



**This Month's Program: December 19, 2019**

### **Amazing Snakes** by George Van Horn



Left, George Van Horn milking venomous snake for antivenin. Right, George's wife Rosa with a cobra. Photos courtesy Reptile World Serpentarium

For the past 47 years, George Van Horn has owned and operated Reptile World Serpentarium east of St. Cloud and has supplied venom for medical research and to make antivenin.

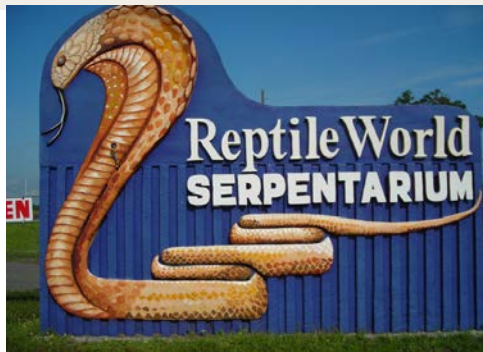
Ever since he was a little boy and started catching garter and water snakes in the swampy Everglades surrounding Miami, Van Horn knew he wanted to work with snakes. Inspired by Bill Haast of the Miami Serpentarium, he believed he could make a career out of it.

The [Reptile World Serpentarium](#) houses over 50 species of snakes from around the world, ranging from the familiar and innocuous to the exotic and deadly. There are also turtles, a large alligator, and other reptiles on display. Visitors to the Serpentarium have a chance to watch George and his wife Rosa "milk" several highly dangerous snake species for venom.

Orange Audubon Society last had George's presentation in 2011 and we are very fortunate to have him back to tell about the fascinating snakes he has loved since childhood. He has promised to bring a snake or two, so bring your kids or grandkids and join us December 19th at 7:00 p.m. for a great program.

We look forward to seeing you. See location below.

*Rick Baird, Programs Chair*



### **Christmas Bird Counts** **December 14, 2019 through** **January 5, 2020.**

Instead of a field trip in December, Orange Audubon Society encourages everyone to participate in a Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Audubon's 120th CBC will be conducted between the dates of Saturday, December 14, 2019 and Sunday, January 5, 2020. If you're interested in participating this season, see more on page 3.

### **Birds of Prey** **Identification Classes,** **Lake Apopka** **December 1, 2019**

Orange Audubon Society will hold three Birds of Prey Identification Classes on the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive on Sundays, December 1, 2019, January 5, and February 2, 2020. You can attend single or multiple days.

Each class will be from 7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Suggested donation for each day is \$5 (Audubon members) or \$10 (nonmembers).

Bob Sanders for many years has taught raptor identification. Before moving to Central Florida, he was co-founder of the Chimney Rock Hawk Watch in Martinsville, New Jersey. No early registration is required. Bob can be reached at (407) 459-5617. See you out there!



Merlin. Photo: Lynn Marie Folts

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/)





## Climate Action

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



NAS continues to defend the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). In 2018, NAS and four other environmental groups filed a federal lawsuit to defend the MBTA. Eight state Attorney Generals also filed suit. The government tried to get the lawsuit dismissed. This past summer the U.S. District Court in New York ruled that the cases should proceed and be consolidated. The next few months will be crucial.

The battle between climate change deniers and the environmental movement has entered a new, pernicious phase, according to Dr. Michael Mann, one of the world's leading climate experts, in a [November 9, 2019 article in The Observer](#). Climate deniers are now attempting "to deflect attention away from finding policy solutions to global warming towards promoting individual behaviour changes that affect people's diets, travel choices and other personal behaviour," said Mann. Individual actions are important but we need policy reform, not backwards momentum such as pulling out of the Paris Climate Accord.

An Orange Audubon Society member has been sending me news and journal articles that mostly paint a sobering picture—have you heard about the [Arctic fires this year and their impact?](#) Yet the articles also include examples of places around the world addressing climate change.

Be inspired by [Inside Copenhagen's race to be the world's first carbon-neutral city](#), targeting "100 new wind turbines; a 20% reduction in both

heat and commercial electricity consumption; 75% of all journeys to be by bike, on foot, or by public transport; the biogasification of all organic waste; 60,000 sq metres of new solar panels; and 100% of the city's heating requirements to be met by renewables."

Bicycling to work is impossible for most of us in Central Florida, but if our work is too far to bike, better public transport should be available. Another of Copenhagen's actions caught my attention: If we made combustible natural gas (biogas) from organic waste including sewage, it would be a renewable energy source, potentially reduce methane emissions into the atmosphere, and our wastewater utilities wouldn't be struggling for where to put the waste (see [November 2018 OASis p.6](#) re Blue Cypress Lake).

On the policy front, a [House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis](#) is now in place although it has limited powers. The [100% Clean Economy Act of 2019](#) was [introduced last month](#). Please stay engaged with [NAS' action alerts](#).

*Deborah Green*

## Split Oak/New Turnpikes

Birds and other wildlife suffer from reduction of habitat. Visiting the Escape Ranch (p.6), I learned that 11,768 acres are encumbered by a perpetual St. Johns River Water Management District conservation easement, set up in 1996. Conservation easements on Florida ranchlands cost less than "fee simple" purchase of the land and allow continuance of ranching. The active program is the Rural & Family Lands Protection Program, part of Florida Forever and administered by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

The Florida Legislature has severely underfunded or, in some years, completely zeroed out funding for Florida Forever, and we need to make quick calls or send emails to our representatives in support of full Florida Forever funding. The 2020 legislative session begins in January.

Split Oak Forest Wildlife and Environmental Area, threatened by CFX's Osceola Expressway Extension, was preserved in part with money

*Continued on p.3*



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.

Orange Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 941142  
Maitland, FL 32794-1142  
[www.orangeaudubonfl.org](http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org)

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

The OASis (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)  
(407) 417-7818

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

Orange Audubon Society, Inc. is a Florida not-for-profit organization, tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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

**Split Oak/New Turnpikes**

*continued from p. 2.*

from the Florida Communities Trust, a part of Florida Forever. Conservation easements will have to be released if the road traverses part of the property, as in CFX's favored route (Split Oak Minimization). Unfortunately Florida's legislature specifies that conservation easements cannot prevent land to be used for "linear facilities," as in [Section 704.06 \(11\)](#).

OAS members have worked to protect [Split Oak Forest Wildlife and Environmental Area](#) and members are divided on their final recommendations. CFX's decision on the Osceola Expressway route will be made December 12th at the CFX board meeting, starting at 9 am., at CFX Headquarters, 4974 Orl Tower Rd, Orlando, FL 32807.

Regarding the proposed new Turnpikes, we need to continue to have public input. See Audubon Florida's article in the [October OASis](#) p.4. *Deborah Green*

**Wekiwa Bird Survey  
December 14, 2019**

Orange Audubon Society's Wekiwa Springs State Park bird surveys are great fun. 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.

**Lake Apopka North Shore,  
Clay Island Trip**

A stormy overnight cleared out for a beautiful morning for the November 9, 2019 Limited Edition Field Trip to the Lake Apopka North Shore, including parts of Clay Island.

Fifty-seven species of birds were seen. Highlights were Gadwall, Northern Pintail, several Bald Eagles, many Northern Harriers, Wilson's Snipe, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, Marsh Wren, and Swamp Sparrow. We would like to thank the St. Johns River Water Management District (District) for special permission to drive through this part of the North Shore property. Special thanks to Haley Carter, our District guide.

*Bob Sanders*

**Still Spaces Left!  
North Florida Birding,  
Seacrest Wolf Preserve  
Private Tour and Flamingo  
Quest, December 5-8, 2019**

Information on registration, lodging and other details are at [this link](#) or contact me at [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com) or (407) 644-0796. *Teresa Williams*



John and Lori Parsons with some of the wolves at Seacrest Wolf Preserve on Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) 2018 Panhandle Trip. *Photo: OAS files*

**Limited Edition Field Trip  
to Lake Jesup  
Conservation Area, Marl  
Bed Flats, Sanford  
December 15, 2019**

Join popular Orange Audubon Society field trip leader Bob Sanders on Saturday, December 15th 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, Bonaparte's Gull, Black Skimmer, Wilson's Snipe and 7 other species of shorebirds, American Pipits, 6 species of warblers, Blue-headed Vireos, and Eastern Meadowlarks.

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.

**Christmas Bird Counts  
December 14, 2019 through  
Sunday, January 5, 2020.**

The longest-running citizen science survey in the world is the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC), now in its 120th 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 at a scale that professional scientists alone could never accomplish. The *Science* report documenting the decline of bird populations by 2.9 billion and National Audubon Society's recent *Climate By Degrees* report both heavily relied on this 120-year bird population study carried out by citizen scientists.

Each individual count is performed in a count circle with a diameter of 15 miles. The volunteers break up into small parties and follow assigned routes, which change little from year to year, and record every bird they see. Birders' natural competitive spirit drives them to do the most thorough job possible.

The first Central Florida CBC was the Orlando CBC, started in the 1970s. With that CBC now discontinued, the longest running local CBC is the Econlockhatchee CBC which began in 1982. In 1987 the Mt. Dora CBC began, with involvement of Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society. The organizers moved that circle to Emeralda Marsh in 1995, and the Zellwood/Mt. Dora area was split off as a separate count. The Wekiwa CBC began by the early 1990s.

John Thomson, OAS member and Disney employee, founded the Bay Lake CBC in 2011 and Clermont CBC in 2012. More than any other local count leader, John welcomes new participants. Contact him at [john.thomton@gmail.com](mailto:john.thomton@gmail.com). For dates and contacts for the other local CBCs, see page 8. *Deborah Green*

## Bird Listing

Often those who enjoy watching birds begin to keep a record of what birds they have seen. Many record their first sightings in a logbook or even in a field guide, with the date and location that they first observed the bird.

In today's digital age eBird has become an extremely popular way to list birds.



eBird is a [database](#) launched in 2002 by Cornell University's Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society. eBird not only provides a quick and easy way to record your bird sightings but it also is a valuable tool for scientists. eBird data includes over 100 million yearly bird observations and helps bird conservation by providing evidence for bird distribution related to human interactions.

Accuracy of the identifications recorded are verified by an expert eBird reviewer in each county.

### Find a banded bird?

Attention birders and photographers! Something simple but very helpful that you can do to help the plight of birds is to report banded birds. When you photograph a bird it may not be apparent until you upload your photo that it is banded. You can report sightings to the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center Bird Banding Laboratory by filling out a simple form at [this website](#).

Since 1904 about 60 million birds from hundreds of species have been banded. Of those, about 4 million bands have been recovered and/or reported. The data collected from these reports helps in the monitoring of imperiled species, setting of hunting regulations and studying the effects of environmental contaminants. Results from the collected data support both national and international bird conservation programs such as Partners in Flight and Wetlands for the Americas. The North American Bird Banding



Marshall Iliff, [eBird Project Leader](#) and Cornell University professor, birds with local eBird reviewer Paul Hueber, on Marshall's first visit to the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive, November 2019. *Photo: Deborah Green*

On a more personal note, as someone starts to list the birds that they have observed, they may desire to better their previous year's list. Some birders get highly competitive and try to be the top lister in their county, state or even the continent!

In Florida there is a free bird (and butterfly) recognition program called "[Wings Over Florida](#)" from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. In this program a person can receive frameable, personalized certificates for achieving 6 Florida birding milestones from 25 life birds to 400 life birds.

"Big Year" certificates are available for those sighting 50 or more native Florida species. In this program all birds must be Florida natives and must be seen or heard in the wild.

**On Saturday January 4th, Orange Audubon Society (OAS) will offer a "Biggest Year Yet" trip in which you can kick-start your year bird list with expert leaders and fellow birders.**



Lori Mathis with Wings Over Florida certificates, including the 400 level. *Photo: Jerry Mathis*

During the [North Shore Birding Festival](#) Sunday afternoon January 19th, Trip 29 "Recording What You See: eBirding and Checklists" will help you learn more. In birding, those who take the extra step to list have their birding skills expand. See you on one of OAS' monthly trips or bird surveys. *Kathy Rigling*



Piping Plover from Disappearing Island, Ponce Inlet. *Photo: Kathy Rigling*

Program is directed by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) along with the Canadian Wildlife Service.

If a match is made with your reported band you will receive a letter and certificate from the USGS letting you know when and where the bird you reported was banded.

The Piping Plover, shown above, breeds along ocean shores in the Northeast and along lakeshores and alkali wetlands in the northern Great Plains and Great Lakes. This species winters on coastal beaches,

sandflats, and mudflats, including in Florida. Our beaches are now rarely safe wintering sites and this species is listed as endangered in some areas and threatened in others.

I photographed this bird at Disappearing Island, Ponce Inlet on September 5, 2019, and after reporting the band number, I was informed that it was originally banded on July 19, 2018 in Nova Scotia, Canada when it was too young to fly.

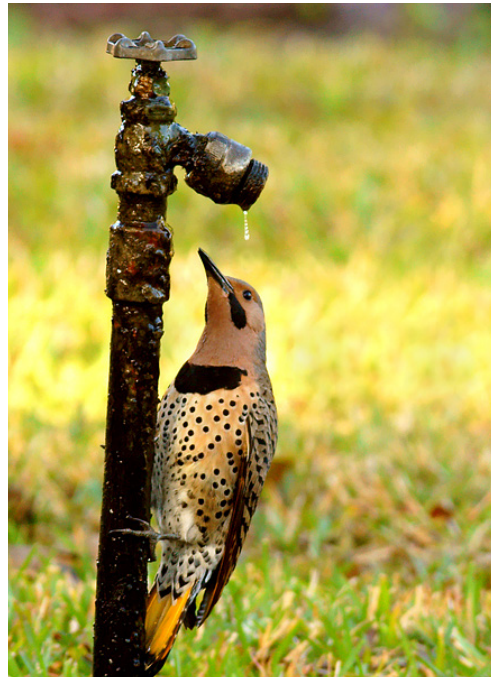
Fellow birder Lorri Lilja photographed a Piping Plover in Jacksonville this November that was banded as an adult female in July 2017 at Plage de l'Hopital, Magdalen Islands, Quebec. Since then this individual has nested at Hog Island, Prince Edward Island. She also was seen in fall 2017 in North Carolina and spring 2018 in New Jersey. She normally winters in the Jacksonville area.

Knowing more from banding studies helps direct conservation work. Plus it reveals fascinating information about bird migration. *Kathy Rigling*

In case you missed it ...

## Nature Photography Tips

Just in time to help photographers get ready for the Chertok photography contest (see information this page), Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) November program featured Jack Rogers, a widely published nature photographer. Jack works at Valencia College, where he teaches science and photography. He shared six tips with us about how to successfully photograph birds.



Northern Flicker. Photo: Jack Rogers

1. Know how your camera works. According to Jack, you don't want to be trapped into your digital camera's default programming, so switch it to manual settings. The three main features to know are the F-stop (controls depth of field, or the amount of the frame that will be in focus), shutter speed (controls how long an exposure lasts), and exposure (controls the balance of dark and light). Jack suggests setting up for action shots: keep the camera in your hands, set a high shutter speed, small F-stop, maximum burst rate, and continuous focus mode. You can always change your settings for subjects that aren't moving. Some other settings include image format (RAW files save the most information), white balance (compensates for the bluish or golden quality of sunlight), and ISO (sensor sensitivity—best resolution is at lower numbers, but in low-light settings a higher number is better).

2. Use a tripod. Taking photos with a tripod simply makes them sharper, especially when you have a longer lens. This also helps with fatigue.
3. Point your shadow (at the bird). Get between the sun and your subject for the best illumination. Jack suggests circling around at a good distance so that you don't disturb the bird, until the light is right. But if you want to capture dramatic shadow effects, keep the sun at a different angle.
4. Shoot at eye level. Just like with portraits of people, the best bird photos usually focus on the bird, not the ground or sky. This might mean using a ladder to photograph a bird on a nest (Jack told of photographing an owl that was very used to people; see NANPA standards, p.6), or getting down in the mud for shorebirds. Keep your camera out of the mud with a "groundpod."
5. Consider the background. Do you want to show the habitat, or focus on the bird? Jack is a fan of a clean background, with solid colors, that do not interfere with the subject. He suggests picking a location with a far away background (like a lagoon), rather than a spot with the background right up close (like a marsh).



Barn Owl. Photo: Jack Rogers

6. Be prepared for action. This is where birders have an advantage! Do some background research on a location, know what birds to expect and what time the sun will be at your back, ask other photographers when and where they took their best photos, and watch the birds' behavior to predict good poses.

Finally, the most important advice Jack gave was to practice with your camera before you go out into the field. The 32nd Annual Chertok photography contest's entry deadline is April 16, 2020. Time to start practicing! *Sonia Stephens*

## 32nd Annual Chertok Florida Native Nature Photo Contest

**Deadline April 16, 2020**

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) announces its 2020 (32nd Annual) Kit and Sidney Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest, themed: Florida Native Nature. Competing will sharpen your photo skills, increase knowledge of Florida's amazing wildlife and wild places and teach valuable ethical field practices. In addition, there are prizes valued up to \$1,300 from OAS and co-sponsors Colonial Photo & Hobby and Tarflower Chapter, Florida Native Plant Society (Tarflower).

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 16, 2020 (postmarked or electronically submitted by date). Disqualified entries may optionally be replaced for no additional entry fee by following instructions provided upon notification. Tarflower plant aficionados 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 16, 2020; 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 forms to be posted soon. Contact me at [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com](mailto:mwilliams@cfl.rr.com) or (407) 644-0796 if you have questions.

*Teresa Williams, Chertok Photography Contest Chair*



Young photographer Photo: Jack Rogers

## Quail Research

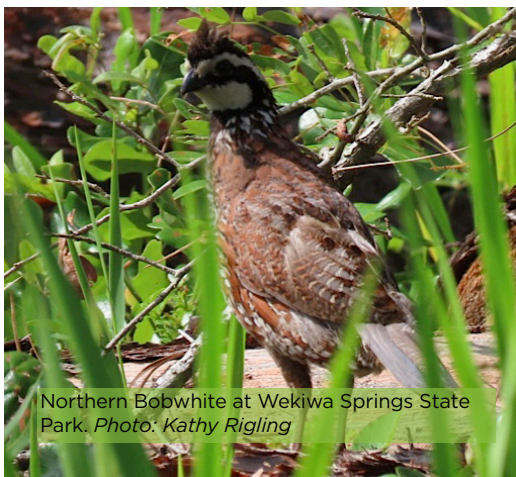
Tall Timbers Research Station north of Tallahassee — site of much of Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) Panhandle trip (p.3) — hosts a game bird program that dates back to founder Herbert L. Stoddard's seminal work (starting in the 1920s) on prescribed fire and the Northern Bobwhite. This quail is one of the most important game birds in North America.

Kathy Rigling and I attended a very interesting Bobwhite Field Day at the Escape Ranch near Kenansville in Osceola County last month. The presentations, some while touring different areas of the ranch, focused on fire, the introduction of cage-grown chicks, and supplemental feeding.

Good fire management to support quail populations maintains an open, grassy ground layer with sporadic shrub areas for cover. It specifies burn frequency of approximately every 2 years primarily in the warm growing season. Optimal size of burns to create the best mosaic of habitat for quail is small (40-60 acre burn blocks).

Bobwhites eat seeds and leaves, supplemented with insects during the breeding season. Nests are on the ground or in low vegetation.

Kathy asked what the impact of red imported fire ants was on quail. We had heard that fire ants heavily impact ground-nesting [Florida Grasshopper Sparrows](#). The presenter answered—for quail, ants have not been as great a problem as early researchers thought. Since quail chicks leave the nest within hours of hatching and can fly within 13-14 days, they are less vulnerable. Sparrow chicks are helpless, remaining in the nest until fledging 9-10 days after hatching. *Deborah Green*



Northern Bobwhite at Wekiwa Springs State Park. Photo: Kathy Rigling

## Hooded Merganser Magic: A Shape-Shifter with an Extra Eyelid

One of the most elegant and fascinating of species, the Hooded Merganser captivates birders.

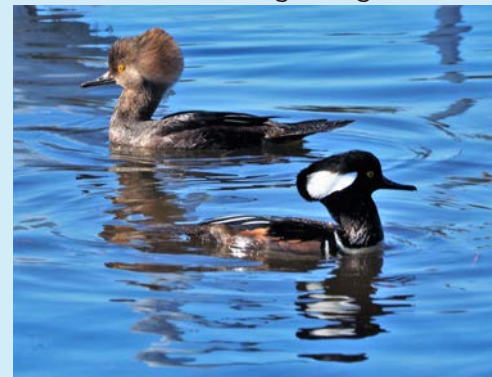
A small diving duck, the male has a vertical, fan-shaped white crest that may be raised or lowered, a white breast with two black bars on each side, a brilliant golden eye, and rusty-brown flanks.

The smaller female has an ample cinnamon crest, black back, and gray body. Both the male and female have long tails they raise when swimming, narrow wings, and thin, serrated mandibles for gathering fish, crayfish, amphibians and vegetation.

Hooded Mergansers visit shallow, wooded ponds, rivers and streams and can locate their food underwater by sight with eyes especially adapted for this. Their extra transparent eyelid—called a nictitating membrane—protects their eyes, much like a pair of swim goggles. A nictitating membrane, or third eyelid, is similarly found in fish, amphibians, reptiles, other birds and some mammals. Mergansers can feed by swimming with just their heads underwater, and ducklings are able to dive for food immediately after leaving the nest when they are only one day old!

You can find this species in pairs or small groups of up to 40. They winter with us and breed as far south as Georgia. During breeding season they court in groups of one or more females and several males. When the males raise their crests and expand the white patch, they often shake their heads. Or they engage in an elaborate display of “head-throwing” as they jerk their heads backwards,

then touch their backs with crests raised while executing a froglike croak.



Hooded Mergansers: left, female; right, male  
Photo: Sherry Fischer

Females court by bobbing their heads and emitting a hoarse “gack.” They nest in live or dead trees close to water in cavities most often 10 to 50 feet off the ground. Hooded Mergansers also will nest in boxes.

Like Wood Ducks and other cavity-nesting ducks, Hooded Mergansers often lay their eggs in other females' nests. They lay about 13 eggs in a clutch, but could produce up to 44.

These birds are fairly common and their population is stable according to the American Breeding Bird Survey. They visit many parts of the U.S. and Canada throughout the year, and are late fall migrants that move ahead of the winter ice. I was thrilled to see a pair in early November at the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge in Titusville. In previous years I also have found them on local retention ponds.

I look forward to seeing many more of these exquisite birds. Check out the extraordinary Hooded Merganser soon!  
*Linda Carpenter*

## NANPA Ethical Standards

The North American Nature Photography Association (NANPA) was officially incorporated in 1994, following a meeting of over 100 nature photographers at the Roger Tory Peterson Institute in Jamestown, New York. Roger Tory Peterson—the famous ornithologist, artist, and nature photographer—convened the group to discuss the future of nature photography. In contrast to photo clubs, NANPA focuses on environmental issues and became a critical advocate for the rights of nature photographers on issues from intellectual property to public land.

NANPA established a set of [Ethical Field Practices](#) that Orange Audubon Society requires that you follow in taking photos for the Chertok photo contest. Examples are: *Learn patterns of animal behavior, so as not to interfere with animal life cycles. Do not distress wildlife or their habitat. Respect the routine needs of animals.* Learn more [at this link](#) and visit [NANPA's Facebook page](#).  
*Deborah Green*

## Lighthouse Point Park, Ponce Inlet Field Trip with Knighthawk Audubon

It was a bright and chilly morning for bird watching on the north side of Ponce Inlet at Lighthouse Point Park. Twenty-five people attended Orange Audubon Society's November 23rd field trip including many newcomers.

We walked on the boardwalk through the dunes to the beach. The younger and more energetic among us climbed up a storm-damaged section of the jetty and traversed to the end. There we saw a Northern Gannet flying, along with its relatives, the Brown Pelicans, and other birds. The gannet was a life bird for many on the field trip.

Eight college students participated from the new University of Central Florida Knighthawk Audubon Chapter along with one Rollins Student. Three of these were part of the Conservation Leadership Initiative of Audubon Florida.

Thirty-six species of birds were spotted and recorded through eBird by Brian Cammarano of the Knighthawks. Highlights were Black Skimmers, Black-bellied Plovers, Sandwich Terns, White Pelicans, a Reddish Egret, and a Spotted Sandpiper. Two sea turtles and several dolphins were seen enjoying the day in the inlet. One Gopher Tortoise meandered around the parking area as we finished the trip. Everyone enjoyed the birding and camaraderie!

*Linda Gaunt*



Top, looking for Northern Gannets at the end of the Ponce Inlet jetty. Middle, the University of Central Florida (UCF) Knighthawk Audubon students plus Jeremy LaPlanche of Rollins College on left. 2018 CLI graduates Jenny Koester and Brian Cammarano are in front. Bottom, Looking over to Disappearing Island for birds. Photos, top and middle, Linda Gaunt; below, Deborah Green

## Ocklawaha River Drawdown Boat Trips

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) has the opportunity to see the drawdown of the Ocklawaha River—an opportunity provided to us by proponents of restoring the Ocklawaha as a free-flowing blueway and ecological greenway of national significance (see November 2019 OASis p.5). The winter drawdown for aquatic vegetation control is conducted only every 4 years and lasts 3-4 months. During the drawdown, springs along the river are visible. On February 9th and 22nd, OAS has 12 seats reserved each day to boat from Eureka boat ramp and explore the river. Price is \$35 to cover costs for the boat captain. Anyone who is interested can email [info@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:info@orangeaudubonfl.org) to be put on the participant list and receive more details when they are available.

*Deborah Green*

## Year End: Check On or Update Your Membership

The end of the calendar year is a great time to renew your 3-way membership in Orange Audubon Society (OAS), Audubon Florida and National Audubon Society if your membership has expired. That way you can always easily remember your expiration date.

A few tips to help OAS: Whether it is a renewal or not, make your check to Orange Audubon Society, and we will forward to National. Also, if you want to include an additional donation as part of your membership, you can. Otherwise the rate is \$20 (students \$15). If you renew directly through National and include more than \$20, the full amount goes to National. It takes a few months for a new membership to show up on our chapter roster provided by National. If you have questions about your expiration date, email [membership@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:membership@orangeaudubonfl.org).

Membership is extremely challenging with a large chapter—adding new members to our email blast list, updating emails and expiration dates, and sending reminders. National's too early mailings confuse the issue. I have discussed with another large Audubon chapter here in Florida how they handle membership and was told that they just let members sign up and update their emails on their own. However, we think there is local political clout associated with being a large chapter and, although extremely time-consuming, we continue to work to keep our membership rosters up to date. Please help us out and renew directly through OAS, either by sending a check to Orange Audubon Society, P.O. Box 941142, Maitland, FL 32794-1142 or by clicking on the [Join Now link](#) and paying through the Buy Now button. Thank you.

*Deborah Green, Membership Co-chair*

## Northeast Florida, Georgia, & South Carolina Birding, May 8-10, 2020

Orange Audubon Society is modifying this fun trip to emphasize migrating shorebirds. More details to come, but mark your calendar.

## November Volunteer Thanks

Volunteers who helped Orange Audubon Society on November 2nd-3rd at the Lake Eola Fiesta in the Park were Della Allen, Rick Baird, Steven Baird, Cyndi and Michael Kay, Wayne Kennedy, Brent Mobley, Lori Parsons, Kathy Rigling, Loretta Satterthwaite and Sonia Stephens. Thank you!

*Teresa Williams*

## Help Birding Ecotourism and the North Shore Birding Festival

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) North Shore Birding Festival (NSBF) will be January 16-20.



**Ecotourism** is "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education"

The International Ecotourism Society

facebook.com/northshorebirdingfestival  
facebook.com/lakeapokawildlifedrive

Participants in the 2019 festival came from 18 states, 40 Florida cities, 2 Canadian provinces, and the U.K., contributing to the local economy through birding ecotourism. This meets the definition from the International Ecotourism Society, as shown above.



Lorne Malo and Gian Basil lead 2017 festival trip. Photo: Beverley Sinclair

The goals of the NSBF are to spotlight the wonders of the Lake Apopka North Shore area and demonstrate its ecotourism potential. You can help OAS boost ecotourism by inviting friends and family members from other states to attend the festival. The 2020 festival so far has registrants from CA, FL, GA, KY, NC, NY, OH, SC and VA. Since the Lake Apopka North Shore is now the [top eBird spot in Florida](#), we have had great leaders for the past

three years and have been able to attract fabulous [additional leaders](#) this year.

For photographers, we have Sunrise Photography and Birding trips, plus a Sunset Trip and a Youth and Family Photography Trip. All proceeds go toward OAS' nature and environmental education center fund.

An afternoon trip is just \$25. A keynote with dinner just \$20—what a **great gift!** College students can register for half price trips. Read more about all the great offerings this year on the [festival website](#) and follow the [Facebook page](#) and/or sign up for the festival email list at [this link](#).

Email [festival@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:festival@orangeaudubonfl.org) or call (407) 637-2525 with questions. *Deborah Green*

## DECEMBER/JANUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Birds of Prey ID Class, Lake Apopka

December 1, 2019  
Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

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

December 5-8, 2019  
Contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796

### December Wekiwa Bird Survey

December 14, 2019  
Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

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

- **Bay Lake:** December 14, 2019  
Contact John Thomton at [jthomton@hotmail.com](mailto:jthomton@hotmail.com)
- **Wekiva 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 Thomton 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

### Your Biggest Year Yet field trip

January 4, 2020  
Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

### Birds of Prey ID Class, Lake Apopka

January 5, 2020  
Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

### January Wekiwa Bird Survey

January 12, 2020  
Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

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

January 12, 2020  
Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

### January Program: The Big Year - A 2011 Film about Three Men Obsessed with Birding - Greg Miller, Commentator

January 16, 2020  
Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

### North Shore Birding Festival, Lake Apopka

January 16-20, 2020  
Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

### Birds of Prey ID Class, Lake Apopka

February 2, 2020  
Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617