



Introduction of Friends—Bobcat and River Otter, 2019 Chertok Photo Contest, Honorable Mention, Novice Category. Photo: Andria Hoag

### This Month's Program:

**June 18, 2020**

## 32nd Annual Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest—Virtually

For the 32nd year, Orange Audubon Society (OAS) will celebrate the end of its season with an exclusive showing of eligible entries in its Kit and Sidney Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest, culminating with announcement of the winning photographs. However, this year we will do the program on YouTube Live on OAS' new [YouTube channel](#) at 7 p.m. on June 18th.

The program will provide a virtual criss-crossing tour of Florida, with beautiful images taken from east to west coasts and from the Panhandle to the Everglades. The suspense will mount ... who will win the contest in the Youth, Novice and Advanced Amateur/Professional categories? At the program's conclusion winners will be announced and over \$1,300 in ribbons, cash and other prizes will be awarded.

This is OAS' 54th year and the 32nd year of this wonderful photo contest. We hope you join us! Just go to OAS' YouTube channel at 7 p.m. on June 18th. Here is [the link](#).

*Teresa Williams, Chertok Contest Chair*

### No Silent Auction

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, OAS has decided to cancel the Silent Auction this June. We understand that many people have been affected by the current situation. We felt it best not to compete for potential donations when there is so much emergency help needed elsewhere.

We thank all of our sponsors who have already provided donations, including the Rusty Anchor Boat Rides, Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, and the Kennedy Space Center. As we continue to strive for our long-term goal to fund a Nature and Environmental Education Center, we will auction your donated items to the membership at future programs. We also want to thank all of our previous sponsors who have supported the OAS Silent Auction in years past; we certainly couldn't have done it without you. Your generosity to OAS is deeply appreciated and we look forward to your contributions to the auction next year. *Linda Gaunt and Lori Parsons, Silent Auction Co-Chairs*

### Global Big Day 2020

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology held a Global Big Day on May 9th to produce a snapshot of the number of species of birds and the populations of those species worldwide.

This year 6,501 of the approximately 10,500 known bird species of the world were observed! Cornell exceeded its goal with 121,907 eBird checklists submitted and 50,917 participants!



Least Bittern at Orlando Wetlands Park. Photo: Mary Keim

Orange County birders also exceeded previous participation. This year 122 species were observed with 99 eBird checklists submitted, in contrast to 2019 with 116 species observed and 56 checklists submitted. A big thank you to all who participated in this citizen science effort. Considering that some of our favorite birding spots had limited or no access, this shows the determination of our birding community.

The top Orange County hotspots for the Global Big Day were Orlando Wetlands Park (69 species), Wekiwa Springs State Park (61 species), and Tosohatchee Wildlife Management Area (51 species). To explore other county, state or country data for Global Big Day, go to [this link](#).

If you missed participating, consider doing the June Challenge, see p.8. For more on how to eBird, see p.6.

*Kathy Rigling*

### Last Issue of Season

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) programs go on hiatus in July and August, as the board plans for next year. Meanwhile please follow OAS' [Facebook page](#).

This month's issue has book reviews for your summer reading pleasure, starting on p.3.

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.

Programs are normally held at Harry P. Leu Gardens

However, they will be held virtually until further notice due to COVID-19 health precautions.





## COVID-19 and Climate

Last October National Audubon Society released [Survival by Degrees: 389 Bird Species on the Brink](#), shedding light on how 389 out of 604 North American bird species are being affected by climate change.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have just had one of the biggest single drops in the amount of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emitted by humans in modern history.

### CO2 Emissions and Atmospheric Concentration

Millions of people stayed home. Air travel ground to a halt, and car traffic lessened. Manufacturing plants slowed or stopped. Public buildings closed. Even construction slowed down (elsewhere, though perhaps not in Central Florida). Nearly every sector of the energy-using economy reacted.

During the most restrictive and extensive lockdowns, emissions in some countries reached nearly 30 percent below last year's averages. But despite these unprecedented reductions, atmospheric concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> *will still go up in 2020*.

About half of the current CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will accumulate in the atmosphere (the other half will be absorbed by plants and the oceans). When we last wrote about CO<sub>2</sub> and how atmospheric concentration was measured ([June 2019 OASis](#), p.3), CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations had just hit 415 parts per million (ppm). This May the concentration has crept up to about 418 ppm, the highest ever recorded in human history ([link](#)).

Many sources of CO<sub>2</sub> and other pollutants have continued on autopilot, despite the shutdown. Appliances continue to run, office buildings must be maintained, and some factories continue to hum ([link](#)).

[350.org](#) is a climate action organization named after 350 ppm, the maximum proposed atmospheric concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> we need to maintain for earth's systems to continue as we know them. This group states the simple mandate: Keep fossil fuels in the ground and quickly transition to 100% renewable energy.

University sustainability programs have convinced their universities'

administrations to *divest* from companies investing in fossil fuels. If we as individuals have investments, we can transfer them to funds that have divested from fossil fuels.

Faith-based institutions have joined universities in divesting, and this begins to signal investors and politicians that coal and other fossil fuels need to be phased out. It also levels the playing field for renewable energy to grow, transform our economy and provide real climate solutions ([link](#)).

### Avoid Palm Oil

Palm oil is probably the world's most popular edible vegetable oil, made from the pulp of the fruit of oil palms. Brazil is already a global agricultural powerhouse and the world's largest exporter of beef, coffee, maize, soya and sugar, but it [wants to expand into the lucrative palm oil trade](#), now dominated by Indonesia and Malaysia. This means clearing of the Amazon forest, that absorbs 2 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year (5% of the world's annual emissions), making it a vital part of preventing climate change. The number of fires in the Amazon rainforest increased 30.5% in 2019 from the previous year, while deforestation rose 85%, according to Brazil's space research agency INPE. Fires in the Amazon not only mean that carbon-absorbing forest is disappearing, but the flames themselves are emitting millions of tons of carbon every day.

Our avoiding palm oil can help a little and is healthier, but it is now in many, many products. Read labels, as in this [link](#).

### Join a Solar Co-op

The 7th Solar Co-op in Orange County and the 54th in Florida will launch June 5th. The nonprofit group Solar United Neighbors (SUN) now organizes these co-ops, open free to all Orange County residents. SUN staff will look at your rooftop remotely to determine if your property is suitable for solar and email their assessment. Information meetings are being held remotely via Zoom, starting June 10th. Check out [this link](#) to register and to check out SUN's informative website.

OAS Conservation Committee



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).

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## June Summer Reading

### Migratory Bird Treaty Act

In February and March, more than 43,000 Audubon members—among nearly 200,000 people across the country—submitted public comments opposing a proposal from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to remove bird protections under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Despite this public opposition, FWS will release a draft environmental analysis, called an “Environmental Impact Statement,” on this harmful policy soon. Sign up for [National Audubon Society Action Alerts](#) to stay engaged.

### Everyone Outside

You don’t have to Google far to find articles about the [increase in interest in birding](#), in part credited to the stay-at-home orders for COVID-19. Bicycling also has had an [amazing surge in interest](#). The [Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive](#) has been closed since March 13th but is open to bicycling and hiking. And bicycling there grows every day.

People are getting outside, and we hope they will like the experience in nature and continue to get out. Florida legislators who diverted the land acquisition fund (Florida Forever) coffers for other purposes need to be reminded: *People want and need their conservation and recreation lands.*

Here is an [excellent article on the COVID-19 virus](#) and how it spreads. It’s not just physical distancing that requires our care and attention — the force with which we are expelling potentially virus-laden air from our lungs and the amount of fluid it rides on is very important.

Our natural spaces offer us the perfect places to be alone without feeling “lonely” in ways we may feel inside our homes.

In groups in these places, we don’t need to engage in much conversation to feel connected to each other in social activities — like sitting and walking on the beach, kayaking and canoeing, fishing from inlet and lake banks, walking the trails and stopping to eat a bag lunch, cycling the Lake Apopka North Shore, and bird, butterfly and dragonfly watching anywhere.

OAS Conservation Committee

“Those who dwell among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life.” *Rachel Carson*

### Leave Only Footprints: My Acadia-to-Zion Journey Through Every National Park by Conor Knighton

Conor Knighton, known primarily for his work as a correspondent on CBS Sunday Morning, spent 2016 doing what many of us dream of—taking a year to explore all 59 U.S. National Parks.

The idea was born out of the overwhelming desire to escape the heartache of a broken engagement coinciding with the 100th anniversary of the National Parks System. With little time to plan and a last minute green-light to turn the adventure into an ongoing series of reports for CBS Sunday Morning, Knighton began his journey on January 1st in Acadia National Park to witness the first light of the year as it touched the continental United States.



Acadia National Park. Photo: Deborah Green

The circuitous nature of his adventure, which often was influenced by what would make good tv at a given moment instead of geographic proximity, resulted in a much more interesting book than a chronological log of his wanderings might have. Instead he organized the chapters by themes. This allowed him to explore “the threads that tie them together — and that tie us to nature.”

Beginning with sunrise he examines current events, philosophical ponderings, love, life, and natural phenomena all through the lens of our National Parks system. By connecting each park to a theme, he paints a picture of the important role the parks have in conserving nature, our history and providing access to spaces in which we can begin to rewild ourselves. Florida’s three national parks are highlighted in chapters focusing on water, animals, and forgiveness. I will leave it up to you to guess where in Florida you might find each of those things. This book provides an eclectic mix of fun facts, interesting people, and snapshots of iconic landmarks

that gives the reader a taste of the lands out there just waiting to be experienced. If there is one complaint to be made, it is that each chapter feels (unsurprisingly) as if it were a tv segment. They are neat, concise and leave you wanting more. This is the perfect book for armchair travel in this time when many of us are staying home dreaming of when we can explore once more.

*Christina Wray*

### The Kids’ Guide to Birds of Florida

To help young people learn more about birds, try *The Kids’ Guide to Birds of Florida* by Stan Tekiela, published in 2019. This field guide is a very appealing colorful guide to common birds found in Florida. It is arranged by color to help youngsters quickly locate birds.

Each featured bird has a two-page spread with a crisp photograph on the left side. The right side key includes details for each bird such as main identifying features, habitat, diet, and life cycle.

Males and females with different coloration are found in their appropriate predominant color section, i.e., male Indigo Buntings mostly blue, female Indigo Buntings mostly brown).

For each species one key identifying feature is prominently displayed under the title, i.e., Common Ground Dove — look for the short tail. For each species next to the basic information are small pictures showing the type of nest, type of feeder it may visit, and distribution in Florida.

The layout on each page is very clean and easy to follow. There is even a small section where the child can check that he or she saw the bird. In addition to the field guide portion there is additional information about bird anatomy, types of nests, citizen science projects and ethical birding.

This is an excellent field guide, specific to Florida, both for children and for beginners due to its easy to follow layout, clearly identifiable photographs and concise but interesting information. *Kathy Rigling*

## June Summer Reading



Sunset on the Lake Apopka Loop Trail. Photo: Stephen Coleman

**Atlas of a Lost World by Craig Childs**

We all know how hot Florida summers can be, and if you're looking for a cooler escape I might suggest stepping back in time — to Ice Age America. In *Atlas of a Lost World*, writer Craig Childs takes readers on a journey through North America's prehistory, combining his own travels with recreating the environments and challenges that the first Americans would have faced.

Childs' journey starts in Alaska, near the site of the former Bering land bridge, where he explores the tundra and glaciers by kayak and foot, evoking a vanished ecosystem with mammoths, short-faced bears, and sabretoothed cats. He travels along the Pacific Northwest coast by kayak and hikes in Texas, Colorado, and the desert Southwest. All along, he combines discussion of the archeological sites and tool technologies of Ice Age Americans with a sense of the very different climates and faunas with which they had to adapt to survive. The first Americans were definitely not at the top of the food chain.

While this book is not very "birdy" (the focus is more on large mammals), there is a Florida connection. In one chapter, Childs visits Florida, kayaking the Aucilla and Suwanee rivers in the Panhandle. During the Ice Age, the sea level was much lower and the Florida Gulf Coast and Big Bend areas were above water as a massive coastal plain mixed with woods. Bison, mastodons, glyptodonts, dire wolves, and scimitar cats (even more

intimidating than sabretooths!) made the area a dangerous place for the first Floridians. The bones of these species can still be found in the river bottoms and at the bottoms of sinkholes, along with Native American artifacts.

One of the things I appreciated most about this book was the way Childs made connections between the ecosystems of today and those of the past, evoking what those places might have been like 15,000 years ago. Ice Age North America was very different from North America today. In turn, the climate and wildlife of North America even 100 years from now will be drastically different due to climate change.

I find myself wondering how people 15,000 years from now will reconstruct the present day, and what they will think of our relationship to the natural world.

*Reviewed by Sonia Stephens*

**Wilding by Isabella Tree**

What would happen if we let nature manage itself, instead of trying to micromanage the landscape for human benefit? Isabella Tree soon found out when she and her husband, Charlie Burrell, decided to stop farming on his ancestral estate in Sussex, England.

'We walked knee-deep through ox-eye daisies, bird's foot trefoil, ragged robin, knapweed, red clover, lady's bedstraw, crested dog's tail and sweet vernal grass, kicking up clouds of butterflies — common blues, meadow browns, ringlets, marbled whites, small and Essex skippers, and

grasshoppers, hoverflies and all sorts of bumblebees.' They hadn't known they had been missing the low-level surround sound thrumming of insects.

One of the birds they wanted to encourage to return is the turtle dove. In the 1960s there were 250,000 turtle doves in Britain. Today there are fewer than 5,000.

Unique among European dove species, [turtle doves are long-distance migrants, travelling between Europe and Africa twice every year](#). They face challenges from desertification and hunting in their wintering grounds in Africa and the firing squads of the Mediterranean countries on their migration to England. Once they arrive they are faced with changes in land use, particularly intensive farming. They are now listed as 'vulnerable' on the IUCN red list.



Turtle Dove, Oxfordshire UK. Photo: Pete Blanchard

You may be familiar with the [Wildlands Network](#) here, which in 1991 embarked on an initiative to reconnect, restore, and rewild North America so that life in all its diversity can thrive. Instructive is the story of what happened when wolves were reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park. Following their predation of the herbivores such as elk, vegetation was allowed to regrow to the extent that rivers were restored to their original courses.

North America still has large expanses of natural landscapes. But what do you do in England which has been heavily cultivated for centuries? The farm on the Knepp Estate, 3500 acres of arable and dairy, was struggling to survive and make a profit in the late nineties. The decision to stop farming was hard; the staff had to be laid off and the herds and farm machinery had to be sold. However, the decision to restore the land as close as (*cont. next pg.*)

## June Summer Reading

### Wilding by Isabella Tree, *cont.*

possible to its original state became a positive and fascinating project.

Of course, laws, rules and regulations from the likes of the Dept. for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and the EU Common Agricultural Policy had to be taken into account. But with help and advice from ecologists, naturalists, English Nature, the British Trust for Ornithology, the Woodland Trust and the Wildlife Trusts, and grants from the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, they embarked on eliminating chemicals, restoring the soil and encouraging native plants.

Any of you with a HOA will understand the reaction of the neighbors! People were used to the English countryside being neat and tidy, with ploughed fields bordered by hedgerows or fences, so they were not happy with the unkempt land that soon emerged.

Even more concern was voiced when large herbivores were introduced. Isabella and Charlie wanted to mimic the original, but sadly now extinct, animals such as aurochs (ox) and tarpan (horse); in their stead, they used ancient breeds such as longhorn cattle and Exmoor ponies, Tamworth pigs to represent the wild boar, and the native deer.

Large predators such as European wolves and lynx are another matter however, and would be too problematic in the sleepy English countryside. You will be aware of the perceived problems caused by wolves in the American west! So to control the populations of the large herbivores they have developed a 'Wild Range' organic meat business that brings in extra income.

Sometimes it was hard to sit on their hands and let nature take control. A case in point was the 'yellow peril', or common ragwort, long vilified by livestock owners as a poisonous plant. When it flourished at Knepp, the outrage was enormous. But research shows that ragwort seeds seldom travel more than 36 metres from the plant, so they cut a 100 metre strip, as recommended by DEFRA, around certain sensitive areas.

A happier outcome was letting

sallow (goat willow and grey willow) flourish, which led to an increase in the scarce and elusive purple emperor butterfly for which sallow is a host plant.

Isabella and Charlie take pleasure now whenever they hear the 'turr turring' of a turtle dove on their land, knowing their small scrap of land will help it survive. Other birds benefiting from the resurgence of wild landscape are nightingales, little owls and peregrine falcons.

The end result was an increase in many species of native plants, invertebrates and vertebrates. Such was their success that they are now a destination for wildlife enthusiasts of all types, and run "glamping" stays and safari tours from the estate.

There is a fascinating 15-minute video tour of the estate that you can [access here](#).

*Reviewed by Christine Brown*

### Stop the press! May 16, 2020 Wild White Storks Hatch in UK, First Time in Hundreds of Years

Birds born in one of three nests at the Knepp Estate (ancestral estate of Isabella and Charlie) as part of breeding project have hatched, making these the first storks born in the UK in hundreds of years.



White Stork, photographed in Southern Spain.  
Photo: Pete Blanchard

The White Stork is famous as the "bearer of newborn babies to expecting parents" and is a familiar sight across Europe where it commonly lives close to humans, perched high upon trees, poles or village rooftops.

Migrating pairs often return to the same nest year after year, as [in this article](#). See [this link](#) for more on the White Stork's dangerous migration.



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher on Virginia Creeper.  
Photo: Mary Keim

### Nature's Best Hope by Doug Tallamy

*Nature's Best Hope* (February 2020) is a beautiful read and plan of action to save birds and other creatures. Author Doug Tallamy, a University of Delaware entomology professor, has appeared in our "Bird-friendly Communities" articles many times (most recently [April 2020 OASis p.5](#) and [February 2020 OASis p.3](#)). Tallamy's research shows how songbirds need insects, particularly soft-bodied caterpillars, to feed their young, and these caterpillars live only on native plants. His best-selling 2007 book *Bringing Nature Home* taught gardeners about this native plant/caterpillar/bird connection and listed best plants to select.

In *Nature's Best Hope*, Tallamy proposes that we create a Homegrown National Park through our home landscapes. In the first chapters, he lays out the problem: our country's loss of intact habitat. He points out that 54% of the U.S. is now urban/suburban (41% in agriculture and 5% in parks). So our public preserves are not enough to sustain biodiversity.

He details how native insects cannot survive on non-native plants, revealing that Portland, Oregon has an enormous park system/green belt — but the trees are non-native, and insect and bird life is limited. Because of their essential ecological roles — pollination as well as food for birds, insects are "the little things that run the world" (E.O. Wilson).

The book is packed with references to ecologists and theories we study in biology, as he makes the case for his Homegrown National Park. The book also includes Frequently Asked Questions for beginners, photos and many tips to draw birds and pollinators to your yard. The call to action is not only to create native habitat in your own yard but to educate others on it and to convince your neighbors to join in. A great book. *Reviewed by Deborah Green*

## June Summer Reading

### The Wind Masters by Pete Dunne

*The Wind Masters* is a very unique account of various birds of prey that are found in North America. Instead of introducing the birds with dry, factual information, Pete Dunne weaves details about each bird into lively stories based on research and first hand accounts.

This book features short stories about 33 different birds of prey from Gyrfalcons to the California Condor.

Each section is told from the bird's point of view making this text very engaging, almost instantly wrapping the reader up in the day-to-day struggle of the featured raptor.

Complementing the stories are beautiful black and white illustrations drawn by none other than the remarkable David Allen Sibley.

Unlike a traditional book about a specific type of bird, the book does not give all-inclusive details about a particular bird — such as nest construction or courtship — but reading each story draws the reader into the life battles that these majestic creatures experience.

My only complaint about this book was that each chapter ended too soon; I wanted to learn even more about each bird's story.

Several birds of prey found in Florida are stars in this book including the Short-tailed Hawk, White-tailed Kite, American Kestrel and Red-tailed Hawk.



Short-tailed Hawk, Orlando Wetlands Park.  
Photo: Mary Keim

I highly recommend this book as light but informative reading that will hook you from the very first page.

*Kathy Rigling*

### The Nature Guys Podcast

Looking for a pleasant diversion while learning a thing or two about nature? Try out *The Nature Guys Podcast* that can be found on your Smartphone wherever you stream podcasts or on the website, [natureguys.org](http://natureguys.org)

Nature Guys features Bill, a retired naturalist from the Cincinnati Nature Center, and Bob, a former businessman, educator and volunteer for the Cincinnati Nature Center.

When listening to this podcast, I feel that I am listening to old friends sharing nature stories, though these stories have been researched and are full of interesting information. Bill and Bob have been broadcasting together since 2016 and produced nearly 150 episodes on a variety of nature related topics.

One recent show was about the annual wildflower pilgrimage sponsored by the Arc of Appalachia (April 21, 2020). In this episode I learned about the rarity and fragility of these wildflower meadows and how the Arc of Appalachia is working to preserve them and educate others by leading springtime walks.

The April 7, 2020 show featured Pillbugs (did you know that there are crustaceans?) and not only included fascinating facts but also kid-friendly activities for families that could be done right outside your home.

Bill and Bob have also started recording shorter weekly nature-themed family activities, such as “hug a tree” that involves being blindfolded and very closely studying a tree and a “hole” hike in which children search for different kinds of holes (a hole with a plant, a hole under leaves, a hole you could sit in, etc.). Archived shows and linked resources can be found at their website, [natureguys.org](http://natureguys.org).

On the June 7th Talkin' Birds podcast Orange Audubon will be mentioned as I will be recognized as a new Talkin' Birds Ambassador! See the [May OASis](http://OASis.com), p.5, for a review of this lively podcast, and access it at <http://talkinbirds.com/>.

*Kathy Rigling*

### Time to Start with eBird

Whether you are an experienced birder or just starting out watching birds, Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird project offers great opportunities to find local birds, explore new birding hot spots and contribute valuable data to scientists. eBird is a real-time online checklist that was launched in 2002 as a joint project of Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society. To explore eBird, check out [the website](http://ebird.org).



Wood Storks, Roseate Spoonbills, and Great Egrets,  
Orlando Wetlands Park. Photo: Mary Keim

Today more than a million bird observations are submitted worldwide yearly. This data is used by researchers to study trends in bird populations and has been used to inform global conservation efforts. For example, eBirders observed that drones flying in Tomoka State Park disturbed rails, causing them to fall silent and in some cases remain so for several days. In 2015, partially in response to these findings, the use of drones was prohibited in all Florida state parks.

Even if you are a beginning birder, your checklists are valuable. You can submit checklists from anywhere and any amount of time. eBird also welcomes input of historical data if you have kept past records.

The easiest way to submit data is to use the mobile eBird app — create a free account. Mobile eBird works with your phone's GPS to accurately find your location when you are birding.

Once you start listing, eBird will keep a life list and year list for you. Your data will not only help scientists study bird populations and seasonal movements, but it can also help other birders find their target birds. On the eBird website you can sign up for Rare Bird Alerts and alerts for birds that you have not yet seen in your county. Each bird alert will include the bird's location and a link to the checklist on which it was listed. The eBird website can also be very useful if you are traveling and want to find out what birds to expect in local hotspots.

*Kathy Rigling*

## White-eyed Vireo—A Superb Singing Machine

White-Eyed Vireos sing all day even during the hottest weather, so they should be easy to find; however, a secretive behavior and favored dense habitat create challenges to spotting this common songbird, a year-round resident of Florida and the Gulf Coast.

Small and solitary, the White-Eyed Vireo forages low in dense undergrowth to capture caterpillars, flies, beetles, and moths, and to glean larvae from leaves. It often hides in brambles or understory where it hops about quickly or takes short flights to look for insects, tilting its head and peering. It pins down larger prey with its foot before eating it. Common habitats are deciduous scrub, overgrown pastures, old fields, forested edges, second-growth forests, and streamside thickets. In Florida, the bird also frequents mangroves.



White-eyed Vireo in wax myrtle.  
Photo: Mary Keim

Larger than a Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher but smaller than a Tufted Titmouse, this species has a compact body, thick neck, and thick, slightly hooked bill. The most distinctive field markings are the bright yellow spectacles that surround its white irises. (Young birds have dark eyes that turn white during their first winter or spring.) The White-Eyed Vireo also has yellow-washed sides,

a gray head, white chest and throat, and two white wing bars—a beautiful combination!

Males and females together build a pendulous nest suspended from a Y-shaped fork by collecting insect silk and spider webs and attaching them to the fork to create a lacey shell. They stick leaves, bark, plant fibers, and bits of paper to the shell and add lichens and moss to the outside for additional camouflage. A pair can complete this complex design in 3 to 5 days.

White-Eyed Vireos maintain a monogamous bond during the breeding season and often return to the same area year after year, but not always with the same mate. Like other vireos, both males and females incubate the eggs and feed nestlings. Despite vigilant parenting, many nests are invaded by Brown-Headed Cowbirds. They lay eggs in vireos nests and then leave the brooding and feeding to the vireos whose own young may not survive.

Nevertheless White-Eyed Vireos are common; their populations increased by 33 percent between 1970 and 2014 according to Partners in Flight.

How to find this remarkable species? Learn to recognize its spunky song, a rapid, nasal, harsh rhythmic sound with a sharp *chik* note at the beginning and end. Then, with your binoculars ready, follow the song into the thickets.

Check it out! There is much more to discover regarding our fascinating birds.

*Linda Carpenter*

## Jay Watch 2020

Jay Watch volunteers contribute to research and preservation of the Florida Scrub-Jay (FSJ), a threatened species dependent on Florida's shrinking scrub habitat.

Audubon Florida's Jay Watch volunteers normally conduct the statewide survey from June 15 to July 15, 2020. However, this year land managers are not allowed to use volunteers on the surveys.

Nevertheless, Audubon Florida has announced three Jay Watch online training webinars led by Dr. Marianne Korosy, Audubon Florida's Director

of Bird Conservation. To become a Jay Watch volunteer, you must take a training session and learn standardized survey methods. The first training is available to anyone who is interested in learning more about the FSJ. The second training likewise describes the basic surveying protocol. The advanced training is designed to give volunteers additional information that will help in their data collection.

If you would like to attend any one or all three sessions, please contact Jay Watch Coordinator Jacqui Sulek at

[Jacqui.sulek@audubon.org](mailto:Jacqui.sulek@audubon.org).

The webinars will be as follows:

- June 3, 10:30 a.m.–Noon. Florida Scrub-Jay Ecology—The basics for new Jay Watchers and those looking for a refresher.
- June 5, 1:30–3:00 p.m. Jay Watch Protocol—The basics for new Jay Watchers and a good refresher for all.
- June 10, 10:00 a.m.–Noon. Advanced training—A deeper dive into Florida Scrub-Jay behavior and data.

Thank you for your interest in the Florida Scrub-Jay!



Jay Watch volunteers at Buck Lake Wildlife Management Area with area leader Maria Zondervan of the St. Johns River Water Management District, June 2019 (pre-COVID-19). Volunteers include many Orange Audubon Society members. Photo: Vince Lamb

## Get Out and Bird!

The June Challenge begins on Monday, June 1 and extends through the month. This friendly competition among fellow birders is meant to build your birding skills and keep you engaged in nature.

Each birder picks a county, any county they like in the state, and tries to compile the biggest list of species for that area. All birds are countable and follow the [American Birding Association \(ABA\) checklist](#). List your ABA species number first, and then the non-ABA birds, like a Mute Swan at Lake Eola.

One twist for the June Challenge is that *you have to see the bird*, not just hear it. The rules are [at this link](#).

The top June Challenge total over the past 8 years was by Bob Sicolo in 2015 with 126 species (7 exotics), indicated as (119/7). Results will be posted to BRDBRAINS (a birding listserv) and in the September OASis. A hint: Bird as much as you can during the first and last weeks of June, to record late spring and early fall migrants.

Last year's results were:

Orange County:

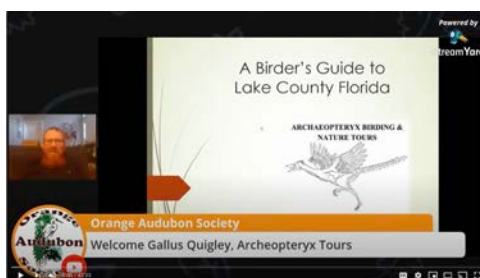
• Mary Soule	111	(102/9)
• Larry Martin	106	(96/10)
• Kathy Rigling	105	(92/13)
• Gail Spratley	87	(86/1)
• Bert Alm	55	(54/1)
• George Perry	50	(43/7)

Lake County:

• Thomas Hanson	77	(77/0)
• Gigi DelPizzo	77	(76/1)
• Kathy Rigling	57	(55/2)

Orange County birders will also be collectively competing for the most birds seen in Florida. Last year Alachua County topped the list with 125 species ( 121/4).

Send your results to me at [riglingk@aol.com](mailto:riglingk@aol.com) by noon on July 1 in order to be counted.  
*Kathy Rigling*



*In case you missed it ...*

## A Birder's Guide to Lake County

With the March and April Orange Audubon Society (OAS) programs sadly cancelled, OAS was thrilled that our May speaker Gallus Quigley was willing to pioneer with us an online format, YouTube Live. Gallus gave a great talk and if you missed it, set aside 45 minutes and view it at [this link](#).

Please *subscribe* to our YouTube channel at the same time. To make YouTube comments on programs, you will need to create a gmail account.

## Update Your Membership

Please join Audubon at the rate of \$20 (students \$15) for your [3-way membership in Orange Audubon Society \(OAS\), Audubon Florida and National Audubon Society \(NAS\)](#). It takes a few months for a new membership to show up on our chapter roster provided by NAS. So please join now so we will have your correct mailing address for OAS' one print mailing of the year in September. If you have questions about your expiration date, email [membership@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:membership@orangeaudubonfl.org).

*OAS Membership Committee*

## North Shore Birding Festival

The planned date — January 21-25, 2021— is over 7 months away. Follow new developments on the [festival Facebook page](#).

## Thanks to the Contributors

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) would like to thank the following writers whose contributions have greatly enhanced the OASis this year: Beth Alvi, Audubon Florida staff, Rick Baird, Christine Brown, Gabbie Buendia, Heaven Campbell, Linda Carpenter, Jennifer Carr, Mike Cliburn, Mary Dipboye, Joe Dunn, Linda Gaunt, Julia Gneckow, Melissa Gonzalez, Marah Green, Mary Keim, Gina Kent, Jeremy LaPlanche, Lorne Malo, Larry Martin, Terry Piper, Richard Poole, Kathy Rigling, Bob Sanders, Bettie Sommer, Joyce Stefancic, Sonia Stephens, Christina Wray, and Teresa Williams.

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For careful and timely editing, we are most grateful to Mary Keim, Loretta Satterthwaite, and Teresa Williams. We will enjoy our two months off and then be asking for articles and use of your photos again for September. If you want to send us an article early, send to [newsletter@orangeaudubonfl.org](mailto:newsletter@orangeaudubonfl.org). Have a good summer and stay safe!

*Deborah Green, OASis editor*

## SUMMER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### June Challenge Starts

June 1, 2020

Contact Kathy at (407) 488-9559

### Chertok Photo Contest YouTube LIVE Event

June 18, 2020

Contact Teresa at (407) 718-1977

### Summer Board Planning Meeting

July 26, 2020

Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

**Thanks to you all for another great year!**