



Clockwise, left to right: Palamedes Swallowtail on thistle; Little Metalmark on Black-eyed Susan; Zebra Longwing larva on Passionflower, Photos: Mary Keim.

Butterflies and Native Plants: Making the Connection by Linda Cooper, March 19, 2026

March is a great time to add some new plants to your landscape. For Orange Audubon's next in-person program, on Thursday March 19th, long-time butterfly expert Linda Cooper will share with us which native plants you might try first to bring butterflies to your yard.

Linda was born and raised in Tampa and moved with her family to Winter Haven in 1965 when her two children were toddlers. She and her late husband Buck were resident naturalists at Street/Audubon Nature Center in Winter Haven for 13 years as full time volunteers, living on the grounds, hosting Audubon events and giving programs for groups. When they left the Center in 1998, they moved to Haines City to focus on traveling and butterfly conservation.

Linda edited Lake Region Audubon Society's *Eagles View* newsletter for many years as well as writing for Florida Native Plant Society's newsletter, *Butterfly Gardener* magazine and *American Butterflies* publication. She and Buck developed butterfly checklists for Circle B Bar Reserve; Colt Creek, Lake Kissimmee, Lake Louisa and Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Parks; Van Fleet and Withlacoochee State Trails; Disney Wilderness Preserve and Bok Tower Gardens based on their year long surveys. Linda and Buck received Florida Audubon's Cruikshank Award for their commitment to environmental education; the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission's Award for their contributions to wildlife conservation and preservation of Florida's natural heritage and Green Horizon Land Trust's Blazing Star Award.

Linda does the North American Butterfly Association's 4th of July Butterfly Counts and compiles and participates in many additional counts. Some surveys she and Buck started have continued for 30+ years. She travels to the Lower Rio Grande Valley each fall for the influx of Mexican butterflies and to reconnect with the butterfly enthusiasts who come to view them and she leads trips for the Texas Butterfly Festival. In 2018 Linda was honored to be a field trip hostess for the National Butterfly Center's first trip to Mexico for wintering Monarch butterflies.

Join us at Leu Gardens on March 19th at 7 p.m. for a fascinating program.

Alan Shapiro, Programs

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/

2026 Chertok Photo Contest Deadline, April 16, 2026

Have you been out photographing nature? If not, it's not too late! The deadline for Orange Audubon Society's 38th annual photo contest is April 16, 2026.

The Kit and Sidney Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest was created to promote interest and concern for preserving the native fauna and flora of Florida and to enhance enjoyment of Florida's natural wonders through photography.

There are three divisions: Novice, Advanced and Youth (open to photographers 17 years of age or younger, as of the entry deadline).

To be eligible, subject matter must be native to Florida, images must not contain human components and must have been taken while complying with North American Nature Photography Association (NANPA) ethical field practices. NANPA was founded in 1994 when Roger Tory Peterson—the famous ornithologist, artist, and nature photographer—convened a group of photographers to discuss the future of nature photography. In contrast to photo clubs, NANPA focuses on environmental issues and became a critical advocate for the rights of nature photographers on issues from intellectual property to public land.

[Following NANPA ethical standards](#) includes: Learn patterns of animal behavior, so as not to interfere with animal life cycles. Do not distress wildlife or their habitat. Respect the routine needs of animals.

2026 entry forms are [available on our website](#). If you have questions, contact me at (407) 718-1977 or mwilliams@cfl.rr.com.

Teresa Williams, Chertok Committee Chair



Great Horned Owls, 2023 Chertok Florida Native Nature Photo Contest, Novice Category, Honorable Mention Winner. Photo: Melissa Erdos



Let's Do This!

Orange Audubon is in an intensive fundraising period, to see if we can start construction on our nature center this

summer. We hope to make 2026 the year we finally establish a place “to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and their habitats, for the benefit of humanity and the earth’s biological diversity.”

How much money is needed? Our entire capital campaign goal has been \$4.5 million, which includes \$2 million for our nature center and \$2.5 million for a board-designated endowment to sustainably use just the interest for salaries and operations. To date, except for a part-time salary to our Education Coordinator, all of the award-winning accomplishments of Orange Audubon have been made by volunteers. We need a paid Center Director once the building opens and to increase our Education Coordinator to full time soon after.

As you can read in [our audited Fiscal Year 2024-25 financials](#) and [our 990 tax return](#), our assets are now \$2.1 million. In honor of our 60th anniversary as a chapter, we’ve made an ambitious goal of raising \$600K in 60 days, for which \$108,000 is already committed as a match.

Reach for the Sky!!!
★★★★★ **\$4.5 Million**
Building with Operation Funds by December 2026

\$600 K

Goal of \$600 K Additional by April 15 To Start Construction...

\$2.1 Million

Scan to Donate

Can you help us raise \$600K in 60 days (by April 15th), so we can start construction? Each company, organization or individual that wants to be a part of Orange Audubon’s big project, **please donate \$60, \$600, \$6,000 or \$60,000, according to your means.**

[There are naming rights for parts of the building.](#) Donations are tax-deductible, to the extent permitted by law and can include **required minimum distributions from IRAs** and Donor Advised Funds, since Orange Audubon Society, Inc. is a qualified 501(c)(3).

With your permission, we will recognize your donation in our newsletter (next issue), on a beautiful donor tree in the building and in other ways. Be a part of an amazing grassroots effort to create a place to share how to live with and sustain nature. Donations can be made by credit card [on our website through the Nature Center tab](#) or by checks written to Orange Audubon Society and mailed to our P.O. Box 274, Apopka, FL 32704.

Note that this is our new Apopka P.O. Box, but we are still maintaining our Maitland address and you can use it. We are moving west with our nature center in Apopka. The new P.O. Box is to try to avoid the ongoing confusion of Orange Audubon with Audubon Florida because of the local Audubon Center for Birds of Prey. Also, with the closing of Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society, we are hoping to pull in more of their members, who may care about the Lake Apopka North Shore.

Potential donors can contact me for more information and to set up a tour of the Apopka Birding Park by emailing info@orangeaudubonfl.org or calling me at 407-637-2525. Thank you!

Deborah Green, Orange Audubon President



Holly Hobart volunteering at 2026 Eco Fair in Lake County. *Photo: Deborah Green*

March 2026 Progress Report

Those who read our newsletter know all about the purpose of our nature center and habitat restoration, on the 69.5-acre old nursery site next to the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive, now called the Apopka Birding Park, owned by the City of Apopka and for which Orange Audubon has a long-term lease. Upland habitat is disappearing locally as development proceeds, and at the Apopka Birding Park we are restoring

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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.

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

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE, 1-800-435-7352, WITHIN THE STATE. VISIT WWW.FDACS.GOV FOR HELP. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. REGISTRATION NO. CH2330

March 2026 Progress Report, continued

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habitat, with walking trails and nature immersion amenities for the community. Here is what we have done in the past few months, while fundraising prior to starting construction:

- Using a grant from the Florida Wildflower Foundation and spearheaded by Alan Shapiro, who retired as owner of a large native plant nursery, our volunteers planted a native bird-friendly landscape after our yellow entry gate.



Rose Kinane of the Florida Wildflower Foundation with Alan Shapiro during inspection of the entry landscape. Photo: Deborah Green.

- We have settled in to a schedule of workdays on the last Saturday of the month, 9 to 12. Next is March 28th.
- We have mowed some trails. People are regularly walking around the property looking for upland birds, like sparrows and buntings. The sign is posted that no dogs are allowed and no bicycling. We had to eliminate bicycle access because the roads have blind turns, and bicycles can be a hazard to pedestrians.
- Through one of our NORTH SHORE BIRDING FESTIVAL leaders, John Groskopf who is an eBird reviewer, we secured the property as its own eBird hotspot.
- Because many people walk into the Birding Park through the pedestrian gate, thinking it connects to the Drive, we put up a sign "No Lake Access, Upland Habitat Restoration in Progress." [FastSigns Apopka](#) was kind enough to print and install both that sign and the sign about our project now visible from the Wildlife Drive.
- Alan led partial demolition on the interior of the building, so it is more presentable, and assisted by other



Leopold Benches, named after ecologist Aldo Leopold, are appearing throughout the Apopka Birding Park, courtesy Alan Shapiro. Photo: Iowa Outdoors



February 28, 2026 workday at the Apopka Birding Park. Photos: Jim Cunningham.

volunteers, he has been making benches with demolition wood.

- Although the money to build and operate the nature center isn't yet in place, Orange Audubon has began the process of selecting our building contractor. A request for proposal that we had worked on months ago was sent to three contracting firms that our architect had worked with on similar projects and an additional contractor that had asked to bid. Two of these firms met with us at the building and will move forward to apply. Target selection date is in April.



Interested building contractors visiting the site with our architect Philip Donovan, February 2026. Photos: Deborah Green.

February Conservation News

The Florida Forever program, our state's land acquisition program, is running on fumes funding-wise. Audubon Florida is focused on making sure this program is top of mind for funding appropriations during the 2026 legislative session.

There are also a good number of bad bills going through the legislature and Audubon Florida is working hard to get ameliorating amendments added. [Please be sure you are on AF's Audubon Advocate email list and respond to calls](#) for action. We appreciate the skilled advocacy work of Audubon Florida during the legislative session.

Here are the links for contact information for your [State Senator](#) and [State House Representative](#).

Orange Audubon will participate in the land management review of the Beardall Tosohatchee Wildlife Management Area on March 4, 2026

Rick Baird and the Orange Audubon Conservation Committee



2022 Buscando Pajaros trip at Orlando Wetlands Park.
Photo: Shalimar Rodriguez

Buscando Pajaros at Orlando Wetlands, March 7, 2026

For the 5th year, Orange Audubon Society is hosting a tram ride at Orlando Wetlands, led by Gilberto Sanchez in his native Spanish. Gilberto is a skilled photographer and Orlando Wetlands volunteer. The trip will be Saturday, March 7th, from 8 to 11:00 a.m. It is free but limited to 25 people, with registration [at this link](#) or contact Deborah at info@orangeaudubonfl.org or 407-637-2525.

En español: Disfrute de un paseo en trailer por los pantanos de Orlando Wetlands, en un evento gratuito patrocinado por la Orange Audubon Society. Los observadores de aves de habla hispana compartirán información sobre la increíble vida de las aves en el Parque de la Ciudad de Orlando.

Fecha y Hora: sábado, 7 de Marzo de 8 a 11:00 am. Dirección: Orlando Wetlands, 25155 Wheeler Rd., Christmas, FL 32709. Traiga sus binoculares. Algunos de préstamo están disponibles. Los participantes están limitados a 25. RSVP a info@orangeaudubonfl.org. Para información, 407-637-2525.



Cogon Grass. Photo: Joyce Stefancic

Cogon grass

Cogon grass is considered to be one of the top 10 worst weeds in the world, introduced near Mobile, Alabama from Southeast Asia in 1911 as packing material in a shipment of plants from Japan and into Mississippi as a forage crop before the 1920s. It was introduced into Florida for soil stabilization and forage, but found to be unsuitable for forage. It spreads

Invasive Plants: Much to Learn

Orange Audubon Society has a lot of invasive plants to control at the Apopka Birding Park, before we can successfully reseed and replant with native grasses and wildflowers. So we hosted an Invasive Plant Identification Workshop on February 13th. Attended by 24 participants, the workshop was a collaboration with the Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA). The first hour was taught by Dana Sussmann of the Florida Forest Service at the University of Florida Mid Florida Research and Education Center. Then we drove 2 miles up the road to the Apopka Birding Park for a walk-around identification session, led by Ron Chicone, Natural Resources Program Coordinator for Seminole County. We thank Mac Camacho of the Tarflower Chapter Florida Native Plant Society for sharing the announcement and our Social Media volunteer Jimena Aguirre for her posts.

Our Apopka Birding Park was a former greenhouse nursery, and certain plants were dumped and have become invasive. We learned from Alan Shapiro that we have two species of non-native *Asparagus* Fern at the Apopka Birding Park. *Asparagus aethiopicus* (Sprenger's asparagus fern) forms dense, tuberous mats, displacing native vegetation. Originally from Subsaharan Africa but long in the nursery trade here, it spreads through bird-dispersed seeds and resprouts from root tubers.

This species is listed as a Category I invasive plant (the worst level) by the [Florida Invasive Species Council](#) (FISC). This non-profit is dedicated to mitigating the impact of invasive species through science-driven management, information exchange, and statewide collaboration. Most members work in public land management, where invasive species control is a serious issue. Founded in 1984, the nonprofit adopted the new name FISC in 2019 to reflect a focus on invasive animals as well as plants threatening Florida's ecosystems. Use of the term "exotic" which has a positive connotation is now being dropped.

A second species *Asparagus setaceus* is known in the floral trade as plumosus fern, providing interesting foliage and filler for floral arrangements. These are not true ferns but are members of the lily family, like the edible asparagus.

Although this species is not listed on the FISC list, *Asparagus setaceus* is spread widely in our Apopka Birding Park oak hammock.

It is worth understanding that the FISC list does not have any teeth. The only prohibited list is the Florida Department of Consumer Services (FDACS) Noxious Weed list, which would prevent a plant from being sold. The process of an invasive plant getting onto this list is very difficult, since nursery growers find growing these non-native species lucrative.

rapidly and displaces desirable vegetation. Orange Audubon with help from the City of Apopka is working to control the infestation at the Apopka Birding Park.



Indoor and Outdoor portions of the February Invasive Plant Workshop. Photos: Deborah Green



Asparagus aethiopicus
Photo by Patricia Howell



Asparagus setaceus
Photo by Shirley Deaton



Red-tailed Hawk. Photo: Joe Mileyka

Limited Edition Field Trip to Chinsegut Conservation Center, March 14, 2026

This is a joint trip with Alachua Audubon. Date and time is March 14th, 8:00 - 11:00 am. Leaders are Alan Shapiro and Matt Richardson of Orange Audubon and Danielle Zukowski of Alachua Audubon.

Enjoy trails, ponds and multiple feeding and water stations on this unique property. It's a wonderful place for photographing many species such as Pine Warblers, Yellow-throated Warblers, Chipping Sparrows and more. We will also explore the various trails that loop through the Sandhills, hardwood hammocks and freshwater wetlands. Other birds we may see are Northern Bobwhite, Yellow-throated Vireo, Eastern Towhee, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Chipping Sparrows, Orange-crowned Warblers, Sandhill Cranes, Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks and much more.

Limited Edition Field Trips have limited spots, this one for 15 participants. Cost per trip is \$15 for members and \$20 for non-members. To reserve a spot visit our website: <https://orangeaudubonfl.org/field-trip-signup/>. Email any questions to riglingkathy@gmail.com.

How to Sign Up for Field Trips

Here is the link: <https://orangeaudubonfl.org/activities/field-trips/>. Once there click in the gold box where it says SIGN UP for classes and PAY here. Then check the box that says Are you a member of Orange Audubon Society? and then scroll down the list of trips in order of the date to find the trip you are interested in.

Shingle Creek Regional Park at Babb Landing, Monthly Free Trip March 21, 2026

Orange Audubon will visit this new field trip site thanks to our trip leaders Gary and Noah Steinberg along with Jimena Aguirre. This dynamic father and son team were #1 and #2 top eBirders in Florida in 2025. An easy 3-mile walk takes us through a blend of wetland and dry prairie in this beautiful park. Loaner binoculars will be available upon request. This field trip is free, but spots are limited to 20. To reserve a spot visit our website: <https://orangeaudubonfl.org/activities/field-trips>. Email any questions to riglingkathy@gmail.com.



Bob Sanders teaching Birds of Prey, Photo: Deborah Green

Intermediate Bird Identification March 21 and 28, 2026

Many people have told us they are ready for an Intermediate Bird Identification Class, and Orange Audubon has the perfect person to teach it!

Bob Sanders taught Beginners Bird Identification for years and is full of identification tips and natural history information. He teaches the popular Birds of Prey classed for Orange Audubon.

This class is two-part. The sessions are on March 21st and 28th, both at Orlando Wetlands from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Cost for the two-part class is \$50 for Audubon members and \$65 for nonmembers, limited to 12 participants. Registration is on our website: <https://orangeaudubonfl.org/field-tripsignup/>. Email any questions to riglingkathy@gmail.com.

Volunteering and Out Reach Events – WE NEED YOU!

Now more than ever we could use some of our members to help us with upcoming and on-going activities. If you haven't volunteered with OAS before maybe now is the time to get out there. The opportunities are low stress and our current volunteers are fulfilled by their service

Upcoming Outreach Events

- April 8 – Valencia Earth Day (East Campus) – 10 am – 2 pm
- April 11-12 – Spring Fever in the Garden, Winter Garden - various shifts during the day on Saturday and Sunday
- April 25 – Lake Eola Earth Day – various shifts between 10 am and 6 pm
- April 25 – 26 Apopka Art and Foliage Festival – various shifts during the day on Saturday and Sunday

Other Volunteer Opportunities

- We are really wanting to expand our group of Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive ambassadors. This is a 2 ½ hour shift at the beautiful Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive entrance on Saturday or Sunday. Volunteers are assigned in pairs.
- Helping our Education Coordinator with school events
- Assisting with clean-up, planting, etc for our future Orange Audubon Nature Center at the Apopka Birding Park
- Hospitality at our monthly in-person programs at Leu Gardens, 3rd Thursdays, 6 pm

IF YOU CAN HELP WITH ANY OF THESE OUTREACH AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES PLEASE EMAIL: volunteer@orangeaudubonfl.org

Thank you to the volunteers who helped with outreach at the 2026 EcoFair in Tavares: Mary Shanklin, Sheryan Epperly, Holly Hobart and Deborah Green.

Mary Van Egmond, Volunteer Coordinator

Education Program Update

This has been a very fruitful month for OAS Educational programs. All together 574 students and 203 adults were reached with a variety of programs from in school field trips where I took first graders outside and then identified living and nonliving things to an all-day Great Backyard Bird Count at Edgewater High School with 9-12 grade students.

This month we were invited to the Four Seasons Resort to lead two bird walks on their property for a group of international welding supervisors. On that walk Glenn Blaser and I were able to point out some of our native birds such as the Double-crested Cormorant, Eastern Bluebird, Pine Warblers and Red-bellied Woodpecker as well as a flyover of an adult Bald Eagle!

On February 13 for the 3rd year in a row we spent the day at Edgewater High School helping the students participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count. Some highlight this year were seeing 2 Loggerhead Shrikes building a nest, American Kestrels hunting on their football field and a flock of White Pelicans in flight high over their stadium.



Camelot Elementary School schoolyard bird survey with Kathy Rigling. Photos: Nancy Dale.

Another notable event was the arrival of Painted Buntings at Zellwood Elementary School, a school we have been working with to improve their habitat for birds and pollinators. In addition to planting native plants Zellwood has added more feeding stations using their own funding. The buntings and other songbirds are showing up in different locations around the school. Besides Edgewater High School, we

also conducted bird counts at Ocoee Elementary, Camelot Elementary, Timber Lakes Elementary and with the Sandhill Homeschool Collective. The students were so excited to observe the birds on their campus. One boy told his teacher afterwards, "when I looked through the binoculars, I felt like I was flying just like the bird. It was so wonderful. I couldn't think of anything else, and I had such less stress. I even forgot at one time where we were." Another girl at a different school said to me that she felt like she was in a dream, that she had always wanted to go bird watching.

We added a new school to our lineup, Millennia Elementary. I visited their very enthusiastic garden club where I taught them about how to improve their habitat for birds and pollinators. They have received one of our native plant mini-grants and will be installing their native plant garden soon.

A big thank you to our volunteers this month; Jennifer Tedman, Jessica Sodano, Jennifer Barber, Maddie Barber, Randy McCall, Terrie Leibler, Jaliza Almeida, Alan Shapiro, Susan Thome-Barrett, Glenn Blaser and Holly Hobart.

OAS still has availability to conduct on campus bird counts and other standards-based educational programs. Interested teachers and other educators should email me at education@orangeaudubonfl.org.

Our monthly free educational webinars will continue March 11 from 7:00-7:30 pm with a program about Exploring Natural Cycles Using Birds and Project Nest Watch. The link to sign up: <http://eepurl.com/imGskM>

Kathy Rigling, Education Coordinator

Get More Involved With Orange Audubon

Orange Audubon Society's annual election of board members will be held before the April 16, 2026 program at Leu Gardens. I chair the nominating committee with committee members Mary Soule (msoule43@aol.com) and Bob Sena (robs32812@yahoo.com).

To serve on the board, you must be an Orange Audubon member, have an interest in wildlife and the environment that supports it, and be able to attend monthly one-hour board meetings either at Leu Gardens or on Zoom on the third Thursday of each month (except July and August). Board members are expected to attend an all-day summer planning meeting, usually in late July.

Prior to or concurrent with applying for the board, please join one of Orange Audubon's committees or volunteer efforts. Most help is needed with conservation, education, and outreach. The Orange Audubon board application collects information about your interests and skills to align them with Orange Audubon's needs. If you wish to give back to your community through the conservation and nature education initiatives of Orange Audubon, please contact me at rbaird4@att.net. Thank you! *Rick Baird*



Rick Baird with Jan Rahill at the Apopka Birding Park workday, February 28th Photo: Jim Cunningham

Green PLACE Nature & Photography Hike March 29, 2026

Orange Audubon Society is offering a FREE guided Nature & Photography Hike on Sunday, March 29, 2026 to Lake Lucie Conservation Area, Sorrento, west Orange County. Naturalists from the Orange County Green PLACE program, along with Orange Audubon's Lee Ann Posavad, wildlife photographer, and Alex DeBear, naturalist and photographer, will co-lead this hike. It is ideal for youth and families. This continues a long-standing partnership between Orange Audubon and [Orange County Green PLACE program](#) in promotion of these important preserves. This is 166 acres in the northwest corner of Orange County. To register, call 407-836-1522 or email greenplace@ocfl.net.



Mead Botanical Garden Spring Bird Walks April 4, 11, 18 and 25, 2026

For the past 15 years, Orange Audubon has hosted free bird walks at Mead Botanical Garden in Winter Park each Saturday in April. Songbirds pass through Central Florida en route to forests of the Appalachians, the northeastern U.S. and Canada, after wintering in the Caribbean or Central or South America. Mead is a great migrant trap, supplying insects and berries to eat and shelter in a variety of habitats — including open water, wetlands and uplands with oaks and tall pines.

On Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird over [200 species have been documented](#), including 35 species of warblers, most of which should be in their colorful breeding plumage in April. These walks, led by different leaders each week, are free but [registration required](#). Join us!



Mead Botanical Garden Spring Bird Walk. Participants are looking at a Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Photo: Deborah Green.

North Shore Bird Survey Report

The February North Shore Bird Survey was during that cold snap. Ten people surveyed six sections and tallied 100 species. Not bad for a rather cool morning. Anyone that had heated seats in their car loved that feature this morning. It was one of those surveys where you count, run back to the car, warm up, run back out count, and so on... Thank you to all that came out and made the day a success. Whistling-Duck numbers have been down, but I think this might be a normal thing for them this time of year. American Wigeon still holding on with 148 seen, Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, and late female Canvasback continued. The cold blustery weather didn't stop the rails. We saw 1 King, 4 Virginia, and 18 Sora. We counted 752 Common Gallinule, 18 Purple Gallinule (wonder how many more are hiding behind the leaves of the Spatterdock?) and 7000 plus American Coots. 15 Sandhill cranes were nice and 3 Long-billed Dowitcher were new to the list. 87 Wilson's Snipe was a good showing, they should be massing getting ready to go north. 290 White Ibis is a good number for the



Male Northern Harrier (Gray Ghost) on the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive. Photo: Eric Moore

North Shore. We saw one lone Least Bittern, no American Bitterns. White Pelican made the list this time, sad to think thousands perished on the shores of Lake Apopka years ago. Now that the area is restored and only getting better, maybe we'll start seeing more pelicans. We counted 17 Red-shouldered Hawks and 23 Northern Harriers. Eastern Phoebes will be next on the list for going north; we still had 24, so they haven't left yet. Only 6 Tree Swallows, wow that's a low number. With the weather like it was, I applaud our group for getting Sedge and Marsh Wrens, Brown Thrasher, Eastern

Bluebirds, American Robins, and Cedar Waxwings. 2 Lincoln's Sparrows was a good find in two different areas. Swamp Sparrows are still in the area with 81 seen. We found only 5 species of warblers, but 7 Northern Waterthrush was awesome and 5 Orange-crowned was great. Northern Cardinals put on a show with 29.

Thanks to those who came out and helped this month. [Trip report for February is at this link](#). See you for the next North Shore Bird Survey on March 24th, 2026. If you have never registered, [here is the link](#). Good Birding,

Chris Newton, Survey Lead

Northwest FL Panhandle Birding April 7-12, 2026

Orange Audubon Society's five-day trip to see migratory and breeding songbirds and shorebirds in the Florida Panhandle will be April 7-12, 2026: Arrive Tuesday, April 7, Depart Sunday April 12.

Following a great itinerary developed over the past several years, plans are to stay in Appalachicola and at the Tall Timbers Field Station, visit St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, St. George Island State Park, St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, Bald Point State Park, Alligator Point and other sites in Leon County. On past trips, the group saw over 130 bird species.

The cost is \$300 for members; \$350 for non-members, and includes local expert guides and some picnic meals.

Maximum participants is 8. Register at this [link](#). For lodging and other details, contact Teresa Williams at (407) 718-1977.



American Oystercatchers, Hooded Warbler, Eastern Kingbirds, birds seen on the North Florida Panhandle Trip. Photos: Brian Miller.

MARCH/APRIL CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Bird Chats with OAS via Zoom

Contact Deborah at info@orangeaudubonfl.org

[Link to register](#)

Wildfire Smoke and Birds by Olivia Sanderfoot

March 5, 2026

Birds & Culture in Southern Portugal by João Jara

March 26, 2026

Birding Colombia by Luis Gles and Mariah Hryniewich

April 2, 2026- -

Flock to Marion Cruise by Joe Hammond

April 9, 2026- -

Youth Photo Workshop

March 1, 2026

Contact Deborah at info@orangeaudubonfl.org

Buscando Pajaros

March 7, 2026

Contact Deborah at info@orangeaudubonfl.org

Wekiwa Springs State Park Bird Survey, Apopka

March 8, 2026

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Limited Edition Field Trip: Chinsegut Conservation Center

March 14, 2026

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

March Program: Butterflies and Native Plants: Making the Connection by Linda Cooper

March 19, 2026

Contact Alan at alanguardiflora@gmail.com

Intermediate Bird ID class with Bob Sanders

March 21 and 28, 2026

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

North Shore Bird Survey

March 24, 2026

Contact Deborah at info@orangeaudubonfl.org

Shingle Creek Regional Park at Babb Landing

March 28, 2026

Contact Alexander at alexdebear@icloud.com

Apopka Birding Park Bird Survey

March 28, 2026

Contact Alexander at alexdebear@icloud.com

Apopka Birding Park Workday

March 28, 2026

Contact Deborah at info@orangeaudubonfl.org

Green PLACE Photo Workshop, Lake Lucie Conservation Area

March 29, 2026

Contact Green PLACE at 407-836-1522

Oakland Nature Preserve Bird Survey, Oakland

March 29, 2026

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Spring Migration Bird Walks at Mead Botanical Garden

April 4, 11, 18 and 25, 2026

Register: <https://orangeaudubonfl.org/activities/field-trips/>



Whee!! This is Fun!!! Egret, Venice Rookery, 2025 Chertok Florida Native Nature Photo Contest, Honorable Mention Winner, Novice Category. Photo: Jeanne Polarolo

Young Birders Field Trip

April 11, 2026

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

Wekiwa Springs State Park Bird Survey, Apopka

April 12, 2026

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

April Program: Rehabilitating Native Animals by Debbie Hesel

April 16, 2026

Contact Alan at alanguardiflora@gmail.com

April Field Trip: Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive

April 19, 2026

Register: <https://orangeaudubonfl.org/activities/field-trips/>

Contact Kathy at riglingkathy@gmail.com

City Nature Challenge

April 24 - 27, 2026

Contact Deborah at info@orangeaudubonfl.org

Apopka Birding Park Bird Survey

April 25, 2026

Contact Alexander at alexdebear@icloud.com

Apopka Birding Park Workday

April 25, 2026

Contact Deborah at info@orangeaudubonfl.org

North Shore Bird Survey

April 28, 2026

Contact Deborah at info@orangeaudubonfl.org

Update Your Membership

March is a great time to join or renew your 3-way membership in Orange Audubon, Audubon Florida and National Audubon Society. Please pay directly to Orange Audubon, and we transmit the base membership fee to National. If you want to include an additional donation, which goes to Orange Audubon, you can.

The base rate is \$20 (\$15 for students). Go to Orange Audubon's website and click the [Join/Renew link](#). If you need your expiration date or have any membership questions, email membership@orangeaudubonfl.org. Thank you for supporting our chapter.