



**This Month's Program: January 16, 2020**

## The Big Year - A 2011 Film About Three Men Obsessed with Birding



Every January 1st, birders storm out across North America for a spectacularly competitive event called a Big Year. For three men in particular, 1998 would become a grueling battle for a new North American birding record. The 2011 movie, *The Big Year*, starring Steve Martin, Owen Wilson and Jack Black, was based on journalist Mark Obmascik's 2004 book about this competition. The charming and often hilarious Greg Miller, played in the film by Jack Black, was birding advisor on the film and had the opportunity to go birding with Jack and meet the other stars. Thanks to his consultation, the film shows the actual birding hotspots around the country where birders go to add to their Big Year lists (or life lists).

Many of us have seen the movie previously. If not, it is widely available in libraries and online streaming.

In this program, we will watch the full movie (1 hour and 42 minutes) and Greg will periodically turn down the volume and provide commentary. To be able to see the entire movie, we will start the program a half-hour early. The meet-and-greet with light refreshments and the opportunity to purchase nature-inspired merchandise starts at 6:00 p.m., and the film (with Greg's commentary) will be shown starting at 6:30 p.m. Free, but donations at the door are appreciated. Join us January 16th for a fun program. We look forward to seeing you. See location below. *Rick Baird, Programs Chair*

## Your Biggest Year Ever Field Trip, January 4, 2020

Do you keep a year list of birds you have seen? If you don't, have you been meaning to do so? For 2020, challenge yourself, your best birding buddy/rival or both to see more species than in any previous year.

To kick off your Biggest Year Ever join three of the area's most avid, experienced birding leaders for a morning field trip at Orlando Wetlands Park on January 4th. Last year we saw 50 species on this trip.

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



2019 Your Biggest Year Trip, led by Lori Mathis. Photo: Kathy Rigling

Lori will be joined by Larry Martin, Orange Audubon Society field trips committee chair and Mead Botanical Garden bird walk leader/liaison, and Gigi DelPizzo, Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission fisheries biologist and avid birder.

Join us Saturday, January 4, 2020, 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 me at (407) 488-9559 or [riglingk@aol.com](mailto:riglingk@aol.com). *Kathy Rigling*

Orange Audubon Society programs are free and no reservations are necessary.

Programs are the 3rd Thursday of each month (September-June) and all but 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

In October National Audubon Society 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.

## Central Florida and Climate Refugees

April 2019 data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicated that Orlando had the nation's fifth largest population increase in metro areas, surpassed by only Dallas, Phoenix, Houston and Atlanta. People traditionally moved to Florida from the Northeast for the warm climate. Now we increasingly have "climate refugees" moving to Central Florida to escape storms and rising sea levels. New residents coming from Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria are obvious climate refugees, but people move north from Miami-Dade and Broward counties and other parts of South Florida also. A new report from Monroe County states that if sea level rise is not curtailed by immediate reductions in greenhouse gases, the Florida Keys may eventually become unlivable. Yale Climate Connections (an initiative of the Yale Center for Environmental Communication and the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies) has compiled maps and resources showing which areas of the [U.S. will be most and least affected by climate change](#). This group points out that in addition to understanding climate threats to your home region, one should consider how your community can react to climate-related stresses and disasters. For example, some cities are responding to more-frequent heat waves by *planting trees, installing cool (light-colored) pavement, and opening cooling centers for residents*. Orange County's Mayor Demings has created the position and recently hired the county's first [Chief Sustainability & Resilience Officer](#), Jeff Benavides. In our TogetherGreen energy efficiency grant, Orange Audubon Society (OAS) worked with Jeff and know his emphasis on energy efficiency and ways to assist low-income communities. You can reach out to Jeff directly or send your ideas to me and I will bring them to his attention.



Top, May 30, 2015 rally in Orlando toward releasing the Florida Forever funding, after the November 2014 vote. Photo: Steve Holt. Bottom, December 2019 Orange Audubon Society members sending another message to the legislature. Photo: Milton Heiberg

## Florida Forever

Orange Audubon Society members value our public lands and understand the need for corridors to allow movement of umbrella species like the Florida Black Bear. Florida's \$65 billion annual tourism industry is inextricably linked to the utilization and enjoyment of its natural resources. Florida's land conservation programs also help secure the survival of agriculture, ranching, and forestry, as well as providing habitat for wildlife and places for people living in increasingly crowded areas to get out in nature. Former State Senator Paula Dockery's article on the 5th anniversary of Amendment 1 lists the [history of expenditures under the Florida Forever program and its immediate predecessor](#). In the 2019 state budget the \$33 million for Florida Forever was not enough. The \$100 million proposed by State Senator Linda Stewart for 2020 (SB 332) is better — and thank you, Senator Stewart — but it also is not enough. We invested \$300 million a year 25 years ago! We can certainly invest that much or more today. Audubon Florida and other environmental groups will be lobbying for the increase, and it's not too early to contact your state representatives to let them know this is important to you.

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 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)  
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**Birds of Prey  
Identification Class  
Lake Apopka  
January 5, 2020**

Orange Audubon Society will hold its second and third Birds of Prey Identification Classes on the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive on Sundays, January 5 and February 2, 2020. 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 co-founded the Chimney Rock Hawk Watch in New Jersey. No registration is required. Bob can be reached at (407) 459-5617. See you out there!



Red-shouldered Hawk. Photo: Mark Hainen

**Wekiwa Bird Survey  
January 11, 2020**

Orange Audubon Society's Wekiwa Springs State Park bird surveys are great fun. You do not have to be an expert birder to help, 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 or (407) 488-9559.

**Lake Jesup Conservation  
Area Limited Edition Trip**

On December 15th twelve birders enjoyed a stroll at the Lake Jesup Conservation Area, Marl Bed Flats Tract. Fifty-four species were seen, including a Great Horned Owl, Bald Eagles, Northern Harriers, Red-shouldered Hawks, and Ospreys. We also saw American White Pelicans, Wood Storks, Limpkins, Eastern Meadowlarks, Ruby-crowned Kinglets and others. Thanks to those who joined the Limited Edition Field Trips this year.  
*Bob Sanders*

**Limited Edition Field  
Trip to Fort De Soto Park  
Pinellas County  
January 12, 2020**



Fort De Soto 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. 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.

**Oakland Nature Preserve  
Bird Survey  
February 29, 2020**

Save the date for a one-time bird survey at Oakland Nature Preserve, west of Winter Garden, on February 29, 2020. If you'd like to join us, contact Kathy at riglingk@aol.com or (407) 488-9559.

**Thanks to OASis Contributors**

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) would like to thank the following writers whose contributions have greatly enhanced the OASis so far this year: Beth Alvi, Rick Baird, Gabbie Buendia, Linda Carpenter, Jennifer Carr, Mike Cliburn, Joe Dunn, Linda Gaunt, Melissa Gonzalez, Deborah Green, Marah Green, Gina Kent, Larry Martin, Terry Piper, Kathy Rigling, Bob Sanders, Sonia Stephens, and Teresa Williams.

OAS also thanks the photographers whose wonderful photos were used: ARCI, Sherry Fischer, Lynn Marie Folts, Sophia Fonseca, Linda Gaunt,

**Christmas Bird Counts**

The longest-running citizen science survey in the world is the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC), now in its 120th year.

The Wekiva River Basin CBC encompasses a 15-mile radius circle including the public land surrounding the Wekiva River. According to Dr. Jay Exum, compiler for this count, an average of about 60 participants log about 3000 group hours and thousands of miles on foot and by car, canoe and powerboat, golf cart and bicycle. Participants include natural resource agency biologists, private sector scientists, natural resource educators and avid birders, and numerous new birders are introduced to the sport/science every year.

Many of the bird species recorded during the annual CBCs depend on wild, connected corridors like the habitats along the Wekiva Wild and Scenic River for their annual, migratory habitat needs. Data from the CBC supports preservation and continued land acquisition efforts. We hope to have full information on the local CBCs and to report interesting trends in an upcoming issue.

*Deborah Green*

**Clermont Christmas Bird  
Count, January 5, 2020**

If you missed the earlier local CBCs and want to get in on the fun, John Thomson, OAS member and Disney employee, welcomes new participants to the Clermont CBC. Contact him at john.thomton@gmail.com.

Melissa Gonzalez, Deborah Green, Mark Hainen, Milton Heiberg, Pat Husband, Mary Keim, Adam Kent, Susan Kirby, Thomas Ledford, Jerry Mathis, John Middleton Sam Mitcham, Greg Miller, Kathy Rigling, Jack Rogers, Seacrest Wolf Preserve, Beverley Sinclair, Reptile World Serpentarium, Robert Sena, Beverley Sinclair, Rebecca Smith, Joyce Stefancic, St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, Topic Films, Michelle Wilson, and many Chertok photo contest winners.

Email newsletter@orangeaudubonfl.org to contribute.  
*Deborah Green*

## Youth Photography Workshop

**January 18, 2020**

As part of the North Shore Birding Festival, a workshop to help young people improve their photography skills will be Saturday, January 18th from 12:30 p.m.–2:30 p.m. Children must be accompanied by a registered adult, and all adults must have a child signed up for the trip.

Location is near the McDonald Canal Boat Ramp, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. Instructor Jack Rogers is an award-winning nature photographer and photography teacher, who works as a geology professor at Valencia College. Through previous youth photography trips for Orange Audubon Society, he has mentored young photographers who have won the Youth category of OAS' annual Kit and Sidney Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest.

Co-leader Lee Ann Posavad is a photographer who enjoys teaching her grandchildren photography. Wading birds and Wilson's Snipe are some typical birds the group might see and photograph in the McDonald Canal area. Registration is [at this link](#).



Young birders looking at a Wilson's Snipe in the McDonald Canal area during the 2018 North Shore Birding Festival. Photo: Deborah Green

## Save the Date! 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 and email [info@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:info@orangeaudubonfl.org) to be put on a notification list.

## Wilson's Snipe and American Woodcock



Wilson's Snipe. Photo: Joyce Stefancic

Wilson's Snipe and its cousin, the American Woodcock, are secretive shorebirds that winter in our area.

The plump, long-billed Wilson's Snipe is among the most widespread shorebirds in North America but difficult to see thanks to its cryptic coloration and secretive nature. Buffy streaks down its back and stripes on its head are the key features of this cryptic coloration. Its distinctive long straight bill, used for foraging in the soft ground, can reach 3-4 inches.

Wilson's Snipes [breed across northern North America and winter from the southern U.S. through Central America to Venezuela](#). In winter, they may feed closely in groups and fly in close formation. Snipes have pointed wings and are strong flyers, reaching speeds of more than 60 miles per hour. If you flush one, it bursts from cover with a zigzagging flight.

Wilson's Snipe is among the few shorebirds that are still hunted with permits—in Florida from November 1st to February 15th. Hunting has not been shown to influence large-scale population trends, but draining or conversion of its wetlands habitat has an impact. Snipe use tactile feeding and may sleep much of the day and feed around dawn and dusk. [They probe for insect larvae, as well as snails, crustaceans, and worms.](#)

The snipe's chunkier relative, the American Woodcock, is distinguished by its shorter legs and unmarked cinnamon belly, contrasting with the snipe's white belly. The woodcock breeds in the Eastern United States, and [most populations winter in the southern part of North America](#). Outside of the nesting season, woodcocks are generally solitary or feed in small clusters of 2-4 individuals.

American Woodcocks eat earthworms and other invertebrates in the soil. They forage by probing with their long bills, of which the upper mandibles are flexible and specialized for capturing and extracting earthworms.

Woodcocks sometimes rock their bodies backward and forward as they forage, shifting their weight heavily from foot to foot, [as in this YouTube video](#). It is thought that vibrations from this motion cause earthworms to move and make slight sounds that the woodcock can hear or feel.



American Woodcock. Photo: Joyce Stefancic

Woodcocks, like snipe, are also hunted, in this case mostly up north on their breeding territory. As for snipe, hunting has not been shown to influence large-scale population trends. Declines in woodcock populations may be related to natural forest succession combined with habitat loss due to development.

Learning to spot Wilson's Snipe isn't that hard to do. But to spot American Woodcocks you must be out really early or just be lucky, as they are more secretive. Kathy Rigling and I both saw our first woodcocks in Florida on this year's Zellwood Christmas Bird Count. Skilled birding leader Gallus Quigley says that you can spot them very early in the morning at the McDonald Canal area, and we will be looking for them on the early trips at the [North Shore Birding Festival](#).

*Deborah Green (with information from Lorne Malo and Cornell Lab of Ornithology's All About Birds)*

*In case you missed it ...*

**Amazing Snakes**

The room was filled with excitement, lots of questions, and a few slithering special guests at this month's general program. Attendees had the pleasure of hearing from George Van Horn, lifelong reptile lover and owner of the Reptile World Serpentarium near St. Cloud. This serpentarium has been in operation since 1972 and is one of very few places where visitors can view live snake milking shows. George and serpentarium volunteer, Adam, generously recreated this show at this month's program and answered members' burning questions about their venomous research.



Top, George Van Horn and apprentice. Bottom, program attendees looking at venomous snakes. Photos: Deborah Green

George opened the program by talking about the scientific and medical value of the serpentarium's work. The serpentarium houses about 500 snakes that regularly provide venom for research and anti-venom. Every year anywhere from 5,000-7,000 people in the United States are bitten by

venomous pit vipers, the most common class of venomous snakes in our region. Treating these bites in a timely and effective manner is a matter of life and death, as venom disperses through the circulatory system into human tissue and works to paralyze muscles.

A specific trace amount of anti-venom can reverse devastating bite symptoms. The venom collected is injected in very small amounts into a domestic host animal that then produces antibodies that are then collected and purified. This can be used as an anti-venom to activate the immune system in order to block the activity of the deadly toxins.

A special cure-all anti-venom can be made by combining the venom of a cottonmouth, mojave rattlesnake, western diamondback and eastern diamondback. Two of these snakes — the cottonmouth and the eastern diamondback — are found in Florida. The two other venomous snakes found in Florida are the coral snake and the dusky pygmy rattlesnake. All of these are pit vipers except for the coral snake, which is related to the cobra.

Pit vipers are distinguished by openings in their faces between their eyes and nose that sense heat. They have long fangs that extend during a strike to dispense venom. Cobras have short fixed fangs. The smaller size of coral snakes can be deceiving. Their bites can feel relatively painless or may go undetected at first, but they release the same amount of venom as a king cobra, enough to fully paralyze an adult.

A live milking demonstration followed with George and Adam milking three snakes. Beginning with an eastern diamondback and following with a coral — the excitement grew with each snake and peaked with an active and vocal cobra. Using yard-long hooks, the pair coaxed the snakes into a position that would allow them to safely grab them behind their heads. From there, they guided the snakes to a vial where the snakes would bite down and release venom.

George's expertise and passion for his work made for a very exciting and informative program. To learn more about the serpentarium and plan a visit, go to [www.reptileworldserpentarium.com](http://www.reptileworldserpentarium.com).

*Gabbie Buendia*

**2019 Panhandle Trip**

The Orange Audubon Society trip to Florida's Panhandle proved to be all that I had hoped for and more. The four days were packed with adventures, information, and great food.

Tall Timbers Research Center was wonderful. Everything from the accommodations and great guides, to spending time in the beautiful and treasured longleaf pine forest, to seeing and learning about Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, to banding five bird species was a fabulous experience.

The day at Seacrest Wolf Center was so memorable. To be in the presence of these magnificent animals was exciting enough, but having them interact with us as we sat among them was beyond amazing. For a first-time attendee, this place was magic.

For me, the highlight of the trip was going to St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. This national wildlife refuge is so beautiful, and has such varied habitats, that birding there was definitely something that I will repeat many times in the future.



American Flamingo at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. Photo: John Middleton

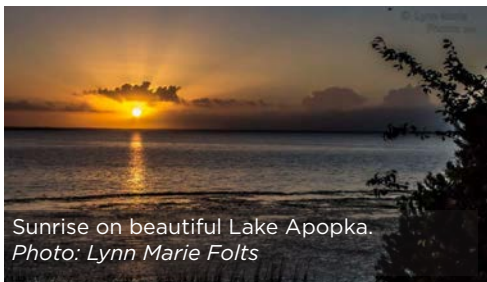
A single American Flamingo had been at St. Marks since last October ([November OASis](#) p.4) and we were fortunate enough to see it. It was an exciting "lifer" for most of us. Other lifers for many in the group—Snow Geese, American Black Duck and LeConte's and Henslow's sparrows—were among the 120+ species seen during the trip.

I encourage everyone to not miss the opportunity to join Orange Audubon on the fun Panhandle Trip next winter.

*Joyce Stefancic*

## Continued Efforts to Clean Lake Apopka

Through the St. Johns River Water Management District's halting of nutrient inputs into Lake Apopka after the state buyout of the farms, by 20+ years of restoring filtering marshes, through removing bottom-feeding gizzard shad and other lake restoration efforts, the District has dramatically cleaned up water quality in Lake Apopka. But there are still substantial organic sediments, aka muck, on the lake bottom.



Sunrise on beautiful Lake Apopka.  
Photo: Lynn Marie Folts

The District's Shoreline Alteration/Dredge & Fill permit application for dredging in Lake Apopka is working its way through the permitting process. If muck could be removed through dredging, it would mean the water column would be clearer, allowing in more light so that more submerged aquatic vegetation, like eelgrass, could grow and fish habitat would improve. It would be cost-prohibitive to dredge the entire 30,000-acre lake, so the District has identified areas with deeper unconsolidated sediment — depositional areas — and targeted those zones for dredging. A possibility is that the muck would be pumped to the lake's north shore to provide capping of residual pesticides in the soils there.

Dredging is very expensive, and knowing that the permitting process can take months, sometimes years, the District is applying for permits now. Final planning then can start expeditiously if and when money becomes available.

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) has joined Friends of Lake Apopka and long supported the comeback of the lake, which as a by-product has allowed the North Shore and other adjacent areas to become better and better bird habitat. *Deborah Green*

## Looking to Buy a Pair of Binoculars?

Consensus among good birders is that good binoculars are the most important tool in birding. At the 2020 [North Shore Birding Festival](#) (p. 8), Orange Audubon Society for the first time will host sales of optics along with our North Shore Birding Festival t-shirts at the keynote presentations Thursday at Leu Gardens and Friday and Saturday at the University of Florida Mid-Florida Research and Education Center, 2725 S. Binion Rd., Apopka, FL 32703. [Register for the Friday and Saturday dinners/keynotes for just \\$20.](#)

To help you select the best binoculars for your budget, see these two links from National Audubon Society. [How to choose binoculars.](#) [Binocular guide](#)

From Linda Carpenter's 2015 *OASis* article: The most common binoculars for birders are 8 x 42. The number 8 refers to the power, or how many times the image is enlarged (magnification); and 42 refers to the diameter of the objective lens that controls how much light is available for viewing. When you divide the second number by the first number, the larger the result, the more light that can pass through. An 8 x 42 lets in the most light of the common configurations and is best for looking at fast-moving birds. If you have a steady hand, you may prefer a 10 x 42 for the greater magnification. Hunters, or those who enjoy birding in low light but seek greater magnification, may prefer a 10 x 50 with a larger objective lens.

Roof prism binoculars, with the eyepiece and objective lenses positioned in a straight line, are increasingly what birders are buying, as they have streamlined shape and durability. Most good binoculars not only have a diopter feature that allows you to adjust the lenses for differences in your eyes but also come

with instructions on how to adjust the eyepieces. Many binoculars today also have close focus, should you want to look at butterflies!

Waterproofing and fog proofing are important features. People without glasses use fold up or twist-up eyecups. Twist-up are preferable to the fold-down style that easily becomes brittle in Florida's humidity.

New buyers should go to a store to try the binoculars rather than purchasing online. If you can't make it to a Friday night or Saturday night keynote to try out the binoculars that Redstart Birding will be bringing, local stores that carry binoculars are Wild Birds Unlimited, in Winter Springs and Eustis, and Colonial Photo & Hobby in Orlando. Take some time, do your research, and invest in binoculars to enhance your birding!

*Deborah Green with Linda Carpenter*

## Checklist-a-day Challenge

Cornell Lab of Ornithology's [eBird](#) has offered a challenge. If you want to learn more about eBirding at the North Shore Birding Festival (p.8), sign up for [Trip 29 Recording What You See: eBirding and Checklists](#), January 19th, 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. led by Chris Newton, Kathy Rigling and Jason Ward (National Audubon Society).



Right at Home—Thick-billed Vireo. 2019 Chertok Photo Contest Honorable Mention, Novice category. Photo: Rebecca Smith

## Rising Temperatures May Be Making Birds Smaller

For nearly 40 years a dedicated team of researchers and volunteers has been taking the measurements of thousands of birds that have collided with buildings in Chicago, Illinois—and they found a surprising trend. Based on data from more than 70,000 individual birds collected between 1978 and 2016, on average, birds lost 2.6% of their mass, and had 2.4% shorter legs and 1.3% longer wings, the team reported in the *Journal Ecology Letters*. Researchers hypothesize that the birds may be shrinking in order to stay cool in warmer temperatures, or their growth may be stunted by the heat. Why longer wings is more mysterious, they said, but could serve to make flying more efficient.



**Orlando Wetlands Festival  
February 15, 2020**

We missed this fun bi-annual festival last year, but it is back! On February 15, 2020, from 9:00 a.m to 3:00 p.m. join Orange Audubon Society (OAS) at the Orlando Wetlands Festival.

Since 2001, this festival has promoted community awareness of the Orlando Wetlands Park and how it is the pioneering wetland-restoration-for-water-treatment project, that has spawned other wildlife habitat recreating projects around the state.

Orlando Wetlands Park attracted an estimated 49,094 visitors in 2018. Several thousand attendees are expected at the festival. Parking, vendors and exhibits are at Fort Christmas Historical Park where buses will transport participants on guided tours to and from Orlando Wetlands Park.

OAS members and Orlando Wetlands Park volunteers will lead bird and plant walks, photography walks, and bus tours throughout the day. OAS, a co-sponsor since the festival's inception, will also be present with outreach and nature merchandise sales. If we have enough volunteers, we will also offer OAS' kids art activity. If you can help, contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796 or mwilliams@cfl.rr.com.

At Fort Christmas there will be presentations, games, live animals, exhibits and vendors, and native plant give-aways (while supplies last).

Bring the whole family for a day of outdoor fun and learning! Bounce houses, games and activities for kids, including animal stage presentations, live music, prize drawings and a silent auction round out the fun.

If we have enough volunteers, we will offer our kids art activity. If you would like to volunteer to co-lead a trip, contact Randy Snyder at rssmhk@gmail.com. *Deborah Green*

**Sunrise Photo Shoot  
Orlando Wetlands Park  
February 22, 2020**

Renowned professional photographer, author and instructor of nature photography Milton Heiberg will teach a sunrise photo workshop on Saturday, February 22nd from 6:00-10:00 a.m. Participants will photograph the sunrise with water reflections at one of the most scenic locations in Central Florida—Orlando Wetlands Park. The park's many gray sun-bleached tree branches make interesting, photogenic perches for avian subjects.



Orlando Wetlands Park's distinctive flooded palms at sunrise. *Photo: Milton Heiberg*

The rest of the morning will be spent photographing flying and perching birds and other wildlife. Participants should have a working knowledge of digital SLR photography. Bring a tripod and a 300 mm or longer lens (tele-extenders help). Cost is \$60 (Audubon members); \$75 (non-members), and class is limited to 12 adult participants. To register contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796 or mwilliams@cfl.rr.com.

**Ocklawaha River  
Drawdown Boat Trips**

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) has been given the opportunity by proponents of restoring a free-flowing blueway to see the drawdown of the Ocklawaha River (November 2019 OASis p.5). The winter drawdown for aquatic vegetation control is conducted only every 4 years and lasts 3-4 months.

On February 9th and 22nd, OAS has 12 seats reserved each day for a 4-hour boat trip from the Eureka boat ramp. A few of these spaces are still available as of press time. Price is \$35 per person to cover costs for the boat captain. Email [info@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:info@orangeaudubonfl.org) for information. *Deborah Green*

**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. Tarflower plant aficionados will be available as mentors to help with plant identification.

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. 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 will be posted soon. Contact me at mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or (407) 644-0796 if you have questions.

*Teresa Williams, Chertok  
Photography Contest Chair*



Young photographer *Photo: Jack Rogers*

## Show Time for the North Shore Birding Festival

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) 4th North Shore Birding Festival (NSBF) will be January 16-20. The festival planning committee, consisting of Linda Gaunt, Melissa Gonzalez, Kathy Rigling, Loretta Satterthwaite, Bob Stamps, Teresa Williams, and myself, received feedback from last year's participants and modified plans accordingly. This year we have added a volunteer on every trip to help with logistics and participant engagement.

When Kathy and I attended the Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival the following weekend, we learned that Greg Miller of Wildside Nature Tours had been talking up the festival to other leaders.

With Greg's good PR and additional help from Robert Wilson, talented digiscoper and rep for KOWA Sporting Optics, a festival sponsor, we recruited gifted birder Mitchell Harris of Brevard County. Audrey Whitlock, a skilled birder from North Carolina who winters in Brevard County, had signed up as a



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

participant in 2019 but had offered to help lead. This year we took her up on it.

I had signed up for a trip at Space Coast led by Alex Lamoreaux, whose reputation as a top birder preceded him. As he is not only a skilled leader but full of natural history information, I asked if he gave programs. That led to his participation as a speaker and leader all four days of our festival.

Our last new celebrity leader, Jason Ward, came through a tip from UCF professor Sonia Stephens, a new member of the OAS board. We checked Jason's YouTube series [Birds of North America](#) and were sold. I had the chance to meet Jason in person at the Audubon Convention

in Milwaukee and invited him to participate.

These great new leaders join our fantastic returning leaders. Please read all about the speakers and leaders for our 4-year old festival [at this link](#). The fact that the Lake Apopka North Shore is now the [top eBird spot in Florida](#) certainly helps us attract great trip leaders. But we like to think we have a friendly, inexpensive festival, dedicated to demonstrating birding ecotourism, and that this helps too.

An afternoon trip is just \$25; a morning trip including lunch just \$35; a keynote with dinner just \$20. College students register for half price trips. If you are not the type who goes on field trips, consider supporting the festival by attending one of the keynotes.

Read 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. We hope to see you! *Deborah Green*

## JANUARY/FEBRUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Your Biggest Year Yet Field Trip, Orlando Wetlands Park

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 11, 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

### February Wekiwa Bird Survey

February 1, 2020

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

### Birds of Prey ID Class, Lake Apopka

February 2, 2020

Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617

### Ocklawaha Drawdown Trip

February 9 and 22, 2020

info@orangeaudubonfl.org

### Great Backyard Bird Count

February 14-17, 2020

www.birdsource.org/gbbc

### Orlando Wetlands Festival, Christmas

February 15, 2020

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

### February Field Trip: Participate in Orlando Wetlands Festival, Christmas

February 15, 2020

Contact Larry at (407) 647-5834

### February Program: Translocating Florida Scrub-Jays - Lauren Deaner

February 20, 2020

Contact Rick at (407) 277-3357

### Sunrise Photo Shoot, Orlando Wetlands Park

Feb 22, 2020

Contact Teresa at (407) 644-0796

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

February 23, 2020

Contact Bob at (407) 459-5617