



"The voice of Conservation in Central Florida"

OASis



*Orange Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society and Audubon of Florida*

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Reminders...

Great Backyard Bird Count, Feb. 18-21
Orlando Wetlands Park Festival, Feb. 26

This Month's Program: February 17, 2005 - 7:00pm Florida Spiders by G.B. Edwards, Ph.D.

Florida has over 750 species of spiders, including only two that are dangerously venomous. From orb weavers to jumping spiders to giant crab spiders, these fascinating creatures are harmless and consume myriads of insects. Dr. G.B. Edwards has identified Florida spiders and other arachnids for the State Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in Gainesville for 27 years and is Florida's spider expert. Along with his slides on our most common species, he may bring some of his favorite hairy pets to show, including native non-spider arachnids. Join us February 17 for a fascinating program.
Deborah Green, Vice President

February Field Trip - Orlando Wetlands Park

On Saturday, February 19th, we will travel to Orlando Wetlands Park in Christmas for our monthly field trip. We have been given permission to take motor vehicles on the berms so we will be able to cover much more of the property than we would normally be able to on foot. This also means those individuals who cannot do a 3 or 4-mile hike get to go on a field trip and enjoy this outstanding birding location.

We will meet in the parking lot behind

the Burger King at the Hwy 50 (Colonial Dr.) and Alafaya Trail in time to get signed up, assigned to a vehicle and LEAVE at 7:30 A.M. Bring your binoculars, spotting scopes, field guides, water and lunch. We will bird until approximately noon and then enjoy a picnic lunch at one of the pavilions. Please join us for a fun time in the great outdoors.

Any questions prior to the trip date, contact Bob Ferguson at 407-644-7850. Thanks!

January Field Trip Report DICK SMITH

On Saturday, January 22, 2005, twenty-six OAS members and guests had a delightful day birding MINWR and some of the surrounding area. Although the day started with a very heavy fog, we were able to see lots of species at close range before heading out to Black Point Drive. A total of 83 species were seen, which is a pretty good number for such a large group that only birded until 1:00pm.

The "birds of the day" had to be the Common Goldeneye and the Buffleheads, which were "life birds" for many of us. The very large number Roseate Spoonbills were an absolute delight – there must have been

in excess of 50 during the day- and they were gorgeous. Being able to see the Common Loon so close to us was another surprise and delight; usually these birds are so far out that you can only catch a glimpse of them thru a scope.

Thanks and appreciation to all of the "deputies" who helped to make this a very successful and fulfilling day – they made sure that everybody got to see everything! This is what it takes to make a field trip a winner. All in all, it was a good day to be in the great outdoors with good birding friends.

Orange Audubon Society meetings are held the 3rd Thursday of every month (Sept - June) at 7:00pm in the Camellia Room at

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

For directions, call 407-246-2620

President's Message LORETTA SATTERTHWAITE, PRESIDENT

Do you remember how the days just zoomed by when you were out of school for the summer? I truly believe that the older you get, the faster time flies — whether you're having fun or not!

Lots of things are happening in Central Florida at this time of year. You will notice announcements for several of these in this newsletter. Familiar events are recurring and new events are cropping up (see opportunities for volunteering in this issue). It's also a great time of year to get out in Florida's natural environs and have some fun (see Calendar of Events) and take some photos for

Orange Audubon's annual Chertok Nature Photography Contest before the May 19th entry deadline.

Are you keeping your bird feeders and baths filled? Have you seen anything unusual at your feeders? Please keep us informed. Also, make note of the chance to see lots of migratory, as well as resident, birds on the Ft. DeSoto Park field trip in April.

Our conservation committee is having no trouble staying busy, as usual. Remember if you have some free time and wish to help them, please contact Peggy Cox (pegcox@att.net; 352-429-1042). Remem-

ber, in the words of Henry David Thoreau: "What is the use of a house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on?" Call Peggy today.

This month the nominating committee for this April's election of five members to the Board of Directors will be appointed. Our by-laws state that we must have at least two OAS members who are not on the board on that committee. Perhaps you would like to serve in that capacity or on the board; if so, please contact me (LNS-OAS@att.net; or 407-886-2925). We need your assistance. Thanks.

Conservation News PEGGY COX, CHAIR

"Get The Big Picture", was the title of the Orlando Sentinel Editorial on January 15, 2005 to Orange County Commissioners. Finally an official public opinion on what is needed to plan for the myriad impacts to southeast Orange County from the anticipated developments being planned for that area. District 4 Commissioner Linda Stewart had previously written a My Word column asking for voluntary restraint from land owners and developers in asking for development approvals and changes to the Comp Plan until the development and environmental resource study on that area is completed later in the year. The old ICP site, once zoned for commercial/industrial development, is now proposed for development as a mixed-use development with at least 2,000 homes in the mix, to connect the UCF Research Park and the proposed High-Tech Corridor near the Airport. The developers are pushing the Commissioners to preliminarily approve this plan - No big picture for them.

The extension of Avalon Blvd to the Beeline has been accelerated by the County Commissioners to begin in May instead of after the completion of this study, so as to better accommodate the development of the ICP parcel. Apparently the only big picture the Commissioners see is the need to get these developments under way, no matter what the consequences on the surrounding community and environment. Smart Growth, new urbanism, and other new types of planning would all insist on analyzing the impacts of the road and the large ICP development before approving any of them. Identification of significant environmental habitats, especially wetlands; the need for potable water; and the lack of any transit systems through this proposed High Tech corridor from the airport to UCF, all deserve to be adequately addressed before these projects are allowed to go forward. OAS has and will be part of public input on these projects and we encourage all members to attend any public hearings on these issues and let our Commissioners hear our concerns on all this proposed growth in southeast Orange county.

The Big Picture on Birds was the title of National Audubon's State of The Birds USA 2004, published at the end of the year. Threats to bird species can be reduced to a few big ones, with the most serious the loss of habitat from draining and degradation of wetlands, expanding agriculture, clear-cutting forests, and the ever spreading sprawl of development. Other threats include air and water pollution, collisions with towers and buildings, and climate change. While we have reduced the threat of pesticides and other poisons to birds, we are degrading their habitats in too many places, too quickly. Audubon is a supporter, along with Bird Life

International, of Important Bird Areas - places that provide essential habitat for one or more bird species. Criteria to qualify as an IBA include that the site provides habitat for a threatened or endangered species; provides habitat for restricted-range species; and sites that are used by species that occur in high densities due to their congregatory behavior. In Central Florida, IBAs include the North Shore Restoration Area of Lake Apopka, The Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern, The Wekiva River-Ocala Greenway properties, Tosahatchee State Preserve; Seminole Wildlife Management Area, Canaveral Marshes, St. Johns Wildlife Refuge, The Upper Econ Mosaic (headwaters of the Econ River). These IBAs are part of the Big Picture. We need to protect them and, in some cases, the waters that flow from them into the rest of our communities. These IBAs represent some of the important habitats of Florida, from rivers and wetlands, to scrub habitat and coastal estuaries. We will continue to advocate for public policies that protect these areas from the threats listed above. For more information, check out www.audubonofflorida.org.

IBAs lead to what is I guess the biggest picture in Florida this year - WATER. Our explosive growth will now bring home the predictions about not enough potable water to go around. A variety of options are being considered by this year's legislature to fund the expensive work of developing new alternative water sources. The aquifer is not going to be able to continue to supply potable water, as it has in the past, to the sprawling growth we have allowed. In south Lake County, the City of Clermont has grown in population by 89% in the last 5 years! All of it on water from the aquifer. Where will the

... cont'd on p3

The 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 beauty of Florida and the World, and the responsibility for the conservation of these remaining resources.

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

<http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org>

Interpretive Birding Workshop

An Interpretive Birding Workshop will be held on Saturday February 26th from 10:00am-2:00pm at the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey, 1101 Audubon Way, Maitland. Suitable for both advanced and novice birders, this workshop teaches you to observe and interpret bird behavior. Dr. Davis - researcher, educator and publisher of IBirding Magazine [www.ibirding.com] - has given this popular workshop all over the country, including the Space Coast Birding Festival.

Registration for OAS members is \$45, for nonmembers \$50, or nonmembers can pay \$60 and receive a membership along with registration. Limited to 25 participants. Send your check payable to Orange Audubon Society to Deborah Green, P.O. Box 91663, Longwood, FL 32791 or register at Wild Birds Unlimited located at the corner of Tusawilla and Red Bug Lake Road in the Publix Shopping Center. For further information, call Deborah Green at 407-553-0028. Register early to reserve your space in this outstanding workshop!

2005 Ft. DeSoto Park Field Trip

On the weekend of April 8-9, 2005, we will again have an overnight field trip to one of the premier birding hot spots in the United States – Ft. DeSoto Park in Pinellas County. The plan is to drive over, on your own, on Friday, April 8 and spend the night at the Center for Continuing Education at Eckerd College so that we can begin birding bright and early Saturday morning.

The cost for the rooms is only \$70.00 per room and they each sleep two people in two double beds, or you can have a room all to yourself for the same price. These are really nice, clean individual rooms, not a dormitory arrangement. A full breakfast will be provided by the Eckerd College Cafeteria for the nominal fee of \$5.00 per person on Saturday morning.

A sign up sheet will be at the monthly Orange Audubon Society meeting on Thursday, February 16 and March 16. If you are unable to attend the meetings, you may e-mail me at dick.smith@zepamfg.com or call me on my cell phone 407-257-7361.



If you want to see warblers and other songbirds in breeding plumage, this is the trip to make! FYI, there is an article, with photographs, by that “other” wildlife photographer in the February issue of *Birder's World*.

Dick Smith

Conservation... from p2

water come from? Well, environmentalists do NOT want to take water from natural systems to satisfy the growth monster. We will be fighting to keep a little used Florida statute that allows the State the right to reserve a set amount of water from consumptive use for the protection of fish, wildlife and human health and safety. Legislation is being planned to reserve an as yet undetermined percent of the State's existing water for natural systems. Expect monumental opposition to our position. Contact your local legislator and ask that they support the reservation of some of Florida's public water supply for natural systems in this year's legislature.

Help us monitor the state of birds in Central Florida by taking part in a bird survey. Two local IBAs have surveys you can take part in; 1) North Shore Restoration Area of Lake Apopka - first Saturday of each month 7:30am-Noon, call Pam Bowen, 386-329-4870, next survey Feb. 5th; 2) Lake Louisa State Park - second Saturday of each month 8am-Noon, call Peggy Cox, 352-429-1042, next survey Feb. 12th.

For more information on OAS Conservation Committee and next meeting date, call or email Chair Peggy Cox, 352-429-1042, pegcox@att.net.

Cheerful Thoughts Needed

Rich Paul, recently retired manager of Audubon Coastal Island Sanctuaries near Tampa, has been diagnosed with stomach cancer. There was no indication that it has spread and he is now recovering from surgery. If you would like to let him and his wife Ann know that you are thinking of them, their address is: 1020 S. 82nd Street, Tampa, FL 33619. Rich's email address is: RichPaul13@earthlink.net. Please keep both of them in your thoughts at this difficult time.

Orlando Wetlands Park Annual Festival

Saturday, February 26th from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, Orange Audubon Society (OAS) will co-host the annual Orlando Wetlands Park (OWP) festival. There will be lots of activities for everyone to enjoy — guided bird hikes, nature hikes, native plant ID hikes and bus tours, face painting, bird mist netting and live animal demonstrations, refreshment booths and more!

Don't forget your money or checkbook because there will be several opportunities for purchasing items. OAS will be selling t-shirts, totes, and books and we'll be happy to sign up new members, also.

OAS has been asked to provide tour guides for some of the events that day. We need several people to lead four birding hikes and fourteen bus tours, starting at 9:15 AM and every half-hour thereafter. Help with the fundraising tables will also be necessary. Please contact Loretta [LNS-OAS@att.net; 407-886-2925] or Teresa [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com; 407-644-0796] if you can volunteer for a couple of hours.

Memorial Party for Ruth Williams

As announced previously, the memorial for Ruth will be held at Leu Gardens on Friday, February 18th. This day was chosen because it would have been her birthday. Ruth's husband, Tom, has told us that they had discussed this type of event and Ruth's wish was for a catered party at which people should have fun. Please join Tom and Ruth's friends at 11:00 AM in the Camellia Room.



\$ - SAVE GREEN - \$



Help protect the Green Swamp, the heart of the Floridan aquifer, and save on your long distance phone bills. The Citizens Coalition of Lake County, Inc., a south Lake county not-for-profit organization dedicated to citizen oversight of the development process and protection of our natural resources, has been engaged in a long legal battle with the City of Groveland to restrict the City from approving sprawling urban density developments into the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern. To help pay our ongoing legal fees and provide support for all efforts that protect the Green Swamp, the Citizens Coalition will soon begin providing a long distance service called the GreenSwampPhone.com, that will allow 15% of the total paid on your phone bill to go to the Green Swamp fund. Long distance service for 5 cents a minute, with 15% of your total bill going for protection of a valuable environmental resource in Central Florida. There will be no monthly service fee, you will be billed either directly or through your local service provider, and best of all you'll be helping those who are actively engaged in opposing the degradation of a treasure of Central Florida's environment. This new long distance service will be available on February 10th. Call 1-877-835-6498 to sign up and for more information.

Call Rob Kelly, President of Citizens Coalition of Lake County, at 352-429-1083 with any questions.

GreenSwampPhone.com: <http://www.valacom.com/gsf/index.html>



Soil & Water Conservation Supervisors Elect Officers

At its first meeting in January, the newly elected Orange Soil & Water Conservation District Supervisors elected their officers. They are: Chairman Susan Clary; Vice-Chairman Mark Busch; Treasurer John Crotty and Secretary Tim Adams. Sally Baptiste is the fifth supervisor on this elected board. The board is looking for volunteers who have expertise in water and/or soil issues in Orange County to act as associate supervisors, attend monthly meetings and participate. Associate members participate in meetings, but cannot vote. Anyone interested is asked to please contact Susan Clary at soilandwater@susanclary.com



Birdathon 2005

It may not feel like it now, but spring is quickly approaching, and with it, spring migration. That can mean only one thing: our yearly **Birdathon** fund-raiser!

This year's fund-raiser will be held on **Saturday, April 16th, 2005**. Now's the time to start planning your schedule, your strategies...and get a team together. Not only can you be out in nature having fun, you can help Orange Audubon Society at the same time!

Next month's OASis will contain a pledge sheet so that you can begin obtaining pledges to help us raise much needed funds for Orange Audubon Society. Start thinking about which of your friends, co-workers, and local businesses you can ask for help.

Claire Hilliker, Birdathon Co-chair



Volunteers Needed - Again!

Orange Audubon Society has several fundraising events coming up rather soon. We need 3-4 people for 2 to 3 hours each to help with set up (7:30 AM or so) through tear down (after 3:00 PM) at the Orlando Wetlands Park annual festival on February 26, 2005 (see related article for details of the event).

The Leu Gardens Annual Plant Sale is the weekend of March 5th & 6th. This event is two full days (8:00am-5:00pm) with thousands of attendees; so once again, we need lots of help (many hands make light work!). Larger blocks of time would be especially helpful for this event, but if you can only spare one or two hours to help, let us know.

To sign up as a volunteer for either of these events, contact Teresa [mwilliams@cfl.rr.com; 407-644-0796] or Loretta [LNS-OAS@att.net; 407-886-2925]. Please let us know your preferred date and block of time for the events. We will get back in touch and work with you to determine a final schedule for these very important fundraisers. Thanks for contacting us soon.

Facing The Worst Threat

"It [climate change] is the greatest environmental health problem the world has ever faced." -- Carol Browner, Chair, Audubon Board of Directors, quoted in the 12-03 Audubon Magazine

Florida needs help. Prized ecosystems, especially the Everglades, would probably be damaged beyond recovery by unchecked global warming. Countless species would be imperiled by higher temperatures, rising sea levels, stronger storms and exotic invaders.

Let's call it global heating; 'warming' sounds too benign. Average global temperatures climbed 1° F in the last century, and heating has accelerated. Virtually all scientists blame human-caused greenhouse gas emissions, especially carbon dioxide, for part or most of the heating and expect another 3 to 11° F temperature rise this century. Computer models of climate correctly predicted that weather extremes would increase with global heating. Downpours instead of gentle rains, blizzards, killer heat waves and scorching droughts have become more common worldwide.

Four devastating hurricanes hit the state, but most Floridians seem unaware that warming seas fuel more powerful hurricanes. Wind damage pales beside potential flooding. Two or three foot higher sea levels, as projected by climate models, would mean catastrophic damage to coastal communities and ecosystems by a powerful hurricane striking at high tide. A lingering nor'easter could wreak even more havoc.

Climatologists studying earth's geological history have established that atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations have varied in tandem with earth's average temperature for some 400,000 years. Greenhouse gas buildup shows no sign of abating and threatens to exceed prehistoric peaks over that time span. Greater polar warming was correctly predicted by climate models. Arctic temperatures have risen about twice the amount as elsewhere, and the Antarctic Peninsula has warmed 4.5 °F in the last half century.

Glaciers are melting faster on six continents. Greenland, essentially an ice mountain, now has a summer melt line above 6,500 feet or over halfway to its top. Melted

ice from Greenland would raise sea level around 24 feet, which is unlikely this millennium. But even a 10 or 20 percent melt would mean a Florida calamity.

Shrinking arctic ice and snow cover is exposing dark water, rocks, soil and vegetation that retain four to eight times as much solar heat as white snow and ice. Scientists term this 'positive feedback'. In other words, global heating reinforces itself. What should you do about this threat?

You can cut your family's greenhouse gas emissions and set an example for friends and neighbors. Most of these suggestions will save money as well:

- For your next car, buy a higher mpg vehicle. New hybrids offer a range of models. My early model has averaged over 68 mpg in four years. Walk or ride a bicycle when you can and enjoy the health benefits.
- In replacing appliances, select for top-rated energy efficiency. Consider installing a solar thermal water heater; it can be a good investment.
- If your local utility offers a "green power" option, support it. Such programs feature energy purchased from renewable sources, financed by consumers volunteering to pay a small additional monthly fee.
- A few non-profit municipal utilities have offered solar photovoltaic (PV) installations largely subsidized by government. Participate if you have the opportunity and can afford your share of the installation cost.
- Make sure your house is properly insulated; many utilities provide a low-cost evaluation. Avoid over-heating in winter and excessive air conditioning in summer. Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent types. Turn off unnecessary lights and unplug idle appliances. Install low-flow shower heads to save hot water. Dry clothes outside when practicable. Recycle and use recycled products as feasible.
- Trees soak up carbon dioxide and will provide summer shade and restrain cold winter winds if strategically placed. Use lawn fertil-

izers sparingly, preferably organic types. Don't water excessively. Florida lawns can flourish without pesticides and be havens for birds and other wildlife. 'Pesticides' include insecticides, herbicides, fungicides and other 'cides' derived from petroleum. Many studies have shown that lawn pesticide use is associated with higher levels of cancer in toddlers and pets. For 25 years, I have maintained a pesticide-free lawn that is green and inviting, but not a monoculture.

Using energy more efficiently reduces greenhouse gas emissions and prepares for the time when cheap petroleum products become only a memory. But we need to do much more.

Audubon members should demand that government leaders require compulsory energy efficiency laws, such as minimum mpg vehicle fleet limits. Voluntary measures aren't enough. Several major firms have saved money by reducing waste and greenhouse emissions, but will go no further without assurance of competitive equality – that is a 'level playing field' set by law.

Lavish subsidies now benefit mature and shrinking industries that provide and process fossil fuels, including uranium. This money should be redirected to growing renewable energy enterprises that will more than replace jobs inevitably lost in fossil fuel industries. Incidentally, hydrogen is not an energy source; it is an energy carrier and means of storing energy from another source, preferably renewable. Hydrogen's future utility depends on developing economical renewable energy sources along with infrastructure to distribute it.

Most importantly, limiting global heating requires international efforts. Our nation must cooperate in cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

Only powerful grassroots pressure is likely to force our government to adopt energy policies that will preserve Florida's ecology and economy for future generations. Audubon should be leading in this effort.

By: Lee Bidgood, Jr., Conservation Chair, SE Volusia Audubon Society, Inc. <bidgood@ucnsb.net>

References: 1. Audubon booklet, "CO₂ Diet for a Green house Planet: A Citizen's Guide for Slowing Global Warming", by DeCicco, Cook, Bolze and Beyea, published June, 1990

2. Audubon Magazine, special issue of December, 2003, Global Warning, Confronting Climate Change: How the World Can Keep Its Cool

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EDUCATION Kimberly Rougeux
& Leesa Sward
FIELD TRIPS Bob Ferguson
FINANCE Milton Heiberg
HOSPITALITY Tom Williams
MEMBERSHIP Mike Daley
NEWSLETTER Claire Hilliker

Calendar of Events

February 12, 2005 - Saturday
Lake Louisa S.P. Bird Survey; 9:00am-Noon.
Peggy Cox 352-429-1042
pegcox@att.net

February 12, 2005 - Saturday
Birds of Prey ID Class - Lake Apopka North
Shore Restoration Area, Zellwood
Bob Sanders 407-898-9798

February 17, 2005 - Thursday
General Meeting, 7:00pm, Leu Gardens.
OAS Board Meeting takes place prior to the
General Meeting at 5:30pm. All welcome.
Loretta Satterthwaite 407-886-2925

February 18-21, 2005 - Fri-Mon
Great Backyard Bird Count
www.Birdsource.org/GBBC

February 19, 2005 - Saturday
Hal Scott Regional Preserve & Park and Long
Branch Park Butterfly Survey.
Randy Snyder 407-851-5416

February 19, 2005 - Saturday
OAS Field Trip - Orlando Wetlands Park
Bob Ferguson 407-644-7850

February 19, 2005 - Saturday
Mead Gardens Bird Survey; 8:00am-10:00am.
Dexter Richardson 407-760-8193
dex@dexwine.com

February 19-20, 2005 - Sat-Sun
Rally for the Ocklawaha River
www.fladefenders.org/events or Karen Ahlers
352-546-3560 / PCECRiverRally@hotmail.com

February 26, 2005 - Saturday
Orlando Wetlands Festival, Christmas FL
Mark Sees 407-567-1706, Olabisi Cox 407-246-2213

February 26, 2005 - Saturday
Interpretive Birding Workshop; 10am-2pm
Audubon Center for Birds of Prey
Deborah Green 407-553-0028 / sabal@cfl.rr.com

March 12, 2005 - Saturday
Pelican Island Wildlife Festival; 9am-4pm
Riverview Park, Sebastian FL
www.nbbd.com/npr/pips/2005fest/index.html

March 17, 2005 - Thursday
General Meeting, 7:00pm, Leu Gardens.
OAS Board Meeting takes place prior to the
General Meeting at 5:30pm. All welcome.
Loretta Satterthwaite 407-886-2925

March 19, 2005 - Saturday
OAS Field Trip - Paynes Prairie State Park
Bob Ferguson 407-644-7850
rfergusonhsd@earthlink.net

April 8-9, 2005 - Fri-Sat
Ft. DeSoto Field Trip; St. Petersburg FL
Dick Smith 407-257-7361
dick.smith@zepamfg.com

Audubon Center for Birds of Prey Celebrates 25 Years
Saturday, March 12 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Since opening in 1979, the Center has received more than 12,000 injured or orphaned birds of prey from the Central Florida community and beyond. Over 5,000 of these birds have been released into the wild, including more than 278 Bald Eagles. Join us in celebrating 25 years of raptor rehabilitation, environmental education, and conservation in Florida. Participate in environmental themed games, educational activities, and demonstrations. Bring your camera!

Special admission price is \$2.50 per guest. For more information and directions call 407-644-0190.

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