



### This Month's Program: November 21, 2019

## Nature Photography Tips by Jack Rogers



Top left, Bobcat. Right, Young Roseate Spoonbill. Bottom left, Black Skimmer chick with fish.  
Photos: Jack Rogers

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) 32nd Annual Kit and Sidney Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest has a deadline of April 16, 2020. Each year OAS hosts a nature photographer to present on Nature Photography Tips, allowing plenty of time for people to get out and take photos. This year we are proud to host Jack Rogers, a widely published nature photographer who has been photographing birds and other wildlife for decades.

Jack leads workshops and presents a variety of seminars each year, including nature photography classes at Valencia College where he is a full-time Geology professor. He is a great supporter of Florida's conservation organizations, including OAS, and his images may be seen on their websites, pamphlets, and signposts across the state. He has won the Chertok Photo Contest several times as well as other photo contests.

Jack will be sharing his in-depth knowledge of where and how to successfully photograph birds and other wildlife across Florida and elsewhere. Young photographers considering entering the Youth category of the Chertok photo contest are welcome, as well as adults.

Non-photographers too will enjoy this program. We look forward to seeing you on November 21st at 7:00 p.m. 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 January and 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/)



### November Monthly Field Trip Lighthouse Point Park, Ponce Inlet November 23, 2019

Orange Audubon Society's Saturday, November 23rd field trip will be to Lighthouse Point Park. *Note changed location from that listed on the brochure.* This Volusia County park in Ponce Inlet has a nice boardwalk where we will look for late migrant songbirds in the hammock. When we exit onto the well-preserved dunes, we'll observe beach birds. We will bird the Ponce Inlet jetty and mouth of the Halifax River, looking for gulls, terns, shorebirds and wading birds.

Park entry is \$10 per car, so we will carpool from Port Orange Plaza, 4064 S. Ridgewood Ave. at the SW corner of US 1 and Dunlawton Blvd. We will meet there at 8:30 a.m. The trip is free and no registration is required. For information, contact me at [lmartin5@msn.com](mailto:lmartin5@msn.com) or (407) 647- 5834, or (407) 252-1182 on day of the trip.

*Larry Martin, Field Trips Chair*



Ponce Inlet saltmarsh. Photo: Deborah Green

### Charitable Distributions

If you are or will be age 70 1/2 by 12/31/2019, have a traditional IRA account and wish to donate to Orange Audubon Society (OAS), consider making a qualified charitable distribution (QCD).

When properly structured, distributions made directly from a traditional IRA to a 501(c)(3) like OAS are tax-free. Work with your IRA fund manager to meet QCD requirements, and please contact me at [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com) or (407) 644-0796 if I can answer questions on behalf of OAS. Thank you!

*Teresa Williams, OAS Treasurer*



## Survival by Degrees

On October 10, 2019 National Audubon Society released [\*Survival by Degrees: 389 Bird Species on the Brink\*](#), an in-depth report shedding much-needed light on how 389 out of 604 North American bird species are being affected by climate change.

The range of bird species will be greatly reduced and modified if global temperatures continue to rise at the current rate. Birds are the canaries in the coal mine for human life. If we lose our bird species at this rapid rate, we have a peek into what our future will be.



The report consisted of Audubon scientists' observations and studies, as well as heavy citizen science. Climate models were used to project how each species' range will change as climate change and other human activity continues based on the current trends. The report's findings are devastating and hard to digest, but with this new information more rigid plans can be implemented to curb climate change and bird loss.

Florida has 29 bird species in the moderately and highly vulnerable at-risk categories specified in the report. Most of these are Eastern forest birds and waterbirds. Vulnerable species that live in Central Florida year-round or in migration include Fish Crow, Bobolink, Yellow-throated Warbler, and Brown Thrasher.

If we can't step up to save vulnerable species, humankind is in more trouble than we even know. Responsible developmental practices will help reduce habitat loss. Transition to clean energy, reducing waste, and continually educating the public are other important actions we can take to thwart climate change and bird loss for the benefit of our own existence.

*Marah Green, Climate Chair*

## City of Orlando Recognized by Audubon

Mayor Buddy Dyer has joined more than 120 other mayors from across the country as part of the Sierra Club's Mayors for 100% Clean Energy. The City of Orlando has committed to 100% clean, renewable energy by 2030! At this year's Audubon Assembly, Chris Castro, Director of Sustainability & Resilience, accepted the prestigious Guy Bradley award on behalf of Mayor Dyer and the City.

Orange Audubon Society is part of the First 50 Coalition of environmental groups that continues urging the City to take positive steps toward clean energy.

A current priority of the coalition is convincing the City's Orlando Utilities Commission (OUC) to close one of the Curtis Stanton coal-burning power plants in East Orange County. As natural gas has become cheaper (through environmentally damaging fracking), the "bridge" from coal to renewables has been gas.

The coalition wants to be sure that natural gas does not become the long-term energy source, due to the environmental problems with its extraction, transport and combustion (natural gas doesn't contain the pollutants of coal but still produces CO<sub>2</sub>). We would like OUC to expand its growing solar use.

Again, congratulations City of Orlando and thank you for listening to your environmentally-concerned residents and striving to become "one of the most environmentally-friendly, economically and socially vibrant communities in the nation."

## Climate Change Now OK to Say in Tallahassee

An unwritten policy to not use the term "Climate Change" went into effect after Governor Rick Scott took office in 2011. The policy has finally ended, enthusiastically states Senator Linda Stewart, who represents part of Orange County and serves on the Committee on Infrastructure and Security. Stewart has asked Governor Ron DeSantis' newly appointed Chief Resilience Officer Julia Nesheiwat if the governor has set a timeline for transitioning Florida to clean energy as a means to slow down climate change. We will be watching with hope as events unfold.

*Deborah Green*



Orange Audubon Society (OAS) mission: To promote public understanding of, and an interest in, wildlife and the environment that supports it; 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.

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The OAS's (Orange Audubon Society information source) newsletter is published monthly, September-June, and posted on the OAS website. A link announcing new issues is e-mailed to subscribers.

Never miss out on OAS happenings. Add or update your email address by contacting [newsletter@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:newsletter@orangeaudubonfl.org).

For other membership information, contact: Mike Daley  
[miked129e@gmail.com](mailto:miked129e@gmail.com)  
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## It's Fiesta Time!! — Volunteers Needed

November 2 and 3, 2019 will be the Lake Eola Fiesta in the Park Arts and Crafts Festival, which is Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) biggest public outreach event. City of Orlando gives us a great spot and we have the chance to speak with many new people. If we have enough volunteers, we can do the Kids Art activity.

We really do need your help. Set-up is on Friday evening November 1st, starting around 5:00 p.m. Friday preparations will consist of helping to set up the tent, tables, etc. Saturday and Sunday (8:00–6:00 each day) mainly consists of setting up and taking down of merchandise and—the fun part—helping to sell merchandise and talking to people about OAS.

Please mark you calendar and commit to helping OAS meet its financial goals and reach out to new members. To volunteer or ask questions, please contact me at [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com) or (407) 644-0796. Thank you! *Teresa Williams*

## North Shore Birding Festival T-shirts For Sale

Do you love the North Shore Birding Festival? Now you can show it by wearing a T-shirt or cap. Sales from these items benefit Orange Audubon Society's Nature and Environmental Education Center fund. Prices listed already include tax.



Melissa Gonzalez and Deborah Green wearing the 2019 North Shore Birding Festival t-shirts at the Audubon Convention in Milwaukee to promote the festival. *Photo: Melissa Gonzalez*

Caps are \$20, one-size fits all. Colors are Pine (green), Mocha (tan), and Indigo (blue).

## Easy to find? The Eastern Bluebird

Since Eastern Bluebirds live year-round in the Southeastern U.S., they should be easy to find. Or not?

A lovely small thrush, these birds perch on wires or fences in open woodlands along pastures, agricultural fields, suburban parks, and golf courses. I first saw them flying swiftly through the pines at Tosahatchee Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Christmas about 10 years ago. During subsequent trips there, I have seen only one or two, but never close and not in favorable light.



Eastern Bluebird. Hal Scott Preserve, April 2017. *Photo: Mary Keim*

The adult male has a vibrant blue back, head and tail, bright rufous throat and breast and a white belly. No other eastern bird has this unique striking color combination! Females are duller and grayer; young birds are heavily spotted.

Cavity nesters, Eastern Bluebirds compete for choice spots with other native birds such as chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, Carolina wrens, and non-native species. Because of habitat loss and the removal of dead trees and limbs, natural nesting cavities for all avian species have

declined. Eastern Bluebirds often select old woodpecker holes in dead pine or oak trees up to 50 feet off the ground. Fortunately these birds also will nest in manmade boxes and prefer snug ones about four-inches square.

A male Eastern Bluebird attracts a female to his nest site by transporting material in and out of a cavity then perching and fluttering his wings. Once mated, the female weaves together grasses and pine needles and lines the abode with fine grasses, horsehair, or turkey feathers. The pair may use the same edifice for multiple broods.

To forage, the birds fly swiftly to the ground to grab an insect. Major preys include caterpillars, beetles, crickets, grasshoppers and spiders. In winter they eat large amounts of wild berries.

Eastern Bluebird populations fell in the early twentieth century as introduced species like European Starlings and House Sparrows made it difficult for them to hold on to their nest cavities. Partners in Flight estimates a global breeding population of 22 million; 86 percent spend some part of the year in the U.S.

Artificial nest boxes have helped reverse the dramatic population decline.

Check out this beautiful bird! You are certain to see one or two at Tosahatchee WMA or Wekiwa Springs State Park. Or perhaps attract a breeding pair to your yard by installing a sturdy four-inch nesting box. You can further contribute to conservation by planting native plants to entice nutritious insects that bluebirds and other avian species need to survive.

*Linda Carpenter, Board Member*

Short-sleeved T-shirt colors are Forest Green, Indigo Blue, Neon Blue, and Blackberry. Sizes and styles are limited. Short-sleeved Regular/Unisex tees are \$21 for SM–XL, \$23 for 2–XL, \$25 for 3–XL and \$27 for 4–XL. Long-sleeved Regular/Unisex (Forest Green) tees are \$28 for SM–XL, \$30 for 2–XL, \$32 for 3–XL. Short-sleeved ladies' scoop-necked tees (Vintage Turquoise) are \$23 for SM–XL, \$26 for 2–XL, \$29 for 3–XL.

With freebies set aside for trip leaders and festival volunteers, your first opportunities to buy one of these will be at Lake Eola Fiesta in the Park, November 2nd and 3rd, and OAS' program at Leu Gardens, November 21st. OAS can ship to out-of-town friends (shipping costs will be added to purchase price). For photos of all styles and colors, sign up for North Shore Birding Festival updates at [this link](#).

## The Florida Flamingo Mystery

There are 6 species of flamingo: the American or Greater Flamingo is the one found occasionally in Florida. The American Flamingo can be found in the Caribbean, Mexico and South America. Flamingos have been considered a non-native species in Florida since the 1950s. Researchers are working to prove that this species should be considered native and thus be protected.

John James Audubon visited Florida in the 1830s specifically to see flamingos.

Evidence that points to the American Flamingo being a Florida native includes a reference in historical and museum records to four flamingo eggs that were collected in the late 1880s, indicating that they were nesting in Florida at that time.

But the large flocks that were found in south Florida were hunted for food and feathers. By about 1900 they were almost all wiped out.

In the 1920s and 1930s some people started to import flamingos to live on their estates, thus establishing captive populations.

In 2018 Zoo Miami and other partners led a study to determine the history of flamingos. They found that there has been a slow but steady increase of flamingo sightings in Florida since the 1950s. It appears that flamingo populations are recovering as they fly in from Cuba, the Bahamas, Mexico and other locations.

In 2004 Pete Frezza, an Audubon Florida researcher, found 64 flamingos at Mud Lake—an interior mangrove area of the Everglades.

In 2014 a flock of 147 flamingos appeared in Palm Beach County, although their origin remains a mystery. There were also 2002 and 2012 sightings of flamingos in the Everglades with leg bands that they acquired as chicks in Mexico.

Based on these findings and others, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission removed the American Flamingo from its list of nonnative species.

*Kathy Rigling, First Vice President*



American Flamingo at Canaveral National Seashore. Photo: Thomas Ledford

## Flamingo Quest

In spring 2016 and 2017, Orange Audubon Society organized a trip to the Stormwater Treatment Area 2 in Broward County to see the flamingos that had been seen there each year for several years. We struck out. Audubon of the Everglades' president Susan McKemy reports that they have discontinued the trips until the flamingos are being seen again.

The American Flamingo shown above was first spotted by birder Mitchell Harris at Canaveral National Seashore Playalinda District. Very shortly after it disappeared from that area, it or another one showed up at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. Mitchell, who is one of the new leaders at the North Shore Birding Festival, thinks it is the same bird, due to the timing. Those like myself who have never seen a flamingo in the wild will be joining Orange Audubon's Panhandle trip.

*Deborah Green*

## North Florida Birding, Seacrest Wolf Preserve Private Tour and Flamingo Quest, December 5-8, 2019

For the 5th year, Orange Audubon Society has organized a great trip to the Florida Panhandle. This year's pilgrimage includes a private, hands-on tour at Seacrest Wolf Preserve on Thursday, December 5th. Seacrest provides an extremely fun wolf-human interaction that fosters a deeper connection with these endangered keystone species.

Then on Friday, December 6th we will bird Florida's Red Hills Region at Tall Timbers Research Station with Jim Cox. Tall Timbers is the home of fire ecology research, the south's premier quail research program, and a bird banding program that Jim Cox will show us. Target birds: Henslow's and other wintering sparrows.

Finally on Saturday, December 7th we will bird the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. Established in 1931, St. Marks encompasses over 80,000 acres along the northwest Florida Gulf Coast and provides wintering habitat for migratory birds. Ducks will be in, and our guide Jeff O'Connell of Apalachee Audubon Society will help us find and identify great species like Redheads and Canvasbacks. And the flamingo!

Weekend cost is \$100 for members or students/\$115 for non-members and includes local expert guides, Seacrest admission, 3 lunches and grill night. The Seacrest private tour only cost of \$45/\$55 includes Seacrest admission and lunch. Weekenders may stay at Walter Lodge under the tall trees and stargaze at night skies of Tall Timbers. For registration, lodging and other details, contact me at [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com) or (407) 644-0796.

*Teresa Williams*

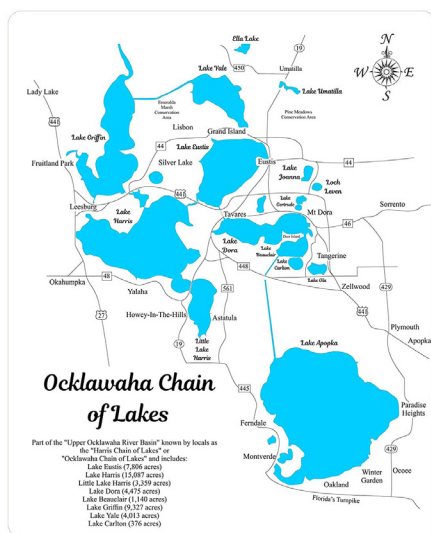


Wolf kisses at Seacrest Wolf Preserve. 500-year old longleaf pine. Jim Cox doing a prescribed burn in wiregrass/pine habitat at Tall Timbers Research Station. Henslow's Sparrow being banded. Another lovable wolf at Seacrest. Photos: Orange Audubon Society files



## Free the Ocklawaha River

On Oct 18th during the 50th anniversary of the [Florida Defenders of the Environment](#) (FDE), founded by conservation leader Marjorie Harris Carr and members of the Audubon Society, it was announced that the next nominated FDE president will be Marjorie's granddaughter, Jennifer Carr. Jennifer attended this year's Audubon Assembly representing FDE to build support and momentum for restoring the Ocklawaha River.



The “Everglades of the North,” a.k.a. the historic Ocklawaha River and its 20 springs and 15,000 acres of forested wetlands, continues to be devastated by the Rodman impoundment. This is 51 years after the area was flooded for the construction of the Cross Florida Barge Canal before FDE succeeded in shutting down the project.

The Ocklawaha River and its stressed forests in Putnam and Marion counties are situated within a critical linkage of the Florida Wildlife Corridor connecting the Ocala National Forest to the Osceola National Forest.

Lake Apopka is the headwaters of the Ocklawaha Chain of Lakes that flows into the Ocklawaha River. Reconnecting the Silver, Ocklawaha and St. Johns Rivers would restore a free-flowing blueway and ecological greenway of national significance.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's 2018 Marjorie Harris Carr Greenway Plan states that its hydrological management goal is to “restore hydrology to the

greatest extent feasible and maintain the restored condition.”

If implemented this would increase habitat for the threatened Wood Stork, according to the environmental impact statement. Restored access to the upper Ocklawaha River would attract American Eel, American Shad, Hickory Shad, River Herring, and endangered Atlantic Sturgeon and Shortnose Sturgeon. Access for the Florida-strain of Striped Bass to their primary spawning area—the Ocklawaha and the Silver rivers—would be restored according to Dr. Kenneth Sulak, a US Geological Survey Emeritus fish ecologist.

FDE sources point out that breaching the dam would save taxpayer dollars. Currently, between \$300,000 to \$500,000 is spent each year to maintain the Buckman Lock, Kirkpatrick Dam, and Rodman Reservoir. The cost to breach the dam and restore the river soon would be recovered through reduced maintenance costs.



Jennifer Carr with poster honoring her grandmother Marjorie Carr. Photo courtesy: Jennifer Carr

Regrettably there has not been the political will to implement the restoration project. Legislators from Putnam and Marion counties have fought to protect the dam so the reservoir could be maintained as a bass fishing lake.

FDE [filed a federal lawsuit in 2017](#) after failing for decades to persuade state

and federal officials to remove the dam.

The lawsuit against the US Forest Service was recently dismissed, and FDE will appeal to the Florida Supreme Court.

Boating ramps become inaccessible due to the large-scale water lettuce blockages. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection spent \$46,500 on aquatic herbicide spraying in Rodman Reservoir in 2018-19.

This winter there is a drawdown of the reservoir being conducted for aquatic vegetation control purposes.

During a drawdown, which lasts 3-4 months and is conducted only every 4 years, the springs along the Ocklawaha River can flow enough to become suitable thermal refuge sites for manatees. However, manatees could reach the area only if proper access were provided through a free-flowing river.

Please learn more about freeing the Ocklawaha River and join our cause. Orange Audubon Society has already become a signatory on a letter to the governor. You can individually write to the Office of Governor Ron DeSantis, State of Florida, The Capitol, 400 S. Monroe St., Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001. Thank you!

*Jennifer Carr, FDE President*

**Editor's Note:** The St. Johns Riverkeeper, Lisa Rinamen, who is also working to restore the Ocklawaha River, has offered Orange Audubon Society the opportunity to take a kayak or boat ride during the drawdown. The date and price have not been determined, but anyone who is interested can email [info@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:info@orangeaudubonfl.org) to be added to a list and receive details when available.

## Thanks for Hospitality

Laurel Roberts has been kind enough to serve as Hospitality Chair again this year, and many people have brought goodies to make our monthly programs more inviting. We'd like to especially thank Betty Schnurr for baking something each month. Please bring goodies, and let us know that you did so we can thank you!

## Wekiwa Bird Survey November 9, 2019

Orange Audubon Society is repeating bird surveys done at Wekiwa Springs State Park in the 1990s. Those participating are finding the surveys to be great birding and fun visits to a beautiful park. You do not have to be an expert birder to join, but willingness to walk in sandy and possibly wet areas is required. If you'd like to join us, contact Kathy at [riglingk@aol.com](mailto:riglingk@aol.com) or (407) 488-9559.

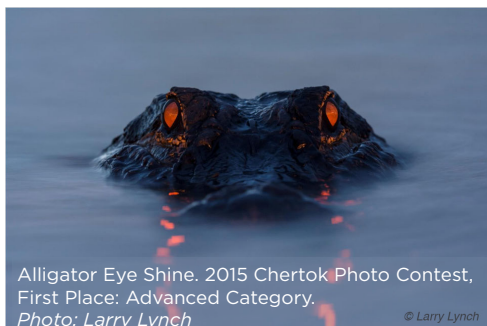


Cooper's Hawk, Mead Botanical Garden.  
Photo: Sam Mitcham

## Creatures of the Night Tram Tour Orlando Wetlands Park November 9, 2019

On Saturday evening November 9th, from 5:00–7:30 p.m., Orange Audubon Society (OAS) will explore Orlando Wetlands Park on a tram/trailer, led by long-time director of the park and past OAS board member Mark Sees.

This is a unique opportunity to enjoy the sunset (5:35 p.m. that evening), see the return to the roost of ibis and other wading birds, see the ghostly flight of Willson's Snipe, see alligators active at night with eye shine, and enjoy the night sounds.



Alligator Eye Shine. 2015 Chertok Photo Contest, First Place: Advanced Category.  
Photo: Larry Lynch

This is a fund-raiser for OAS' nature and environmental education center fund and is \$15 per person.

Bring a flashlight and bug spray. Orlando Wetlands Park will provide water and snacks also, but bring your own if you prefer.

Address is Orlando Wetlands Park, 25155 Wheeler Rd, Christmas, FL.

Space on the tram is limited to 25 people, so register soon. To register, contact Teresa Williams at (407) 644-0796 or [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com).

## Butterfly Field Trip

Orange Audubon Society's Butterfly Field Trip was another great one. Photographed is White Peacock. Other sightings included Black Swallowtail, Cloudless Sulphur, Barred Yellow, Red-banded Hairstreak, Ceraunus Blue, Gulf Fritillary, Viceroy, Long-tailed Skipper, Clouded Skipper, Monk, Brazilian Skipper caterpillar (on Alligator flag) and Ocola Skipper. Thanks to the 10 that attended for contributing to the butterfly fun!

Mary Keim



White Peacock at Orlando Wetlands Park.  
Photo: Mary Keim

## Mead Botanical Garden Fall Trips

About 25 to 30 birders participated in the Mead Botanical Garden fall migration bird walks each Saturday, except on October 19th because of Tropical Storm Nestor. A mix of regulars and "newbies," and even some tourists from the midwest participated and many got "lifers."

People who made these walks a success included Kathy Rigling, Tom Rodriguez, Mary Soule, Renee Thomas, and others lending their expertise in helping the group find and identify birds. Linda Carpenter and Linda Gaunt helped getting people signed in. We all look forward to doing it again in April.

Larry Martin, Field Trips Chair

## Donations

Thank you to all who have already donated in response to Orange Audubon Society's President's Letter Appeal sent to you in September. If you have not already done so, we hope you will consider donating to support your local Audubon chapter. You can mail a check to Orange Audubon Society, P.O. Box 941142, Maitland, Florida 32794 or [use the link on our website to donate](#). Thanks again!

## October Volunteer Thanks

October was a busy month for Orange Audubon Society (OAS) outreach events, and wonderful volunteers came through for us. At the Get Outdoors event at the Winter Park Library on October 5th, Linda Carpenter and Deborah Green worked an OAS display table. At Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society's Festival of Flight and Flowers in Eustis on October 12th Deborah Green, Carole Johns and Kathy Rigling worked the table. On October 19th at Backyard Biodiversity Day, Sonia Stephens and Linda Carpenter were ready to do outreach for OAS when severe weather cancelled the event. At the Florida Birding and Nature

Festival in Tampa also on October 19th Kathy Rigling and Deborah Green put out OAS' pop-up banner on the North Shore Birding Festival (NSBF). On October 25-26th at Audubon Assembly in Gainesville, Linda Gaunt and Deborah Green put up the NSBF pop-up banner and marketed the festival by wearing our new NSBF tee-shirts.

OAS has need of many volunteers November 2nd-3rd at the Lake Eola Fiesta in the Park event (p.3).

For other volunteer opportunities, please email [volunteer@orangeaudubon.fl.org](mailto:volunteer@orangeaudubon.fl.org). Thank you! Deborah Green



*In case you missed it ...*

## The Monarch-Milkweed Initiative

For Orange Audubon's October program, Scott Davis presented an impressive review of his project, the Monarch-Milkweed Initiative. Scott is a biologist and park ranger at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge on the Gulf coast of the panhandle where monarchs gather to prepare for their heroic migration to Mexico.

Monarch butterflies are "larval host obligate" to milkweeds (*Asclepias*) and a few other closely related plants, meaning that they lay their eggs only on that plant. The survival of the monarch butterfly depends entirely on the survival of the milkweed. Sadly, the numbers of both are down by as much as 95%. Monarchs are being tagged in order to track their adult life cycle and migration.



Monarch caterpillars on milkweed. Photo courtesy: St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge

Scott has found that the majority of wild milkweed plants are located along roadways. Due to burning suppression of this fire-dependent community of plants, milkweeds linger in a facsimile of a regularly-burned ecosystem, the openings created by mowing the right-of-ways. From tree rings we find that growing-season burns have occurred historically every 2-3 years.

With help from other "Nascar botanists," Scott is documenting locations of existing roadside milkweed populations in the Florida Milkweed Atlas. He collects seed from the ripened seed pod or follicle before it "dehisces" (dries) and the seeds disperse in the breeze by using hair ties to contain the seeds within the follicle until they can be collected.

Monarchs are losing their hibernacula (places of refuge) for over-wintering in Mexico. Groves of the high-altitude oyamel fir or "sacred fir" tree (*Abies*

*religiosa*) are being lost in swaths of illegal logging. Now, they also face an uncertain future with climate change.

Another problem for monarchs is a debilitating protozoan parasite called *Ophryocystis elektroscirrha* or "OE." An infected adult butterfly spreads dormant OE spores to eggs or milkweed leaves. When caterpillars eat the spores, the parasite then replicates inside the larvae and pupae. It can cause stunted growth or death at all stages of the life cycle, less strength for migration, and overall population decline.

But the greatest challenge to milkweed survival is the development of genetically modified (GMO) agricultural crops. Since 1996, GMO crops species have been genetically altered to survive herbicide spray, while other weedy species die, including milkweed. (It's another reason to buy organic products.)

To help the monarch butterfly survive, you can establish a population of milkweed in your yard. By planting at least two plants of the same appropriate species, milkweed will flourish, flower and seed. In addition, monarchs will need an abundance of nectar plants. The most important is *Bidens*, because of its beneficial phytosterol content. Other excellent genera are *Baccharis*, *Coreopsis*, *Eupatorium*, *Vernonia*, *Liatris*, *Solidago*, and *Melanthra*.

As for the controversial subject of *Asclepias curassavica*, the tropical milkweed, a common vector for OE, Scott suggests cutting it back in the fall to mimic the dormancy period of native milkweeds. It will regenerate rapidly.

In the meantime, if you find a roadside milkweed population, please contact Scott at [Scott.Davis@fws.gov](mailto:Scott.Davis@fws.gov). If the population is vulnerable to mowing, you can report it to your FDOT district vegetation manager to change the mowing schedule.

For additional information on these topics please go to [monarchwatch.org/blog](http://monarchwatch.org/blog), [plantmilkweed.org](http://plantmilkweed.org), or [monarchinitiative.org](http://monarchinitiative.org).

The presentation was videotaped by David Bottomley and can be seen at [this link](#). Terry Piper, OAS Board Member

## Limited Edition Field Trip to the Lake Apopka North Shore, Clay Island November 9, 2019

On Saturday, November 9th, Bob Sanders will lead a Limited Edition Field Trip to the Lake Apopka North Shore, Clay Island area. This is an opportunity to drive through areas normally closed to vehicles and to find early overwintering ducks, other waterfowl, raptors, and songbirds.

Limited Edition Field Trips are limited to 15 people. Cost is \$10 per person per trip for members and \$15 per person for non-members. Reservations (required) will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis the week prior to the trip. Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617.



Clay Island. Photo: Susan Kirby

## Three Lakes Trip Recap

A small group of 5 birders enjoyed the Oct 13th Limited Edition Field Trip to Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area and Joe Overstreet Rd in Osceola County. Although the Red-cockaded Woodpeckers proved to be elusive, we ended the day with 58 species.

Highlights included Brown-headed Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, plus seven warbler species including a Magnolia Warbler. A Snail Kite was seen at Lake Jackson & no fewer than eleven Snail Kites were seen at Joe Overstreet Landing, along with several Limpkins. Bald Eagles were seen in numbers. Joe Overstreet Road yielded several American Kestrels and Loggerhead Shrikes. At Three Lakes we found about 20 Catesby's lilies (*Lilium catesbaei*) in bloom. These beautiful native wildflowers are commonly called pine lilies. All in all, it was a pleasant day and a good time was had by everyone.

Bob Sanders

## CLI and Knighthawk Audubon

Audubon Florida's Conservation Leadership Initiative (CLI) kicked off its 8th consecutive year by introducing its new expanded year-long program thanks to the support of Darden Sustainability, the Jessie Ball DuPont Fund and the Maggie Walker grant. CLI at Audubon Assembly introduces college students to Audubon Florida and their local chapter.

This year 25 students from 14 colleges and universities were paired with chapter leaders. Mentor-mentee field trips allowed casual interaction doing something both love. Other activities were with their peers, Audubon Florida staff and CLI alums like myself. This year CLI activities will extend beyond Assembly throughout the school year where students will have the opportunities to develop connections with their local chapters, but also continue to gain leadership skills, field experience, and participate in resume building activities.

The idea of starting a campus Audubon chapter is not new, but its time has come thanks to CLI and support from National Audubon. A new student Audubon chapter at the University of Central Florida (UCF) is now recognized there as an official student organization and by National Audubon Society as an official Audubon chapter! The new chapter is called Knighthawk Audubon, and there are currently two Knighthawk officers participating in the CLI year-long program. Congratulations to President Stephanie Gaspar and the other officers. Orange Audubon Society is thrilled to welcome you all to the Audubon family.



Melissa Gonzalez

## Treatment Wetlands and Bird Habitat

As birders we recognize the value of wetlands at a single glance. Our appreciation of wetlands is usually limited to our interests—conservation, biodiversity, and having a place to enjoy these rarities in a state that becomes more and more populated every day.

However, not many of us consider the monetary benefits of wetlands (discussed later) or that wetlands "scrub" pollutants going into the Floridan aquifer that is the source of the water we drink.

Recognizing, learning about, and touting these benefits when talking to policy makers in our community is a strength that we should never overlook.

During the 2019 Audubon Assembly as part of Conservation Leadership Initiative, I attended a learning session on the benefits of treatment wetlands, which are generally recreated wetlands designed to absorb and treat either stormwater or wastewater or both. The panelists—Dr. Robert Knight, Debra Segal, Geoff Parks, and Rachel Slocumb—spoke to us about the overall benefit of treatment wetlands as well as how they have benefited their communities.

Sweetwater Wetlands is a stormwater treatment facility in Gainesville that

is a birder's paradise with over 200 species reported on eBird. Geoffery Parks, Natural Resource Management Coordinator for the City of Gainesville, told us about the monetary benefit of this particular wetland. His department found that 32% of people surveyed came to Alachua County specifically to visit Sweetwater.

That is approximately 9,000 visitors, of which 1,200 stayed in local hotels during their visit. That means that local businesses are getting substantial monetary gain from this stormwater park in their community.

The success of Sweetwater needs to be highlighted to policy makers at the local, state, and national levels. In order to convince policy makers, as well as the residents of these communities that conservation is important, the emotional appeal of protecting birds is not enough. We must preach the monetary benefits of ecotourism as a driver of the local economy as well as property values.

*Julia Gneckow, Vice President  
of Knighthawk Audubon*

*Editor's note:* Orlando Wetlands Park, Florida's first constructed water treatment wetland, attracted an estimated 49,094 visitors in 2018.



University of Central Florida (UCF) students on their first field trip since formal recognition of Knighthawk Audubon by UCF. Trip was to the Lake Lotus Park banding station.  
*Photo: Knighthawk Audubon*

## Florida Ornithological Society Fall Meeting November 1-3, 2019

The fall meeting of the [Florida Ornithological Society](#) (FOS) will take place Nov 1-3, 2019 at Stetson University in Deland. FOS was initially sponsored by Audubon Florida, which was founded in 1900 and then called the Florida Audubon Society. Whereas Audubon Florida and our local chapter Orange Audubon Society are focused on conservation and education, FOS' mission is to promote field ornithology in Florida and to facilitate contact between professional and amateur ornithologists and birders in the state. FOS held its inaugural meeting in 1972 and now meets each spring and fall.

FOS organized both Florida Breeding Bird Atlases—the first from 1982 to 1987 and the second from 2012 until 2017. Deliberations of the FOS Records Committee are published annually in the *Florida Field Naturalist*. FOS provides grants and awards on a competitive basis to students and professionals for research and education related to birds in Florida. For information on the fall meeting, [see this link](#).

*Deborah Green*



Cattle Egrets. *Photo: Mary Keim*



## Connect the Trails Around Lake Apopka Ride November 10, 2019

Why would anyone want to cycle around the fourth largest lake in Florida ?

In 1991, the [Friends of Lake Apopka \(FOLA\)](#) was founded by a concerned local biologist, Jim Thomas. The collective voice of this citizen advocacy group prompted the State of Florida to purchase the farms on the 20,000-acre North Shore, thereby eliminating the single largest contributor to the lake's demise.

This was a crucial pivot point in the lake's recovery. The St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) assumed stewardship of the North Shore and has spent the last 20 years restoring it as natural wetlands to reduce the lake's phosphorus.

The Lake Apopka North Shore is now home to an 18-mile gravel bicycling and hiking trail that is teeming with wildlife, along with an 11-mile Wildlife Drive that attracts more than 100,000 visitors a year from all over the US.

In April 2017, FOLA held its first organized bike ride around the 30,000 acre lake. The purpose of the ride was to raise awareness about: 1. The ongoing restoration of Lake Apopka, 2. The wonderful network of cycling trails around the lake, and 3. The need to "Connect the Trails" into a 40-mile loop trail.

Lake Apopka is surrounded by the West Orange Trail (south & east), the South Lake Trail/Hancock Road Trail (south & west), and the Lake Apopka Loop Trail (north). But to get from West Orange Trail to Magnolia Park, cyclists need to ride 3 miles on shoulder-less roads with cars. Similarly, on the west side cyclists need to ride on 3 miles of curvy, shoulder-less roads with cars to get from Green Mountain Scenic Trail Head to Hancock Road.

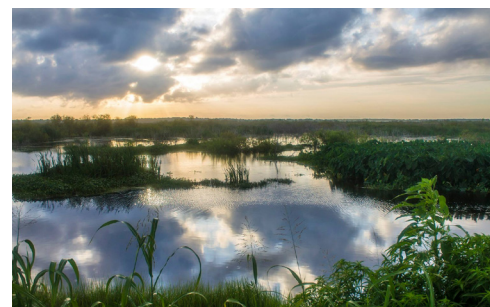
With support from then Orange County Commissioner Bryan Nelson and Commissioner Betsy VanderLey (who both rode in the 2017 inaugural ride), Orange County and MetroPlan Orlando allocated funds to build a dedicated cycling/walking trail to connect the two trails. The "Apopka Connector" will be completed in late 2023/early 2024.

On the west side, the Lake County Board of Commissioners and local legislators are exploring a Public/Private Partnership to connect Green Mountain Scenic Trail Head and Hancock Road with a dedicated cycling/walking trail.

That last connection will create a 40-mile loop around Florida's fourth largest lake and that loop will sit directly on Florida's Coast-to-Coast Trail (C2C), which will run about 250 miles across Florida, connecting the Gulf Coast at St. Petersburg on the west, through Central Florida, to the Atlantic Coast on the east at Canaveral National Seashore.

The ride has been called the FOLA 40, but last year 8-mile, 16-mile, and 32-mile loops were added to the original 40-mile loop around the lake, and FOLA decided to rename the ride for the mission: Connect the Trails.

This year's ride will be held on Sunday, November 10th and will honor Veterans through a partnership with a local Veterans advocacy group. FOLA is expecting 200 riders and registration is open at Active.com. Please search for Connect the Trails. This article is based on Joe Dunn's article in *Florida Bicycle Association Messenger*.  
*Joe Dunn, FOLA President*



Sunrise on the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive.  
Photo: Lynn Marie Folts

## Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive Visitation Grows

At a recent St. Johns River Water Management District (District) Recreational Land Management meeting, the astounding number of 135,000 visitors per year was cited for the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive (LAWD). Two years ago 100,000 visitors, on a drive just open 3 days a week, was considered unbelievable. We learned how visitation numbers are verified with high tech counters and cameras and how challenging accommodating these visitors is to the District.

The District appreciates the volunteer work that Orange Audubon Society (OAS) members are doing, including: securing grants to put in educational kiosks, cleaning and stocking the kiosks with brochures, maintaining the butterfly garden by the first kiosk that was originated by Friends of Lake Apopka, maintaining a LAWD Facebook page with information on sightings and news of openings and closings, and annually celebrating the anniversary of the drive with volunteers with spotting scopes.

That annual volunteer day has apparently inspired the District to develop a docent ("ambassador") program, and OAS will be supporting that program. If volunteering to be a docent would be interesting to you, email me at [info@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:info@orangeaudubonfl.org).

*Deborah Green*



Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive butterfly garden, October 2019. Photo: Deborah Green

## Register Now for the 4th Annual North Shore Birding Festival January 16–20, 2020

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) North Shore Birding Festival is set for January 16th–20th, and registration is open. The 2019 festival brought participants from 18 states, 40 Florida cities, 2 Canadian provinces, and the U.K., contributing to the local economy through birding ecotourism. Proceeds of OAS' festival contribute to fund-raising toward a nature and environmental education center.

Since the Lake Apopka North Shore is now the [top eBird spot in Florida](#) with a growing reputation among birders, we have had great leaders for the past three years and have been able to attract some fabulous additional leaders for the 2020 festival.

The past three years of the festival have focused on expert-led trips exploring the western part of the Lake



New trip leader Jason Ward.  
Photo: Topic Films

Apopka North Shore based out of the McDonald Canal area, with additional excursions to see Florida Scrub-Jays at Seminole State Forest, woodpeckers at the Ocala National Forest, pineland birding specialties at Wekiwa Springs State Park, bird banding at Lake Lotus Park, birds by pontoon boat at the Dora Canal, and gulls at Daytona Beach Shores.

New field trips include several new Lake County sites, Waterfowl of The Villages by Golf Cart, Birding by Kayak, a Behind-the-Scenes visit to the Avian Reconditioning Center

in Apopka, a morning at Orlando Wetlands Park, and Digiscoping with Robert Wilson.

For photographers, on each of the four days of the festival we have Sunrise Photography and Birding trips, plus this year a Sunset Trip and a Youth and Family Photography Trip with Jack Rogers (this month's presenter).

This year college students can register for half price, and there are scholarships for out-of town students to help defray travel costs, provided through generous donations of our members. Jason Ward of [National Audubon Society and Birds of North America](#) will be leading trips!

Read more about it on the [festival website](#). Please follow new developments also on the festival [Facebook page](#) and/or sign up for the festival email list at [this link](#).

*Deborah Green,  
Festival Committee Chair*

## NOVEMBER/DECEMBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Fiesta in the Park, Lake Eola

November 2–3, 2019

Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977

### Creatures of the Night Tram Ride, Orlando Wetlands Park

November 9, 2019

Contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796

### November Wekiwa Bird Survey

November 9, 2019

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

### Limited Edition Field Trip to Lake Apopka North Shore, Clay Island

November 9, 2019

Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

### November Program: Nature Photography Tips – Jack Rogers

November 21, 2019

Contact Rick at (407) 277-3357

### November Field Trip: Lighthouse Point Park, Ponce Inlet

November 23, 2019

Contact Larry at (407) 647-5834

### North FL Birding & Seacrest Wolf Preserve Private Tour and Flamingo Quest

December 5–8, 2019

Contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796

### Christmas Bird Counts: Contact the compiler to participate.

- **Bay Lake:** December 14, 2019  
Contact John Thomson at [jthomton@hotmail.com](mailto:jthomton@hotmail.com)
- **Wekiwa River:** December 14, 2019  
Contact Jay Exum at [jay.h.exum@gmail.com](mailto:jay.h.exum@gmail.com)
- **Kissimmee Valley:** December 15, 2019  
Contact Chris Newton at [dexterdevon68@gmail.com](mailto:dexterdevon68@gmail.com)
- **Zellwood/Mt. Dora:** December 19, 2019  
Contact Gallus Quigley at [gallusq@gmail.com](mailto:gallusq@gmail.com)
- **Econlockhatchee:** December 21, 2019  
Contact Lorne Malo at [lornemalo@bellsouth.net](mailto:lornemalo@bellsouth.net)
- **Clermont:** January 5, 2020  
Contact John Thomson at [jthomton@hotmail.com](mailto:jthomton@hotmail.com)

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

December 15, 2019

Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

### December Program: Amazing Snakes – George Van Horn

December 19, 2019

Contact Rick at (407) 277-3357