



Lake Apopka. Photo: Joyce Stefancic.

### This Month's Program:

**January 18, 2018**

## It takes a Village: A Story of the People, Partnerships, and Perseverance on Lake Apopka's North Shore by Dr. Gian Basili



Dr. Gian Basili will present Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) program on January 18, 2018. Dr. Basili is an ornithologist and conservation biologist who was

one of the people most responsible for guiding restoration efforts on the Lake Apopka North Shore and for opening the area to birding and other passive recreational use. He worked 2 years for Audubon Florida and 17 years for the St. Johns River Water Management District, during the period of the Lake Apopka farm buyout through the opening of the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive. He now

works for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Jacksonville. Dr. Basili received his Ph.D. in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison for his groundbreaking work on Dickcissels, the first year-round study of a Neotropical migratory songbird.

He has humbly titled his talk "It takes a Village: A Story of the People, Partnerships, and Perseverance on Lake Apopka's North Shore."

This is an important talk for those who are interested in the Lake Apopka North Shore, its history, restoration challenges and successes, and its future. Join OAS Thursday, January 18, 2018 for a compelling program

Location details below.

*Deborah Green, Programs Committee*

### January Field Trip:

## Lake Apopka Birding Festival

Instead of leading a regular field trip in January, Orange Audubon Society (OAS) encourages you to participate in one or more field trips or keynotes at OAS' own Lake Apopka Birding Festival. More on p. 3 and 4.

## New Event: Your Biggest Year of Birding January 6, 2018

Challenge yourself or your best birding buddy/rival to see the most bird species in 2018. Then join three of the area's most experienced birding leaders to start your biggest year.

On January 6th at Orlando Wetlands Park, jump-start your 2018 Florida bird list with trip leaders Lori Mathis, Larry Martin, and Bob Sanders. Lori did her own Florida Big Year in 2016 and is the first recipient of the Wings Over Florida 400 bird species certificate. Larry Martin is OAS board member and Mead Garden Bird Walk Leader/Liaison. Bob Sanders leads OAS' Beginning Birding, Limited Edition, and Birds of Prey ID classes and is a raptor expert.

OAS board member Kathy Rigling has organized this fundraiser to benefit OAS' nature and environmental education center fund. Donation is \$10. Birding will be from 7:30 a.m.-12 noon. All skill levels are welcome, and you don't even have to have your own binoculars. OAS will have loaner binoculars available.

Bring your own water and snacks, and meet in the parking lot by the education center. Address is Orlando Wetlands Park, 25155 Wheeler Rd, Christmas, FL 32709. If you have questions, contact Kathy Rigling (407) 488-9559 or riglingk@aol.com. Let the start of 2018 be the start of your biggest year of birding!

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/](http://www.leugardens.org/plan/directions/)





## State Legislative Session to Start

This fall Florida Senate and House committees met to consider already filed bills. The Regular Session convenes January 9, 2018. There is a 12:00 noon deadline that first day for filing bills for introduction, so after that there should be fewer surprises. The session continues until sixty days later on March 9, 2018.

Please sign up [at this link](#) for the Audubon Florida Advocate to receive updates. The Senate Environment and Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee passed two important bills: Senate Bill 370 that provides \$100 million to Florida Forever, our state's signature land conservation program and Senate Bill 204 that would allocate \$75 million to springs protection and \$50 million to St. Johns River restoration. Both bills passed several committees and are now in the full Senate Appropriations Committee. Senator Bradley, who introduced both bills, was recognized at this fall's Audubon Assembly for his conservation leadership.

A fracking ban was previously proposed by then Senator (now U. S. Congressman) Darren Soto in the 2015-2016 legislative session. In the 2016-17 session, a bill to ban fracking, sponsored by Sen. Dana Young (Tampa) and Rep. Mike Miller (Orlando), was nixed by Senate leadership. But bills to ban fracking are back for 2018 with a new House sponsor, Rep. Kathleen Peters (St. Petersburg). [Florida Conservation Voters](#) is working closely on these bills.

Audubon Florida is closely following and opposes two bills, Senate Bill 574 and House Bill 521, that would prohibit cities and counties from protecting trees with local tree ordinances. Protecting urban forests helps provide essential habitat for migrant and resident birds, helps protect urban air quality, and helps reduce the "heat island" effect of paved urban areas. To date, the bills have been referred to committees, but have not yet been added to any agendas for future hearings. Follow this issue on [Audubon Florida's Facebook page](#).

## Split Oak Forest and the Osceola Parkway

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) is part of a coalition of environmental groups opposing the extension of Osceola Parkway through the 1700-acre Split Oak Forest Wildlife and Environmental Area. The Central Florida Expressway Authority (CFX) is "evaluating the feasibility" of building the toll road that benefits the new developments planned on Deseret Ranch property.

On November 30th, CFX hosted fourteen Split Oak Coalition representatives, including Charles Lee of Audubon Florida, to hear a proposal for compensation acreage. For every 1 acre of Split Oak destroyed by the road, Split Oak and the adjacent conservation properties, Moss Park and Isle of Pine, would grow by a certain number of adjacent acres now owned by Deseret Ranch. On December 15th Coalition members had the opportunity to see much of the potential "compensation land."

The only reason why the Coalition is even considering this offer, in exchange for losing a corner of Split Oak Forest, is to possibly create corridor linkages with other conservation lands and/or expand Split Oak Forest's scrub holdings to assist survival of the existing Florida Scrub-Jays. This story is ongoing. If you want to help, particularly if you live in or have connections in Osceola County, please contact Deborah at [sabalpress@mac.com](mailto:sabalpress@mac.com).

## Introducing Split Oak Forest to New People

If you still aren't familiar with Split Oak Forest, join the Friends of Split Oak Forest on an upcoming hike. The next one is Wednesday, January 3rd at 11 a.m. This is a long hike, 5.4 miles, billed as getting folks to move around after the holiday stupor. Check out [Friends of Split Oak Forest's event page for this](#) and other upcoming hikes. Note that Split Oak Forest is an Orange County Green PLACE, and photos taken there are eligible for additional recognition in the Chertok Photo Contest.

Split Oak Forest is on Clapp Simms Duda Road, which is a road going east from Narcoosee Road, 3.6 miles south of SR 417. Turn left at the sign to Back to Nature Wildlife Sanctuary, and watch for the Split Oak Forest parking lot on your right. If you have any questions, contact Deborah at 407-637-2525.



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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JOIN OAS' [MEETUP](#) GROUP

LIKE OAS ON [FACEBOOK](#)

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## Wekiva River Basin Update **New Solar Co-ops**

A final blow to the attempt to open the [2004 Wekiva Parkway Act](#) for modification seems to have come at the Central Florida Expressway (CFX) meeting on December 14th, where Audubon Florida, Orange Audubon Society and other entities spoke against opening the Act. Lake County Commissioner Leslie Campione mentioned her new strategy to help traffic in Plymouth-Sorrento, a round-about. Thanks to Charles Lee of Audubon Florida for mobilizing comments from environmental groups against reopening the Act.

### Critical Wildlife Areas

Positive news: On December 6, 2017, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) approved the final Critical Wildlife Area (CWA) that had not been approved in 2016 and the closest CWA to us, Bird Island by the Dunlawton Bridge on the Halifax River (Port Orange in Volusia County). This is the northernmost rookery for Brown Pelicans and a breeding site for American Oystercatchers, egrets and other birds. OAS wrote in support of this effort. Reviving the CWAs was an effort of Acting Executive Director of Audubon Florida, Julie Wraithmell, in conjunction with FWC. Halifax River Audubon monitors this rookery.

### Christmas Bird Counts

Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) are held between Thursday, December 14, 2017 and Friday, January 5, 2018. The Audubon CBC, now in its 118th year, is the longest-running Citizen Science survey in the world. Hurricane Irma had thinned vegetation in our area, and water levels in many of the rivers and marshes were high. We hope to have results soon.

### Oklawaha Valley Audubon Trip with Greg Miller

A few spaces are available in a trip to the Shiloh Marsh area of Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge and other locations on Monday, January 22, 2018. Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society has booked Greg Miller to lead. Cost is \$30 (\$35 non-members). Email [rayesm105@aol.com](mailto:rayesm105@aol.com) to register.

Orange County Solar Co-operatives (Co-ops) are designed to make the purchase of solar photovoltaics easier and more affordable for homeowners and owners of small commercial properties. The first one, Orange County East Co-op, will launch January 8th and close April 15th. The Orange County West Co-op will launch the next day. Note that Interstate-4 is used to establish the boundary between east and west.

These Co-ops are being offered through a partnership between Orange County's Environmental Protection Division and Solar United Neighbors of Florida. These will be the fourth and fifth Solar Co-ops hosted in Orange County.

There is no cost to joining a Co-op. And there is no obligation to sign a contract with the solar installer chosen by the Co-op's members. Once the Orange County East Co-op has opened on January 8th, property owners in that portion of the County will be able to join online at the Co-op's webpage. Go to [this link](http://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/florida/go-solar-in-florida/) <http://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/florida/go-solar-in-florida/> and then go to left column and hit "Go solar in a Florida group." Select "Orange County East" the list of open Co-ops.

To learn more about solar equipment, benefits of joining a Co-op and solar financing, attend one of the free, public "solar information meetings."

The first one will be Tuesday, January 31st, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at Barry Law School, 6441 E Colonial Dr, Orlando. To register, go to the link above and locate the Co-op's webpage. If you have any questions, contact Mary Dipboye, [mdipboye@yahoo.com](mailto:mdipboye@yahoo.com) or 407-340-9680.

*Articles by the OAS Conservation Committee*

## Lake Apopka Birding Festival

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.

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.

For further information, contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525 or [festival@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:festival@orangeaudubonfl.org). See more on p.4.



Above left, 2017 Friday All Day Field Trip with Dr. Gian Basili, Greg Miller by car, and David Simpson to the right. *Photo: Bev Sinclair.* Above right, the inimitable Greg Miller will be leading field trips, courtesy of Wildside Tours. *Photo: Steve Shaluta.* Bottom left, Sunrise Photo and Birding Tour 2017. There is a trip starting at 5:30 a.m. each day of the festival. *Photo: Lynn Marie Folts*

## Lake Apopka Birding Festival

For the [Lake Apopka Birding Festival](http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival), January 18-21, 2018, one of the featured field trips is Trip 3 Waterfowl, led by Bruce Anderson and Tom Rodriguez. High water levels in the former farm fields have brought in many species of ducks and this trip will allow you to share the vast knowledge of the leaders. Read about the 21 great field trips, see profiles of the leaders, and see a map of the field trip locations at [www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival](http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival). Registration link is available on the website.



Above, Friday Keynote speaker Michael Brothers with a shearwater. Below, Clay Taylor digiscoping.

### Friday Keynote

If you missed Michael Brothers' talk on gulls and terns for OAS last January (or want to hear it again), Michael will present the Friday Keynote, with dinner, on Friday, January 19th. Location is the University of Florida Mid-Florida Research and Education Center, 2725 S. Binion Rd., Apopka, FL 32703. The meet-and-greet starts at 4:30 p.m., dinner starts at 5:30 p.m., and the talk starts at 6 p.m. Cost is \$20 including dinner. Vegetarian options are available. For reservations, go to [www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival](http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival).

### Saturday Keynote

OAS is pleased to have Clay Taylor of Swarovski Optik share bird photos taken over 4 decades, using both film and digital cameras, and talk about challenges encountered and solutions found. Being the Naturalist Market Manager for Swarovski Optik, Clay has had the opportunity to travel extensively around the world. His camera is ALWAYS with him. Oh, yes, his iPhone, too. Location and time as above. Dinner will be pizza and salad, vegetarian included. Cost is also \$20 including dinner. Clay will also be leading a digiscoping workshop.

## Wildlife Drive Reopens

On December 22nd, the St. Johns River Water Management District gave the many fans of the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive a surprise holiday gift and announced that the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive had reopened.

After major flooding of much of the Lake Apopka North Shore following a levee breach caused by Hurricane Irma, District staff sealed the breach and pumped water off the flooded roads. Dry weather helped, and with the extra touch of filling all the potholes that were there before the hurricane, staff reopened the Drive to visitation, Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and federal holidays, including New Year's Day. A lot of people are very happy!



Dawn at reopening of the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive on the first Saturday.  
Photo: Lynn Marie Folts

## Birds of Prey Identification Classes, Lake Apopka January 7 & February 4, 2018

Orange Audubon Society will hold two Birds of Prey Identification classes on the [Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive](#) on Sundays, January 7, 2018 and February 4, 2018. Each class will be from 7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. You can attend single or multiple days. Suggested donation for each day is \$5 (Audubon members) or \$10 (non-members).

Raptors we are likely to see are Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks, Cooper's Hawks, Northern Harriers, Osprey, Merlins, Kestrels and other less common species.

Popular instructor Bob Sanders is an avid birder who for many years has taught raptor identification. Before moving to Central Florida, Bob was co-founder of the Chimney Rock Hawk Watch in Martinsville, New Jersey. No early registration is required. Bob can be reached at (407) 459-5617.



Red-shouldered Hawk. Photo: Mary Keim

## Lake Apopka Wildlife Photo Exhibit

Many nature photographers post in the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive [Facebook Group](#). Nature photographer Phoebe Gonsalves has organized a series of exhibits of some of the top photos. The Orange County Library System's Main Branch on Central Avenue hosts the latest exhibit through the end of January. Check it out!



Downtown library, some of the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive Facebook Group photos. Photo: Phoebe Gonsalves

## Limited Edition Field Trip to Smyrna Dunes January 14, 2018

Bob Sanders will lead a Limited Edition Field Trip to Smyrna Dunes Park in New Smyrna Beach on Sunday, January 14, 2018. Located on the south side of Ponce Inlet, this park is an excellent winter spot to see gulls, terns, Common Loons, Northern Gannets and shorebirds including endangered Piping Plovers and scarce Purple Sandpipers plus raptors. This trip is limited to 15 people and has a cost of \$10 per person per trip for members and \$15 per person for nonmembers. 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) 459-5617.

## Florida Panhandle Red Hills & St. Marks Trip Recap

Tall Timbers Research Station (TTRS) is a widely regarded research center for fire ecology, game bird management, vertebrate ecology and forestry. Jim Cox, director of TTRS' vertebrate ecology program, hosted Orange Audubon's Panhandle trips in 2014 and 2016, and again last month. In the field Jim showed us Brown-headed and White-breasted Nuthatch and demonstrated banding of wintering Henslow's and resident Bachman's Sparrows, life birds for many of the group. He provided a tour of the Stoddard Bird Lab with its incredible taxidermy bird collection, including the now extinct Bachman's Warbler. Rainy weather birding in the Red Hills and at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge yielded ~90 species, including 10 duck species, American White Pelicans, Wilson's Snipe, Red-cockaded Woodpecker and Golden-crowned Kinglet. For the private tour at Seacrest Wolf Preserve, inclement weather forced us to participate in the Saturday public tour (with ~160 participants). All participants were enthralled by one-on-one encounters with resident Arctic and Grey wolves and smaller animals. If there is demand, we will run this fun trip again next year.



Bachman's Sparrow recently banded.  
Photo: Lorri Lilja

Teresa Williams

*In Case You Missed the Program...*

## **Hidden Wildlife: Garden Jewels**

At December's monthly meeting, Orange Audubon board member, Dena Wild, shared her passion and excitement for outdoor critters with her program titled "Hidden Wildlife: Jewels of the Garden." Throughout the program, Dena highlighted six of her favorite backyard friends, revealing their subtle beauty and complexity and encouraging the audience to reconnect with feelings of childlike wonder. Dena shared many fun facts and gardening tips as she highlighted the features of earthworms, naiads, dragonflies, ladybugs, green anoles and black racers.

Earthworms are a powerhouse in the garden. They naturally aerate, fertilize, and plow soil; allowing air and water to circulate and making space for roots to spread. They give off nutrients needed by plants such as nitrogen, calcium, magnesium and phosphorus. To attract earthworms, one simply needs to add organic matter such as compost, manure or mulch to your garden.

Next, Dena discussed naiads and dragonflies. Naiads are simply juvenile dragonflies. They are useful to have in the backyard, because they eat larvae of pesky mosquitoes. They also eat newts and tadpoles. Naiads live underwater for up to 5 years until they emerge as adult dragonflies. Adult dragonflies live for a few more weeks, just long enough to mate and lay eggs. They have the largest compound eyes of any insect and they can see in all directions at the same time. They can also see UV light. Also, despite having six legs, they cannot walk. In order to attract these mosquito munchers to your garden, put in a small pond that is about 2 feet deep with aquatic plants and exposure to midday sunlight.

Dena then highlighted ladybugs. According to Middle Age folklore, ladybugs came to the rescue after farmers prayed to the Virgin Mary for salvation from bad crops and plant predators. Ever since then, ladybugs have been considered blessings in the garden. A kind of beetle, ladybugs can eat up to 50 aphids a day and lay 20-50 eggs each season. Their spots and bright colors indicate to predators that they may contain distasteful chemicals. Dena recommended planting umbrella-shaped flowers to attract these symbols of good luck.

Next featured was the green anole, a native Floridian that is being challenged by populations of invasive and aggressive brown anoles. Green anoles may appear brown when they are stressed or exposed to cold.

Finally, Dena shared tales about the often-misunderstood black racer. They are also native to Florida and they are non-poisonous. They are excellent swimmers and climbers and can move very quickly. Black racers are also beneficial to have around if you are weary of rodents, because they prey on them. They prefer yards with open grassy areas, thickets or shrubs and enjoy being near water.

Through the program Dena encouraged the audience to shift their perspective on what many may view as scary or gross creatures. By highlighting their ecological importance and unique features, she showed a new way to appreciate the environment and backyard friends around us.

*Gabbie Buendia, OAS Board Member*



Southern Black Racer. Photo: Mary Keim

## **Youth & Family Photography Workshop January 13, 2018**

Nature photographer Susan Kirby will lead a Youth & Family Photography Workshop on Saturday, January 13, 2018 from 1:00-4:00 p.m. at Mead Botanical Garden (MBG), 1300 S. Denning Dr, Winter Park, FL 32789.

The workshop, which complements OAS' 2018 Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest, encourages children and their adult(s) to learn together many basic nature photography techniques to enhance their skills and enjoyment.

Young people, target ages 10-17, must be accompanied by at least one registered parent or other authorized adult for the entire workshop to allow one-on-one help. Adults must be accompanied by at least one registered child. No photographic experience is necessary for children or their adults.

This workshop is focused on easy techniques for taking great nature photos and will familiarize participants with many wildlife and landscape photo opportunities around MBG. Instruction will be personalized to individual needs and experience level and any type of digital equipment will be appropriate.

Registration is required and space is limited. Cost per child is \$5 with registered adult. Cost per adult is \$10 (Audubon members), \$25 (non-members). To register contact Teresa at [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com) or (407) 644-0796. For additional workshop information, please contact Susan at (443) 994-9909.

## **Johns Lake Conservation Area, Sunset Photo Walk February 10, 2018**

Mark your calendars for Orange County Environmental Protection Division's sunset photo walk at Johns Lake Conservation Area in Winter Garden. This will be Saturday, February 10, 2018, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. If you have any questions, contact [EPD@ocfl.net](mailto:EPD@ocfl.net) or 407-836-1400.



Above, Danny Raleigh holding a l'iwi. Below, the endangered Akikiki. Photos courtesy Danny Raleigh

*Report from the Field*

**Kaua'i Forest Bird Recovery Project**

From January through August of 2017, I was hired by the Kaua'i Forest Bird Recovery Project to assist with conserving populations of endangered, endemic forest birds of Kaua'i. Three species, the Puaiohi, the 'Akikiki, and the 'Akeke'e, are classified as endangered. The high mountains of Kaua'i offer a dwindling refuge to these and other species, encroached upon by development with habitat loss, plus avian malaria, and invasive mammalian predators.

During the field season our crew searched for and marked nests of these species with flagging and GPS devices. We banded birds after capturing them in mist nets, and after release, the color bands on their legs allowed us to identify individuals in the dense jungle.

We collected 'Akikiki and 'Akeke'e eggs to transport them to a hatching facility and aviary on Maui, in collaboration with the San Diego Zoo. We hope the birds hatch in captivity and begin a breeding flock from which individuals can be released back into the wild to sustain the struggling populations. We hope these birds will continue to add their songs and colors to the forests of Kaua'i for years to come!

*Danny Raleigh, OAS Board member*

**Orlando Wetlands Festival  
February 17, 2018**



The 17th Orlando Wetlands Festival will be held on February 17, 2018 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Ft. Christmas Historical Park (1300 N. Ft. Christmas Rd.). The City of Orlando, Orange County Parks and Recreation and Orange Audubon Society (OAS) co-sponsor this event. OAS will be selling nature-inspired merchandise including t-shirts, tote bags, signs and mugs (bring cash, check or credit card).

We need volunteers to help with sales, outreach and/or the kids' art activity. If you can help, please contact Teresa at [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com) or (407) 644-0796. No experience is necessary. For OWP questions, contact me at [rsmhk@gmail.com](mailto:rsmhk@gmail.com) or (407) 851-5416.

*Mary Keim, OAS-OWP Liaison*

*Mark Your Calendars!*

**South Carolina Magical Birding  
May 18-20, 2018**

No more Flamingo Quest/South Florida Birding! We struck out twice on seeing the American Flamingos, and participants are now familiar with a dozen great birding locations in South Florida, which they can visit on their own. A new adventure beckons! On May 18-20, 2018, Orange Audubon Society's fun fund-raising trip heads to the Columbia, South Carolina, area.

On Friday, we'll drive 6 hours from Orlando, with a lunch stopover in Savannah. Our destination is Congaree National Park. Southeastern breeding birds and lingering spring migrants will be singing up a storm at that time of year, and after a picnic dinner at the park we will stay to see the synchronous fireflies! Saturday includes guided birding at the Audubon Center & Sanctuary at the Francis Beidler Forest and a search for the rare Swainson's Warbler. On Sunday we will visit the ACE Basin, another birding hotspot, on the way home. The Hampton Inn and Suites in nearby Orangeburg, South Carolina offers a group rate for Friday and Saturday nights for which we need a minimum number of participants ready to book. The cost is \$60 members/\$75 non-members, which includes honoraria for local expert guides, field trip fees, and picnic supper Friday at Congaree. Lodging, other meals, transportation and incidentals are not included. Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525 or [sabalpress@mac.com](mailto:sabalpress@mac.com) for more information.

**OAS' Nature-inspired Merchandise at January Program**

To give you and our visiting Lake Apopka Birding Festival participants an opportunity to purchase Orange Audubon Society's nature-inspired t-shirts (long- and short-sleeved), hoodies, tote bags, signs, mugs and more, we will be selling these items at the January 18th program at Leu Gardens. You know you love them and nothing says "Be My Valentine" better! Sales start at 6:30 p.m., so come early, browse and buy! Bring cash or check for quick check-out. PayPal for credit cards is also available. If you can help with sales, please contact Teresa at [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com) or (407) 644-0796. Thank you!

## Annual Chertok Nature Photo Contest

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) 2018 Kit and Sidney Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest, is themed: *Florida Native Nature* and has a **deadline of April 19, 2018** (postmarked by date).

This 30th annual contest is open to all photographers (except members of OAS' board and Chertok contest committee) and there are three skill level competition categories: Youth—for photographers age 17 or younger by April 19, 2018; Novice—for new and less experienced photo hobbyists; and Advanced Amateur/ Professional—for experienced photographers who have practiced and honed their skills over time.

Eligible photos may not include humans, human artifacts or introduced plant or animal species—subject matter must be native to Florida—and entries must be taken in compliance with the NANPA code of conduct. Participants will be notified of any disqualified entries and may optionally replace them at no charge. See contest rules for details. Again this year Tarflower Chapter of Florida Native Plant Society will add \$100 in NEW cash prizes for 1st-3rd place Youth winners. Together with OAS and co-sponsor Colonial Photo & Hobby's cash and other prizes, the total prize package is valued at \$1,200.

Entries in all categories that are taken on Orange County natural lands (Green PLACES) are eligible to be included in Orange County's nature calendar. Entry submission details will soon be on the OAS website. So get outside with your cameras and start shooting and preserving Florida's amazing native nature! Contact me at [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com) or (407) 644-0796 if you have questions. *Teresa Williams, Photography Contest Chair*



Perched on a Cattail - Female Red-winged Blackbird. 2016 Chertok Photo Contest, Honorable Mention Winner, Advanced Amateur/ Professional Category.  
*Photo: Kathy Bargar*

## JANUARY/FEBRUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Your Biggest Year Kickoff

January 6, 2018

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

### Birds of Prey Identification, Lake Apopka

January 7, 2018

Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

### Youth & Family Photography Workshop Mead Botanic Garden

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: A Story of the People, Partnerships, and Perseverance on Lake Apopka's North Shore." - Dr. Gian Basili

January 18, 2018

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

### Lake Apopka Birding Festival

January 18-21, 2018

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

### Lake Apopka Birding Festival Friday Keynote Gulls and Terns - Michael Brothers

January 19, 2018

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

### Lake Apopka Birding Festival Saturday Keynote 40 Years of Birding Through A Camera Lens - Clay Taylor

January 20, 2018

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

### Birds of Prey Identification, Lake Apopka

February 4, 2018

Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

### February Program: Birds of Panama - Clyde Stephens

February 15, 2018

Contact Dena at [4shosha@gmail.com](mailto:4shosha@gmail.com)

### Great Backyard Bird Count

February 16-19, 2018

Contact Mary at [rssmhk@gmail.com](mailto:rssmhk@gmail.com)

### Orlando Wetlands Festival, includes Field Trips

February 17, 2018

Contact Mary at [rssmhk@gmail.com](mailto:rssmhk@gmail.com)

### Sunrise Photo Shoot - Milton Heiberg, Orlando Wetlands Park

February 24, 2018

Contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796

### Limited Edition Field Trip to Lake Harney Wilderness Area

February 25, 2018