



This Month's Program:

April 19, 2018

Orange County Green PLACE Program

by **Beth Jackson**

For Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) April 19th program, Beth Jackson will present on the Orange County Green PLACE program.

The PLACE in Green PLACE is an acronym for Park Land Acquisition for Conservation and Environmental Protection. This is

Orange County's natural lands program, started in the 1990s. There are now 28 properties that were purchased by Orange County, encompassing approximately 22,708 acres of environmentally sensitive land. Funding came from Public Service Tax Bonds, Conservation Trust Fund, general funds, and grants.

Among the properties scattered throughout Orange County are Isle of Pine Preserve, site of OAS' March field trip, and Split Oak Forest Wildlife and Environmental Area, that OAS has been working to protect. Others are the Charles H. Bronson State Forest, Eagles Roost, Hal Scott Preserve, Johns Lake Conservation Area, Long Branch, Pine Lily Preserve, Sandhill Preserve, and Savage Christmas Creek Preserve. Orange County manages 4500 acres of this and the remaining acreage is managed by the county's partners. For example, Split Oak Forest is managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. These well-burned, protected sites harbor threatened and endangered species. These locations (along with state and national conservation properties) are critical for survival of these species.

Beth, who is Environmental Program Supervisor for the Orange County Environmental Protection Division, will highlight the various properties that are open for public passive recreational use and those that will be open in the near future. She will also profile the flora and fauna of these properties.

Join us April 19th for an interesting and important program about our local conservation lands. Location details are below. *Dena Wild, Programs Chair*



Left, Red-veined Pennant at Hal Scott Preserve and Catesby's Lily, Isle of Pine Preserve. Right, White-eyed Vireo at Charles H. Bronson State Forest. Locations are Green PLACEs. *Photos: Mary Keim*

Spring Bird Walks at Mead Botanical Garden April 7, 14, 21, & 28, 2018

To celebrate spring migration, Orange Audubon Society (OAS) hosts bird walks at Mead Botanical Garden in Winter Park each Saturday in April. Many songbirds pass through Central Florida en route to forests of the Appalachians, the Eastern Seaboard or Canada, after wintering in the Caribbean or Central or South America.

Mead Botanical Garden is one of the best public places to see these lovely birds in Central Florida. It has food (insects and berries) and shelter for bird stop-overs, with a variety of habitats that includes open water, wetlands, and an upland area with oaks and tall pines. Over 160 species have been documented, including 23 species of warblers, most of which should be in their colorful breeding plumage by April.



Worm-eating Warbler at Mead Botanical Garden, April 2014. *Photo: Frank Salmon*

The walks start at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot, and will last 2 to 3 hours. The pace will be slow with lots of stopping to look at birds. The walks are free and there is no need to preregister. OAS has a limited number of loaner binoculars. If you need a pair, please come a little early to sign them out and be oriented on their proper use.

For information, contact me at lmartin5@msn.com or (407) 647- 5834 (in advance, not day of walk). Address: 1500 S. Denning Drive, Winter Park. We hope you join us!

Larry Martin, Field Trips Chair

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/





Conservation Update Legislative Session

The recently concluded session of the Florida Legislature provided a mixed bag of environmental successes and challenges for future sessions. For major good news: after years of no funding of Florida Forever and conservation land acquisition the budget provides \$100 million for acquisition of unique lands previously listed on the Florida Forever priority list, for the Rural and Family Lands Protection program, and the Florida Communities Trust program. Unfortunately, the Legislature did not revise Florida Statutes to guarantee annual appropriations for Florida Forever, so the fight for funding will continue next year.

More good news: the attempt to prevent local governments from enacting and enforcing tree removal ordinances died in committee, and the \$5 million appropriation for Lake Apopka restoration remains in place. The Legislature, however, did not pass a “No Fracking” law, despite broad bipartisan support. Also, the Legislature permitted treated wastewater to be pumped into Florida’s aquifers, and created possible challenges for wetland preservation by the state taking over regulation of dredging permitting from the federal government.

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) and Audubon Florida were active this session, making our concerns known to area lawmakers. Other updates, plus issues where action is currently needed are below. Please contact me at conservation@orangeaudubonfl.org, if you are willing to join the OAS Conservation Committee and participate in our efforts to protect our local environment.

Mike Jones, Conservation Chair

Migratory Bird Treaty Act (1918 – ?)

The one-hundred-year old Migratory Bird Treaty Act has a long history of protecting birds from the plume trade and protecting habitat essential for migratory birds. National Audubon was one of the leaders in obtaining passage of this Act ([Audubon’s Fact Sheet](#)). The U.S. Congress is considering legislation (HR 4239) that will severely weaken the protections for migratory birds and habitats, including not holding companies responsible for “incidental” bird deaths like those occurring to shorebirds from oil spills. Please contact your U.S. Representative and our two U.S. Senators to oppose this unwise legislation by following [this easy link](#). There are also other Audubon sponsored [ways to get involved](#) to protect the birds we all enjoy!

Roadway Threats Through Public Lands

408 Extension, Final Public Meeting April 26, 2018

The Central Florida Expressway Authority (CFX) will soon make an important decision about whether to go forward with the extension of SR-408 eastward to the SR-50/SR-520 interchange. OAS’ wish is that the roadway not transect public lands, primarily some of the Orange County Green PLACE properties that are subject of our April program by Beth Jackson. Information about this proposed expansion may be found [at this link](#). On Thursday, April 26, 2018, CFX will hold a final public presentation on the project and route alternatives at East River High School (650 East River Falcons Way, Orlando, FL 32833) between 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Comments can be sent to ConceptStudies@CFXway.com. CFX will make its decision at its board meeting on Thursday, May 10, 2018 at CFX headquarters, 4974 ORL Tower Road, Orlando. Public comments are at 9:00 a.m.

Split Oak Forest and the Osceola Parkway

As reported over the past year, OAS opposes a possible Osceola Parkway expansion through the 1700-acre Split Oak Forest Wildlife and Environmental Area, off Narcoossee Road. We thank those who attended the February public meetings, the March 8th CFX board meeting and/or submitted comments. OAS wrote the CFX board recommending a route that skirts Split Oak Forest entirely, and as a second choice, the recently proposed route clipping the southwest corner of Split Oak Forest in exchange for a package of compensation lands to be added to Split Oak, Moss Park and Isle of Pine preserves. We continue pushing for the compensation lands to have better



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.

Orange Audubon Society
P.O. Box 941142
Maitland, FL 32794-1142
www.orangeaudubonfl.org

President:
Rick Baird
rbaird4@att.net
(407) 277-3357

OASis Editor:
Deborah Green
newsletter@orangeaudubonfl.org
(407) 637-2525

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.

Address Change or E-Delivery:
Mike Daley
miked129e@gmail.com
(407) 417-7818

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.800helppfla.com FOR HELP. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. REGISTRATION NO. CH2330

conservation corridors. The CFX board on March 8th recommended beginning the Project Development and Environment Study (PD&E) for the Osceola Parkway expansion and including all possible routes.

Frequent walks at led by the [Friends of Split Oak Forest](#). See what we have been fighting for. Split Oak Forest is off Narcoosee 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. And see p. 6 to join the BioBlitz at Split Oak Forest.

Conservation Committee

April is Elections Month

The Orange Audubon Society (OAS) annual officer election will be on April 19, 2018. I, Linda Gaunt have the pleasure of chairing the nominating committee, along with committee members Jenny Williams Cohen (jennycohen181@gmail.com) and Maureen (Mo) Cortese (mocar1129@gmail.com).

The nominating committee has received nominations for OAS' five board officer positions, as follows:

- President: Deborah Green
- 1st Vice President: Kathy Rigling
- 2nd Vice President: Rick Baird
- Secretary: Mary Keim
- Treasurer: Teresa Williams

Current board members whose terms expire who have agreed to be nominated are Melissa Gonzalez (2018-2019); Dena Wild (2018-2020); Linda Carpenter and Brent Mobley (2018-2021). There are 4 OAS board positions available for nominations.

To serve on the board, you must be an OAS member, have an interest in wildlife and the environment that supports it, and be able to attend monthly one-hour board meetings at Leu Gardens on the third Thursday of each month (except July and August). There is also an all-day summer planning meeting, usually in late July, that board members are expected to attend. Joining the board is a great way to get involved with environmental projects and events as well as help make decisions that will have a positive impact in our community. Please contact me at lgaunt246@gmail.com or (941) 704-1189 if you have time and interest to increase your involvement in OAS, and I will send you an application. Thank you very much. *Linda Gaunt, Nominating Committee Chair*

Homeowners' Orange County Solar Co-ops Grow

Orange County homeowners are invited to join with their neighbors to access affordable solar photovoltaics (PV) for their homes. When homeowners join the Co-op, they learn if their homes are suitable for solar PV and receive information on solar equipment, solar financing, and how this co-op helps them to bundle their buying power to receive a competitive price. There is no fee to join and no obligation to sign the contract presented by the solar installer who will be chosen by co-op members. Orange County East Solar Co-op (for those who live east of I-4) has a new joining deadline of April 23rd. The Orange County West Solar Co-op (for those who live west of I-4) will open on April 16th. Watch for informational workshops and sign up to receive the e-newsletter [at this link](#).

Warbler neck?

I'm always eager for April and the warblers. Spring migration means many birds will be foraging at Mead Botanical Garden (Mead), that lush green space with water—Howell Creek and Alice's Pond—so attractive to weary warblers. Birdwatchers will be sauntering about seeking new lifers for their lists.

Warblers are challenging. So small, so quick, so many, so varied, so... beautiful!! One of my favorites is the American Redstart, a sparrow-sized, long-tailed, lively warbler that hops among tree branches in search of insects. The male is coal-black with vivid orange patches on the sides, wings and tail. It has a relatively wide, flat bill.

"True to its Halloween-themed color scheme, the redstart appears to startle its prey out of the foliage by flashing its strikingly patterned tail and wing feathers," according to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. It repeatedly dashes through trees and bushes after unseen insects, or prances along branches, rapidly spreading and closing its colorful tail. Photographers remark how difficult it is to get great shots of these hyperactive birds who never seem to stand still.

Females and immature males have more subdued yellow "flash patterns" on a gray background. These "sweet-singing warblers" nest in open woodlands across much of North America. During migration, the species can be found in nearly every habitat with trees. The song, by the way, is a series of four or five high and rather strong notes often with an emphatic ending *tsee tsee tsee tsee tzirr*, or ...See your field guide for more about that!

American Redstarts are common spring and fall migrants in the East, so you can always count on seeing them, and many other species, at Mead. Frequent visitors to the Garden have reported up to 24 warbler species during migration. You have to be quick with your binoculars, however, and not averse to getting "warbler neck" (otherwise known as a crick) from staring up at trees for long periods.

I was thrilled when a male American Redstart flew into my backyard a few years ago. My grandson was visiting, so we used a bird song application on my phone to call it so he could get a better look. The bird immediately drew closer, and then—surprise! A female followed. What a wonderful day! *Linda Carpenter*



Above, male American Redstart; below, female American Redstart. Photo: Sherry Fischer

Sign up now!

South Carolina Magical Birding, May 18-20, 2018

Orange Audubon Society's fun fund-raising trip in mid May is 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](#)! This is a once-a year event at Congaree.

Saturday, May 19th includes morning birding at the [Audubon Center & Sanctuary at Francis Beidler Forest](#) and a search for the rare Swainson's Warbler. In the afternoon, we will drive in the direction of Charleston and visit the [Francis Marion National Florest](#). On Sunday, May 20th we will visit the [ACE Basin](#), another birding hotspot, on the way home.

Although it seems a long way off, this mid May weekend is *very busy* for travelers, and *lodging is at a premium*. If interested, please contact the trip organizers right away to register and secure lodging information.

Cost of the trip is \$60 members/\$75 non-members, which includes honoraria for local expert guides, a picnic supper Friday at Congaree and a field trip fee to OAS. Lodging, other meals, transportation and incidentals are not included. For more information, contact me at (407) 637-2525 or sabalpress@mac.com. To reserve a spot, contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796 or mwilliams@cfl.rr.com. Please hurry, if interested. *Deborah Green*



Swainson's Warbler at Congaree National Park.
Photo: National Park Service

Birdathon is April 7th! Please Help Fund-raise

Birdathon is like a Walkathon, except you collect donation pledges for species of birds seen, instead of miles walked.

The beauty of Birdathon is that members bring in donations from *others besides our chapter members*. If you bought Girl Scout cookies from a neighbor or helped someone for another cause, consider asking that person – or a friend, relative, doctor, veterinarian, hair stylist, etc. – to sponsor you by donating to Orange Audubon Society (OAS).

Birdathon this year is April 7th. In addition to collecting pledges, we need people to bird and participate as individuals or teams. The Florida Ornithological Society provides the official list of birds in Florida at [this link](#). ALL BIRD SPECIES ARE COUNTABLE for Birdathon...exotic or not.

If all OAS birders collectively during a 24-hour period on Birdathon day record 180 species, and a sponsor who pledges 20 cents a species, would donate \$36 to OAS. Fixed donation amounts are appreciated, too. The pledge form to track your pledges is available on the [OAS home page](#).

The person or team recording the most species and the person securing the most pledges will be recognized in the May *OASis*.

We hope many of our members will collect pledges this year. No pledge is too small and they really do add up! Or use this as an occasion to make a donation yourself to OAS. Birdathon donations will be used to fund OAS conservation, advocacy and education efforts.

Bring your pledge sheet and funds collected to OAS treasurer Teresa Williams at the April meeting or mail to OAS, P.O. Box 941142, Maitland, FL 32794-1142.

Let me know if you will be birding that day and please turn in your April 7th species list to me by April 19th.

Contact me at riglink@aol.com or (407) 488-9559. Thanks for your participation in this fun OAS fund-raiser.

Kathy Rigling, Birdathon Coordinator

Silent Auction Help Needed

On June 18, 2018 Orange Audubon Society (OAS) presents its final program of the season, an exclusive showing of entries in the Kit and Sidney Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest, announces winners and presents awards. Tasty finger foods and a silent auction make the event even more fun, but also frenetic!

And that is why OAS solicits your help. Please volunteer to help setting up or cleaning afterwards.

Now is also the time to solicit silent auction items for this major fundraiser. Will you ask a frequented restaurant, outdoor shop, fitness trainer, etc. to donate? Consider re-gifting desirable presents (just not by you) received over the holidays.

Or donate a personal creation that is artistic, culinary or crafty and provide value, description, minimum bid and other details to me by May 31st so that organizers can determine table and layout needs, prepare bid sheets and rally other volunteers for this special evening.

Contact me at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or (407) 644-0796 to leave some good news. Thank you!

Teresa Williams, Treasurer

In Case You Missed the Program...

Creating Gardens for Bees by Kelly Greer

For every third bite of food you take, thank a bee or other pollinator, states famous entomologist E.O. Wilson in *Forgotten Pollinators*, 1996. Orange Audubon Society's March presenter, Kelly Greer of UF Orange County Extension, taught us about bees and why we should care about them. She and others at the Extension Center have developed a pollinator garden and, through working in it, Kelly has acquired firsthand knowledge.

She started by distinguishing the honeybee from the diverse groups of native bees. Honeybees are native to Europe and were brought to North America in 1622 for wax and honey production. Today honeybees enable a 14 billion dollar industry of pollinated crops.

Kelly pointed out that bees find nectar-bearing flowers first by scent and then, as they get closer, by color (Bees are attracted to yellow and blue and can't see red). However, air pollution affects bees' ability to find flowers by scent.

Honeybees are often inefficient pollinators because they are generalists. If they are visiting ten different species of flower, only a tenth of the pollen they carry will be right for a particular plant. In contrast, native bees favor one flower species at a time; therefore they do most of the actual pollination. Progressive farmers leave native weed hedgerows to support native bees when crops are not flowering.

There are 4000 native bee species in the U.S.. Florida has 315 native bee species, of which 29 occur in Florida and nowhere else. Kelly told us how she can identify the bee groups from a distance by their behavior. Honeybees are the only social bees, although bumblebees are "eusocial," which means live in small colonies. She showed us the "bee houses," tubular structures that are becoming popular to put in gardens. These are for leaf-cutter bees to nest in.

Among Kelly's favorite flowers to support pollinators is the native Beggarticks (*Bidens alba*), although it

Honeybee Swarm – Nothing To Fear

Many people who spend a lot of time out in nature have seen a honeybee swarm, clustered on a tree limb. In swarming, at least half of the original colony's worker bees leave, along with the laying queen, to seek a new location for a hive. In the old hive a new laying queen is all ready to emerge, having been fed "royal jelly" as a larva.

The [breakaway swarm](#) does not sting and may stay on the limb for several days, while scout bees search for suitable cavities – a notch in a tree, an old building wall, or a rock crevice.

Once they find the perfect location, worker bees build the hive infrastructure from wax they secrete through abdominal glands. They mold the wax comb into hexagonal cells large enough to hold a developing larva, plus a small quantity of honey or pollen.

Then the entire swarm moves in, and the queen begins to lay new eggs. The worker bees feed the larvae that hatch royal jelly for a few days, and then switch to feeding them [bee bread](#), a fermented mixture of pollen and honey. This provides protein, fat, minerals, and vitamins for growth and development of larvae of worker bees, drones, and the queen. Adult bees subsist primarily on flower nectar or honey when they can't forage. Here's a [link](#) for introductory information on fascinating honeybees.

Deborah Green



Honeybee swarm. Photo: Lynn Marie Folts

is weedy. She suggests capturing the seeds before they spread everywhere. She also likes the following natives: *Gaillardia*, *Monarda* (spotted bee balm) as well as *Coreopsis*, *Rudbeckia*, goldenrod and spiderwort.

Honeybees and native bees are both badly affected by [neonic insecticides](#), so if you use pesticides, check to make sure they are not from this group. Since neonics came onto the market, [sudden colony collapse](#) has spread through the honeybee industry.

Even before neonics, honeybees were in trouble with a non-native Varroa mite in the colonies. And as mentioned, air pollution affects bees' ability to find flowers by scent.

By planting nectar and pollen sources in our urban landscapes, [we help improve pollinator health and numbers](#).

The UF Extension Pollinator Garden is open to the public at 6021 S. Conway Rd., Orlando (walk through the breezeways to behind the buildings).

The [Florida Wildflower Symposium](#) this year will be at that site, April 27-28, 2018.

Deborah Green



Sand-loving wasp on Spotted Bee balm. Photo: Mary Keim

Garden Maintenance, April 7, 2018

Friends of Lake Apopka started a pollinator garden on the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive near the first kiosk, with help of St. Johns River Water Management District staff. Maintenance has been assumed by Orange Audubon Society and the [Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive Facebook Group](#). Hurricane Irma plus a freeze and drought set the project back but monthly maintenance is now on again every first Saturday of the month at 10 a.m. If you will help, please contact me at sabalpress@mac.com.

Deborah Green

Limited Edition Field Trip, Fort De Soto Park, April 22, 2018

Situated in the mouth of Tampa Bay and surrounded by miles of insanely dense development, this green gem of an island is a target for many songbirds that cross the Gulf of Mexico flying north in spring. April is the peak month for spring migration. On a good day at Ft. De Soto birders may see hundreds of warblers, buntings, thrushes, grosbeaks, orioles, tanagers, and other songbirds. Weather is a key factor, however, and some days there may be more birders than birds. But it'll be fun, either way.

Because it's a bit of a drive to get there, participants should plan on a long day. Definitely pack a lunch! This trip is limited to 15 people and has a cost of \$10 per person per trip for members and \$15 per person for non-members. Reservations are required and will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis the week prior to the trip. For trip questions or reservations, call Bob Sanders at (407) 459-5617.



Fort Desoto Park Limited Edition Field Trip.
Photo: Joyce Stefancic



Red-Shouldered Hawk Chick.
Photo: Center for Birds of Prey

Ethos Vegan Kitchen 5% Day



Thanks so much to Ethos Vegan Kitchen for donating 5% of sales from March 12th to Orange Audubon Society (OAS). In this fifth year as a 5% Day beneficiary, OAS received over \$700 from Ethos toward our nature and environmental education fund.

The [restaurant](#), which has been in business for nearly nine years, is located at 601-B South New York Avenue, Winter Park. Thanks again, Ethos!

Baby Owl Shower May 12, 2018

Audubon Florida's Center for Birds of Prey holds its annual Baby Owl Shower the Saturday before Mother's Day to raise funds to offset increased costs during baby season. Admission is "free" that day with an item from the wish list of supplies for caring for these young raptors. See the wish list at [this link](#). Non-releasable baby raptors will be on view.

Orange Audubon Society participates by selling nature-inspired merchandise and offering a kids' art activity. We need help with both. Baby owls attract lots of baby people (grown people, too!). The event starts at 10 a.m. but set up help is needed at 9 a.m. Tear-down begins at 2 p.m. To help, please contact Teresa at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or (407) 644-0796.

Sign Up for Jay Watch

Jay Watch volunteers contribute to research (Citizen Science) and preservation of the threatened Florida Scrub-Jay. The Florida Scrub-Jay is dependent on Florida's shrinking scrub habitat.

The closest Jay Watch sites are Lyonia Preserve, Blue Spring State Park, North Peninsula State Park, and Lake Monroe Conservation Area (all in Volusia County), and Buck Lake Conservation Area in Brevard County.

Jay Watch will conduct a statewide survey from June 15 to July 15, 2018. To become a Jay Watch volunteer, you must take a free half day training session in which you will learn standardized survey methods. For information, [visit this link](#) and contact Audubon Florida's Jacqui Sulek at jsulek@audubon.org. We hope you get involved with Jay Watch!

Bioblitz at Split Oak Forest, May 4-6, 2018

To document the diversity of plant and animal life at a location, Bioblitz volunteers record everything they see over a specific period. Organized by University of Central Florida Zoology student Danny Goodding of the Friends of Split Oak Forest Wildlife and Environmental Area, this Bioblitz will be held at Split Oak Forest on May 4-6, 2018. If you would like to help, contact Deborah at sabalpress@mac.com

Chertok Display Coming to Colonial Photo & Hobby

Images from the 2017 Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest have been selected by contest co-sponsor, Colonial Photo & Hobby (CPH). Big prints of these selections will soon be featured in window and in-store displays. Stay tuned for announcement of CPH's selections.



Florida Scrub-Jay. 2010 Chertok Photo Contest, First Place., Youth Category. Photo: Megan Authement

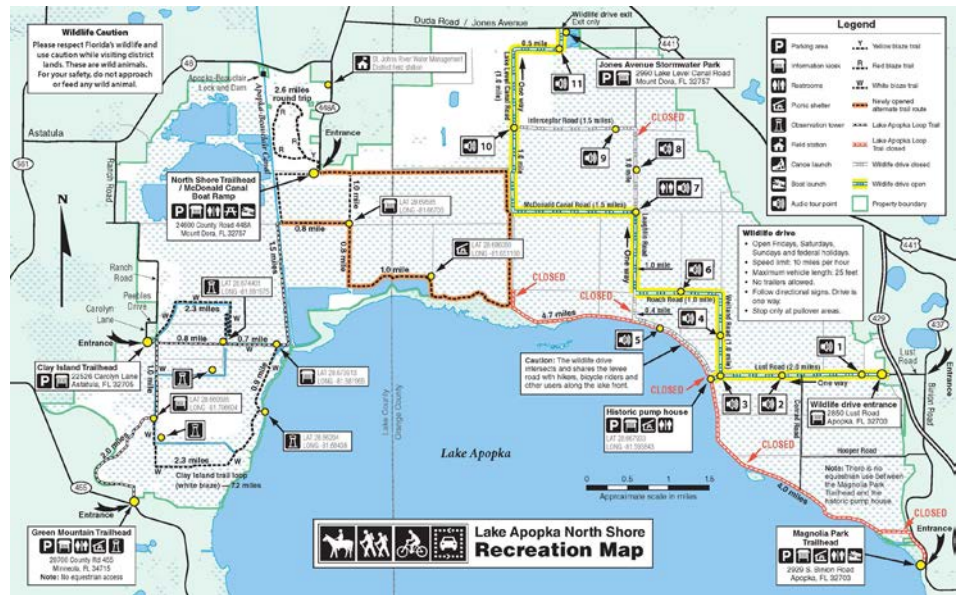


Osprey. Photo: Lynn Marie Folts

Lauding LAWD: 3rd Anniversary of the Lake Apopka Wildlife, April 29, 2018

On Sunday, April 29th, to commemorate the 3rd anniversary of the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive (LAWD), Orange Audubon Society (OAS) volunteers will be along the drive with binoculars, bird books, and spotting scopes to help beginners enjoy some of the area's most interesting birds. We will be on the Drive from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at four stations, including the entrance, pumphouse and near the sod fields or wherever any rarity has been spotted.

LAWD is on the eastern part of St. Johns River Water Management District (District) Lake Apopka North Shore. This 20,000 acres was once part of Lake Apopka but was drained through canals and pumps starting in the 1940s for farming. Due to the dramatic decline in water quality from nutrients going into the lake, the farms were purchased by [the St. Johns River Water Management District](#) in the late 1980s and 1990s, and lake restoration began.



Central Florida Earth Day April 21, 2018

For the seventh year, Orange Audubon Society (OAS) will have a tent and display table and will do outreach at [Central Florida Earth Day](#) at Lake Eola Park in downtown Orlando. The FREE event is Saturday, April 21st, from 10:00 a.m to 6:00 p.m.

OAS is provided a great spot right by Lake Eola, since we offer free bird walks around the lake. We could use help introducing beginners to some of the birds. Although they are not native, the swans are very popular and we'll have a photo sheet on them, to help you. Contact Rick at rbaird4@att.net or Deborah Green at sabalpress@mac.com you can help.

Earth Day In the Park April 15, 2018



Join Orange Audubon Society at Earth Day in the Park in Winter Park's Central Park. Festivities will be from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Contact Rick at rbaird4@att.net if you can help.

Other Earth Day Events

Orange Audubon Society board members will again be at Earth Day at Valencia College East Campus on April 5th. It's a busy month!

Birders knew the Lake Apopka North Shore to be an Important Bird Area and wanted access, but it took a festival to secure the interest of a wide segment of the public. The Lake Apopka Wildlife Festival and Birdapalooza was co-founded in 2013 by Orange Audubon Society and Orange County, along with the District, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and many other partners, to introduce the public to the area and its wildlife. First Orange County opened the Lake Apopka Loop Trail, a lakeside hiking/cycling trail from Magnolia Park. Then Lake County completed an additional section, so it is now over 18 miles into Lake County. During that time the District built pullouts along some of the old farm roads and opened the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive (LAWD) on May 1, 2015. LAWD is an 11-mile one-way wildlife drive that is only open Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and federal holidays, as these are days that District staff are not moving around on the roads doing lake restoration activities.

Despite being closed last year from the time Hurricane Irma hit until Christmas weekend, visitor numbers have surpassed 100,000 since LAWD first opened. Visitors marvel at alligators and wading birds, learn the difference between coots, grebes, and ducks, and turn up rarities. There's always something interesting to see and photograph. As pointed out by OAS' October speaker Reinier Munguia, one's car acts as a bird blind. The wildlife have less fear if you stay in your car. Of course, there are places to get out and walk around also.

OAS continues developing interpretive signage and shares sightings through the LAWD [Facebook page](#). OAS appreciates access to this birding hot spot. If you also love LAWD and would like to help us share our enthusiasm that day, contact me at sabalpress@mac.com or (407) 637-2525. See you out there!

Deborah Green

April 19th is the Deadline for Chertok Photo Contest Entries!

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) 2018 Kit and Sidney Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest, is themed: *Florida Native Nature* and has an entry deadline of April 19, 2018 (postmarked or electronically submitted by date). Instructions for electronic submission and online payment are on [OAS' Chertok webpage](#). Participants may still enter by mailing or hand-delivering a CD.

This 30th annual contest is open to all photographers (except members of OAS' board and Chertok contest committee).

There are three skill level competition categories: YOUTH— for photographers age 17 or younger by April 20, 2017; NOVICE—for new and less experienced photo hobbyists; and ADVANCED AMATEUR/ PROFESSIONAL—for experienced photographers who have practiced and honed their skills over time.

The 2018 prize package worth \$1,350 is enhanced by the long-running co-sponsorship, since 2004, of Colonial Photo & Hobby (CPH) and the new co-sponsorship of Tarflower Chapter, Florida Native Plant Society. With Tarflower's funding, OAS added 4th and 5th place winners in the YOUTH category.

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 by following instructions that will be provided upon notification.

Electronic entry submission details are now on the OAS website [at this link](#). You may also pick up entry forms at contest co-sponsor CPH, 634 N. Mills Ave., Orlando, FL or by contacting me.

So! Get outside with your camera and start shooting, preserving and learning more about Florida's amazing native nature and their 'wild' habitats! Contact me at (407) 644-0796 or mwilliams@cfl.rr.com if you have questions.

Teresa Williams, Chertok Photo Contest Chair



Gus, the Caterpillar - Spicebush Swallowtail. 2016 Chertok Photo Contest, Novice Category, Second Place Winner. Photo: Pam Clark

APRIL/MAY/JUNE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Birdathon Fundraiser

April 7, 2018
Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive Garden Maintenance

April 7, 2018
Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

Spring Mead Botanical Garden Bird Walks, Winter Park

April 7, 14, 21, & 28, 2018
Contact Larry at (407) 647-5834

Monthly Program, Orange County Green PLACE Program by Beth Jackson

April 19, 2018
Contact Dena at 4shosha@gmail.com

Annual Chertok Nature Photo Contest

Deadline: April 19, 2018
Contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796

Central Florida Earth Day at Lake Eola

April 21, 2018
Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

Limited Edition Field Trip to Fort De Soto Park, Pinellas County

April 22, 2018
Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive, 3rd Anniversary

April 29, 2018
Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

Bioblitz at Split Oak Forest

May 4-6, 2018
Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

Baby Owl Shower, Audubon Center for Birds of Prey

May 12, 2018
Contact Center for Birds of Prey at (407) 644-0190

South Carolina Magical Birding Trip

May 18-20, 2018
Contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796

Monthly Program, Bird Feathers by Bruce Anderson

May 17, 2018
Contact Dena at 4shosha@gmail.com

Limited Edition Field Trip, Three Lakes WMA, Osceola County

May 26, 2018
Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

Chertok Nature Photography Contest Awards Program and Silent Auction

June 21, 2018
Contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796