

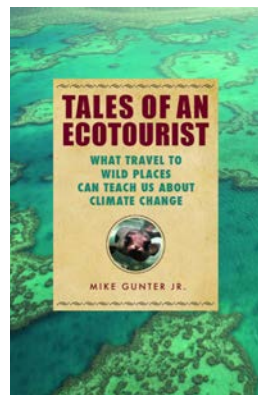


This Month's Program: **December 20, 2018** **The Galapagos and** **Tales of an Ecotourist:** **What Travel to Wild Places** **Can Teach Us about Climate** **Change by Robert Sena and** **Mike Gunter**

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) December 20th program starts with photographer Robert Sena presenting on his trip to the Galapagos Islands with his wife Flo this February.

Then Dr. Mike Gunter, Jr. will share stories from his book *Tales of an Ecotourist: What Travel to Wild Places Can Teach Us about Climate Change*. Dr. Gunter is Chair of the Political Science department and Director of International Affairs in

the Holt School at Rollins College. He has traveled to all 7 continents but focuses on the Galapagos Islands, Australia's Great Barrier Reef, Kruger National Park in South Africa, the hot and humid Peruvian Amazon and the frozen Antarctic. Join us December 20th at 7:00 p.m. for a great program. Location below.



Left, Celebrity Xperience ship in background with smaller boat allowing entry to the islands; Robert and Flo Sena with an iguana; Lava Heron; Galapagos Tortoise. Photos: Robert Sena. Right, Cover of Dr. Gunter's new book.

Rick Baird,
Programs Chair

December Field Trips: **Participate in a** **Christmas Bird Count**

The longest-running citizen science survey in the world is the [annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count](#), now in its 119th year. See more, including how you can participate on page 3.

Birds of Prey **Identification Classes**

Winter is the best time to see raptors on the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive, and it's time for popular instructor Bob Sanders to hold his three Birds of Prey Identification Classes. Before moving to Central Florida, Bob was cofounder of the Chimney Rock Hawk Watch in Martinsville, New Jersey. Dates are December 2nd, January 6th and February 2nd from 7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Cost for each day is \$5 (Audubon members) or \$10 (nonmembers). No early registration is required, and you can attend single or multiple days. Meet at the entrance of the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive at 2850 Lust Road, Apopka. Bob can be reached at (407) 459-5617. See you out there!

Other December Field **Opportunities**

OAS' Annual **Panhandle Trip**, December 6-9, 2018, still has a few spaces. This is a unique opportunity in many ways. See p.8

Bob Sanders' December **Limited Edition Field Trip** will be to Marl Bed Flats on Lake Jesup. See p. 5

The **Wekiwa Springs State Park bird survey** will be December 8th. See p.3.



Solitary Sandpiper from November 10th Wekiwa Survey. Photo: Kathy Rigling

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/





Don't Take Anything for Granted

One year ago, Charles Lee, Director for Advocacy, Audubon Florida was wrapping up several months of rallying to uphold the 2004 Wekiva Basin Protection Act from proposed modification to add a new beltway exchange. This would have resulted in additional modifications to a document forged nearly 15 years ago through long and difficult compromise. Charles engaged Orange Audubon, Oklawaha Valley Audubon, Seminole Audubon, Friends of the Wekiva River, and local municipalities to lobby legislators and transportation agencies. From the January 2018 OASis, "A final blow to the attempt to open the 2004 Wekiva Parkway Act for modification seems to have come at the Central Florida Expressway meeting on December 14th, where Audubon Florida, Orange Audubon Society and other entities' representatives spoke against opening the Act."

One of the many prongs of Charles' activism was working with Audubon members from Lake County to encourage the *Orlando Sentinel's* Lake County editorial writers to write about this issue. "[Get your mitts off Wekiva Protection Act; no more interchanges needed](#)" was Lauren Ritchie's October 26, 2017 editorial. It was right on point, and I emailed to thank her. She emailed back that she hadn't heard from many people and that "people seem to take the Wekiva for granted these days."

That is sad. Maybe some of our long-time members recall when the different parcels in the 70,000+-acre Wekiva River Basin state lands were purchased and brought into state protection, under land-buying programs that were precursors to Florida Forever, throughout the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

Wekiwa Springs State Park has over 400,000 visitors a year, more than many national parks. I have always thought that Wekiwa is national park quality, with its diversity of habitats and particularly its rare sandhill habitat that is well-preserved through prescribed burning. Of course, it is a "cash cow" for the state with all the visitation for the wonderful springs.

As national recognition, in October 2000, the U.S. Congress designated the Wekiva River, along with Wekiwa Springs Run, Rock Springs Run and Black Water Creek as components of the [National Wild and Scenic River System](#). That is a very special designation and is held by only about 200 rivers around the country. The only other one so designated in Florida is the Loxahatchee River.

There still remain key pieces to purchase (or secure with conservation easements) to complete wildlife corridors to the Ocala National Forest, and several parcels have been on the approved Florida Forever acquisition list for years, awaiting funding, listed as the highly ranked [Wekiwa-Ocala Greenway Florida Forever project](#). Environmentalists have lobbied State Senator Linda Stewart, one of our few local state legislators to invite input from the environmental community, to work toward acquisition of these properties.



Wekiwa Springs State Park sandhill with grasses and wildflowers. Photo: Deborah Green

While continuing to be ready to speak up for additional acquisitions in the Wekiva-Ocala Greenway, I encourage people to appreciate our existing Wekiva River Basin properties. For years Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) Mary Keim and Randy Snyder have organized year-long bird, butterfly, or dragonfly surveys at the request of park managers. This year OAS' Kathy Rigling has added a Wekiwa Springs State Park monthly bird survey, which you are welcome to join. To participate in the Wekiva River Christmas Bird Count on December 15th, contact Jay Exum at jay.h.exum@gmail.com. OAS is extremely lucky to have this fantastic preserved area near us. Let's not forget it, and let's introduce more people to it by getting out to enjoy nature there.

Deborah Green, President



Line to enter Wekiwa Springs State Park typical of holidays and weekends. Photo: Deborah Green



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

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

To add your email address to our distribution list or report a change in email address, contact newsletter@orangeaudubonfl.org.

For other membership information, contact: Mike Daley
miked129e@gmail.com
(407) 417-7818

JOIN OAS' [MEETUP](#) GROUP
LIKE OAS ON [FACEBOOK](#)

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Wekiwa Bird Survey December 8, 2018

Since September, Orange Audubon has been helping the biologists at Wekiwa Springs State Park collect data about the birds found in the park. This study has not been done in over 10 years. Park biologist Paul Lammardo is seeking data to study the effects of prescribed burns on the health of bird populations. Generally on the second Saturday of each month volunteers spend their morning hiking and counting birds.



Wekiwa Survey volunteers from November 10th, with park biologist Paul Lammardo, center with clipboard. Photo: Kathy Rigling

The volunteers include participants from the original Wekiwa survey 30 years ago as well as those from 10 years ago. Wekiwa Springs State Park is considered the gem of the Florida State Parks system with more ecosystems found there than in any other state park in Florida.

Some of our birding highlights have included Bachman's Sparrows, Brown-headed Nuthatches, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Carolina Chickadees, Pine Warblers, Wood Ducks, Summer Tanagers and Eastern Bluebirds. In September we were excited to find an Acadian Flycatcher and a Magnolia Warbler in an oak hammock. October brought us a covey of Northern Bobwhite (at least a dozen) and an unexpected Solitary Sandpiper feeding at a large puddle by Lake Pevatt.

We are continuing our surveys through the coming year. Birders of all levels are welcome to join us as we continue to collect valuable data to help in our understanding of birds and habitat management.

Our next survey will be Saturday, December 8th. To participate or for more information, contact me at riglink@aol.com.

Kathy Rigling, First Vice President

Seminole State Forest Bird and Butterfly Survey

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) Wildlife Survey Committee has been participating in year-long bird, butterfly, or dragonfly surveys since the surveys were initiated by former OAS Wildlife Survey Chair Dot Freeman in the 1970s. The survey team has worked with park biologists or administrators to select the location where data is needed on bird, butterfly or dragonfly populations. Data has been used to make wildlife checklists and/or for inclusion in property management plans.

Focusing on one area each year, monthly surveys are set up. Past survey locations have included: Wekiwa Springs State Park, Lower Wekiwa River State Preserve, Rock Springs Run State Reserve, Tosohatchee Wildlife Management Area, Orlando Wetlands Park, Lake Apopka North Shore, Shingle Creek Preserve, Pine Lily Preserve, Savage/Christmas Creek Preserve, Long Branch Preserve, Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area, Hal Scott Preserve and Regional Park, Seminole Ranch Conservation Area, Little-Big Econ State Forest, Charles H. Bronson State Forest, Canaveral Marshes Conservation Area, Lake Jesup Conservation Area, Lake Monroe Conservation Area, Palm Bluff Conservation Area and Buck Lake Conservation Area.



Red-banded Hairstreak on Aster. Photo: Mary Keim

The current survey location is the Lake Tracy Unit of Seminole State Forest, north of SR44, part of the Wekiwa Basin. On November 24th, 44 bird species were observed, including 110 American Robins. Seven species were new, bringing the cumulative total to 78.

Thirty butterfly species were observed, one new, bringing the cumulative total to 54. Little Yellow was most abundant.

Christmas Bird Counts Are Citizen Science

The longest-running citizen science survey in the world is the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC), now in its 119th year. Dr. Frank Chapman, founder of *Bird-Lore*, which evolved into *Audubon* magazine, founded the CBC in 1900 as an alternative to the holiday "side hunt," in which teams competed to see who could shoot the most birds. The CBC uses over 70,000 volunteer bird counters in more than 2,400 locations across the Western Hemisphere to track the health of bird populations on a scale that professional scientists alone could never accomplish.

Each count is performed within a circle with a diameter of 15 miles. The volunteers break up into small parties and follow assigned routes, counting every bird they see. The natural competitive spirit of birders drives them to do the most thorough job possible. See more at [this link](#).

The first Central Florida CBC was the Orlando CBC, as reported by past Orange Audubon Society (OAS) board member Mary Keim, who first participated in the 1970s. With that CBC now discontinued, the longest running local CBC is the Econlockhatchee CBC that started in 1982. In 1987 the Mt. Dora CBC began, with involvement of Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society. The organizers moved that circle to Emerald Marsh in 1995, and the Zellwood/Mt. Dora area was split off as a separate count. By the 1990s the Wekiwa CBC began.

John Thomson, OAS member and Disney employee, founded the Bay Lake CBC in 2011 and Clermont CBC in 2012. John welcomes new participants. Contact him at john.thomton@gmail.com. Dates and contact information for all the local CBCs are on p.8. *Deborah Green*

The volunteers for the survey at the Lake Tracy Unit of Seminole State Forest are Sandy Bauerschmidt, Sue Farnsworth, Cyndi Kay, Mary Keim, Terrie Leibler, Lorri Lilja, Lorne Malo, Kerry Paddock, Carol Palmer, Nancy Prine, Lenny Shelp and Randy Snyder. Cyndi Kay took the time to input years of data into eBird. OAS appreciates the volunteers. *Mary Keim*

In case you missed it ...

Nature Photography Tips



November's Orange Audubon Society (OAS) program featured Wayne Bennett, a professional, award-winning

photographer, past president of the Orlando Camera Club, and a former Chertok Nature Photography Contest judge. In Wayne's lively presentation "Wildlife and Nature Photography: Little Things Mean a Lot," he shared advice for capturing the best photographs possible using an array of his own nature photography for illustration.

By "little things" in nature, Wayne means the innuendoes of nature - and learning the innuendoes of your subject: its habits, its preferences, its location, its behavior patterns, its timing. When you understand your subject to that degree, you can predict, anticipate, and prepare for photographing its activity, and thereby create the best, most interesting, and most appealing image of your subject.

Wayne offered several basic rules to improve the quality of nature photography. The first rule is to "catch light" of any animate subject's eye, to keep the eye always in focus. The rest of the subject can vary in focus, but well-focused eyes catch the viewer's attention and hold it. Wayne's photo of a leopard's forceful gaze was a strong example of the powerful attraction of the eyes.

Photographers often debate the rule to avoid the "bulls-eye" image, or to locate the subject in the center of the image. Wayne showed several of his photographs where, although the subject was centered, the "bulls-eyed" image was made more interesting by including the reflection of the image, or a background that improved depth of field, or by centering multiple subjects, as with a flock of birds.

Another of Wayne's basic rules is to consider the background image in addition to the foreground. The background can enhance or hinder the value of the foreground image. His example was an image with just a white sky behind, verses an image

Announcing the 31st Annual Chertok Nature Photo Contest

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) announces its 2019 (31st Annual) Kit and Sidney Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest, themed: Florida Native Nature. Competing in this contest will sharpen your photo skills, increase knowledge of Florida's amazing wildlife and wild places and teach valuable ethical field practices. 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. The deadline is April 18, 2019 (postmarked or electronically submitted by date). Disqualified entries may optionally be replaced for no additional entry fee by following instructions provided upon notification. In addition to the prize package of \$1,300 from OAS and co-sponsors Colonial Photo & Hobby and Tarflower Chapter of Florida Native Plant Society, plant aficionados from Tarflower will be available as mentors to help with plant identification. The contest is open to all photographers (members of OAS' board and Chertok contest committee excluded) and there are three skill level competition categories: Youth—for photographers age 17 years or younger by April 18, 2019; Novice—for new and less experienced photo hobbyists; and Advanced Amateur/ Professional—for experienced photographers who have practiced and honed their skills over time. Entry submission details will soon be available. Meanwhile, get outside with your camera and start shooting and preserving Florida's amazing native nature! Contact me at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or (407) 644-0796 if you have questions.

Teresa Williams, OAS' Chertok Photography Contest Chair



Sunning—Florida Scrub-Jay. 2018 Youth Category, Honorable Mention Winner. Photo: Jake Turner

with a natural background of trees, shrubs, water, or anything that adds a



Back-lit Wood Storks. Photo: Wayne Bennett

sense of three dimensions.

To add as much interest as possible, Wayne goes for an action shot, when the subject is "doing" something active or unusual. In particular he mentioned photographing the subject as it approaches, rather than from behind, or as it turns its head toward you. Again, getting a well-focused eye is most important.

Wayne also suggested breaking all these rules to add some "wow" factor, by thinking outside the box, or by photographing from an unusual direction or location.

In addition to the basic rules, Wayne also mentioned the "post-processing" phase of image-making. Using a photo-enhancing program like SnapArt, an Alien Skin product that Wayne uses, you can add enhancements that make your image more interesting, more artistic, more attractive, and more individualized.

His personal process for great photography includes the following:

1. Pre-planning. This part involves doing pre-shoot research, like checking the weather, understanding the innuendoes of your subject, and knowing your location.
2. What you see through the viewfinder. This involves the investment of time and considerable patience to find the right image, from the right direction or location, in the right conditions, as the subject approaches you and behaves in an image-worthy way, and by taking multiple shots for improved success.
3. Post-processing. This is the phase in which you digitally improve the image and add your unique signature after the shoot.

For more, visit Wayne's website, WayneBennettPhotography.com.

Terry Piper, OAS Board Member



Left, at Center for Birds of Prey Linda Gaunt holding injured Barred Owl while vet administers fluids. Right, Linda feeding Bald Eagles in mew. Photos: Laura VonMutius

Raptor VIP Experience

At the June 2018 Orange Audubon Society Silent Auction, I was the winning bidder of a Raptor VIP Experience donated by Audubon Florida. This brand new program (I was the pilot) provides the ultimate “Get Your Hands Dirty” one-of-a-kind immersion opportunity with the Center’s bird care programs.

My day started with a tour guided by Education Manager Laura VonMutius, providing detailed information and stories about each raptor that lives at the Center. I learned about the birds’ natural habitats and why each lives at the Center. I visited the clinic where regular guests are not permitted, where injured birds are taken for evaluation of injury, x-rays and care during the beginning of their rehabilitation.

Then I walked a woman with an injured Barred Owl. The medical staff and volunteers jumped into action to help this sad creature. It was an underweight male with a possible fracture. I was given instructions on how to hold it and carried it to the x-ray table. Once x-rays were completed, revealing a fracture in one of the wings, the vet tech handed the owl back to me to hold while she administered medicines and fluids. Though saddened to see the injured owl, I was very happy to be part of the start of its healing.

Next I helped with feeding. I cut up food, wrapped it in newspaper and stuffed it into paper tubes to make 8 enrichment items for some of the raptors. I then entered into the mews

(enclosures designed to house one or more birds of prey) to place the enrichment packages for the raptors. The birds hopped to the ground and pulled the paper open to get to the food. This assists the raptors by providing some activity and maintaining some of their natural ability to hunt food.

The Center has a building called the “barn” where the raptors are moved when they are close to being released. The barn is large and the birds can fly a long distance. Staff observe the raptors to ensure they are flying properly, capturing food naturally and that overall behavior is normal. This is a happy place at the Center as the birds are healed and almost ready to be released back to a place near where they were originally found.

I was able to observe Dianna Flynt, a 30-year Audubon Florida staffer, working with a juvenile eagle that was brought in with a human imprint this March. The eagle cannot be released back into the wild because it does not have natural skills and knowledge. Dianna said she “met this eagle and knew it was special.” It is now being trained to eat with a person in its mew.

Dianna puts the food on the perch, and the eagle moves over to it. Training the eagle to be comfortable around people allows it to eventually be glove-trained to be an Ambassador for another bird facility or zoo. It takes a bird with special personality to be glove-trained and to be around people outside its mew.

Then I was off to the building where the food is prepared. Each bird has its own special diet, and food is

Limited Edition Field Trip to Lake Jesup Conservation Area, Marl Bed Flats, Sanford December 16, 2018

Join popular Orange Audubon Society field trip leader Bob Sanders on Sunday, December 16th for a Limited Edition field trip to the Lake Jesup Conservation Area. This 6000+ acre St. Johns River Water Management District property on the north shore of Lake Jesup is rich in bird life.

With oak/ palmetto hammock, pasture, and wetlands adjacent to Lake Jesup, past sightings have included American White Pelicans, Bald Eagles, Limpkins, 7 species of shorebirds, Bonaparte’s Gulls, Black Skimmers, American Pipits, 6 species of warblers, Blue-headed Vireos, Eastern Meadowlarks, and Wilson’s Snipe.

Limited Edition Field Trips have a maximum of 15 participants, so that beginners can receive individualized attention. Cost is \$10 per person per trip for OAS 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 .

weighed. Some of the birds are given medicines, and all of this is charted daily. All the birds eat once a day late in the afternoon. I participated in feeding the owls and eagles by going into the mews and placing food on perches and poles.

I learned so much about the raptors, their rehabilitation and overall how wonderful this Center is for them! The staff and volunteers are amazing and have so much passion for the care of raptors.

The [Audubon Center for Birds of Prey](http://AudubonCenterforBirdsofPrey.org) will be offering this experience to others. Contact Education Manager Laura VonMutius at Ivonmutius@audubon.org to inquire about the Raptor VIP Experience.

Linda Gaunt, Orange Audubon Society Secretary and EagleWatch Volunteer

**History of Conservation:
A Bird's Eye View**

The Tampa Bay History Center and Audubon Florida's Coastal Islands Sanctuaries have teamed up for an exhibit highlighting birdlife in Florida. The new exhibit traces both humankind's reverence for and decimation of Florida's birds. It runs through February 10th from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. daily. Cost is \$14.95. Tampa Bay History Center, 801 Old Water St., Tampa. For further information, call 813-228-0097 or visit tampabayhistorycenter.org.

Thanks to Volunteers

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) annual participation in the Lake Eola Fiesta in the Park Arts and Crafts Festival on November 3rd was a success in terms of nature merchandise sales and outreach, although rain washed out the second day of the event. Thanks so much to our volunteers: Rick Baird, Marah Green, Cyndi and Michael Kay, Wayne Kennedy, Brent Mobley, John and Lori Parsons, Kathy Rigling, and Dena Wild.

OAS participated in several festivals in October. At Oklawaha Valley Audubon's Festival of Flight and Flowers in Eustis, OAS' table was manned by Kathy Rigling and Terry Piper. At Backyard Biodiversity Day at Mead Botanical Garden, Marah Green, Gail Holdiman, Kathy Rigling and Dena Wild managed the display, while Mary Keim, Larry Martin, and Randy Snyder led walks and gave presentations. Thanks to all!

Deborah Green and Teresa Williams

End of Year Donations

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

IRA Distribution

If you are 70 1/2 or over and are required to take a distribution from an IRA, you can donate to Orange Audubon Society without tax penalty. See [this link](#) for information and consult your tax professional.

Hog Island Camp



Hog Island Camp residence. Photo: Linda Oliver

The Hog Island Audubon Camp in Maine is a beautiful and inspirational place to learn about birds, nature and the environment. The first Nature Study Camp for teachers was held in 1936 with the hope that the campers would develop a lifelong interest in nature, wildlife and the environment. The teachers (campers) would then take their knowledge to their students, spreading the message of the importance of conservation of our natural resources. I was fortunate enough to attend the Arts and Birding program in July, where I was able to photograph the incredible beauty of the island while observing and learning about the native birds there.

My interest in the camp began with watching the wildlife cam on Hog Island where a pair of Ospreys, Rachel and Steve, would raise their chicks from tiny hatchlings to young adults able to leave the nest. I felt there was so much more I could learn about Ospreys and other raptors from the expert instructors and the classes that the camp provides. On our field trips we would look for birds and kept a running tally of all that we saw, which included everything from tiny hummingbirds to magnificent Red-tailed Hawks. My favorite experience was the boat trip to observe the puffins and other seabirds that spend their summers on Eastern Egg Rock Island. The sheer number and variety of birds living together on that island is amazing.

Every evening after dinner we would all attend an interesting and educational program with expert speakers. The work that Dr. Steven Kress and [Project Puffin](#) have done to restore the seabird population in Maine is truly inspiring. By the 1970s many of the raptors and seabirds we have around us today were endangered because our communities didn't realize that what we did to the environment affected them. By making it illegal to hunt birds for their feathers, stopping the widespread use of harmful pesticides and through a great deal

of hard work by scientists and other conservationists, we were slowly able to bring these birds back from near extinction.

I would encourage anyone to attend one of these camp sessions, which are designed for children, adults and families. Meeting and spending time with so many other like-minded people who care about the environment is so inspirational. You will find that a week as a resident on Hog Island surrounded by nature and away from the many distractions we face every day can be life-changing. I returned home with a deeper appreciation of protecting our environment and how important it is for each of us to be stewards for wildlife and the environment. To find out more go to this [link](#).

Linda Oliver, Center for Birds of Prey

Ponce Inlet Trip Report

Orange Audubon Society's November monthly field trip to Lighthouse Point Park in Ponce Inlet yielded some great sightings. Low tide was at 10 a.m., so the sandbars were exposed and covered with birds. We saw large flocks of Black Scoters, Great Black-backed Gulls, some plovers, lots of Laughing Gulls, Royal Terns, and Brown Pelicans. A Bald Eagle posed on a pole. We enjoyed seeing dolphins, manatees, a Green Sea Turtle, and Gopher Tortoise. Overall a very successful day. *Larry Martin*

**Wings Over Florida
Recognition Program**

Wings Over Florida is a recognition program for bird and butterfly listing, sponsored by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as part of the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail. It offers attractive certificates for 6 levels from 25 to 400 species. Follow [this link](#) for more information.

Orange Audubon will be hosting a "Your Biggest Year Yet" field trip at Orlando Wetlands Park on Saturday January 5th, which will provide a great opportunity to get a head start on completing this program. We are lining up some amazing trip leaders, so save the date and stay tuned for updates in next month's *OASis* or contact me at riglingk@aol.com. *Kathy Rigling, First Vice President*

North Shore Birding Festival



Above, 2017 festival trip sunrise trip. Photo: LynnMarie Folts Below, 2017 festival trip. Photo: Beverley Sinclair

The North Shore Birding Festival, January 17-21, 2019, is a weekend event with field trips led by expert birders and keynote talks with dinners. Orange Audubon Society (OAS) seeks to put the 20,000-acre Lake Apopka North Shore on the map internationally!

Last year registrants came from 17 states, including Florida, with 40 cities represented, and 1 Canadian province.

There are 23 field trips scheduled, most of which start from the McDonald Canal area at the end of CR448A in Lake County, and allow driving into areas that are otherwise inaccessible except on foot or bicycle. We will search for recently sighted rarities and as many as possible of the 360+ bird species documented.

In addition to our best local leaders, Greg Miller (*The Big Year*) will be with us, along with Glenn Crawford, a superb birder from Belize, both sponsored by Wildside Nature Tours. We will be going to Daytona Beach Shores with Michael Brothers to see the amazing gull congregation. To see the schedule and for registration, see [this link](#).

Please LIKE our [festival Facebook page](#). Since this is an OAS festival, we can use help from our members, whether you attend or not. Members are chipping in to provide scholarships for out-of-town college students to be able to attend. Contact me at (407) 637-2525 or festival@orangeaudubonfl.org for more information.

Deborah Green

South Carolina Magical Birding Trip: Save the Date

We had so much fun last year that we're going back. On May 17-19, 2019, Orange Audubon Society's fund-raising trip will be to the Columbia, South Carolina, area. The field trip fee, which includes local expert guides and a picnic supper Friday, is \$60 members/\$75 non-members. Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525 or sabalpress@mac.com if you are interested or for more information.

Eastern Phoebe: Another tail-pumping charmer

Fee-be, fee-be, fee-be.

Phoebe on the cable line. Phoebe on an oak branch. Phoebe on my fence.

Winter is coming.

A plump solitary flycatcher with a dark head, the Eastern Phoebe can often be found sitting conspicuously on a bare branch flicking its long, dark tail. The distinctive head appears large in proportion to its body, perhaps because the bird sometimes raises its head feathers to a peak.

Like many small flycatchers, this Phoebe has a short, thin bill used for catching insects. Its common prey includes wasps, beetles, dragonflies, butterflies and moths, flies, and cicadas. They also eat spiders, ticks and millipedes and small fruits or seeds.

The bird is brownish-gray above and off-white below, with a dusty wash on the sides of the breast. Birds in fresh fall plumage show faint yellow on the belly and whitish edging on the folded wing feathers. Although it has no bright colors to distinguish it, the Eastern Phoebe can easily be identified by its clever foraging behavior. The bird sits alert in a conspicuous place to search for prey. When it spots one, it abruptly leaves its perch, darting out quickly to grab a flying insect, then returning to the same or a nearby perch.

Eastern Phoebes rarely occur in groups, and even mated pairs spend little time together. Males sing a two-part raspy song throughout the spring and aggressively defend their territory from other phoebes, though they tolerate other species.

Eastern Phoebe populations were stable overall between 1966 and 2015 with small declines in Canada and small increases in the U.S. according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey. Partners in Flight estimates a global breeding population of 32 million with 76 percent spending some part of the year in the U.S., 33 percent wintering in Mexico, and 24 percent breeding in Canada.

The Eastern Phoebe can easily be confused with the Eastern Wood Peewee. The Peewee, however, has wingbars, a partly yellowish bill and does not flick its tail. The Phoebe's entire bill is dark.

In addition to their familiar "phoebe" vocalizations, Eastern Phoebes also make sharp "peep" calls.

Check it out. You will fall in love as I did with its charming head and acrobatic foraging technique.

Linda Carpenter



Eastern Phoebe. Photo: Sherry Fischer

Lake Lucie Trip Introduced a Soon-to-be-opened Park

The November 10th Photo/Nature field trip to the Lake Lucie Conservation Area near Apopka (an Orange County Green PLACE) was very interesting. We saw stick bugs, butterflies, spiders, snakes and plants that were identified by Beth Jackson of Orange County Environmental Protection Division. Beth anticipates that this 166-acre park will be open to the public in 2019.

Susan Kirby, Photo Trip

Orlando Wetlands Park Full of Wildlife



Roseate Spoonbill at OWP. Photo: Mary Keim

At Orlando Wetlands Park (OWP) 237 bird species have been reported on eBird. A recent highlight has been large numbers of Roseate

Spoonbills. Visitors can walk or bike the 19 miles of berms seven days a week. In addition, on Fridays and Saturdays, there are first come-first served tram tours from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. run by the volunteers. Tours are free, but donations are accepted. More information about the tours is [at this link](#).

Mary Keim, OWP Volunteer

Last but not least ...

Birding, Wolf Encounters and Quest for Bison and Wild Horses: The Florida Panhandle Beckons

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) annual overnight Panhandle trip on December 6-9, 2018 is upon us, and we have a few spaces left.

On December 6th we have the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to interact with magnificent native wolves at Seacrest, a nonprofit organization dedicated to conservation of wolves through education. We will enjoy guided birding December 7th with Jim Cox in the Red Hills Region of Florida and Georgia, where fire ecology is a key to healthy longleaf pine and wiregrass communities. Sixty-four threatened and endangered plant and animal species live there. On December 8th we'll bird with Jeff O'Connell at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, home to 250 bird species and a prime wintering ground for migrants. Finally, on Sunday, December 9, 2018 we'll stop at Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park south of Gainesville, home to 300 bird species and small, illusive herds of wild horses and bison. Can't come to the Panhandle? Meet the group Sunday at Paynes Prairie. Fee is \$15 per person including lunch at the preserve. Park entry fee is \$6 per vehicle (up to 8 people) or free with a state park pass.

Seacrest-only participants meet Thursday for lunch and a private tour. Weekenders can meet as early as Wednesday at Tall Timbers Research Station in Tallahassee. The weekend field trip fee is \$100 for Audubon members/\$115 for nonmembers and includes local guides, 4 lunches, a grill dinner, and admission to Seacrest. Birding-only is \$65/\$80, with 3 lunches and a grill dinner. Seacrest-only, including lunch, is \$45/\$55. For registration, lodging and other details contact me at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or (407) 644-0796. We hope you join us!! *Teresa Williams, Treasurer/Trip Organizer*



Brook Rohman and Lori Mathis with one of Seacrest's wolves. Brook and Lori with ancient pine. Jim Cox doing a prescribed burn. *Photos courtesy Teresa Williams and Jim Cox*

DECEMBER/JANUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Birds of Prey Identification Field Trip, Lake Apopka

December 2, 2018
Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

N. Florida Birding, Quest for Bison and Wild Horses & N. American Wolf Encounter

December 6-9, 2018
Contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796

December Wekiwa Springs State Park Bird Survey

December 8, 2018
Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

Christmas Bird Counts: Contact the compiler to participate.

- **Bay Lake:** December 15, 2018
Contact John Thomton at jthomton@hotmail.com
- **Wekiva River:** December 15, 2018
Contact Jay Exum at jay.h.exum@gmail.com
- **Kissimmee Valley:** December 16, 2018
Contact Chris Newton at dexterdevon68@gmail.com
- **Zellwood/Mt. Dora:** December 20, 2018
Contact Wes Biggs at birdsatfnt@bellsouth.net
- **Econlockhatchee:** December 29, 2018
Contact Lorne Malo at lornemalo@bellsouth.net
- **Clermont:** January 5, 2019
Contact John Thomton at jthomton@hotmail.com

Limited Edition Field Trip to Lake Jesup Conservation Area, Marl Bed Flats, Sanford

December 16, 2018
Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

December Program: The Galapagos - Robert & Flo Sena and Ecotourism & Climate Change - Mike Gunter

December 20, 2018
Contact Rick at (407) 277-3357

Your Biggest Year Field Trip

January 5, 2019
Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

Birds of Prey Identification Field Trip, Lake Apopka

January 6, 2019
Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

January Wekiwa Bird Survey

January 12, 2019
Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

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

January 13, 2019
Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

January Program: The Ways and Wanderings of Florida Waterfowl - Paul Gray

January 17, 2019
Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

North Shore Birding Festival

January 17-21, 2019
Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

Wishing Everyone A Wonderful Holiday Season!