This Month's Program: January 19, 2006 - 7:00pm
Birdsong by Don Stap, PhD

Chickens, ducks, and hawks tend to make calls that are inborn, but songbirds
learn their songs from their fathers, uncles, or neighbors. Variations in timing,
pitch, and pronunciation in local populations (dialects) make the scientific study
of birdsong a rich field. Don Stap, English professor at UCF, enthralled us several
years ago with his story of a birding expedition to Peru. This month he will de-
scribe the lives of Gregory F. Budney of Cornell University and Donald E. Kroodsma
of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst as they study the phenomenon of
birdsong. Professor Stap’s 2005 book on this subject will be available for sale and
autographing.

Join us January 19 for a fascinating program.
Deborah Green, Vice President

January Field Trip - Merritt Island NWR, Titusville FL

Eighty three species seen on this trip last year!
If you missed last year's field trip, don't be
left out this time!

Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge
is our world class duck headquarters that
always provides great encounters. We will
see many types of waterfowl, shorebirds, and
waders. Migratory species abound. This is
a delightful driving tour on the Black Point
Drive that offers leisurely views with binocu-
lars and scope views of hundreds of birds.
So join us and add to your life list on Janu-
ary 21st.

We will meet in the rear parking lot of
the Burger King located at Hwy 50 (Colo-
nial Dr) and Alafaya Trail in east Orange
County in time to sign up, get assigned to a
vehicle for carpooling and leave at 7:30am
to caravan to Titusville. It takes about 40
minutes from the meeting point at Alafaya
Trail and Colonial Drive to get to the Ref-
uge. Bring your binoculars, spotting scopes
if you have one, field guides, a jacket, and a
snack/lunch for the end of the drive lunch
time gathering. If you have questions be-
fore the trip, Bob Ferguson can be reached
at 407 644-7850. The day of the trip, any
need for info or directions via his cell phone
407 619-4484. You do not need to sign up
in advance. Hope to see you there!

NOTE: This is a driving trip with NO hiking
involved so mobility impaired members are
couraged to attend.
Happy New Year! Did you get a chance to participate on one of the local Christmas Bird Counts? I haven’t heard any reports yet of the numbers of birds seen, but let’s hope the numbers are still high. We finally have seen American Goldfinches at our feeders. It did seem like it took much longer for them to appear this year than normal. Others were also experiencing a ‘lack of birds at their feeders’ if my phone calls and emails are any indication; several persons contacted me wondering what had happened and why they weren’t seeing birds this season. Let’s just hope that the migrants, for whatever reason — plentiful supply of food, nicer than normal weather, etc. — took their time leaving the northern environs to head south. Hopefully it’s not due to loss of habitat. I was just reading that loss of habitat is blamed for the decline in the Northern Bobwhite population in Florida. As a result, plans are underway to change land management policies to bring about an increase in their numbers [and coincidentally the Crested Caracara, Burrowing Owl, Eastern Meadowlark and some Sparrow species].

While National Audubon Society is marking its 100 years of conservation, this month marks the 40th anniversary of the incorporation of Orange Audubon Society (OAS). In July the board of directors talked about doing something special this year to commemorate the occasion, but that hasn’t gotten off the ground yet. Would anyone care to make suggestions? You may contact me if you have any ideas about it.

Soon the annual election for OAS’ officers and board of directors will be upon us. All officer positions and five board of director positions will be filled at that time. In that regard, attendance at the Audubon of Florida’s Audubon Academy at Eckerd College in March might be productive. Discussions/workshops will focus on how to help your chapter in several different capacities. To serve on the board, you need not attend this workshop — most of us have learned by being elected and doing what we can; however, the workshops can certainly be useful and you may want to consider attending. Watch for details on this event.

Have you seen the numerous articles in various publications — newspapers, e-news, magazines — regarding how global warming is affecting our planet? From a small rodent species in the western U.S. whose habitat has moved further up on the mountains to the Greenland coastline that is becoming more and more submerged (studies of both of these were reported in December 2005), nothing is immune. There is no doubt that the human species is having an effect on this big Earth of ours. We must continue the fight to conserve and preserve. Your help is needed — now! Please do what you can each day to help in the battle. To paraphrase the philosophy of the environmental movement: every victory is for that battle alone (note the recent victory for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge — again), but every defeat is forever. Best wishes for a healthy, happy, safe and environmental 2006!

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Bird Watchers’ Delight

It was announced at the December program that birders’ were ‘flocking’ to the Lake Apopka Restoration Area (North Shore) to catch a glimpse of some Scissor-tailed and Fork-tailed Flycatchers. As of the OAS deadline (Dec. 23rd), the birds are still present. Best chance to see them is in the mid- to late afternoon, on the East side (and looking East) of Binion Road (CR437) where the Hooper Farms Road dead ends into Binion. Good luck; no one knows how long they will stay in the area.

Loretta Satterthwaite

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Holiday Cheers

A big thank you to everyone involved with our December meeting set-up and tear down. It was certainly a challenge to rearrange everything into the two smaller rooms at Leu Gardens (the large Camellia room was needed for a special holiday party). Our re-arrangements were hampered even more by the very late delivery (that evening) of one of our t-shirt orders. Special thanks to Teresa Williams and Milton Heiberg for their efforts in getting those shirts inspected, folded and ready for sale. I was busy and didn’t see everyone who helped, but do know that Mary Anne Freyer, Chris Gandy, Mary Keim, Dick Smith and Bob Stamps were kept busy, too. And, as always, thanks to Tom Williams who consistently does a great job with hospitality. All in all, it was a good meeting — an excellent speaker, good attendance, great hospitality goodies and worthwhile sales. The only drawback was that we were so rushed with everything that we didn’t have a chance to relax and enjoy everyone’s company during this special holiday time of the year. Thanks again to all of you who helped OAS in this ‘transformation’.

Loretta Satterthwaite

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Volunteers Needed for Orlando Wetlands Park Festival

Saturday, February 18th 2006 (9–3 p.m.) marks the official date and time for the 6th Annual Orlando Wetlands Park Festival, co-sponsored by the City of Orlando and Orange Audubon Society (OAS). That can mean just one thing. We need your help from 8–3:30 p.m. to make the event happen.

OAS informally “adopted” Orlando Wetlands Park (OWP) several years ago and since that time has proudly co-sponsored the festival by providing expert guides for bird watching and nature photo treks through the park as well as other nature activities. You can help with a variety of activities that includes: leading guided bus and walking tours, providing information at environmental education tables, selling t-shirts at our fundraising tables, instructing children in making nature collages and other duties.

OWP is a model example of wetlands engineering at its environmental finest. Located in Christmas, Florida (near Ft. Christmas) this 1,650 acre “park” has become an oasis for flora and fauna, particularly of the feathered kind. Volunteers are guaranteed time off to enjoy the activities, so bring your binoculars and help OAS make this event a success. For more details and to reserve your volunteer time slot, contact Teresa [407-644-0796 or mwilliams@cfl.rr.com] or Loretta [407-886-2925; lns-oas@att.net]. We look forward to hearing from you soon.
The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) returns for its ninth season February 17-20, 2006. The National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology encourage everyone to COUNT BIRDS WITH A BUDDY! Bird enthusiasts of all ages can share their love of birds with a friend, a child, a scout troop, a class, or a co-worker—opening new eyes to the joy of birding and the fun of creating a unique snapshot of winter bird abundance and distribution across the continent. Every pair of eyes is needed and everybirdy counts, whether in a backyard, on a high-rise balcony, in a park, or on any of the 730 million acres of public lands. In 2005, participants sent in more than 52,000 checklists, with a record-breaking 613 species and more than 6 million birds counted. These millions of sightings generate what would be impossible otherwise—continent-wide information about where the birds are and how their numbers compare with those of previous years. Anyone with Internet access can see the results in maps and charts as the count progresses.

“The level of energy created each February by Great Backyard Bird Counters is phenomenal,” said Dr. Paul Green, director of Citizen Science for Audubon. “What always amazes me are the new discoveries made by people across North America. Some birdwatchers even send digital photos to back up their reports. Last year participants sent in more than 1,000 photos and many are now part of the GBBC web site gallery.”

For nearly a decade, the GBBC has kept tabs on the ever-changing patterns of birds in winter. How far north will American Robins be reported this year? Will Sandhill Cranes migrate early or late? Introduced Eurasian Collared-Doves have been turning up in new states—where will they be this year? Native Red-bellied Woodpeckers have been spreading to the northeast—will this trend continue? Scientists also want more information on declining species, such as Rusty Blackbirds and Painted Buntings. While these species are suffering from the continued destruction of their preferred habitats, other factors, such as mercury accumulation in Rusty Blackbirds, and removal of Painted Buntings for the illegal cage bird industry, may make a bad situation worse.

“With the GBBC, it is possible to use your own backyard to study bird abundance and distribution across the continent. Every pair of eyes is needed and everybird counts,” said Dr. John Fitzpatrick, director of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. “It is a classic example of the vital role citizens and the Internet now play in understanding our planet.”

In 2006, for the first time, the Lab of Ornithology and Audubon are launching an element of friendly competition. Awards will be given to localities that submit the most checklists, record the greatest number of species, or count the highest number of birds (last year’s top numbers: 433 checklists from Georgia, 169 species from Corpus Christi, Texas, and 291,246 birds from Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge, Missouri). A photo contest will also be held based on bird pictures taken during the event and submitted for posting on the GBBC gallery. Winners will be announced after all the data from the event have been submitted.

Everyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to seasoned experts. During the count, bird watchers can tally up birds for as little as 15 minutes, or for as long as they like, keeping track of the highest number of each bird species they see together at one time. People are encouraged to report birds from public lands and local parks, as well as from their own backyards. Participants enter their numbers online at www.birdsource.org/gbbc and can explore sightings maps, lists, and charts as the count progresses.

Year-round, anyone can view results from past counts and learn how to participate by visiting www.birdsource.org/gbbc. There is no fee or registration for the event, which is sponsored by Wild Birds Unlimited. For more information contact the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at cornellbirds@cornell.edu or (800) 843-2473 in the United States; (607) 254-2473 if calling internationally; or contact Audubon at citizenscience@audubon.org; (215) 355-9588 Ext. 16.

### Announcing OAS’ Beginning Bird Watching Class

For most folks, the enjoyment of bird watching increases with the ability to name a species using sight, sound, behavior or a combination of these and other clues to identity. To help you master the rewarding and fast-growing “sport” of bird watching, Orange Audubon Society (OAS) is pleased to offer a Beginner’s Bird Watching Class (BBWC) with instruction by Tom Williams. The course includes 2 classroom and 2 field sessions:

- **Class Session 1:** March 25th * 9 a.m. – noon * Rollins College.
- **Class Session 2:** April 1st * 9 a.m. – noon * Rollins College.
- **Field Session 1:** April 8th * (Time TBA) * Mead Gardens – session coincides with OAS’ annual Birdathon event.
- **Field Session 2:** April 15th * (Time TBA) * Orlando Wetlands Park.

Tom Williams is a past president of OAS and retired education curator for the Central Florida Zoo. He began the “sport” of birding in 1970 and has been sharpening his skills ever since. Through previous educational classes for OAS and Harry P. Leu Gardens, this well known naturalist has helped both novice and experienced birders sharpen their skills. Registration fees, which include handout materials and parking at Rollins College, are as follows:

- Audubon members - $25 registration fee,
- Non-members - $40 registration fee, or
- Non-members who join OAS concurrently when enrolling - $45 ($20 introductory membership rate includes annual 3-way membership in Orange Audubon and National Audubon Societies and Audubon of Florida + $25 registration fee.)

The course will be limited to 15 students. To reserve a space, send your check payable to Orange Audubon Society (and your completed membership application form if joining OAS), PO Box 941142, Maitland, FL 32794-1142. For additional information, contact Tom Williams (407-332-5089) or Teresa Williams (407-644-0796 or mwilliams@cfl.rr.com) or check the OAS’ official website: www.orangeaudubonfl.org where additional information and membership application forms are posted. Hurry, you know what they say about the early bird!
Rally for the Rivers - February 17-19, 2006

Plan to attend the second Rally for the Rivers, a three-day event to promote restoration of the Ocklawaha and St. Johns Rivers, increase environmental awareness, teach the principals of smart growth, and empower activists. Interact with candidates running in the 2006 election and demonstrate the economic value of nature-based tourism in a festive and fun atmosphere. Sponsored by the Putnam County Environmental Council, most events are free and all are open to the public.

Scheduled events include a Smart Growth Workshop on Friday (space is limited; pre-registration is required. Call Margy Bielling at 352-685-2434 for more information.), Riverfest all day Saturday, Field Trips on Saturday and Sunday mornings (contact David Zeigler at davidpzeigler@aol.com, 352-546-4715, or check out the Florida Defenders of the Environment website at www.fladefenders.org/riverrally.html), and the Ocklawaha River Wrap Party on Sunday afternoon.

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Riverfront Inn in Palatka. Call 386-328-3481 to make your reservations at the event rate of $60-$75, good through February 2, 2006. Be sure to mention the Rally to ensure the conference rate. Go to the Florida Defenders of the Environment website at www.fladefenders.org/riverrally.html for more information, including lists of camping and dorm-style accommodations, area restaurants, and field trips.

We hope to see you there!
In years past, these guided trips with the team of Bob Wheeler and Dick Smith have been a favorite. They have kindly agreed to do two trips this year, the first of these being held on January 28th. If you have not been to Orlando Wetlands Park at sunset, it is beautiful! Add to this hundreds of birds returning to their night-time roosts and you have a special birding encounter. For this trip, bring your binoculars, a jacket, and you may want a small flashlight and possibly bug spray although this is not usually needed in January. This trip does involve walking and sitting and at times you may also want a small pad or even light chair to sit on. If you have questions, you can call Dick Smith at 407-834-2197 or Bob Wheeler 407-869-0303.

Return to Roost Field Trip #1

Day of the course info or directions Dick's cell# 407-257-7361 or Bob's cell# 407-739-0333.

Please meet at the Orlando Wetlands Park parking lot early enough to be ready to leave the lot at 5pm. The park is located in East Orange County near Fort Christmas Park. To get there, take Highway 50 east to Christmas, Florida, turn north at the sign to Ft. Christmas Park. You will see the fort on your left in about 1.5 miles. You will quickly see Wheeler Road on your right after you pass the fort. Turn right on Wheeler Road (there is a sign for Orlando Wetlands Park) and travel about 1 mile down this small road. The park is on your left at the end of Wheeler Road. Hope to see you there!

November Field Trip Report

Again, a wonderful trip was experienced by thirty birders on the levees at Lake Apopka Restoration Area (LARA) Jim Peterson from St. John's water management was a saint in leading us on what would have been a day off for him and his family. Thank you Jim!! We were thrilled to have many new birders along for the ride as we found 64 species varying from palm warblers to great blue herons. The herons were feeding on rats in the fields along with the myraid of juvenile eagles, hawks, harriers, and vultures. This was an interesting behavior to watch as was watching the “gangs” of juvenile eagles congregating on the ground while resting from feeding. The birds of prey really gave a show as we saw everything from an early Bald Eagle pair on nest to Red Tails, Red Shoulders, Sharp-Shinned, Coopers, Merlin, Kestrel, and Harrier. After what I'm sure will become a traditional “relief-visit” to the rest

Second Hawk ID Class

On Saturday January 14, Bob Sanders will hold another of his most excellent Hawk ID Classes at the Lake Apopka Restoration Area. We will meet at the Lust Road gate, which leads into the restoration Area at 8:30 AM. From U.S. Hwy 441, in Plymouth, take SR 437 south, to Lust Road, and turn right. The gate is about 200-300 yards straight ahead. Extra cars will be left inside the gate, and we will car pool to the selected viewing area. This is a driving and sitting class.

Bring binoculars, field guides, spotting scopes if you have one, water, a snack, and a folding chair. We will bird until approximately noon. There is no charge for this event. Call Bob Sanders if you need any additional information at 407-898-9798.

Ft. DeSoto

Spring Migration Field Trip

The annual Ft. DeSoto field trip this year will be the weekend of April 7-8, 2006. The cost will be $75.00 per room for two (2) people. Provide your own transportation on Friday, April 7. We will be staying at the Continuing Education Conference Center Lodge at Eckerd College which is very close to Ft. DeSoto, allowing us to begin birding early Saturday morning. A sign up sheet will be at the January and February meetings, or you may telephone Dick Smith at 407-257-7361 or e-mail @ dick.smith@zepnfg.com to reserve your space. Dick Smith, Field Trip Leader
Field Trips for Disabled Birders in Maine

The American Birding Association has become aware of the need for modified field trips designed for birders with limited mobility or limited endurance. Therefore, for the first time ever, the 2006 convention in Bangor, Maine, through the Physical Limitations Track, will offer three such trips. Two of these trips will focus on land birds that can be found in accessible “hot spots” near Bangor, and in the stunning Acadia National Park. The leaders for these trips will include Victor Emanuel and Barry Lyon from Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, and Rick Wright of Aimophila Adventures. The disabled birders will join the rest of the ABA group for the third trip, which will be a boat trip to the waters surrounding Petit Manan, a breeding island used by Atlantic Puffins and other seabirds. During this trip, we will have the expertise of Wayne Peterson of Field Guides Incorporated and Massachusetts Audubon, to guide our smaller group.

For detailed information about this June 19-25, 2006, Bangor, Maine, convention, please visit the official website at www.americanbirding.org (click on Bangor convention, then field trips, then scroll down to the Physical Limitations Track), or contact me, Darlene Smyth at smythd@comcast.net or 1-520-297-2315. I hope to see you there!