



“The Voice of Conservation in Central Florida”

OASis

Orange Audubon Society
A Chapter of National and Florida Audubon Societies



Vol. 49

February 2014

Issue No. 6

Saturday, February 15th

9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

OAS Co-sponsors 14th Annual Orlando Wetlands Festival

The 14th annual Orlando Wetlands Festival will be held on February 15th, 2014, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Ft. Christmas Historical Park (1300 N. Ft. Christmas Rd.). While parking and vendors will be at Ft. Christmas Historical Park, tour buses and shuttles will take visitors to nearby Orlando Wetlands Park. The City of Orlando, Orange County Parks and Recreation and Orange Audubon Society (OAS) sponsor the event. OAS members lead nature and photography hikes as well as nature bus tours through Orlando Wetlands Park. OAS will also be selling nature-oriented merchandise including t-shirts, tote bags, signs and mugs (plastic accepted; but for faster service, please bring cash or check).

OAS needs volunteers! To lead bird watching hikes or nature bus tours, please contact Randy at (407) 851-5416 or rssmhk@gmail.com. To volunteer for the kids' art table, merchandise sales, or helping with outreach, please contact Loretta at (407) 886-2925 or LNS-OAS@att.net or Teresa at (407) 644-0796 or mwilliams@cfl.rr.com. No experience is necessary.

This Month's Program: February 20th—7:00 p.m. Birding Cuba by Bruce Anderson

Orange Audubon Society invites you to take a photo journey through western and central Cuba—including the Caribbean and Atlantic coasts—with Bruce H. Anderson, current Orange County Coordinator for the Florida Breeding Bird Atlas II project. Delight in photographs of most of the Cuban endemic bird species including the Bee Hummingbird (the smallest living bird in the world), the oddly-shaped tailed Cuban Trogon (Cuba's national bird), the Cuban Parrot and Parakeet, the tiny and colorful Cuban Tody, the Giant Kingbird and others; join us to discover Bruce's favorite! Although this island country is less than 100 miles from Florida at its closest point, Cuban endemic bird species have rarely, unlike those from the nearby Bahamas, strayed to our coast; this makes Cuba a must destination for those wanting to add to their West Indies bird lists. Please join us for this program about birds from one of our closest neighboring countries!

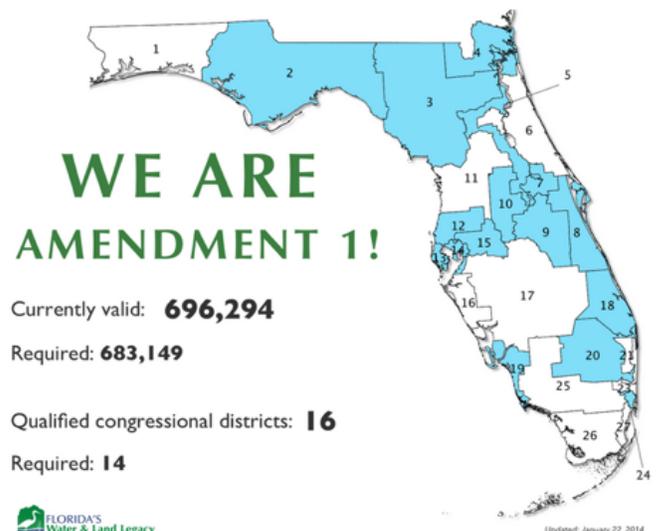
Loretta Satterthwaite, Programs Chair

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) meetings & programs are free & no reservations are necessary. Programs are held the 3rd Thursday of every month (September–June) usually at 7:00 p.m. in the Camellia Room at:

Harry P. Leu Gardens
1920 North Forest Avenue
Orlando, FL 32803-1537

For map and directions, visit:

www.leugardens.org/plan/directions.htm



**Sunday, February 16th, Limited Edition Field Trip
Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge**

The Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge (MINWR) is a strange and valuable place combining the primal with the high tech. Unfortunately it has recently come under the predatory gaze of developers and much of its primal nature is threatened. It is its primal nature that this field trip will explore. MINWR in winter is home to a wide variety of birds: waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, resident waders, and interesting passerines including the threatened Florida Scrub-Jay.

This trip is limited to 15 people and has a cost of \$10 per person per trip for members and \$15 per person for non-members. Reservations are required and will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis the week prior to the trip. For trip questions or reservations call Bob Sanders at (407) 454-0542.

**March 1st
Lake Apopka Wildlife
Festival & Birdapalooza**

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) is helping to organize the 2nd Lake Apopka Wildlife Festival & Birdapalooza—celebrating Lake Apopka and its North Shore. The event will be at Orange County's Magnolia Park (Lakeside), 2929 S. Binion Rd., Apopka, 32703 on Saturday, March 1st from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Some of the activities at this free admission event include bus tours (one actually leaving at 8:30 a.m.) of the North Shore and airboat rides on Lake Apopka, nature and photo hikes (reserve a spot in advance for tours and hikes at www.birdapalooza.com/tours/), tree giveaway, lots of nature-oriented information, music and other entertainment, kids' activities, and merchandise and food sales. Check out the list of participating exhibitors at the website.

Last year's inaugural Lake Apopka Wildlife Festival and Birdapalooza was an overwhelming success with an estimated attendance of ~4,400 people. Eighty-two bird species were reported by trip leaders to the OAS booth during the one-day event. All walking tours were well attended and all eight buses were standing room only. We expect the March 1st attendance to be just as good, so we need your help to make this event a success.

Because OAS is one of the co-sponsors of the event, we need lots of volunteer help such as two guides for each of the nine bus tours, people to assist with bus and airboat 'boarding', birders at lakeside, and lots of people to help with our nature-oriented merchandise sales, our outreach and conservation issues space, and our kids' art/nature collage activity. If you can volunteer for any of these activities, please contact Loretta [LNS-oas@att.net] or (407) 886-2925] or Teresa [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com] or (407) 644-0796]. Please don't hesitate; we need your help. Thanks.

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) promotes the understanding of and an interest in wildlife and the environment, recognition of the intangible values in the remaining natural areas of Florida and the World, and the responsibility for the conservation of these remaining resources.

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The *OAS*'s is published monthly from September through June and is sent free to all members of the Orange Audubon Society.

**SEND AN EMAIL TO MIKED129E@GMAIL.COM WITH THE SUBJECT:OASIS
GOING GREEN TO REGISTER FOR ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS**

Space Florida/Shiloh vs Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge & Water, Water, Water

Two major conservation-related issues facing our community need input from you – our members. First, two upcoming scoping meetings are to be held by the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) to solicit input from the public on potential issues that need to be evaluated in the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) associated with Space Florida's request for issuance of a Launch Site Operator License that would allow it to construct and operate launch facilities that would include part of the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge (MINWR). See http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/ast/environmental/nepa_docs/review/documents_progress/shiloh_launch_statement/. The meetings will be on February 11th from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., at the New Smyrna Beach High School Gymnasium, 1015 10th Street, New Smyrna Beach, Florida 32168 and February 12th from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., at the Eastern Florida State College, Titusville Campus, John Henry Jones Gymnatorium, 1311 North U.S. 1, Titusville, Florida 32796. Each meeting format will include an open-house workshop from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., an overview of the environmental process provided by the FAA from 6:00 p.m. to 6:15 p.m., followed by a public comment period from 6:15 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Even though you might consider this an 'east coast' issue, if you have visited MINWR (Blackpoint Drive), then this will affect you. It would be a good idea to carpool in order to get a good turnout of the environmental community. It is important that we be there and that we speak in support of a letter from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) that evaluated the potential impacts from the construction and operation of such a launch facility in MINWR and suggested alternative sites to be considered. Simply stating that you request that the FAA "adopt the comments of the USFWS" would suffice because it was very thorough in its analysis [please feel free to contact Bob or Loretta at (407) 886-2925 or LNS-oas@att.net for information about this letter or the issue]. Written public comments must be submitted no later than **February 21st**.

The second issue that affects all of us deals with several water plans. The Central Florida Water Initiative (CFWI) is a cooperative effort by the St Johns River (SJR), South Florida and Southwest Florida water management districts (WMD), working with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and regional utilities, to address near- and long-term water supply needs in central Florida. This process to develop a Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP) that will quantify existing and future water needs, ensure protection of water resources and related natural systems, and identify sustainable water supply options includes engaging the public and using technical 'Solutions Planning' teams working on specific issues such as conservation, water quality and quantity, groundwater availability, etc. for input. The CFWI draft RWSP is available for public review and comment at <http://cfwiwater.com/> and public comments will be accepted until **February 20th**. Meanwhile, the SJRWMD has released its draft District Water Supply Plan 2013 (<http://floridaswater.com/DWSP2013/>) and public comments (online, email or snail mail) may be submitted through **February 20th** also. Both of these plans should concentrate on conservation as the solution to the problem; it's the only way that our natural systems and our human populations will both be sustained. [Again, contact Bob or Loretta (see 1st paragraph) for info.]

Florida's Clean Water Declaration Campaign is a positive vision to inspire people to work together to create a new water ethic, find solutions to Florida's water quality and quantity problems and send our water managers a clear message that the people of Florida demand clean water. Visit the website at <http://goo.gl/rK8VvKM> and read and sign the petition — and please alert your friends and family to do the same. The Board of Directors signed Orange Audubon on as a participating organization.



Several attendees at our January meeting offered to share fox squirrel photos with our speaker. If you have photos to share, please send them to greenda@ufl.edu.
Thanks for sharing.

A Weekend Field Trip to the 'Red Hills' of the Panhandle

Orange Audubon Society (OAS) is sponsoring a weekend trip to Tallahassee to explore Tall Timbers Research Station (TTRS) and nearby Birdsong Nature Center (Birdsong) in the 'Red Hills' area of the Panhandle.

Arrive Friday, March 28th; enjoy birding and guided tours Saturday at TTRS and Sunday morning at Birdsong; depart Sunday after lunch. Space is limited to 40 people and reservations are required. For the guided field trips contact Teresa: mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or (407) 644-0796 by March 10th for reduced rate; final deadline for registering is March 25th. For lodging at the recommended Cabot Lodge, call (850) 386-7500 by March 14th and mention OAS for special rate; note that a limited number of rooms have been blocked for this event.

Weekend birding activities include a guided 'wagon' tour of TTRS, known for its milestone research in fire ecology, plus Northern Bobwhite, Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW), native plant communities, longleaf pine, ornithology, herpetology and invertebrates. Saturday's birding guide is Jim Cox, TTRS' scientist and Vertebrate Ecology Program Director who also promises to provide 'front row seats' for banding of Brown-headed Nuthatch, Bachman's and wintering sparrows and (optionally) RCWs plus a look at fire research plots and the authentic, restored Jones family tenant farm house. A picnic lunch on the grounds will be followed by guided tours of the historic Beadel House, circa 1895, and onsite museum that houses a number of rare specimens. End the day birding on your own along the public trail that loops past TTRS' bird window.

About nine miles from TTRS across the GA line is Birdsong Nature Center, where naturalist extraordinaire Wilson Baker will be our guide on Sunday morning as we explore for birds and other natural pleasures. Afterwards those who wish may enjoy Birdsong's famous, mesmerizing bird window before departing for home (bring a lunch if you'd like to eat with the group). Like TTRS' history, Birdsong's is also entwined in the antebellum plantation era that gave way to game bird hunting and pioneering activities in fire experimentation and wildlife management that are now its focus and purpose.

Early bird field trip cost is \$40 for Audubon members, \$55 for non-members and \$15 for youths ages 4-17 accompanied by paid adult (after March 10th please add \$5 each person), which includes admission to TTRS and Birdsong, lunch Saturday and snacks during socials on Friday and Saturday evenings before dinner. For full details including itinerary, Cabot Lodge information, some other hotel, camping options and area dining information, visit OAS' website: www.orangeaudubonfl.org.

Spring 2014 Beginners' Bird Watching Class Offered

Orange Audubon Society's (OAS) Bob Sanders will teach a Beginners' Bird Watching Class (BBWC) this spring. The class is intended to teach or enhance skills in identifying bird species using sight, sound, behavior and other clues. The course includes a classroom session March 8th at Orlando Wetlands followed by a mini-field trip, and 2 field sessions on March 15th and 22nd. All sessions are 8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Field session locales will be announced at the first class. Goals of the course are to increase knowledge and awareness of North American bird species; teach basic birding principles and bird ID techniques—including bird habitat and anatomy; provide binocular basics (OAS has 'loaner' binoculars for use during the class), and tips on using field guides and checklists; and discuss birding ethics. If you miss a session, you may take a make-up session during the fall 2015 class at no charge. No participant substitutions please.

Registration is required and class is limited to 20 students. Total cost for all three sessions is \$30 for Audubon members, \$45 for non-members and \$10 for children through age 12 with a registered adult. Non-members can join when registering and pay \$50, which includes BBWC registration (member price \$30) plus introductory 3-way annual membership in Orange, National and Florida Audubon Societies (\$20 promotional rate). Such new memberships must be paid directly to OAS as described to you when you reserve your space by contacting Teresa: mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or (407) 644-0796. For questions about the class, contact Bob: (407) 454-0542.

February 22nd**Ethos Vegan Kitchen 5% Profit Day to Benefit Orange Audubon Society**

On Saturday, February 22nd, 2014, Ethos Vegan Kitchen will be donating 5% of its profits to Orange Audubon Society. This is the second time Ethos has kindly selected OAS to benefit from their 5% profit day. Last year, it was their best day ever, and we'd like to see us break that record this year. Ethos is located at 601-B South New York Avenue, Winter Park, FL 32789. Their phone number is (407) 228-3898. See the OAS website at www.orangeaudubonfl.org for more details.

Nature Photography Contest Call for Entries!

Orange Audubon Society is accepting entries in its 26th Annual Kit & Sidney Chertok Florida Native Nature Photography Contest. The contest theme, Florida Native Nature, allows participants to explore, photograph and learn more about amazing Florida native animals, plants, landscapes and habitats. Non-native (to Florida) fauna and/or flora, humans and human artifacts are not allowed.

Prizes will be awarded in three skill level divisions: Novice—for new and less experienced photo hobbyists of any age; Advanced—for experienced nature photographers of any age who have practiced and honed their skills; and Youth—for participants age 17 and younger.

The final deadline for all entries (postmarked by date) is May 15th, 2014. Images may be entered by the optional early deadline of April 17th, 2014 (postmarked by date) for a free pre-screening and a free do-over if they do not meet the native, nature and other contest criteria.

Entry fees per image for Audubon members are: Novice and Advanced, \$5, and Youth, \$2; and for non-Audubon members: Novice and Advanced, \$10, and Youth, \$4. For entry forms visit www.orangeaudubonfl.org or contact Teresa: mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or (407) 644-0796.

Audubon Academy—April 11th–13th, 2014

Early bird registration ends March 10th! Registration form, schedule, and walking workshop descriptions are posted on the Audubon Florida website (<http://fl.audubon.org/>). Orange Audubon Society has budgeted funds to help defray costs for 'current & future leaders'! Do not miss this opportunity to network at this "for the chapters, by the chapters" event dedicated to protecting and conserving Florida's natural resources.

Environmental Colloquium Series—February 14th

Please mark your calendar for this series of environmental presentations sponsored by Seminole State College's Biological Sciences Department. All are free and open to the public. For directions, see <http://www.seminolestate.edu/slm/directions>.

February 14th presentation: 12:30-1:30 pm, Sanford/Lake Mary Campus, University Partnership Bldg., Room 1205 "What Are Invasive Species And How Do They Affect Us?" by Elizabeth Stephens, Seminole Co. Public Works Dept. Space is limited this month so next month's OASis will include details for the other two presentations.

**Saturday, February 22nd, 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon
Orlando Wetlands Park Field Trip**

On February 22nd, OAS will visit Orlando Wetlands Park (OWP). This 1650-acre property in Christmas is an artificial wetland constructed to treat reclaimed water. It also happens to attract wintering waterfowl as well as long-legged waders. We will walk about three miles along berm roads at a pace to observe plants and animals along the way. For directions, brochure, bird checklist and more, see: http://www.cityoforlando.net/public_works/wetlands/Maps_Brochures.htm.

Meet no later than 8:00 a.m. in the OWP parking lot. Bring drink, birding gear and lunch (for after the walk). Free. No registration is required. Please join us. If you have questions about the trip, contact us at rssmhk@gmail.com.

Mary Keim and Randy Snyder, Field Trip Committee

January Field Trip Report

Fifteen attended the trip to Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge on January 18th. The group observed at least 61 bird species including Horned Grebe, American White Pelican (impressing us at 5 feet long), Northern Shoveler, Reddish Egret, Roseate Spoonbill, Sharp-shinned Hawk (upsetting the shorebirds), Black Skimmers (providing close looks at Parrish Park), Caspian Tern (eating a large fish), Loggerhead Shrike (feathers blowing in the wind) and Savannah Sparrow (joining us for lunch at the observation tower). Butterflies included Great Southern White and Red Admiral. While we were looking at the differences between mangrove species, a man caught up with us on the trail to explain how they tolerate a saline environment. Black Mangroves and White Mangroves extrude salt through glands on their leaves, while Red Mangroves exclude salt at their root surfaces by ultra-filtration. The cold morning turned into a great day in the field.

Interested in bringing food or drinks to share at the next meeting? Please check with Hospitality Chair, Charlie Kirby at (407) 440-3448. Every little bit helps!



Orange Audubon Society

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Maitland, FL 32794-1141

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Calendar of Events



Thank you to all of our participants in events past. Looking forward to seeing you again!

- Great Backyard Bird Count.** February 14th–17th. See GBBC at www.birdsource.org.
- Environmental Colloquium Series.** February 14th, March 21st, April 1st. See page 5.
- Orlando Wetlands Festival.** February 15th 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. See page 1.
- Limited Edition Field Trip to MINWR.** February 16th. For trip reservations or questions, call Bob Sanders at (407) 454 0542.
- OAS Florida Master Naturalist Program Scholarship applications due February 19th.** See January OASis.
- February Program: Birding Cuba by Bruce Anderson.** February 20th, 7:00 p.m. at Harry P. Leu Gardens.
- OAS 5% profit day at Ethos Vegetarian Kitchen.** February 22nd. More details coming in February newsletter.
- Field Trip to Orlando Wetlands.** February 22nd. See page 5.
- Lake Apopka Wildlife Festival and Birdapalooza.** March 1st, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. See page 4.
- Beginner Bird Watching Class.** March 8th, 15th, 22nd. See page 4.
- Genius Drive Workday.** Sunday, March 16th, 9:00–11:00 a.m. Contact Teresa: mwilliams@cfl.rr.com or 407-644-0796.
- Audubon Academy.** Late registration fee begins March 11th. April 11th–13th, 2014. Visit <http://fl.audubon.org/> for details.