



### This Month's Program:

**February 15, 2018**

### Birds of Panama by Clyde Stephens

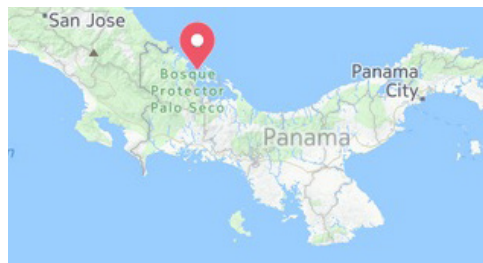
Clyde Stephens spent 32 years in sweltering plantation backwaters working on banana insect pests and their natural enemies. In 1959, newly graduated from the University of Florida, he secured his job with United Fruit Company, now Chiquita Brands International. He was posted to Bocas del Toro province in Panama, on the Caribbean coast near the Costa Rican border. This area was disconnected from the outside world (until road connections came in the 1980s). Clyde quickly fell in love with the birds and other nature of the area, as well as the local people and the area's history.

This gregarious frontiersman and fifth-generation Floridian is now a world renowned banana expert and author of four books on the history of that region of Panama. With his wife, Phyllis, whom he met and married in 1963 while in Honduras, Clyde still spends four months each year in Bocas del Toro. To be closer to family in Florida, the couple spends eight months each year in Lake County. Active in Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society (OVAS), Clyde coordinated field trips for OVAS for six years.

Orange Audubon Society is in for a treat from Clyde who will present on the behavior, habitats and biodiversity of some of Panama's 976 bird species. He will also share personal experiences of living in the tropics, infusing his talk with history on the rise and fall of a banana empire.

Join us February 15th for a fascinating program. Location details are below.

*Dena Wild, Programs Chair*



Above, Bocas del Toro, Panama location, [Google Maps](#). Below, Harpy Eagle, the national bird of Panama. Photo: [Tom Friedel, birdphotos.com, Wikipedia Commons](#).

### Monthly Field Trip to Orlando Wetlands Festival

**February 17, 2018**

Orange Audubon Society is a co-sponsor of the City of Orlando's upcoming Orlando Wetlands Festival, which is this month's February field trip destination. Join us for an array of birding hikes and bus trips. See more on p. 8.

*Larry Martin*

### Birds of Prey Identification Lake Apopka

**February 4, 2018**

Orange Audubon Society will hold its last of three winter Birds of Prey Identification classes on the [Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive](#) on Sunday, February 4, 2018. Time is 7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Suggested donation 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 possibly Peregrine Falcons and Bald Eagles. 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.

### Lake Apopka Birding Festival a Success!

Among the 250+ participants of Orange Audubon Society's 2018 festival there were people from 17 states and Canada, with 40 Florida cities represented. 124+ bird species were recorded during 21 field trips. More on p. 5.

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 Underway**

The Florida Senate and House Session convened on January 9, 2018 and will adjourn on March 9, 2018. Florida Forever funding is a big Audubon effort. To be notified of time-sensitive requests to contact your legislators, join Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) Central Florida Conservation Network by emailing Conservation Chair Mike Jones at [conservation@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:conservation@orangeaudubonfl.org). Please sign up [at this link](#) for the Audubon Florida Advocate and follow the [Audubon Florida's Facebook page](#).



Split Oak Forest sunrise. Photo: Gary Anderson

**Split Oak Forest and the Osceola Parkway**

Orange Audubon Society is part of a coalition of environmental groups opposing a possible Osceola Parkway expansion through the 1700-acre Split Oak Forest Wildlife and Environmental Area. To its credit, the Central Florida Expressway (CFX) has 1) moved the proposed path of the road south so that it transects only the southwest corner of the property, 2) considered a slower speed limit to accommodate a curve around Split Oak Forest, and 3) facilitated negotiations with the landowner and developer such that Orange and Osceola counties might acquire additional conservation land buffering Split Oak, Moss Park, and Isle of Pine, and possibly linking to Osceola conservation lands.

There will be three final public meetings for CFX to receive public input on the proposed routes, and these are important to attend. The first is February 13th in the St. Cloud High School Cafeteria, 2000 Bulldog Lane, St Cloud. The second is on February 15th at Lake Nona Middle School, 13700 Narcoossee Rd, Orlando. The third is on February 21st at the Association of Poinciana Villages, Poinciana Community Center, 445 Marigold Ave., Poinciana. For each meeting you can drop in between 5:30-7:30 p.m. Our coalition encourages all to submit written comments before leaving the meeting. Coalition members will have maps and bullet points available at the Lake Nona meeting and possibly the other two meetings. If you are unable to attend, send comments to CFX at [ConceptStudies@CFXway.com](mailto:ConceptStudies@CFXway.com) within a week of any of the 3 public meetings and indicate that comments are to be included with that meeting. The [Friends of Split Oak Forest website](#) or [Facebook Group](#) has a petition in opposition to the road crossing Split Oak Forest that you can sign and share if you chose.

Join Friends of Split Oak Forest on one of their 7 hikes this month (February 3rd, 2-6 p.m.; February 7th, 1-4 p.m.; February 9th, 6:30-9:30 a.m.; February 12th, 3-6 p.m.; February 15th, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; February 18th, 9 a.m-12 p.m.; February 25th, 3-7 p.m.). Split Oak is an Orange County Green PLACE, and photos taken there are eligible for additional recognition in the Chertok Photo Contest. Go south on Narcoossee Road, 3.6 miles south of SR 417. Turn onto Clapp Simms Duda Rd to the east, at the sign for Back to Nature Wildlife Sanctuary. Watch for the parking lot on the right. *Deborah Green, Conservation Committee*



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](#)

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE, 1-800-435-7352, WITHIN THE STATE. FROM OUTSIDE OF FLORIDA CALL 1-850-410-3800. VISIT [www.800helpfla.com](http://www.800helpfla.com) FOR HELP. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. REGISTRATION NO. CH2330

**Youth Bird Walk  
February 3, 2018**

Join Orange Audubon Society for a walk through Mead Botanical Garden targeting young people interested in nature. Do you have any children in your life you could bring to participate? Children, accompanied by one or more parents, will learn about our community's birds and their habitats!



Time: 8 am. Meet in the parking lot. A limited number of loaner binoculars will be available! The walk is FREE and no reservations are required. Contact Gabbie Buendia at (321) 368-1678 if you have questions.

**Mead Botanical Garden Habitat Enhancement Project**

The City of Winter Park Parks & Recreation Department and Urban Forestry Division, in partnership with Mead Botanical Garden, Inc., the Tarflower Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, and Orange Audubon Society (OAS), will begin a significant Habitat Enhancement Project at Mead Botanical Garden on Monday, February 12.

In the upland areas, exotic and invasive trees will be selectively removed and replaced. For each invasive tree removed, the city's Urban Forestry Division will replant native trees to accelerate the ongoing recovery of the wetlands.

Approximately 400 native trees planted will support a wider range of birds and other natural wildlife, improve their habitats, and also improve water quality as the wetlands serve as treatment for stormwater.

This exciting project will help to establish Mead Botanical Garden as a model of urban habitat management and wildlife corridor development. For more information, call (407) 599-3546.

*Larry Martin, OAS Mead Botanical Garden Liaison*

**Sunrise Photo Workshop,  
Orlando Wetlands Park  
February 24, 2018**

Renowned professional photographer, author and instructor of nature photography Milton Heiberg will teach a sunrise photo workshop on Sunday, February 24th from 6:00-10:00 a.m. to benefit Orange Audubon Society. The class will photograph sunrise with water reflections at one of the most beautiful scenic locations in Central Florida—Orlando Wetlands Park. The park's many gray sun-bleached tree branches make interesting, photogenic perches for avian subjects. The rest of the morning will be spent photographing flying and perching birds and other wildlife.



Participants should have a working knowledge of digital SLR photography. Bring a tripod and a 300 mm or longer lens (tele-extenders help). Cost is \$60 (Audubon members); \$75 (non-members), and class is limited to 12 participants. To register contact Teresa at [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com) or (407) 644-0796.

**Johns Lake Sunset Walk, Winter Garden  
February 10, 2018**

On Saturday, February 10, 2018, join Beth Jackson of the Orange County Environmental Protection Division for a sunset nature hike at the beautiful 138-acre Johns Lake Conservation Area. This site is located on the east side of Johns Lake and offers lovely views of sunsets and many wildlife species. Be sure to bring your cameras! This nature walk will provide rare photographic opportunities that can be entered in the 30th Annual Orange Audubon Society Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest. Johns Lake is one of Orange County's Green Place properties and is located at 880 Avalon Road, Winter Garden. We will gather at 4:15 p.m. and head off into the sunset at 4:30 p.m. The walk is free but registration is required. Visit [www.greenplacewalks.eventbrite.com](http://www.greenplacewalks.eventbrite.com) to reserve your spot. If you have questions, contact [EPD@ocfl.net](mailto:EPD@ocfl.net) or (407) 836-1400.

**Wind Beneath our Wings  
February 18, 2018**

Join Audubon Center for Birds of Prey (CBOP) for an evening to celebrate conservation in Florida including meet and greets with Florida raptors, a silent auction and special guest speaker Eric Draper, Director, Florida Park Service.

This fund-raising event for CBOP is February 18, 2018 from 4:30-7:30 p.m. at the Lake Maitland Civic Center. Tickets are \$75 per person and includes dinner. For tickets go to [WindBeneathOurWings.org](http://WindBeneathOurWings.org).

## Bird Friendly Communities



### Get Ready for Migrants

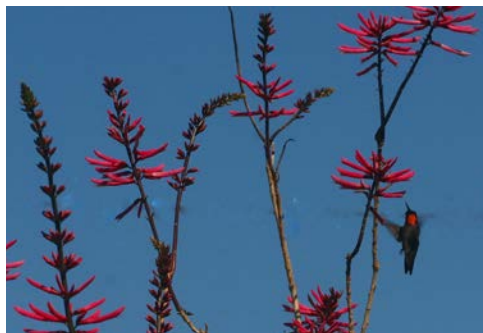
The Great Crested Flycatcher will be arriving from its tropical wintering grounds in March. Now is the time to put up bird nest boxes or clean out old ones. Nest boxes sized for these flycatchers are also utilized by Eastern Screech Owls, flying squirrels, and Tufted Titmice. An article on nest boxes by Orange Audubon's nest box expert Richard Poole is posted at [this link](#). Scroll down to the bottom left.

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds also return from the tropics in March. A native plant that blooms exactly at that time and has a nectar-rich red flower perfectly sized for the hummingbird's bill is the Coral Bean or Cherokee Bean, available at native plant nurseries.

The Northern Parula warbler nests in Spanish moss. There are many places where Spanish moss is unwanted. Collect some and position as high as possible on tree branches in your yard. If you have oaks and other trees that will be infested with tiny caterpillars when the new spring leaves emerge, you have a good chance to attract these lovely warblers.

Northern Parula warblers will be coming through starting in mid February, so it is none to early to get your yard ready for them. Having a bird bath accessible in the area where they nest encourages them also and provides an opportunity to see them up close.

*Deborah Green*



Above, Great-crested Flycatchers on and in nest box. Middle, Ruby-throated Hummingbird taking nectar from Coral Bean. Below, male Northern Parula.  
*Photos: Mary Keim.*

### Nemesis Bird

“The Orange-crowned Warbler is the bird that others see but you don't,” quips Greg Miller. Orange-crowns breed across the northern U.S. and Canada, in dense areas of deciduous shrubs near forests, and overwinter in small numbers in the southern states.

Dull gray-green without wing bars, tail spots, or other conspicuous markings, this warbler has a thin white or yellow stripe over the eye, a blackish line through the eye, and a pale partial eye-ring.

Its bill is sharply pointed, and it has warmer yellow under the longish dark tail. There is rarely any sign of the namesake orange crown, particularly in winter.

Extremely restless and lively, this warbler moves about continually at high or mid level in the trees, usually singly, but sometimes loosely associated with flocks of other birds.

It is mainly insectivorous but it takes wild berries and citrus fruit during winter and occasionally visits bird feeders. Thanks to Life Histories of North American Wood Warblers by Alexander Bent and Paul Hueber for identification tips on this challenging bird. Consider yourself lucky when you see one!

*Deborah Green*



Orange-crowned Warblers. *Photos: Steve Shaluta (above) and Jan Pewsey (below).*

## Great Backyard Bird Count February 16-19, 2018

The 21st annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is this month! This four-day event, led by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, engages birdwatchers of all ages in the important citizen science activity of counting birds. Dates are Friday, February 16th through Monday, February 19th. Participants tally the number of individual birds of each species they see during their count period and enter the numbers on the GBBC website. There is a print option to mail in your observations checklist. However, the GBBC has encouraged online data submission for years and data entry is now integrated with eBird. If you're new to the count, first register online, then enter your checklist. If you already have an eBird account, use that login. Please consider participating in this fun event. See the GBBC website at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org) for more information.

*In Case You Missed the Program...*

**Lake Apopka's North Shore Restoration: A Moving Tale**

Kicking off the 2018 Lake Apopka Birding Festival at January's general program, Dr. Gian Basili of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service delivered a compelling talk centered around the history of Lake Apopka. With his presentation titled, "It Takes a Village: The Stories of the People, Partnerships and Perseverance on Lake Apopka's North Shore," Dr. Basili highlighted the resilience and beauty of Florida's fourth largest lake.

The story began in the 1940s at the height of World War II. Once the second largest lake in Florida, Lake Apopka shrank after its northern shores were drained for agriculture. What once was the northern part of the lake was converted to 20,000 acres of muck soil row crop agriculture, growing the renown Zellwood corn and other vegetables. During the hottest months of the year, water from the lake was pumped onto the farmlands to create a shallow flood that kept the soil hot, hydrated and healthy. These seasonal floods happened to line up with the migration of shorebirds, and with Lake Apopka's 30,000 remaining acres standing out in the middle of the state, it made the perfect rest stop for migrating birds. By the 1950s, the Zellwood farms were attracting many visitors hoping to glimpse common and rare bird species.

Eventually, farming operations were discontinued due to unsustainable practices. The pumping of water in and out of farmlands introduced high nutrient pollution from fertilizers. Algae bloomed starting in 1947 and did not stop until the entire ecosystem crashed. It soon became clear that this was an emergency, and the land needed to be bought out and restored.

The St. Johns River Water Management District, where Dr. Basili worked at the time, was strong in leading efforts to reclaim the farmland. The last major buyout occurred in 1998 and that is when restoration efforts began.

It turned out, however, that the land buyout was just the first of many challenges. That December, 40 pelicans were found dead on the north shore. Tests ran positive for the presence of pesticides banned long ago in the 1970s including the infamous DDT.



Dr. Gian Basili. Photo: Milton Heiberg.

Consultants and planners were forced to learn about the persistent nature of such chemicals and biomagnification, and to rethink their plans towards restoration. Bird deaths continued — 676 birds in total. News of these deaths spread quickly among the locals and even hit national headlines as the "Apopka-lypse." Cleanup and restoration efforts were heavily delayed as people became weary of the possible harmful human impacts and distrustful of the District.

After the bird kills, Dr. Basili recalls compounding feelings of loss. The District lost many partners who did not want to be liable for bird deaths. District personnel lost a sense of job security as the federal government put them under investigation, and many stakeholders lost hope for the restoration effort. There were talks of shutting everything down and declaring the north shore a Superfund site, closing it off to human activity and development. Thankfully, Dr. Basili was able to find a supportive team that not only exhibited hope, but great trust. Dr. Basili continuously emphasized the importance of trust and hope in executing the restoration and gave great thanks to the people who exhibited these values. The supporting team consisted of influencers in many different areas including lawyers, nonprofit leaders, farmers, ecologists and many others.

To remediate pesticide effects, the soil was flipped—effective because most pesticide residues were confined to the first foot of soil; past that depth, the soil was safe. A farmer/inventor from Texas was called on to carry out the operations of bringing soil from 3 feet under to the surface. The project was successful and from there, the rest is

good history.

Today, Lake Apopka is showing great signs of recovery and the North Shore teems with birds. 369 bird species have been sighted at Lake Apopka, the highest diversity of bird species recorded in Florida! It is an Important Bird Area and continues to acquire state, national and global recognition.

*Gabbie Buendia*

**Lake Apopka Birding Festival Thank You**

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) now has a successful formula for a birding festival: start with a great birding hotspot, add great leaders, organize to optimize participants' fun and voila!



Sunrise Photography at the Clay Island Overlook, Photo: Milton Heiberg; Birding by Ear at the McDonald Canal, Photo: Steve Shaluta.

A big thank you to the St. Johns River Water Management District for repairs after Hurricane Irma and facilitating our birding, to Lake County for use of the McDonald Canal, and to UF Mid-Florida Research and Education Center for use of the auditorium for keynotes. Thanks to our sponsors: First GREEN Bank, KOWA Optics, Oakland Manor and Wildside Nature Tours, and the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive Facebook Group for promotion. Thanks to the keynote speakers, Gian Basili, Michael Brothers, and Clay Taylor, and to our great field trip leaders. Finally thanks to Bob Stamps, Loretta Satterthwaite, Sheila Smith, Suzanna Khachatryan, and the birding festival committee for pulling everything together.

*Deborah Green*

**Beginners' Bird Watching Class**  
**March 3, 10, & 17, 2018**

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) Bob Sanders will teach a Beginners' Bird Watching Class this spring. An "outdoor" classroom session and mini-field trip on March 3rd at Orlando Wetlands Park (OWP) are followed by two field sessions on March 10th and 17th at OWP and Lake Jesup, respectively. All sessions are 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The course will teach basic birding principles and ID techniques, including bird habitat and anatomy, use of binoculars ("loaner" binoculars available), field guides and checklists, and birding ethics. If you miss a session, you may catch a make-up session during the fall 2018 class at no additional charge.

Registration is required, limit 20 students. Cost for all three sessions is \$30 for Audubon members, \$45 for non-members and \$10 for children through age 12 with a registered adult. Non-members can join when registering for \$50, which includes registration plus 3-way membership in Orange, National and Florida Audubon societies. New memberships must be paid directly to OAS, as instructed when you register, by contacting Teresa at [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com) or (407) 644-0796. For questions about the class, contact Bob at (407) 459-5617.

*In Case You Missed the Program...*

**Gulls and Terns**

After a long day of field trips at the 2018 Lake Apopka Birding Festival, Michael Brothers, director of the Marine Science Center at Ponce Inlet, presented the Friday keynote.

Sharing many years of experience, he gave some guidelines for beginning and expert birders to identify Florida's rich diversity of gulls and terns.

Did you know that of the 50 gull species known worldwide, 20 of them can be found in Florida? In fact, the largest concentration of gulls can be found right in our backyard, at Daytona Beach Shores. Here, large populations of Herring, Ring-billed and Laughing gulls can be found alongside rarer species including Kelp and Vega gulls. Starting about 3:30 p.m., gulls of all colors, ages and species mingle on the shores in a spectacular display.

Brothers explained that through plumage changes you can identify the age of a gull. For example, in Florida, a thick black band on tail plumage is characteristic of a young or first year gull, no matter what species. When they are young, many gulls adorn speckled brown and white plumage. He recommends focusing on the stages of the most common species: Laughing Gulls, Ring-billed Gulls, and Herring Gulls. Brothers also surveyed the terns, of which 15 out of the 45 species worldwide spend time in the sunshine state. He suggests focusing on identifying the most common species: Royal Terns, Sandwich Terns, Least Terns and Forster's Terns.

There is a lifetime of learning and practice to be done before being able to differentiate these beach bums, but just the chance to see their rich diversity can be worth it.

*Gabbie Buendia*



Laughing Gulls congregating on Daytona Beach Shores. Photo: Kathy Bargar.

**Youth & Family Photography Workshop**  
**March 17, 2018**

Nature photographer Susan Kirby will lead a Youth & Family Photography Workshop on Saturday, March 17th, 2018 from 1:00-4:00 p.m. at Mead Botanical Garden. 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. Cost per child is \$5 with registered adult.

Cost per adult is \$10 (Audubon members), \$25 (non-members). To reserve your spaces, contact Teresa at [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com) or (407) 644-0796. For additional workshop information, contact Susan at (443) 994-9909. Mead Botanical Garden is at 1300 S. Denning Dr, Winter Park, FL 32789.



J.J. Clark enjoying nature photography. Photo: Susan Kirby.

**Biggest Year Success**

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) members and friends started their birding year with three of the area's most experienced birding leaders on January 6th at Orlando Wetlands Park. Lori Mathis, Larry Martin, and Bob Sanders led the group to sight about 50 species. Thanks to Kathy Rigling has organized this fun fund-raiser to benefit OAS' nature and environmental education center fund.

**Birdathon**

OAS' Birdathon is April 7, 2018. Birdathon chair Kathy Rigling is working on an idea to secure more participation in Birdathon by beginning and intermediate birders. Mark your calendars and stay tuned.

## Solar Co-op Updates

Homeowners in Orange County who reside east of Interstate 4 are invited to join the [Orange County East Solar Co-op](#). By joining this Co-op, homeowners & owners of small commercial buildings receive education about solar photovoltaic (PV) equipment, access to competitive prices for solar PV, assistance from Solar United Neighbors, the nonprofit bringing solar co-ops to counties across the state. There is no cost to join and no obligation to sign the contract presented by the Co-op's chosen installer. To learn more, attend this free, public "Solar Information Meeting" Wednesday, February 28 at 6 p.m., Rollins College - Bush Auditorium, 1000 Holt Ave., Winter Park, FL 32789. Sign up to receive the e-newsletter [at this link](#).

## Board Nominations

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) will hold its 2018 annual elections for the board of directors in April. The board is comprised of twenty volunteer members who serve staggered 3-year terms. OAS seeks board members who will pitch in by contributing to its conservation and educational efforts and fund-raising for a proposed nature center. If you are interested in serving OAS, please contact Linda Gaunt at lgaunt246@gmail.com or (941) 704-1189.

*Mark Your Calendars!*

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

Orange Audubon Society's fun fund-raising trip in mid May heads to the Columbia, South Carolina, area. On Friday, May 18th, we will drive 6 hours from Orlando, with a lunch stopover in Savannah. Our destination is Congaree National Park, formerly Congaree Swamp National Monument.

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, May 19th includes guided birding at the Audubon Center & Sanctuary at Francis Beidler Forest and a search for the rare Swainson's Warbler. On Sunday, May 20th we will visit the ACE Basin, another birding hotspot, on the way home.

The Hampton Inn and Suites in nearby Orangeburg offers a group rate for Friday and Saturday nights for which we need a minimum number of participants ready to book. Cost of the trip 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. For more information, contact Deborah: (407) 637-2525 or [sabalpress@mac.com](mailto:sabalpress@mac.com). To reserve a spot, contact Teresa: (407) 644-0796 or [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com).

## 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 are 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, OAS' Chertok Photography Contest Chair*

## Disney Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival

This is Disney's 25th year hosting the Epcot International Flower and Garden Festival and changes have been made to the event's format. Disney has completely discontinued the use of any Florida Audubon volunteers who covered the outside around the Purple Martin nests. Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) inside coverage days were reduced from 39 days to only 6 days. I personally want to thank each of you for your service representing OAS in the past years. With our limited days, we asked our most active OAS volunteers, who are knowledgeable of Audubon's goals, to cover our six days at the festival. We want to present Audubon, "2018 The Year of The Bird" in the most dynamic manner.

*Susan Kirby, OAS EPCOT volunteer coordinator*

**A Special Place**

*"More Record Trees than any other Place"*

The Congaree Swamp National Monument has "more record trees than any other place," according to one contemporary biologist. Within its 22,200 acres, this Monument preserves the largest remaining tract of old-growth bottomland hardwood forest in the United States.

The National Monument protects national and state champion trees, but it is much more than big trees. It provides a large tract of undisturbed habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals. It is home to rare, threatened and endangered species such as the fox squirrel, the red-cockaded woodpecker, and the Swainson's warbler.

Congaree Swamp National Monument offers us a place to hike, canoe, fish, birdwatch, and stroll the boardwalks. Experience the tranquility of this special place.

**Orlando Wetlands Festival, February 17, 2018**



Black Skimmers at Orlando Wetlands Park.  
Photo: Mary Keim.

Orange Audubon Society is pleased to again co-sponsor the Orlando Wetlands Festival with the City of Orlando and Orange County Parks and Recreation on February 17, 2018 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Ft. Christmas Historical Park (1300 N. Ft. Christmas Rd.).

Parking and vendors will be at Ft. Christmas, and shuttles will take visitors to nearby Orlando Wetlands Park (OWP) for bus tours, birding hikes, trail hikes, wildflower hikes, bird banding and hayrides. The City of Orlando, Orange County Parks and Recreation and Orange Audubon Society (OAS) co-sponsor this annual event. OAS members lead nature hikes as well as nature bus tours through OWP.

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*

**Coming Soon...**

**Ethos Vegan Kitchen 5% Day to Benefit Orange Audubon Society**



On Saturday, March 3, 2018, Ethos Vegan Kitchen will donate 5% of its sales throughout the day to Orange Audubon Society (OAS). Simply dine in or take out and 5% of your check will go to our chapter. This is the sixth year that Ethos has selected OAS to benefit from their generous 5% Day. [Ethos](http://Ethos) is located at 601-B South New York Avenue, Winter Park, FL 32789, phone (407) 228-3899.

**FEBRUARY/MARCH CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**Youth Bird Walk**

February 3, 2018  
Contact Gabbie at (321) 368-1678

**Friends of Split Oak Forest Hike**

February 3, 2018; see p.2 for other dates  
Contact Dave at [dawegman1960@gmail.com](mailto:dawegman1960@gmail.com)

**Birds of Prey Identification, Lake Apopka**

February 4, 2018  
Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

**Green PLACE Nature Walk, Johns Lake**

February 10, 2018  
Contact (407) 836-1400

**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 [rsmhk@gmail.com](mailto:rsmhk@gmail.com)

**Monthly Field Trip to Orlando Wetlands Festival**

February 17, 2018  
Contact Larry at (407) 647-5834

**Orlando Wetlands Festival**

February 17, 2018  
Contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796

**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**

February 25, 2018  
Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

**Ethos Vegan Kitchen 5% Day to Benefit Orange Audubon Society, Winter Park**

March 3, 2018  
Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

**Beginning Birdwatching**

March 3, 10 & 17, 2018  
Contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796

**Green PLACE Nature Walk, Isle of Pine Preserve**

March 17, 2018  
Contact (407) 836-1400

**Youth & Family Photography Workshop, Mead Botanical Garden**

March 17, 2018  
Contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796

**Limited Edition Field Trip to Ocala National Forest, Paisley**

March 24, 2018  
Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617