



### This Month's Program:

**January 17, 2019**

### The Ways and Wanderings of Florida's Waterfowl

by **Dr. Paul Gray**

The comings and goings of ducks and other waterfowl on the water bodies and wetlands of Central Florida is the topic of Orange Audubon Society's January 17th program.

Dr. Paul Gray, a waterfowl expert, will share differences between ducks and other waterfowl, which species breed in our area, which migrate here in winter and which show up in summer, and details of their life cycles. He will also share efforts to protect and enhance waterfowl numbers.

Dr. Gray has been Science Coordinator for Audubon Florida's Everglades Restoration Program for the past 24 years, primarily around Lake Okeechobee where he provides technical support on ecosystem and bird conservation, water quality, and water management. In the photo he is shown with famous water quality activist Erin Brockovich, upon her recent visit to Lake Okeechobee.

Paul has a degree in wildlife biology, a master's in wetland ecology and a PhD in conservation biology. His 1993 doctorate from the University of Florida was on Florida's Mottled Duck in the Okeechobee region.

This is also the kickoff keynote for the North Shore Birding Festival (p.7). Dr. Gray will be leading the Waterfowl field trip Friday morning January 18th (Trip 4) at the festival ([registration required](#)).

This waterfowl talk is free and no reservations are required. Join us January 17th at 7:00 p.m. for a great program. Location below.

*Rick Baird, Programs 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/](http://www.leugardens.org/plan/directions/)



Above, Mottled Duck and ducklings at Orlando Wetlands Park. *Photo: Mary Keim.* Below, Dr. Paul Gray with water quality activist Erin Brockovich on a recent visit to Lake Okeechobee. *Photo courtesy Paul Gray.*

### Your Biggest Year Ever

Do you keep a year list of birds you have seen? If you don't, have you been meaning to do so? For 2019, challenge yourself or your best birding buddy/rival to see more bird species than any previous year.

To kick off your Biggest Year Ever join three of the area's most avid, experienced birding leaders on a morning field trip at Orlando Wetlands Park on January 5th. Last year we saw 50 species on this trip.

Trip leaders are Lori Mathis, who is a "Wings over Florida" recipient of the new 400 species certificate (meaning that she has seen 400 of the 500 or so species occurring in Florida).

Lori will be joined by Larry Martin, Orange Audubon Society field trips committee chair and Mead Botanical Garden bird walk leader/liason, and Bob Sanders, raptor expert extraordinaire.

The field trip will be Saturday, January 5, 2019, 8:00 a.m.–12:00 noon at Orlando Wetlands Park, 25155 Wheeler Rd, Christmas, FL 32709. We will meet at the parking lot by the education center.

\$10 donations per person will benefit Orange Audubon Society's nature and environmental education center fund.

All skill levels are welcome. Loaner binoculars are available. If you have any questions, contact Kathy Rigling (407) 488-9559 or [riglingk@aol.com](mailto:riglingk@aol.com)



White Ibis and Snowy Egret, Orlando Wetlands Park. *Photo: Mary Keim*



## Year of the Bird Continues

National Audubon Society, along with National Geographic, BirdLife International, and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, designated 2018 the “Year of the Bird.” Within Central Florida, 2018 was a great Year of the Bird, in my view. Orange Audubon Society’s (OAS) three featured birding areas—the Lake Apopka North Shore, Orlando

Wetlands Park, and Mead Botanical Garden—all brought many more people into the birding community.

The Lake Apopka North Shore, managed by the St. Johns River Water Management District, now has easy access through the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive. Over 100,000 visitors a year go through the gates of the 11-mile drive, although it is only open Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and some federal holidays. The 20,000-acre North Shore has other entrances open during the week, and people are riding bicycles or hiking in from them, many with binoculars and camera in tow. The Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive Facebook page and two Facebook groups have provided easy communication, including identification of birds, to regular visitors and newcomers. As an admin of [the Facebook page](#), I can verify that visitors who barely knew the names of the wading birds three years ago when the Drive opened can now find and identify species of warblers and sparrows! Everyone is learning. Going out to see what you can find—the discovery process—is such a pleasurable activity, especially in such a peaceful setting, and when you get to know the other people who love this discovery too, it makes it that much more fun. OAS’s three-year old North Shore Birding Festival demonstrates that birding ecotourism is a real thing and that it contributes to the local economy (p.7).

A similar progression has occurred with Orlando Wetlands Park, which has had public access since its opening twenty years ago. The work of the [Friends of Orlando Wetlands Park](#) to develop interpretive materials, including Facebook pages and groups, and to lead tours, has helped increase birding interest and knowledge (See p. 6). There is no Orlando Wetlands Festival for 2019, but it will be back for 2020. OAS and the City of Orlando co-sponsor the festival, which has introduced many people to the park and birding.

Mead Botanical Garden is OAS’ migration hot spot, and our fall and spring bird walks continue to bring new birders to the fold. And the list of species seen at Mead continues to grow. The Wekiva Basin Banding Station which began in the 1990s, operates at Lake Lotus Park and continues to bring in new birders. Over 75 bird species have been banded since the program began at the park in Altamonte Springs. Audubon Florida’s Center for Birds of Prey serves as both a raptor rehabilitation center and local attraction with public education on birds, including to schoolchildren.

OAS tries to engage new and experienced birders in Citizen Science in which observations help document bird populations. Our members participate in Audubon Florida’s Eagle Watch and Jay Watch programs, National Audubon’s Christmas Bird Counts, and Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology’s Backyard Bird Count, Feeder Watch and Nest Watch. We encourage eBirding, which contributes to accumulation of information on bird distribution as well as makes finding rare birds easier. I myself plan to do more eBirding in 2019.

OAS continues to collaborate with the Florida Native Plant Society and Florida Wildflower Foundation on programs to show the public how they can make backyards more friendly to birds.

On the national level, instead of being able to go forward with new strategies to protect birds and share the joy of birding with more people, bird advocates are having to defend America’s most important bird protection law, the 100-year old Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). This past summer National Audubon, in a highly unusual move, filed litigation, *National Audubon Society v. Department of the Interior*, joined by a coalition of environmental groups. Our [ongoing support for this litigation](#) will be necessary. There will always be plenty to do locally to conserve bird habitat. Thank you for engaging with OAS. Here’s to a great 2019!

*Deborah Green, OAS President*



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 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](mailto:newsletter@orangeaudubonfl.org).

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**Limited Edition Field Trip to Fort De Soto Park Pinellas County January 13, 2019**



Fort DeSoto Park field trip with Bob Sanders, Photo: Joyce Stefancic

Situated in the mouth of Tampa Bay, Fort De Soto Park is a spring migration hotspot. But winter is good for overwintering shorebirds, which is why we've chosen January for this trip. Because it's a bit of a drive, 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.

**Indoor Cat Campaign**

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) has launched a campaign to encourage new cat owners to keep their feline pets indoors to help bird populations. "A single individual free-ranging cat may kill 100 or more birds and mammals per year" (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission). Keeping cats indoors also helps cats. Cats allowed to roam outside have potential for far more costly and life threatening injuries.

OAS' indoor cat campaign differs from other campaigns in that we want to let new cat owners know the risks and costs for allowing their cats outdoors. Dena Wild who is heading up this campaign seeks typical cost for the following common injuries: eating toxic plants, fractured tooth, bite wound, lacerations, cat bite abscesses. Please inquire about the cost of these injuries from your veterinarian and, if you would prefer, give your veterinarian a letter from OAS. Contact Dena at 4shosha@gmail.com. Thank you!

**Panhandle Trip: A Great Time Had by All!**

Each year Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) Panhandle trip seems to get better, and that was the case for 2018. The core group of weekend participants arrived at Walter Lodge at Tall Timbers Research Station (TTRS) in Tallahassee on December 6th. The lodge was home-base throughout the 5-day, 4-night trip.

Day One: Seacrest Wolf Preserve. We carpoled and caravanned to Chipley, FL to meet day-trippers for the much-anticipated private wolf encounter. Seacrest's director, Cynthia Watkins, and staff provided a most informative and personalized tour. Participants walked among and howled in communication with magnificent North American Gray and Arctic wolves, treasuring every one-to-one, eye-to-eye gaze, every hands-on interaction, and every muzzle greeting as members of each wolf pack came enthralled us. It was a special encounter for humans and wolves alike. The group also saw British Columbian Wolves, and played with smaller creatures—Arctic and Gray foxes, Coyote, Skunks and Raccoons. As the tour ended and we loaded into our cars, the wolf packs howled in unison. Their unsolicited farewell was chilling and gratifying – a statement that told us they had loved the encounter, too.



Day Two: The Red Hills Region – Tall Timbers and Greenwood Plantation – with TTRS guides Jim Cox, Stoddard Bird Lab and vertebrate ecology program director, and Rob Meyer, Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) conservation specialist. The 300,000-acre Red Hills Region stretches from Tallahassee, FL north beyond Thomasville, GA and supports 64 federally endangered species including RCWs and Brown-headed Nuthatch. We became field biologists at Greenwood Plantation, assisting Jim and Rob with netting, collecting and recording data, and banding a Bachman's Sparrow. We also hiked to the area's oldest living Longleaf Pine, thought to be 500 years old, as we learned how fire is a key element in game bird management. Red Hills sightings included Northern Bobwhite; 7 woodpecker species including Red-headed Woodpeckers and RCWs; Red-breasted, White-breasted and Brown-headed nuthatches; and 6 sparrow species including a juvenile White-crowned Sparrow. Besides birding and field work, we also were treated to guided tours of Tall Timber's historic Beadel House with archivist, Juanita Whiddon, and the Stoddard Bird Lab with Jim and Rob, which reinforced lessons learned about the region, and early biologists and naturalists who were instrumental in establishing TTRS and its landmark work in fire ecology. After a cookout dinner provided by OAS, participants Joy and Richard Fox presented a wonderful slide show that wove together Bing Crosby, Minute Maid Orange Juice and Greenwood Planation.

Day Three: St Marks National Wildlife Refuge with guide Jeff O'Connell, field trips leader for Apalachee Audubon Society. Highlights of the ~83 species seen at St Marks included three Common Golden Eye and ~350 Redheads (2 of 12 duck species), plus Common Loons and Horned Grebes. Red became the new pink when we did not see the targeted American Flamingo. A juvenile Vermilion Flycatcher became the star of the day by remaining in its favorite roadside spot, affording us myriad photo ops of flycatching aerodynamics and still poses.

Day Four: Paynes Prairie Preserve. On the trip home, many stopped at Paynes Prairie Preserve. The observation tower at the visitor's center yielded a panoramic prairie view with Sandhill Cranes, wading birds, Ring-necked Duck, Blue-winged Teal, and deer. While we only saw scat and tracks from our primary targets, American Bison and Marsh Tackies, a collective weekend bird list of ~115 made for a satisfying weekend and the group consensus was unanimous: "Let's do this trip again next year!"

*Susan Kirby*

*In case you missed it ...*

**December Program**

Our December meeting featured two complementary presentations. First up were Bob and Flo Sena who shared beautiful photographs and fascinating information from their trip to the Galápagos Islands. They traveled to several of the 13 islands.

As with all visitors to the islands, the Senas enjoyed seeing the iconic Galápagos tortoise at close range. There are two types of Galápagos tortoise, those that prefer more arid conditions, and those that prefer more humid conditions. The shape of the tortoise species correlates with diet: ground grazers have more rounded shells, and those that eat from taller shrubs and trees have a saddle-shaped shell allowing the head and neck to reach higher.

They found two kinds of iguanas on the islands, the land iguana and the marine iguana. Land iguanas are golden in color, and well-camouflaged in their arid habitat. Marine iguanas are darker in color, often covered with a whitish, dried salt spray that comes from glands that expel excess salt from their diet of submerged ocean algae. One theory about this unique marine diet is that iguanas may have evolved on an island where there were few herbaceous plants and individuals with the ability to use this unique diet were able to survive and reproduce.

The Senas shared photos of the many Darwin finches that inhabit the islands, seventeen species in all. They are identified by beak size and shape which relate to their diet. For example, the cactus finch has a long, pointed beak used to insert into cactus flowers for nectar and insects, while the seed-eating finches have larger, heavier bills capable of cracking open hard seed coats.

They also photographed many of the endemic Galápagos species, like the Flightless Cormorant, which has lost its ability to fly; the Galápagos Penguin, the only Penguin found north of the Equator; the Galápagos Hawk, the rarest of raptors; and the Swallow-tailed Gull, which is nocturnal.

The Senas' reminiscences of their ecotourism experience complemented the next speaker's presentation.



Dr. Gunter in Antarctica. Photo courtesy Michael Gunter

Rollins College professor Mike Gunter Jr. discussed and illustrated his latest book, *Tales of an Ecotourist: What Travel to Wild Places Can Teach Us about Climate Change*.

Dr. Gunter and his family traveled to five well-known tourist destinations, including the Galápagos Islands, South Africa, the Antarctic, the Great Barrier Reef, and the Amazon Basin, exploring the effects of climate change on these locations.

The first public warning of climate change came in 1988 when James E. Hansen testified to the United States Congress that the earth's climate was warming. Today, statistics provide irrefutable evidence: ten of the hottest years on record have occurred in the last 20 years. Carbon dioxide levels can now exceed 410 parts per million (ppm), as they did in Hawaii on December 19, 2018, compared with approximately 316 ppm in 1960. Carbon dioxide emissions related to human activity started during the Industrial Revolution, from approximately the 1750s to present, when burning coal, gas, and wood for energy production began in large scale.

The results are visible. The cryosphere is melting and the resulting rise in sea level is affecting low-lying areas like Venice, Italy, where St. Marks Basilica plaza is currently underwater; Bangladesh, where huge numbers of people live in poverty; and coastal Florida, where cities are funding projects to raise roadways and pump water out of urban areas.

In addition, Dr. Gunter provided examples of local climate change-related events such as extreme drought in the Midwest, the California fires, intense hurricanes like Katrina and Harvey, and bizarre events like snow in the Sahara Desert and a phenomenon called a "rain bomb" or "wet

microburst," in which huge quantities of rain dump on an area literally all at once.

Given the vast evidence that climate change is happening, Dr. Gunter asked why understanding of the situation is so limited and controversial in the United States. Although there are many theories, he suggested a paradigm shift in our thinking is necessary and that the solution may lie in greater travel and ecotourism. As Mark Twain so famously said, "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness... charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime."

Climate change researcher Michael E. Mann said it best in his review of Dr. Gunter's book, "If we are to veer from our current path of global environmental degradation, we will have to come to appreciate firsthand its remarkable wonder and beauty." Dr. Gunter encourages us all to do just that. *Terry Piper, OAS Board Member*

**Birds of Prey Identification Classes**

Winter is the time to see raptors on the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive, and on January 6th popular instructor Bob Sanders will hold the second of his three Birds of Prey Identification Classes. Before moving to Central Florida, Bob co-founded the Chimney Rock Hawk Watch in Martinsville, New Jersey. Remaining dates are 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 there!



Red-shouldered Hawk. Photo: Joyce Stefancic

## Wandering Snail Kites

The Snail Kite, *Rostrhamus sociabilis*, is native to tropical Central and South America and Cuba. Although its historic range in Florida extended into the headwaters of the St. Johns River northward to the Oklawaha drainage, this species was called the Everglades Kite since its more recent distribution was largely confined to the Everglades watershed.

When the Snail Kite was listed as federally endangered in 1967, it had extremely low populations because it depends for its existence on a single food source, the Apple Snail. Although native Apple Snails, *Pomacea paludosa*, are widespread throughout the Florida peninsula, the kites can only successfully hunt them in open freshwater marshes. These marshes must retain water throughout the year for apple snails to survive.

Dispersal of Snail Kites into central Florida wetlands was generally associated with droughts and low water levels in south Florida. For example, following a severe drought in 1993, I observed and photographed a banded Snail Kite on Spring Garden Run, the creek running out of DeLeon Springs north of DeLand in 1994. I learned that Snail Kites are considered nomadic according to water and foraging conditions, and individuals had been seen as far north as Georgia.



Banded female Snail Kite on Spring Garden Run (DeLeon Springs), August 1994.  
Photo: Deborah Green

## Limpkins by the Lake

Two Limpkins arrived on the shores of Lake Knowles last March and reproduced.

The event, unremarkable in the wild, created much excitement in my Winter Park neighborhood. I had observed the pair mating, and hoped for offspring; however, I had never in 40 years seen a Limpkin family in the area. The species is uncommon, inconspicuous, and solitary in its usual habitat of wooded swamps.

Furthermore this pair bore eight chicks, and seven flourished into adulthood.

Amazed and delighted, our maternal instincts were awakened. Neighbors were disheartened when a turtle devoured one of the chicks.

The birds had come for the abundant apple snails—their primary food source. It was fascinating to watch the adults skewer a snail, extract the gastropod, and feed it to offspring. Limpkin chicks aren't able to forage for snails at birth; they must learn the labor-intensive technique from their parents.

Their long tweezer-like bill, uniquely adapted for this purpose, has a gap and bent tip that allows it to deftly turn the snail shell upward, cut through the muscle attachment and pull out the snail. Extraction takes 10 to 20 seconds. The tip also is slightly curved to the right so it can be slipped into the right-handed chamber of the snail. How remarkable!!

Various species of apple snails flourish in Florida, but only one is native. Experts note four exotic apple snail species, including the channeled and island apple snails. These are opportunistic feeders that consume large amounts of aquatic vegetation, fruits and vegetables, algae, and decaying organisms. Because of damage to crops, the channeled apple snail is listed as one of the world's worst invaders. The exotic snails also could alter our ecosystems or displace the native Florida apple snail, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The City of Winter Park recruits volunteers to remove apple snails from Lake Knowles several times a year. In November a crew roamed the lakeshore collecting snails and empty shells.

You can find the Limpkin in marshy habitats from Florida south to the Caribbean, Mexico, Central America, Bolivia, Peru and Argentina. It is easily identified by the white streaks on its dark brown body shaped like an ibis, but slightly larger. The species, however, is more closely related to rails and cranes. Their call is an unmistakable loud, haunting wail often heard in the evening.

By the end of May, the Limpkin chicks had matured and mastered the art of foraging for snails. From a distance the adults and juveniles appeared identical. I saw all nine strolling together along the water's edge in the summer, but by fall, they were gone. I hoped they had found another lake with plentiful apple snails.

Linda Carpenter



Limpkin Feeding Chick. 2010 Chertok Photo Contest. Actions and Interactions Category, Honorable Mention Winner. Photo: Vince Lamb

Snail Kites capture snails by aerial hunting over foraging habitat, called coursing, in which the birds fly horizontally above the marsh, heading into or quartering the wind with their head pointed downward. They also still-hunt, in which perched birds search the immediate surroundings for snails. They extract the snail on a perch or platform and build their nests in dead vegetation near the water's edge, preferably woody vegetation.

Drainage of marshes has a major impact on Snail Kite habitat. Eutrophication also contributes to die-offs of snails as well as growth of invasive aquatic plants. Non-native aquatic vegetation, like water hyacinth, water lettuce, torpedo grass, and hydrilla, decreases the amount of foraging area (*Rare and Endangered Biota of Florida: Vol. V. Birds*. Ed. by James A. Rodgers, Jr., Herbert W. Kale II, & Henry T. Smith. 1996. Univ. Press of FL.)

Continued on p. 6.



Gray-headed Swampheens pair. Photo: Bob Zaremba. Purple Gallinule. Photo: Kathy Rigling.

## Gray-headed Swampheens

A new bird to see on the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive is the Gray-headed Swampheens, a subspecies of the Purple Swampheens. This isn't the first year that this introduced species has been seen, but its population is clearly expanding. Five individuals were seen on the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive at the end of December.

Larger than the Purple Gallinule, the swampheens have a red face plate and bill, without the blue and yellow of the face plate of the Purple Gallinule. The legs are pale pinkish, while the Purple Gallinule's are yellow.

Purple Swampheens have various subspecies native to Asia. They were first detected in Florida in 1996 in Broward County, and are thought to have escaped from aviculturists in the Pembroke Pines area. Eight birds also escaped from the Miami Metro Zoo's "Wings of Asia" exhibit in 1992. Due to the grayish heads, the Florida birds are thought to be *Porphyrio porphyrio poliocephalus*, native from Turkey and the Caspian Sea east to southern Asia.

Although Gray-headed Swampheens are primarily vegetarians, they have also been recorded preying on mollusks, fish, frogs, lizards, snakes, bird eggs, and small birds. Eating vegetation, they may impact the plant life of the wetlands and the native species that depend on it, according to Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

Swampheens are prolific breeders and have been documented "double-brooding" (raising two or more groups of young in one season) in Florida. Although it is exciting for birders to see this species and add it to their life lists, FWC tries to prevent its spread to new areas. The occurrence on the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive has been reported, and if you have any new sightings, email [ExoticReports@myfwc.com](mailto:ExoticReports@myfwc.com) or call (352) 357-2398. *Deborah Green*

## Wandering Snail Kites, continued

As recently as 6 years ago, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) biologists were very concerned about invasive apple snails, which were just beginning to spread rapidly and which were much larger than the native apple snail. It appeared that young Snail Kites would not be able to feed upon the invasives as easily. Tyler Beck, now FWC Snail Kite Conservation Coordinator, has commented 'The presence of the exotic apple snails, along with FWC's lake management efforts, are helping the Snail Kite numbers rebound'.

According to a 2018 article in *Nature Ecology & Evolution*, "Rapid morphological change of a top predator with the invasion of a novel

prey," [summarized here](#), in less than one decade since invasion of the island apple snail (*Pomacea maculata*), snail Kite bill size and body mass increased substantially. Larger bills should be better suited to extracting meat from the larger snail shells. The authors detected strong selection on increased size through juvenile survival.

On this year's Econlockhatchee Christmas Bird Count, my territory on Lake Jesup had higher numbers of Limpkins than previous years and three Snail Kites! Two Snail Kites were recorded by other birders on the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive. Nature is amazing. We can try to help. Many times there are surprises.

*Deborah Green*

## Orlando Wetlands Park Full of Wildlife

Orlando Wetlands Park's (OWP) primary purpose is to provide advanced treatment of reclaimed water before it is discharged into the St. Johns River. But, there is a lot more going on at this constructed wetland in Christmas, Florida than nutrient uptake.

Approximately 44,000 people visit the park annually. While visitors come for a variety of reasons, one of them is the 237 birds reported on eBird. A couple of birds that visitors ask about are Limpkin and Purple Gallinule. Rarely do visitors leave disappointed. 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. See [this link](#) for more information

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) and the park have partnered on environmental education efforts for many years. OAS has been a sponsor of the park's Orlando Wetlands Festival (next scheduled for 2020) and has provided educational materials to the park through grant funding. The park has supported OAS' educational efforts by providing OAS with classroom space for classes and has allowed OAS to distribute its brochures at the park.

To preview the fauna and flora you may see at the park, check out the [new brochure](#) created by a park volunteer and featuring photographs taken by the volunteers. A brochure with park information can be downloaded from [this link](#). To learn more about volunteer opportunities at the park, see [this link](#).

*Mary Keim, OWP Volunteer*

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

The new exhibit by the Tampa Bay History Center and Audubon Florida's Coastal Islands Sanctuaries 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, visit [tampabayhistorycenter.org](http://tampabayhistorycenter.org).

## North Shore Birding Festival January 17-21, 2019

For the 3rd annual [North Shore Birding Festival](http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival), January 17-21, 2019, there are 23 great field trips to choose from. Most trips focus on birding, but on each of the four days of the festival, there is a Sunrise Photography and Birding field trip. See trip descriptions, profiles of the leaders, and a map of the field trip locations at [www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival](http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival).

The 2019 North Shore Birding Festival has three keynotes. The first by Dr. Paul Gray on the “Ways and Wanderings of Florida’s Waterfowl” will be held at Leu Gardens as OAS’ regular monthly program (see p. 1). The Friday and Saturday keynotes include dinner and are held at the University of Florida Mid-Florida Research and Education Center, 2725 S. Binion Rd., Apopka, FL 32703. The meet-and-greets start at 4:30 p.m., dinners start at 5:30 p.m., and the talks start at 6 p.m. Cost is \$20 including dinner. Vegetarian options are available. For reservations, go to [www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival](http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival).

### Friday Keynote: Chasing Warblers by Frank Salmon

Central Florida birder and photographer Frank Salmon caught the ‘warbler bug’ at the Orlando area’s birding hot spot Mead Botanical Garden. He says, “it’s these guys that get me out of bed at 5 a.m. I won’t be satisfied until I see every species in North America.” In this presentation, Frank will tell us about his adventures chasing warblers and how eBird helps. Frank’s photography can be seen on his FLICKR site. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/fwsalmon>

### Saturday Keynote: Central American Birding by Greg Miller and Glenn Crawford

Greg Miller (of *The Big Year* fame) and Belizean birding guide Glenn Crawford, both of Wildside Nature Tours, will share some of the fabulous experiences you can expect if you go birding in Central America. The presentation features photos by Wildside Nature Tours founder and president, photographer Kevin Loughlin, and includes the beautiful birds of Glenn’s native Belize, as well as Honduras, Guatemala and Panama. Read more about Greg and Glenn



under [Speakers and Leaders](#). Join us for this fun presentation.

### Saturday Afternoon Nature Journaling Workshop by Susan Snyder

For the nature-lover who would like to fine tune his or her observational skills through nature journaling, visiting Utah artist and naturalist Susan Snyder will teach nature journaling methods on Saturday, January 19th, 1:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m., as part of the festival. We’ll create some fun pages based on observations around the McDonald Canal area, draw birds, bugs, buds, and other natural wonders and learn to make artful and thoughtful nature journal pages. All materials will be provided, but feel free to bring your own. This is Trip 12, Nature Journaling - Adults \$5, Children \$1. Ages 8 and up; children younger than 14 must be accompanied by a participating adult. Here’s the [registration link](#).

### Other Trips

Dr. Gian Basil will lead a trip on Sunday. He was one of the people most responsible for guiding restoration efforts on the Lake Apopka North Shore and for opening the area to birding and other passive recreational use. New this year is a trip to Daytona Beach Shores with Michael Brothers to see the amazing gull congregation. See all 23 trips at [this link](#). This is Orange Audubon Society’s birding festival. Don’t miss it!

Deborah Green



Above, Friday Keynote speaker Frank Salmon on a birding trip. *Photo courtesy Frank Salmon.* Middle, Greg Miller on Wildside Nature Tours Amazon trip. *Photo courtesy Greg Miller.* Below, Glenn Crawford calling in a bird at Rio Bravo Research Station, Belize. *Photo: Deborah Green.* Left, Rufous-naped Wood-rail, a distinctive bird of Belize. *Photo: Kevin Loughlin, Wildside Nature Tours.*

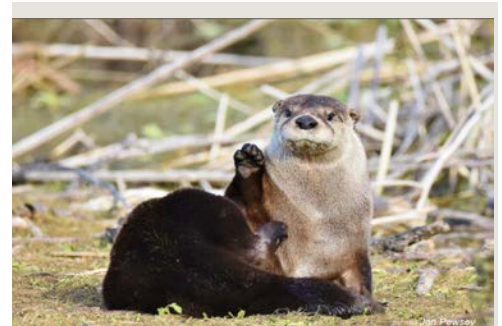
## Announcing the 31st Annual Chertok Nature Photo Contest

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](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com) or (407) 644-0796 if you have questions.

*Teresa Williams, OAS' Chertok Photography Contest Chair*



The Waving Otter - River Otter. 2018 Chertok Photo Contest. Novice Category, Honorable Mention Winner. *Photo: Jan Pewsey*

## 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](mailto:sabalpress@mac.com) if you are interested or for more information.

## JANUARY/FEBRUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### 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

### Youth Field Trip to Mead Botanical Garden

February 2, 2019

Contact Melissa at (239) 404-9248

### Birds of Prey Identification Field Trip, Lake Apopka

February 3, 2019

Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

### February Wekiwa Bird Survey

February 9, 2019

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

### Youth & Family Photo Workshop, Mead Botanical Garden

February 9, 2019

Contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796

### Great Backyard Bird Count

February 15-18, 2019

[www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc)

### February Program: Tracking the Sea Turtle - Kate Mansfield

February 21, 2019

Contact Rick at (407) 277-3357

### Sunrise Photo Shoot, Orlando Wetlands Park

Feb 23, 2019

Contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796

### February Field Trip: Rock Springs Run State Reserve, Sorrento

February 23, 2019

Contact Larry at (407) 647-5834

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

February 24, 2019

Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617