



Clockwise: Black-throated Blue Warbler. Photo: Alexander DeBear; Kentucky Warbler, Photo: Brian Miller; Yellow-throated Warbler, 2023 Chertok Florida Native Nature Photo Contest, Honorable Mention Winner, Novice Category, Photo: Heather Earl; Yellow Warbler, Photo: Alexander DeBear. Right, our presenter Alexander DeBear holding a Swallow-tailed Kite prior to its release. Photo courtesy Alexander DeBear

Warblers! The Journey of a Lifetime by Alexander DeBear, September 18, 2025

Undeniably impactful in their environment, striking, charismatic, and downright fierce little songbirds, the warblers have generated hemispheric passion among bird enthusiasts for generations.

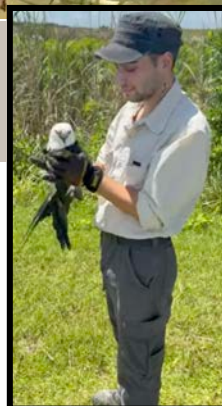
Beyond the warblers' eye-catching colors and fantastic songs, many questions are left unanswered for even the seasoned birder.

Orange Audubon board member Alexander DeBear set out on a deep dive to make known the ecology of these birds once shrouded in mystery.

From overseas night flights to crucial wintertime recovery, Alexander unveils the spectacular lifestyles of these hardy birds.

Prepare your questions, and we'll see you on in person on Thursday, September 18th in the Camellia Room at Leu Gardens to enjoy this talk! Come at 6:30 p.m., for socializing. Program starts at 7 p.m. Address below.

Alan Shapiro, Second Vice President



Did You Receive Your Orange Audubon Brochure in the Mail?

In early September, Orange Audubon members will be receiving an envelope, including our annual brochure that lists all our activities for the year. If you do not receive it, email membership@orangeaudubonfl.org to check on your membership status or use [Join/Renew link](#).

Bird-Friendly Yards Tour Returns! October 12, 2025

For the first time since 2016, Orange Audubon is hosting a Native Plants Yards Tour on Sunday, October 12th, 9 am–2 pm, co-sponsored by the the Tarflower Chapter, Florida Native Plant Society and Wild Birds Unlimited, Winter Springs.

The tour will showcase 7–10 homes, some featuring new or mature native landscapes, and -- new this year -- others featuring yards with bird feeders attracting Painted Buntings, goldfinches, and more.

Tickets are \$15 (Youth accompanied by a paying adult are free). Proceeds benefit Orange Audubon's future Nature Center at Apopka Birding Park. The tour is timed to be a week before Backyard Biodiversity Day at Mead Botanical Garden, where native plants will be for sale. Make your lists!

Following maps and descriptions provided, attendees can tour at their own pace all or parts of two loops—in the Wekiva area and near downtown Orlando. Tickets will be on sale at Wild Birds Unlimited in Winter Springs, at the October 7th meeting of the Tarflower Chapter (7:00 p.m. at Mead Botanical Garden in the Garden Club building) and at the September 18th Orange Audubon Society meeting. You can also buy tickets online at a link to be posted soon.



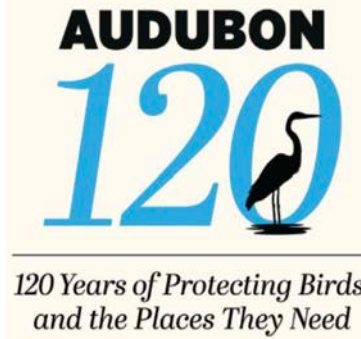
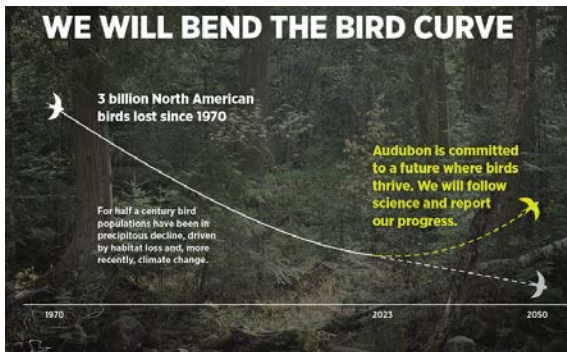
Deer eating coral honeysuckle in home landscape. Photo: Deborah Green

ORANGE AUDUBON SOCIETY programs are free. No reservations necessary.



Programs are the 3rd Thursday of each month (September–June) at 7:00 p.m. and all but December are at **Harry P. Leu Gardens in the Camellia Room** at 1920 North Forest Ave., Orlando, FL 32803

For map and directions, visit:
www.leugardens.org/plan/directions/



Bending the Bird Curve

The [2025 U.S. State of the Birds report](#), unveiled at the 90th annual North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, underscores an alarming decline in bird populations. Two-hundred twenty nine species require urgent conservation action.

Building on the 2019 study documenting a net loss of 3 billion birds in North America over the past 50 years, the latest report confirms that declines persist. The most significant losses have been for grassland birds (-43% since 1970), aridland birds (-41% since 1970), and shorebirds (-33% since 1980) but [the report](#) found that birds are declining across all habitat types. Nearly 2.5 billion of the missing birds are migratory species like warblers.

"In my lifetime, North America has lost more than 3 billion birds. ...magnified by the dual crises of biodiversity loss and climate change," says Dr. Elizabeth Gray, Audubon Chief Executive Officer.

Flight Plan is National Audubon's 2023–2028 strategic plan that aims to "bend the bird curve," meaning that Audubon is working to halt and ultimately reverse, the decline of birds across the Americas.

One hundred twenty years old this year, National Audubon has over 400 local chapters and 800 staff members, scientists and habitat stewards, plus a network of partner organizations. With these strengths, following lessons from past efforts and using the latest technology, Flight Plan plots a way forward.

Several us from Orange Audubon had the opportunity to attend National Audubon's biennial Leadership Conference this July in Montreal, Canada. Alexander DeBear, Orange Audubon board member, 2024-25 Conservation Leadership Initiative student and founding member of our Young Birders Club, reports, "As a young conservation advocate, I had the privilege to meet conservation leaders from all over the states and a bit of Canada, too, including indigenous leaders. I received a fantastic insight into

different conservation practices, challenges, and innovative ideas from all over the hemisphere."

I also was inspired by the Hemispheric reach of the conference that had attendees from First Nations (the far north of Canada) and as far south as Chile. Using bird tracking technologies, which are improving yearly, the locations most important to preserve for resident and migratory birds are being identified, and conservationists in these areas are working to preserve them. It gave me hope that Audubon is working efficiently across habitats and national borders, with partners, governments and local communities.

Deborah Green, Orange Audubon President

Orange Audubon's Local Efforts

Your local chapter is: 1. working on restoration of an upland habitat site, our Apopka Birding Park (p. 5), 2. encouraging people to plant native plants, particularly those utilized by birds through our Bird-friendly Yards Tour (p. 1), 3. supporting our parks through bird surveys and publicizing our county natural lands by collaborating on walks (p. 3), and 4. speaking out and asking our members to speak out to county and state officials on conservation issues (see below).

Preemption?

Kudos to Orange County for developing a rural boundary beyond which dense growth would not be permitted and for updating its wetlands protection and tree protection ordinances. Orange Audubon has appreciated being part of stakeholder input. Now the state legislature and governor are trying to make it impossible for local governments to carry out local protections. Thank you to those who contacted your Orange County Commissioners about not giving in to an attempt to pre-empt home rule under SB180's guise of hurricane recovery. Thank you to Charles Lee of Audubon Florida for alerts and to the [Orlando Sentinel](#) for coverage. Please follow this, thank our commissioners and be ready to engage. *Conservation Committee*



Orange Audubon Society (OAS) mission: To conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and their habitats, for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

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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.

For other membership information, contact: membership@orangeaudubonfl.org

JOIN OAS' [MEETUP](#) GROUP

LIKE OAS' [FACEBOOK PAGE](#)

OAS welcomes those who wish to volunteer and become more involved in our efforts. Email volunteer@orangeaudubonfl.org.

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Sept 6, 2025**Green PLACE Walk at
New Preserve on the Econ**

Orange Audubon is excited to be touring a location not yet open to the public, the Ken Bosserman Econlockhatchee River Preserve in the northern part of Orange County. On September 6th from 9 to 11:30 a.m., we will enjoy this sneak peek.

Green PLACE (Park Land Acquisition for Conservation and Environmental Protection) is an Orange County initiative to preserve, enhance, and restore environmentally sensitive lands.

To date, Green PLACE has preserved 25,602 acres of natural lands, independently or in partnership with other agencies, focused on establishment of regional corridors, greenways, and blueways. Since July 2021, when funding for the Program was reauthorized, Green PLACE has acquired 45 new properties, adding 2,221 acres to the County's environmentally sensitive lands holdings.

In addition to acquiring conservation lands, Green PLACE focuses on land management, including invasive species control, controlled burns, and habitat restoration. The program manages 7,189 acres, with the remaining acreage managed by its partners. Fifteen Green PLACE properties are open for nature-based recreation.

New Preserve on the Econ

The Ken Bosserman Econlockhatchee River Preserve (KBERP) is a 241-acre Green PLACE property, consisting of eight parcels acquired in 1974, 1998, 2018, 2021, 2022, and 2024.

The Econlockhatchee River (Econ for short) is an 55-mile-long north-flowing blackwater tributary of the St. Johns River. Less well-known than Orange County's popular spring-fed Wekiva River, the Econ has tea-colored waters that flow through Osceola, Orange, and Seminole counties, east of Orlando.

The Econlockhatchee River was designated an Outstanding Florida Water by the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation, based on the river's significant natural attributes. The river is beloved for kayaking.

As Orlando began to sprawl eastward, state and local land-buying programs were able to protect several other properties along the river, including the Little Big Econ State Forest and Econ River Wilderness Area in Seminole County and the Econlockhatchee Sandhills Conservation Area and Hal Scott Regional Preserve and Park in Orange County. But the



Tea-colored Econlockhatchee River. Map of Econlockhatchee River. Photos: Orange County Water Atlas

area continues under acute development pressure. KBERP serves as a vital connection for wildlife within the Econlockhatchee River Corridor.

Ken E. Bosserman (1948 -2006) was a passionate advocate for conservation lands and a leader in preserving Central Florida's pristine lands. As the founder of The Friends of the Econ, he played a pivotal role in protecting the Econlockhatchee River. His advocacy for the preservation of natural spaces and support for their use for nature-based recreation ensured the public could connect with nature. His legacy lives on through the Ken Bosserman Econlockhatchee River Preserve, a testament to his dedication and the lasting impact of his efforts.

KBERP will be open by the end of 2025, offering hiking, picnicking, and wildlife observation as some of its nature-based recreational opportunities available. The preserve is managed in a manner that protects and enhances ecosystem integrity, function, and biodiversity.

In appreciation of the Green PLACE program and as a kick-off to our 38th annual Chertok Florida Native Nature Photo Contest, Orange Audubon co-hosts a family photo walk each fall and spring to a different Green PLACE property.

The September 6th walk will be led by Alexander DeBear, naturalist and photographer from Orange Audubon Society, along with naturalists from the Green PLACE program. The trip is free but limited to 20 participants. To register, email GreenPLACE@ocfl.net.

Orange Audubon Conservation Committee

Teachers: Call on Orange Audubon

Orange Audubon Society's Education Coordinator Kathy Rigling is available to visit local schools. As a retired middle school science teacher, Kathy has 35 years of classroom experience in the Orange County Public Schools, as well as 10 years as the nature coordinator at the Wekiva Youth Camp.

Her classroom visits provide standards-based science lessons, community science field experiences and guidance for planning and implementing native plant gardens—all free of charge. Programs are grade level appropriate.

This year Orange Audubon is offering a limited number of monthly before or after school STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) birding clubs. Our Education Coordinator will visit your extracurricular club providing an engaging bird-related curriculum, loaner binoculars and other related resources. These have been successfully piloted at Zellwood Elementary, Eccleston Elementary, Rock Springs Elementary and Eustis Elementary.

Orange Audubon is also offering a limited number of free class subscriptions of the engaging *Audubon Adventures*, a high interest magazine that not only supports standards-correlated science content but also aids literacy education with both print and digital resources.

Our monthly free educational webinars will resume on September 10th from 7:00-7:30 pm with a program about using the Feathered Friends curriculum from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's K-12 educational programs. The link to sign up: <http://eepurl.com/imGskM>

Audubon Assembly, Oct 17-18, 2025

Join Orange Audubon board members October 17th in Howey in the Hills for the Friday activities at Audubon Florida's statewide gathering of its 44 chapters and staff members. [Here is the registration link](#)





Birders at Mead Botanical Garden, circa 2021.
Photo: Melinda Klinger

Bird Migration Excitement

In the world of birding, fall and spring are the best times to bird. As the seasons change, many species of birds start their migration.

Migration is where birds move from one part of the world to another to find suitable resources and to breed. Central Florida is in the path for birds usually not here during the rest of the year. Early to mid October is when our peak fall migration occurs.

Peak migration is when there is the highest abundance of species and individuals of migrating birds, but many migratory birds pass through at different times.

Following migration is really interesting because the different birds show up at different but predictable times. One of the most sought after groups of migrating birds are warblers. Most breed north of Florida and winter south of Florida so migration is the best way for us to observe these species.

For example, some of our first migrants to reach central Florida going south to the tropics after the breeding season are Prairie Warblers, Louisiana Waterthrush, and some species of shorebirds. Last to reach central Florida after the breeding season are our wintering ducks.

Finding all these different types of migratory bird species is really fun and exciting for a new birder or seasoned veteran. Cornell Lab of Ornithology's *All About Birds* has range maps, and on eBird we can look up information on a particular species. Birding with a group led by an expert always helps. Many eyes and ears help us find the birds.

Some of the best places in central Florida for finding migrants are Mead Botanical Gardens and the Lake Apopka North Shore, but you can find migratory birds in your own backyard. Overall, bird migration is an amazing spectacle that is rewarding to follow.

Haden Klinger

Haden Klinger is a high school sophomore and trip leader for Orange Audubon. He was one of the founding members of our Young Birders Club when only 11 years old.

Connecticut Warbler: Last To Come Through

Have you ever seen a Connecticut Warbler, with its white eye-ring, gray hood and strong bill?

My interest in this species—which I have never seen—was piqued by a comment from a birder friend who is a snowbird. Audrey said that she goes home, back north, *after the Connecticut Warblers come through*.

The Connecticut is the last of our spring migrant warblers to pass through, only passing through going north to its breeding grounds in May. By then, most of our local birders have frequented Mead Botanical Gardens, made their trips to Fort DeSoto Park, and some may now be following the birds farther north.

Breeding across Canada and around the western Great Lakes (orange zone on the map from Cornell Lab of Ornithology), the Connecticut Warbler is a denizen of remote, boggy forests of spruce or tamarack.

It eats insects, spiders, other arthropods and the occasional berry, foraging on the ground and is a “skulker.” Ornithologists did not discover the first nest of this species until 1883, and only one study of a nesting pair has been published, in 1961, according to Cornell Lab of Ornithology's *All About Birds*.

The remoteness of its breeding habitat and its retiring habits make the Connecticut Warbler among the least studied of American songbirds.

Partners in Flight includes the species on the Yellow Watch List for declining populations. Logging, use of herbicides, and suppression of fires, as well as fragmentation of habitat associated with forestry, oil and gas development, construction of power transmission corridors, and agriculture, all have damaged its specific breeding habitat.

Geolocator data indicate that in fall these warblers travel from their breeding grounds to the Eastern United States (first recorded in Connecticut, hence the name) and then make a transoceanic flight to the Greater Antilles. This is followed by a second flight across the Caribbean Sea to overwintering grounds in South America (blue area on the map).

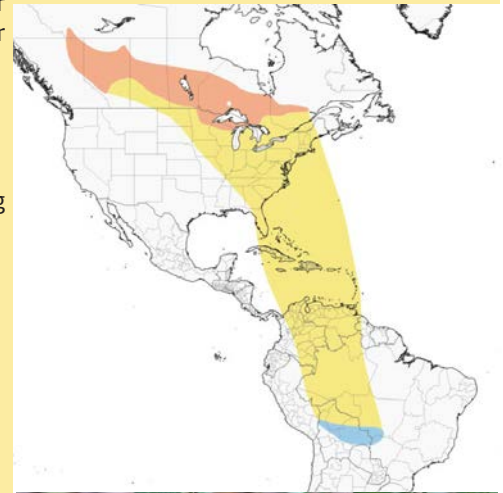
Wintering birds in South America occupy woodlands, forest edge, and dense, shrubby second growth, usually below 6,600 feet elevation. The Connecticut's habitat requirements on the wintering grounds are little studied, but it is likely that deforestation has reduced available habitat there also.

In spring migration, single birds are found in dense tangles and thickets, where it walks along branches or on the ground. Osceola birder Alex Marine really wanted to see a Connecticut Warbler, which had not been recorded in his county. So he researched what would be good stopover habitat and what are the most likely dates of passage. He settled on May 10th. “We had a full day scheduled for checking spots of promising habitat, but we didn't even get past our second spot because it came through for us immediately!” he reports on eBird. The site was Shingle Creek Regional Park, Babb Landing. With great patience, in tangled vegetation, Alex and later other folks using coordinates he provided, were able to see their “lifer” Connecticut Warbler.

Godspeed to this little warbler. Hoping it found its northern breeding ground successfully and in adequate condition. Hoping that its fall travels back to South America are safe.

Thanks to Mary Soule for tips toward this story.

Deborah Green



Above, Connecticut Warbler migration, Map: Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Below, Connecticut Warbler, first time seen in this home landscape, Orange County, FL. May 2020. Photo: Mary Keim

Nature Center Update

Busy with our activities at the start of the season, we will do a better update on nature center progress in October. See [this video in our Bird Chat series](#) for general background on the project if you are unfamiliar with it.

For an all-volunteer organization, with just one part-time employee, Education Coordinator Kathy Rigling, Orange Audubon accomplishes a tremendous amount. Our activities are now described in our first Annual Report, to be posted on our website under About Us.

Your Contributions Really Help

Orange Audubon is profoundly grateful to those making monetary contributions toward the nature center. One hundred thirty-four (134) people or foundations donated over \$100 since the signing of our long-term lease from the City of Apopka for the Apopka Birding Park in March 2024.

Although we still need large donations in order to have enough money to start construction, we think this number of donors shows tremendous community support. Our donors follow our activities, know we are a capable organization and that this nature center site is perfect. It is located at the entrance to the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive which receives heavy traffic and is an upland site for wildlife which is disappearing in the area.

Donations to Orange Audubon are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. [You can donate online at this link](#) or mail checks to Orange Audubon Society, P.O. Box 941142, Maitland, FL 32794.

Monthly donations

If you are a Sustainer member of National Audubon, making monthly donations, you can now make monthly online donations to Orange Audubon through [our website](#) and designate them to benefit our nature center project and educational efforts.

For those with IRAs who are 70½ years of age or older, making qualified charitable distributions (QCDs) directly to certain nonprofits like Orange Audubon, may count towards your required minimum distribution to provide a significant tax benefit. QCDs for 2025 can be made throughout the tax year.

Donations received early will help as we choose a contractor and determine the construction start date. Thank you!

*Deborah Green, President, with
Sue Weidner, Treasurer and
Teresa Williams, Past Treasurer*

Workdays Continue

At Orange Audubon Society's third workday at the Apopka Birding Park (ABP) on June 28th, we had over 30 participants, mostly recruited by Observatorio Ambiental Hispano, Renacer Foundation and Nuestra Cultura Outdoors. Efforts were invasive Plant Removal in the oak hammock and continued demolition of the inside of the building. Wood salvaged was used to make bird boxes and benches. We plan to continue Saturday workdays on the last Saturday of the month, following the ABP bird survey. Email volunteer@orangeaudubonfl.org to participate.



Top, Volunteers cleaning up the Apopka Birding Park Truck Shop. Middle, volunteers at the 2025 Labeling Party on August 29th. Bottom, the Orange Audubon board at its summer planning meeting. Photos: Deborah Green

Update Your Membership

September is a great time to renew your 3-way membership in Orange Audubon Society, Audubon Florida and National Audubon Society. Please pay directly to Orange Audubon, and we transmit the funds to National. The base membership rate is \$20 (\$15 for students). If you want to include an additional donation, which goes to Orange Audubon, you can. Just click the [Join/Renew link](#) on our website. If you need your expiration date, email membership@orangeaudubonfl.org. Thank you!

Apopka Birding Park Bird Surveys, Last Saturdays

As Orange Audubon works on the former nursery site, now called the Apopka Birding Park — that we are transforming to native vegetation and bird habitat— volunteers are documenting an anticipated increase in bird species. During our monthly Apopka Birding Park bird surveys, trails are being carved out. Dates are the last Saturday of the month, starting at 7:30 a.m.. Email Alexander at alexdebear@icloud.com to join.

Looking For Volunteers

Do you have time and a passion for volunteering? Orange Audubon is looking to expand its existing base of Orange Audubon member volunteers. Here are volunteer opportunities:

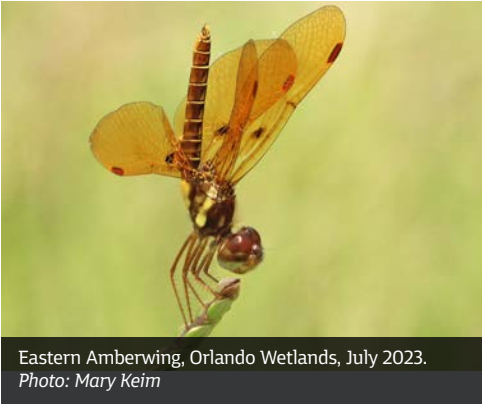
- Meal, Hospitality, and Logistics support for the NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL (December 11-15) and Chertok Nature Photography Contest Awards Program (June 18th)
- Helping our Education Coordinator with school events
- Hospitality at our monthly in-person programs at Leu Gardens, 3rd Thursdays, 6pm
- Joining the elite group of Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive Ambassadors to welcome visitors to the Drive
- Assisting with clean-up, planting, etc. for our future Orange Audubon Nature Center at the Apopka Birding Park

The [Get Involved](#) tab on our website has a survey to let us know of your interests. Or just email volunteer@orangeaudubonfl.org. Thank you!

Mary Van Egmond

Labeling Thank You

At Orange Audubon Society's Labeling Party on August 29th, many hands made light work. We thank Rick Baird, Glenn Blaser, Mo Cortese, Mike Daley, Deborah Green, Mary Hoag, Marian Lichtler, Ann Mixson, Noreen Nickerson, Karen Picciano, Kathy Rigling, Charlie Ross, Alan Shapiro, Louis Stern, Steve Turner, Mary Van Egmond, Louise Vivona-Miller, Ryan Wendt and Teresa Williams. Thanks all!



Eastern Amberwing, Orlando Wetlands, July 2023.
Photo: Mary Keim

Free Monthly Field Trip to Brownie Wise Park Kissimmee September 20, 2025

Brownie Wise Park is an excellent location in which one can find many different habitats within a relatively small area. The park has a wooded section that follows the entrance road before transitioning to open marsh. The presence of many neighborhoods in the surrounding area funnels migrating songbirds into the available park habitat. We hope to see a wide variety of species, including warblers, wading birds, egrets, herons, raptors and possibly other migratory passerines like flycatchers, tanagers, and orioles.

Leaders will be Lorri Lilja and Melissa Steinberg of Orange Audubon, assisted by top notch young birder Haden Klinger. FREE but advanced registration is required and space is limited. Go to the [Field Trips tab under Activities on our website](#).

Oakland Nature Fest September 20, 2025

The fourth annual Oakland Nature Fest will be Saturday, September 20th, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., at Oakland Nature Preserve! Participate in animal interactions and guided hikes and learn more at interesting presentations! Admission is free, but donations are gratefully received, and will benefit the mission of Oakland Nature Preserve.



Orange Audubon Society will be there with a table. If you live in West Orange and have time to volunteer, we could use your help. Email volunteer@orangeaudubonfl.org

Young Birders Club Trip September 27, 2025

Orange Audubon Society's Young Birders Club will be going on a field trip on September 27th to Mead Botanical Gardens in Winter Park.

We will look for fall warblers and other migratory birds at this popular bird hotspot. The field trip is free to parents and Young Birders, but you are required to register in advance on our website: <https://orangeaudubonfl.org/field-trip-signup/>.

Loaner binoculars will be available upon request. The trip is free, but the spots are limited. For more information contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail on Florida paintbrush, Photo: Mary Keim

Dragonfly Identification at Orlando Wetlands, Sept. 13, 2025

Orange Audubon Society is very lucky to have local dragonfly experts (or enthusiasts, as they prefer to say) Mary Keim and Randy Snyder willing to share their knowledge.

Mary and Randy's 2025 Dragonfly ID Field Trip will be Saturday, September 13th from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at Orlando Wetlands and adjacent Seminole Ranch.

This walking trip is limited to 15 participants with registration required. Cost is \$20 for Audubon members; \$25 for non-members. To register, go to the [Field Trips tab under Activities on our website](#).

If you have any questions about the class, email Mary and Randy at rssmhk@gmail.com. Dragonflies are everywhere in the warmer months and are so interesting. Take advantage of this great once-a-year offering from Orange Audubon!

Beginners' Birdwatching Class October 11, 28 and 25, 2025

Would you like to improve your bird identification skills? Take Orange Audubon's Beginners' Birdwatching Class starting October 11th and continuing October 18th and 25th.

If you have to miss one of the three Saturday mornings, you can make it up in the winter series (Feb 7, 14 and 21, 2026). Instructors are Susan Thome-Barrett and me. All sessions are 8:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. An "outdoor" classroom session and mini-field trip is October 11th at Orlando Wetlands. On October 18th and 25th field sessions are at Mead Botanical Garden and the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive, respectively.

The class is limited to 12 students and registration is required. Total cost for all three sessions is: \$60 members; \$75 non-members; \$10 youth (12 & under) with registered adult. Non-members can join when registering, all [through our website](#). For questions about the class, contact me at riglingkathy@gmail.com
Kathy Rigling

Backyard Biodiversity Day Celebrates Florida's Unique Flora and Fauna

Saturday, October 18, 2025 - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Location: Mead Botanical Garden 1300 S. Denning Drive, Winter Park, FL 32789

Join the Tarflower Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society for a full day of discovery, nature and community at the 14th Annual Backyard Biodiversity Day, hosted at beautiful Mead Botanical Garden! This beloved event celebrates Florida's incredible native plants and wildlife, while supporting vital habitat restoration efforts on-site in the Sandhill, Xeric Hammock and Scrubby Flatwood ecosystems.

FREE, family-friendly event features:

- Expert-led presentations on native gardening and biodiversity
- Interpretive hikes exploring pollinators, edible native plants, reptiles, gopher tortoises and ongoing sandhill restoration
- Native plant & wildflower seed sale
- Eco-conscious vendors and environmental exhibitors
- Engaging kids activities and crafts
- Local Food trucks
- Live Music

Whether you are a longtime native plant enthusiast or just curious about creating a more sustainable and wildlife-friendly yard, Backyard Biodiversity Day offers something for everyone.

Parking at Mead Botanical Garden is free but limited. If parking is full, please park legally on nearby streets. Even better, walk, bike or carpool!

Orange Audubon Society is proud to have co-sponsored this event since its inception. Take our Yards Tour the previous Sunday (October 12th), make lists of plants you need and buy them from our Tarflower friends. Don't miss it!

Join Our Bird Surveys

At Orange Audubon, we are helping birds by participating in community science throughout the year, even in Florida's hot, humid summers. We encourage all our members to consider trying out a survey, no matter their skill level, as there are always more experienced birders to assist you.

This summer we continued our monthly surveys at Wekiwa Springs State Park, the Apopka Birding Park and the North Shore of Lake Apopka. We also had our quarterly survey at Oakland Nature Preserve and Rock Springs Run State Reserve.

Highlights this summer at Wekiwa Springs were nesting species: Red-headed Woodpeckers, Summer Tanagers, Bachman's Sparrows, Eastern Bluebirds, Brown-headed Nuthatches and Pine Warblers. We even saw some early migrants: Prairie, Yellow and Prothonotary Warblers!

Oakland Nature Preserve treated us to a singing Yellow-throated Vireo, three species of Woodpeckers, and Brown Thrashers. At Rock Springs Run State Reserve, we observed young Brown-headed Nuthatches, a flock of over 30 Anhingas as well as early warblers.

The North Shore survey included Louisiana Waterthrush, Short-tailed Hawk, Yellow-throated Warblers and Mississippi Kites. At the Apopka Birding Park, we have observed a good variety of species including warblers such as Prairie, Northern Waterthrush and Yellow Warblers, lots of flyovers of wading birds, ducks and raptors, even some shorebirds this past month. For more information about upcoming surveys, please contact me at riglingkathy@gmail.com.

Kathy Rigling

North Shore Bird Surveys

The St. Johns River Water Management District's 20,000-acre Lake Apopka is rich in bird life. Orange Audubon requested a revival of North Shore Bird Surveys that had been coordinated by the District years ago. We want to help document changes in species composition as the property has been restored from farm fields to native vegetation, with more natural water flows.

A specific transect methodology is followed, and eBird is used to record data. Meeting time is 6:30 a.m., and the surveys extend from 7 am to noon. Routes are assigned on a lottery system, following arrival at the McDonald Canal Boat Ramp, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora (Astatula), FL 32757.

In the April survey, our first, we recorded 87 species. In the May survey, we recorded 81 species. Highlights in May included Mississippi Kite, Orchard Orioles, Bobolink, many Least Bitterns, Caspian Terns, Limpkins, 7 duck species and 6 shorebird species. In August, we saw three late Swallow-tailed Kites, American Bitterns, Bobolinks and heard Yellow-billed Cuckoos.

Surveys are the 4th Tuesday of each month, continuing September 23rd, October 28th, November 25th and December 23rd. Registration with waiver must be filled out for the season [using this link](#) and then each month email info@orangeaudubonfl.org or dexterdevon68@gmail.com, if you can participate.

If surveys are beyond your interest and availability, the [NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL](#), December 11-15, 2025, provides guided opportunities to explore this same bird-rich territory. *Chris Newton, Survey Coordinator, Ben Gugliotti, District Land Manager*

2025 NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL

The NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL highlights the St. Johns River Water Management District's 20,000-acre Lake Apopka North Shore, one of the top eBird hotspots in Florida. Most of the 70 field trips are for birding but a number are tailored for photographers. We also will have nature journaling this year!



Fulvous Whistling-Ducks on the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive. Photo: Leigh Kalfakis

Field trips have excellent local and out-of-town leaders, and include a Young Birders trip, birding by bicycle, birding by kayak, and search for Crested Caracara, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, overwintering northern-breeding ducks and others for your life list.

For the past few years, we have had a rush upon the opening of registration. Sixty-five percent of registrations occurred in the first 24 hours. So be sure to watch for the opening. The festival is a project of Orange Audubon Society and all proceeds go toward its nature and environmental education center on the Lake Apopka North Shore.

Visit our website northshorebirdingfestival.com. If you have questions, email festival@orangeaudubonfl.org or call 407-637-2525.

Deborah Green

Discover Central Florida's 20,000-Acre Lake Apopka North Shore • 377+ Bird Species
Affordable Birding and Photo Field Trips

ORANGE AUDUBON
A Chapter of National and Florida Audubon Societies

December 11-15, 2025

Photos: Mark Hainen, Sam Mitcham, Joyce Stefancik

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Bird Chats with OAS via Zoom

No Bird Chats in September
October Chats currently being scheduled
Contact Deborah at info@orangeaudubonfl.org
See past Bird Chats on [Orange Audubon Society on YouTube](#)

Green PLACE Nature & Photography Hike

September 6, 2025
Register at greenplace@ocfl.net

Wekiwa Springs State Park Bird Survey, Apopka

September 6, 2025
Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Dragonfly Identification, Orlando Wetlands

September 13, 2025
Register: <https://orangeaudubonfl.org/activities/field-trips/>

Limited Edition Field Trip: Joe Overstreet Road and Landing, Osceola County

September 13, 2025
Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Latino Conservation Week Paseo al Apopka Birding Park

September 13, 2025
Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

September Program: Warblers! The Journey of a Lifetime by Alexander DeBear

September 18, 2025
Contact Alan at alangrandiflora@gmail.com

September Field Trip: Brownie Wise Park, Osceola County

September 20, 2025
Register: <https://orangeaudubonfl.org/activities/field-trips/>

Nature Fest, Oakland Nature Preserve

September 20, 2025
Contact Alan at alangrandiflora@gmail.com

Young Birders Field Trip, Mead Botanical Gardens

September 27, 2025
Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Apopka Birding Park Bird Survey

September 28, 2025
Contact Alexander at alexdebear@icloud.com

Mead Botanical Garden Bird Walk, Winter Park

October 4, 11, 18 and 25, 2025
Register: <https://orangeaudubonfl.org/activities/field-trips/>
Contact Linda at (941) 704-1189

Oakland Nature Preserve Quarterly Survey

October 5, 2025
Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Beginners Birdwatching Class

Orlando Wetlands, Mead and Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive
October 11, 18 and 25, 2025
Register: <https://orangeaudubonfl.org/activities/field-trips/>

Wekiwa Springs State Park Bird Survey, Apopka

October 12, 2025
Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

October Program: Bats, Myth and Reality by Shari Blissett Clark

October 16, 2025
Contact Alan at alangrandiflora@gmail.com

Backyard Biodiversity Day, Mead Botanical Garden, Winter Park

October 18, 2025
Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525

Limited Edition Field Trip: Pine Meadows Conservation Area, Lake County

October 19, 2025
Register: <https://orangeaudubonfl.org/activities/field-trips/>

Apopka Birding Park Bird Survey

October 25, 2025
Contact Alexander at alexdebear@icloud.com

North Shore Bird Survey

October 28, 2025
Contact Deborah at info@orangeaudubonfl.org

NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL, Lake Apopka

Dec 11-15, 2025
Contact Deborah at (407) 637-2525



PANAMA

Panama | Birding Central Panama and the Darién Lowlands

with **Orange Audubon**

February 18-28, 2026



Panama boasts the highest diversity of bird species in Central America, so the country's advantageous location at the convergence of two continents makes it the prime respite for migratory birds from both North and South America. Embark on an unforgettable 11-day birding journey across several fascinating regions of Panama, including the country's easternmost province of Darién. Visit well-known birding trails, tropical rainforests, wetlands, mudflats, and much more. Enjoy the chance to explore not only noteworthy public and private reserves, but also witness the Panama Canal's Miraflores Locks in action, and learn about Panama's role as an international trade center and its many historical sites.

Program Highlights

- Discover two of Panama City's stunning natural areas, the Metropolitan Natural Park and the Panama Bay Mudflats, for encounters with fascinating wildlife, especially shorebirds.
- Venture into the Darién Province's many birding hotspots, including the San Francisco Reserve, Chucunaque River, El Salto Road, and the Yaviza wetland, to see some of the country's hundreds of bird species like the Crimson-bellied Woodpecker, Black Oropendola, Red-throated Caracara, and Harpy Eagle.
- Meet members of the Indigenous Wounaan community and learn about their traditions, culture, and botanical culture.
- Hike the world-famous Pipeline Road, where target species include Black Hawk-Eagle, Purple-throated Fruitcrow, Masked Tityra, the coveted Blue Cotinga, and hundreds of others.
- Explore Soberania National Park, one of the country's most accessible tropical rainforests and home to an impressive list of 525 bird species.
- Visit a sloth rescue center, meet animal ambassadors and learn about wildlife rescue, rehabilitation, and release during canal expansion.

Land Cost- \$3495

For more information contact:

Alan Shapiro 352-317-0089
Alangrandiflora@gmail.com

or
Lisa Palmese-Gruabard 800-451-7111
lisa@holbrooktravel.com