Camp on Lake Apopka, and part of the property has a Commercial (C-2) zoning. The applicant wants to change it to planned development to allow a seaplane base and all sorts of commercial activities, in what has become a residential neighborhood.

At a public meeting on this zoning change proposal one year ago, the applicant let us know that he was planning to sell seaplane rides on Lake Apopka as *ecotourism*. Birding ecotourism is a big OAS effort with the Lake Apopka Birding Festival (p.8) and our efforts to support the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive. In the case of the seaplane proposal, the prefix *eco* tacked onto *tourism* means that the tourists will be expecting to see birds from the planes.

Getting close enough to birds to see them with a seaplane (or a fast-moving boat like an airboat) has great potential to cause harm to the birds. When the birds flush, they use energy, which makes them need more food. If it is nesting season and they fly off the nest, eggs or nestlings may be vulnerable to loss of warmth or even predation.

OAS and Friends of Lake Apopka have adopted the definition of Ecotourism of the International Ecotourism Society, as to the right. On November 1st, Orange County's Development Review Committee voted to reject the zoning change



Ecotourism is "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education"
The International Ecotourism Society

application, and on November 16th, the Planning and Zoning Commission voted likewise. The applicant will try again at the County Commission, tentatively on December 12nd. If you live near Lake Apopka in an area that would be negatively affected by seaplane traffic, your comments as a neighbor can be very useful. Please contact me at sabalpress@mac.com.

Fertilizer Ordinance Update

To bring local ordinances into compliance with a new state law to protect our springs and natural waterbodies, local governments have recently revised their fertilizer ordinances. In February, Seminole Audubon Society and county staff successfully convinced the Seminole County Board of County Commissioners to pass the first strong fertilizer ordinance in our area. This ordinance includes a summer ban (from June through September) on fertilizer containing nitrogen and/or phosphorus. Fertilizer containing nitrogen used during the non-restricted season must also contain at least 50% slow-release nitrogen. This ordinance applies only to unincorporated Seminole County, but through efforts of Seminole Audubon and others, cities have adopted the county ordinance (Altamonte Springs, Casselberry, Lake Mary, Longwood, and Oviedo). Sanford adopted it but with an exemption on the summertime ban for industry professionals and citizens who complete training. Winter Springs adopted the state model ordinance.



The Orange County Commission revised its fertilizer ordinance at its June 6, 2017 meeting. Their revisions,

Fertilizer Ordinance Update

continued

supported by OAS and other groups, require using slow release nitrogen fertilizer, strengthening the enforcement and penalty provisions for violations, and requiring in-store signage about the summer fertilizer ban.

The ordinance left in place exceptions to the summer ban for commercial applicators and residents who have taken a training course. The Commission ordered staff to revisit the ordinance after Wekiva area water testing results and other scientific data become available and may consider a summer ban with no exceptions at that time.

On November 21, 2017, [Lake County commissioners passed](#) an ordinance mirroring that of Seminole County, including the summertime ban. Fertilizer and lawn care company representatives *from around the state (and country)* showed up at the public hearing, along with Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society, other environmental groups and individuals. A robo call campaign backed by fertilizer industry supporters against the summer ban reportedly was poorly received by the commissioners, contributing to their votes in favor of the summer ban.

First 50 Coalition

Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer joined a growing group of U.S. mayors on May 25, 2017 when he signed a commitment to transition the City of Orlando to 100 percent clean and renewable energy by 2050. Orlando is now the largest city in Florida to make such a commitment and joins more than 3 dozen cities nationwide. This coalition calls itself the First 50 Coalition.

Locally led by the League of Women Voters Natural Resources Committee and the Central Florida Sierra Club, with Orange Audubon Society a supporting partner, the First 50 Coalition has carried out several strategic actions.

Orlando Utilities Commission (OUC) recently picked a new general manager, and the First 50 Coalition



Born to Fly - Limpkin Chick. 2017 Chertok Photo Contest, Honorable Mention Winner, Youth Category. Photo: Alayna Hew

weighed in to encourage choosing the candidate most favorable to increasing renewable energy.

In the City of Orlando's increasing "greening" efforts, one aspect that could be emphasized more is to protect and expand the City's parks and green spaces. If you are a City of Orlando resident who would like to speak up on this point, please contact Mike at conservation@orangeaudubonfl.org.

New Solar Co-ops

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) supports the upcoming Orange County Solar Co-operatives that will launch in 2018. For homeowners, these co-operatives offer a way to get educated about solar equipment and financing plus get a competitive price on a solar PV array for your home.

There is no cost to join these co-ops and there is no obligation to sign a contract with a co-op's chosen installer. Co-op members select their own installer.

Orange County Co-op, east of I-4, will be open from mid-January thru April. Orange County Co-op, west of I-4, will be open April thru June. To receive notice when these co-ops launch, go to the homepage of SolarUnitedNeighbors.org and sign up for either the newsletter and/or the Listserv. For more information, contact Mary Dipboye at mdipboye@yahoo.com.

Articles by the OAS Conservation Committee

Annual Chertok Nature Photo Contest

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) announces its 2018 (30th Annual) Kit and Sidney Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest, themed: *Florida Native Nature*. The deadline is April 19, 2018 (postmarked or electronically submitted by date). Participants will be notified of any disqualified entries and may optionally replace them at no charge by following instructions given when notified. In addition to the prize package of \$1,300 from OAS and co-sponsors Colonial Photo & Hobby and Tarflower Chapter of Florida Native Plant Society, plant aficionados from Tarflower will be available as mentors to help participants with plant identification. Get outside with your camera and start shooting and preserving Florida's amazing native nature! Contact me at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or (407) 644-0796 if you have questions. *Teresa Williams, OAS' Chertok Photography Contest Chair*

Lake Eola Success

The Lake Eola Fiesta in the Park 2-day outreach and fundraising event was a big success for Orange Audubon Society (OAS) thanks to help from Rick and Laurel Baird, Mike Jones, Cyndi and Michael Kay, Wayne Kennedy, Brent Mobley, Lori & John Parsons and Kathy Rigling. Mother Nature delivered great weather to make selling t-shirts and touting OAS' conservation efforts and nature education opportunities more fun.
Teresa Williams, Treasurer

Panhandle Birding and North American Wolf Encounter, December 7-10, 2017

A few spaces are still available for Orange Audubon Society's trip on December 7-10, 2017 to the Florida Panhandle for birding at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge and two locations in the Red Hills Region: Tall Timbers Research Station (TTRS) and the privately-owned Greenwood Plantation; and Seacrest Wolf Preserve, home to North American Wolves. Our weekend birding guide, Jim Cox, is a biologist and director of the vertebrate ecology program at TTRS. The weekend includes 4 birding/botany field trips, other natural history indulgences, and a private, hands-on tour at Seacrest Wolf Preserve. Weekend and birding/botany-only participants should arrive Thursday, December 7, 2017. Seacrest-only participants should arrive at Seacrest on Friday, December 8, 2017. A brief outline follows.

- Thursday: Arrive by 1 p.m. for birding, an introduction and brief history of TTRS, the bird museum collection, a possible Beadel House tour and a stroll down to the bird window as Red-cockaded Woodpeckers return to roost around 5 p.m.
- Friday: Start with early morning birding at TTRS' Woodyard Hammock, a nice beach-magnolia forest, and the boat launch at Lake Iamonia. Afterwards, answer "the call of the wild" by carpooling to Seacrest Wolf Preserve near Chipley, FL, to meet, touch and forever revere Seacrest's Arctic, British Columbian and Gray wolves; and smaller animals like Arctic Fox, Coyote, Raccoons and huggable Skunks. Imagine getting a muzzle greeting from one of this year's Gray Wolf pups or their pack's female alpha, Grey Cloud!
- Saturday: Carpool to St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge for birding and other coastal encounters. Targets are wintering ducks and shorebirds and rare sightings.
- Sunday: carpool to Greenwood Plantation in nearby Thomasville, GA, for a birding/botany field trip in pristine, old growth longleaf pine forests. Jim will demonstrate bird banding, targeting wintering Henslow's Sparrows (photo to right). After lunch an optional stopover at Maclay Gardens is offered before leaving the Red Hills Region for home.

Early Bird Registration for the entire weekend is \$80 Audubon members/\$95 non-members; birding-only trips are \$55/\$70. Both include guides, field trip fees, 3 lunches and 1 dinner prepared at Walter Lodge. The Seacrest-only private tour is \$35/\$45 and includes private tour admission and lunch. A late registration fee of \$10 applies after Nov 30, 2017. Residual profit, if any, will benefit OAS' future nature and environmental education center to be located on or near the Lake Apopka North Shore.

Lodging is first come, first served at TTRS' Walter Lodge, which has 8 private bedrooms (double occupancy; twin beds). Guests share 5 bathrooms and large open living, dining and kitchen areas. The lodge is offered to OAS participants for a discounted rate of \$37.50/night + tax if we fill it each night. Otherwise, the cost is pro-rated. Because space is limited, priority will be given to weekend participants. Free, primitive camping for tents or campers is available on the grounds near the lodge. Contact me for details and to reserve field trip spots, a room at Walter Lodge or a camping spot under the big trees: (407) 644-0796 or mwilliams@cfl.rr.com. Alternatively, you may make your own hotel reservation.

We hope you take the opportunity and join us on this fun trip.

Teresa Williams



Henslow's Sparrow, Jim Cox, Prescribed burning at Tall Timbers. Photos courtesy Tall Timbers. Susan Kirby with Seacrest Gray Wolf. Photo: Orange Audubon Society.



Brown-headed Nuthatch. Photo: Mary Keim

December Bird Highlight: Brown-headed Nuthatch

Brown-headed Nuthatch (*Sitta pusilla*) is a small, compact bird of open pine forests of southeastern United States. It is 4.5 inches long with a gray back and brown on its head and neck.

The Brown-headed Nuthatch is often heard before it is seen. Its call sounds a bit like a rubber duck, with a spunky two-syllable squeak. They are often seen on the trunks and branches of pine trees where they feed on insects in the pine bark. They are unusual among the birds in that they will sometimes use tools to get insects out of the bark. They also feed on pine nuts, hence the name "nuthatch."

Their populations are decreasing due to development and the lack of fire management to maintain open pine forests. Orange County locations for Brown-headed Nuthatches include Tosohatchee Wildlife Management Area, Hal Scott Preserve, Split Oak Forest and Wekiwa Springs State Park. If you attend OAS's trip to North Florida, they are also commonly found at Tall Timbers Research Station in Leon County.

Mary Keim

In Case You Missed the Program...

Troubled Waters

On November 16th, Orange Audubon Society members had the pleasure of viewing “Troubled Waters: Connections and Consequences” with the St. Johns Riverkeeper. The Riverkeeper is a non-profit that seeks to protect the river through non-partisan community engagement and awareness. Representing this group, Jane Durocher introduced the film with an overview of the river’s expanse and impact. Originating west of Vero Beach and cutting across the state, the St. Johns River travels an impressive 310 miles before flowing into the Atlantic Ocean at Jacksonville. “Troubled Waters” gives an inside look on the delicate state of the watershed that influences the daily lives of many Floridians.

The first and biggest takeaway from the film: *All of Florida’s water is connected.* The water that sits in our lakes, bubbles up through our springs, flows under our surface, and comes right out of our faucets is all connected. This connection is an awe-inspiring but also dangerous fact, as residents either unknowingly or maliciously abuse these resources. The film shared a startling example of this concept through its depiction of the 2016 sinkhole that allowed effluent from a Mosaic phosphate plant to flow directly into our Floridan aquifer. This directly affected the drinking water of Polk County and caused immediate panic.

Next, the film outlined the connection between Florida’s rapid development and the quality of our waterways. The St. Johns River and Florida’s other waterways have been inundated with increased runoff and pollutants forming the unthinkable — the gooey green MONSTER known as algae. Alluding to the 2005 Green Monster documentary, this film shows that an overabundance of nutrients remains a problem in Florida’s waterways and can lead to devastating algae takeovers at any moment. These algal blooms carry with them the potential for massive fish kills and even total economic collapse as public health and tourism tank with them. Septic tanks are the most daunting contributors to damaging runoff. Other contributors include pesticide and fertilizer use for agriculture and lawn maintenance. As Florida’s leaders focus on economic opportunity and growth, the threats of environmental collapse are pushed to the side.

The film attributes this dismissal of environmental woes to politics and unjust protections. Throughout the film, many city and state officials who were interviewed rationalized cuts made to conservation budgets. The film put the St. Johns River Water Management District in the hotseat, criticizing them for lax permitting regulations that allow overconsumption of public water sources for private operations. The good news is that the public expects better. In 2014, a large majority voted for Amendment 1 for increased funds for public acquisition and maintenance of land. Unfortunately, this support was minimized by the eventual mismanagement of the allotted funds.

This did not stop locals from advocating for the river’s health, however. The film ended on a positive note, highlighting many examples of community members pressing for change and a response from their elected officials. Mary Sue Scott of DeBary spread a petition through social media to protect Gemini Springs, and Alicia Smith initiated Rising Tides to conduct river cleanups, while Robert Field of Jacksonville reached out to the director of his local parks department to stop the deposit of street litter into the river. These individuals show that change does not have to be big to be meaningful.

As the credits rolled, Jane opened the floor to questions and the crowd remained positive. Many shared their own stories of small victories and differences made in their communities. Through these stories, the crowd was reminded that we are ALL involved whether or not we want to be.

Overall, the film gave a wonderfully comprehensive view of the situation at hand, drawing on interviews and statements from professors, locals, researchers, tour guides and elected officials. This attention to all the different people and groups affected by the river makes the message that much more powerful. The documentary is available for screening online at [this link](#).

Gabbie Buendia, OAS Board Member



Eagle Nest, Orlando Wetlands Park.
Photo: Susan Kirby

Eagle Watch

Citizen science projects allow non-scientists to meaningfully contribute to scientific research. Audubon Florida’s EagleWatch program is one of Florida’s premier citizen science programs, and provides valuable information on nesting activity and the current trends of eagle populations in Florida.

EagleWatch works to protect approximately 20% of Florida’s nesting Bald Eagle pairs. The volunteers monitor one or more eagle nests in their vicinity. These observation reports assist eagle biologists to determine the right conservation measures to ensure the success of the species. The reports may also be used by law enforcement agencies to prevent any harm to the birds and their nesting sites.

Florida has the third highest breeding density of any state, only surpassed by Alaska and Minnesota. Current threats include habitat and nest destruction, collision with vehicles, and territorial fights. With the current ongoing land development, many eagles are choosing to nest on man-made structures such as power line and communication towers. These non-natural nest sites can introduce many hazards to the young eaglets when they fledge.

EagleWatch has over 400 volunteers state wide and currently monitors more than 500 eagle nests in Florida. If you are interested in learning more about the EagleWatch program, please contact Shawnlei Breeding, Audubon EagleWatch Program Coordinator, 407-644-0190, x118 or eaglewatch@audubon.org.

Linda Gaunt, OAS Board Member and EagleWatch volunteer



Cooper's Hawk and Red-tailed Hawk.
Photos: Mary Keim

Birds of Prey Identification Classes

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. Field trips are on Sundays: December 3, 2017, January 7 and February 4, 2018 and will enhance your appreciation of these fascinating birds. Due to closure of most of the Lake Apopka North Shore access points, the December 3rd trip will be held in the McDonald Canal area. From Jones Road off US 441, go left on Jones Road/Duda Road and then south on CR 448A to where it dead ends. You can attend single or multiple days and no early registration is required. Cost each day is \$5 for members and \$10 for non-members. Meet at the McDonald Canal. Field trip is 7:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. If you have questions, contact Bob at (407) 459-5617.

Limited Edition Report

The Clay Island area of the Lake Apopka North Shore is still closed, due to hurricane damage, so for Orange Audubon Society's November Limited Edition Field Trip, we checked out birding opportunities at the McDonald Canal area, including the Red Trail. Ten birders sighted 46 bird species. Highlights were a Sharp-shinned Hawk, male Northern Harrier, and Swamp Sparrows. Ruby-crowned Kinglets were abundant. Join us next time!
Bob Sanders

Limited Edition Field Trip to Seminole State Forest December 17, 2017

On Sunday, December 17th, join popular birding guide Bob Sanders for a Limited Edition Field Trip to the [Seminole State Forest](#). Due to high water levels, the original Marl Bed Flats location was changed in favor of site within the Wekiva River Basin. We will see Florida Scrub-Jays and other pineland species. Limited Edition Field Trips are limited to 15 people. Cost is \$10 per person per trip for members and \$15 per person for non-members. The trip starts at 7:30 a.m. Required reservations will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis the week prior to the trip. Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617.

Split Oak Field Trip

Join Friends of Split Oak Forest for a December hike at Split Oak Forest Wildlife and Environmental Area. This beautiful 1700-acre conservation area is an Orange County Green PLACE and photos taken there are eligible for additional recognition in the Chertok Photo Contest. The walk will be from 11 a.m.-12 p.m. on December 6th. Split Oak is off Narcoosee Road, on Clapp Simms Duda Rd, which is 3.6 miles south of SR 417, before the Back to Nature Wildlife Sanctuary. If you have any questions, contact Deborah at 407-637-2525.

PEAR Park Field Trip

Orange Audubon Society was joined by Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society for a November trip to Palatka Environmental and Agricultural Reserve (PEAR) Park in Leesburg. Grasshopper Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, and 3 other sparrow species were highlights.
Larry Martin

Lori Mathis Records 400 Florida Species

Avid birder and past Orange Audubon Society (OAS) board member and field trips chair Lori Mathis just passed a milestone and entered the "rarified air" of birders who have seen over 400 Florida bird species. Lori has secured a new [Wings Over Florida](#) certificate to celebrate this achievement.



Lori Mathis with Wings Over Florida certificates for different levels of Florida Birding Achievement. Photo: Jerry Mathis

There are 528 bird species recognized as native or established in Florida, according to the Florida Ornithological Society. Wes Biggs, formerly of Orlando and now of Sebring, has seen the most species at 489. David Simpson of Brevard County has recorded 463 Florida species. David, of [Birding with David Simpson](#), has been OAS' trip leader for two south Florida trips and has led trips and been an integral part of the [Lake Apopka Birding Festival](#), at which he and his wife Dee offer Beginning Birding with the Simpsons. Picking up additional species is slow, according to David. Other leaders for the Lake Apopka Birding Festival that have high Florida lists are Gallus Quigley, with 431 species, and Christian Newton, with 421 species. Anyone wanting to improve their birding skills is encouraged to learn from these experts by registering for trips (p. 8).

Lori points out that with eBird rare bird alerts, it is easier than ever for birders to add species to their Florida lists. But you have to get out there and go. Having birding friends makes it more fun, and competitive birding and listing add a little extra motivation. She encourages others to get the certificates through the Wings Over Florida program.
Deborah Green

Lake Apopka Birding Festival- New Name and Logo



The [Lake Apopka Birding Festival](#), January 18–21, 2018, is Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) own birding festival with field trips led by expert birders and keynote talks with dinners. It has been wrapped around the Saturday Lake Apopka Wildlife Festival and Birdapalooza family festival at Magnolia Park, which OAS co-founded and co-sponsors with Orange County. Unfortunately Birdapalooza was cancelled this year due to hurricane damage, but the birding festival goes on. Trips start from the McDonald Canal area in the northwest of the Lake Apopka North Shore. Please tell your out-of-town family and friends that the Lake Apopka Birding Festival is a great time to visit. Greg Miller will be there! And David Simpson! Registration is now open at [this link](#). Here is the [Facebook page](#) and [Facebook event](#) to share. Thanks so much to OAS member Joyce Stefancic for use of her photo of a Fulvous Whistling-Duck for the new logo. For further information, contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525 or sabalpress@mac.com.

Amazon Smile

When you make purchases on Amazon, before checking out, please select Amazon Smile and then select Orange Audubon Society as your charity. Amazon will donate a small amount—a half percent of the price of eligible purchases—to our chapter. You do not need to change login credentials and it won't cost you a penny—Amazon products and prices are the same. Click here for a [direct link](#). Every little bit helps!



Gift Ideas for the Holidays

Consider giving the gift of a Panhandle trip registration or Lake Apopka Birding Festival registration. Also consider a gift membership to the Orange Audubon Society (OAS); a chapter of National Audubon Society and Audubon of Florida. Your basic membership of \$20 supports our efforts to safeguard Florida's natural environment and entitles you to receive three publications: National Audubon's bimonthly magazine, *Audubon*; Audubon Florida's *Audubon Florida Naturalist*; and Orange Audubon's monthly newsletter, *OASis*. To join online or obtain an enrollment form go to [this link](#) and click on "Membership Form" in the left column.

Joining through OAS directly allows our chapter to keep more of the funds. However, renewals should go directly to National Audubon.

DECEMBER/JANUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Birds of Prey Field Trip: Lake Apopka North Shore, McDonald Canal Area

December 3, 2017
Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

December Field Trip: Split Oak Forest Wildlife and Environmental Area

December 6, 2017
Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

Florida Panhandle's Red Hills & St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge & Seacrest Wolf Preserve Field Trips

December 7–10, 2017
Contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796

Christmas Bird Counts: Contact the compiler to participate.

- **Zellwood/Mt. Dora:** December 14, 2017
Contact Wes Biggs at birdsatfnt@bellsouth.net
- **Bay Lake:** December 15, 2017
Contact John Thomton at jthomton@hotmail.com
- **Wekiva River:** December 16, 2017
Contact Jay Exum at jay.h.exum@gmail.com
- **Christmas:** December 17, 2017
Contact Karen Hamblett at karen.hamblett@gmail.com
- **Kissimmee Valley:** December 17, 2017
Contact Chris Newton at dexterdevon68@gmail.com
- **Emeralda/Sunnyhill:** December 21, 2017
Contact Barb Gay at stkite52@gmail.com
- **Econlockhatchee:** December 23, 2017
Contact Lorne Malo at lornemalo@bellsouth.net
- **Clermont:** December 29, 2017
Contact John Thomton at jthomton@hotmail.com

Limited Edition Field Trip to Seminole State Forest

December 17, 2017
Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

December Program: Backyard Jewels by Dena Wild

December 21, 2017
Contact Dena at 4shosha@gmail.com

Youth & Family Workshop: Mead Botanical Garden Winter Park by Susan Kirby

January 13, 2018
Contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796

Limited Edition Field Trip to Smyrna Dunes Park, New Smyrna Beach

January 14, 2018
Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

January Program: It Takes a Village: People, Partnerships, and Perseverance on Lake Apopka's North Shore by Gian Basili

January 18, 2017
Contact Deborah at sabalpress@mac.com

January Field Trip: Lake Apopka Birding Festival

January 19–21, 2018
Contact Deborah at sabalpress@mac.com

Birds of Prey Field Trip: Lake Apopka North Shore, McDonald Canal Area

January 7, 2018
Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

Best Wishes for a Safe and Peaceful Holiday Season!!