



"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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This Month's Program: December 20, 2007 - 7:00pm Alligators & Wading Birds: A Natural Symbiosis by Mike Godwin

Gatorland on south Orange Blossom Trail is a photographer's paradise, for many types of wildlife but particularly for the wading birds. How the most accessible wading bird rookery in Central Florida started is quite a tale, and to tell it we have the grandson of Gatorland's founders. Our December speaker Mike Godwin is an alligator expert and naturalist, who loves to show off the wonderful resource Gatorland has become (see his website at home.cfl.rr.com/gatorhole). Mike will be leading Orange Audubon in a special sunset field trip to see the birds fly in to the roost on January 26.

For our December program come with your questions on alligators and other wildlife. Mike promises to bring a small alligator. Bring a child to share the experience and we look forward to seeing you on December 20 for a fascinating program!
Deborah Green, Vice President



December Field Trip - Join a Christmas Bird Count

No OAS field trips are scheduled for December. Please participate in a Christmas Bird Count. The 50,000+ birders that participate can't be wrong. See the Calendar of Events section on the back page for dates and contact information.

November Field Trip Report

MARY KEIM, FIELD TRIP CHAIR

On Saturday, November 17th, twelve people, including two first-timers, attended the OAS trip to Smyrna Dunes Park in New Smyrna Beach. At least 42 bird species were observed including Brown Pelican, Reddish Egret (white and dark morphs), Osprey, Piping Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Royal Tern, Loggerhead Shrike, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Palm Warbler, and Savannah Sparrow. Other vertebrates seen include Bottle-nosed Dolphin and Gopher Tortoise.

Ten butterfly species were seen includ-

ing Great Southern White, Little Yellow, Cassius Blue and Monarch. Invertebrates washed onto the beach included Cannonball Jellyfish and Moon Jelly (see: <http://www.sms.si.edu/IRLFieldGuide/index.htm>). If you have not visited Smyrna Dunes, the size of the dunes may surprise you. The cool, sunny day was ideal for this bird walk at the beach.

Please join us on our January field trip to Merritt Island (see details in January OASis).

Orange Audubon Society meetings are free to the public and held on 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

Education Committee Report GAYE SMITH, EDUCATION CHAIR

Packets of our brochure and listings of the Birds of Prey ID courses have been distributed to schools using Audubon Adventures. We specifically designated these materials for the teacher and her classroom. Brochures are now being distributed to local schools not currently using the Adventures' kit. As referrals come in, contacts are being made to bring additional schools into our education program. OASis readers who know of teachers in the local area who might be interested in the program are urged to email me at smith_ted_gaye@bellsouth.net, or call me at 407-249-3969, with contact information. That extra effort would be much appreciated.

Pontoon Boat Ride on the St. Johns River with a Private Wine & Cheese Party at a Home Along the River

Sierra Club of Central Florida is hosting a pontoon boat ride on the St. John's River, from 12-3, on February 2, 2008. The cost is \$25.00. We will leave from Blue Springs State Park and cruise to a private home on the river. We will dock and take a tour of the home and 50 acres (with black bears in the woods). Wine and cheese will be served on the dock. All profits will go to the manatee protection legal fund. For more information or to reserve a spot, please contact Mary-Slater Linn at 407-481-4398 or flsierra@bellsouth.net

Festival Fundraiser Results

OAS participated in the Lake Eola Fiesta in the Park Arts and Crafts Festival, an outdoor event on November 3rd and 4th. As a result, OAS made approximately \$720 and spoke with dozens of event attendees about the chapter's work in the Central Florida community.

Participation would not have been possible without volunteers who collectively contributed over 130 hours of time. OAS extends sincere thanks to Christine Brown, Chris Gandy, Cyndi Kay, Mary Keim, Richard Poole, Ellen Rocco, Dominique Shimizu, Dick Smith, Randy Snyder, Bob Stamps and Jennifer Weader for their assistance.

OAS' next fundraising and outreach event is the Orlando Wetlands Park Festival, which takes place on February 23rd 2008. Save the date for this fun event! Loretta Satterthwaite and Teresa Williams

Conservation News PEGGY COX, CONSERVATION CHAIR

Orange Audubon has voted to oppose the Application of a Bottled Water company, Niagara Bottling LLC, for a Consumptive Use Permit (CUP) at the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD). The request may be heard as soon as December by the Governing Board of SJRWMD, but most likely after the 1st of the year.

Niagara Bottling has applied for a CUP to withdraw 490,000 gallons per day or approximately 1.7 million gallons per year for their proposed plant in south Lake County. The withdrawals would be made via one ex-

isting well and 3 new proposed wells. Opposition to this plant has been very strong in Lake County. The Lake County Board of County Commissioners voted on Nov. 20th to deny a request by Niagara for \$2.6 million in tax incentives to locate their plant in the Lake County Ford Commerce Park near Groveland. South Lake County, like all of Orange, Seminole, and Polk counties, is part of the Central Florida Coordination Area for water supply that is a joint effort by 3 Water Management Districts to supply water in an area with dwindling groundwater resources. SJRWMD has determined that by the year 2013 there can be no new groundwater withdrawals without seriously impacting the Floridan aquifer and numerous surface water systems.

The Niagara Bottling request is an unnecessary withdrawal of our groundwater in an area that will be restricted in the necessary uses for water in the future, even with serious conservation measures and the limiting of new CUP requests. Niagara Bottling was solicited by the Metro Orlando Economic Development Commission to locate

this bottling plant in Lake county. The vote by the Lake County Commission to deny the tax incentive package was against the EDC's recommendation. Niagara is continuing their pursuit of the CUP at SJRWMD and is apparently going ahead without the tax incentive package having purchased an existing building in the Commerce Park for their plant.

Audubon of Florida conservation priorities for 2008 has been revised to reflect greater emphasis on Enforceable Water conservation measures by the Water Management districts and local governments. AOF also approved resolutions to lobby for mandatory water conservation programs as a condition of CUPs and mandatory reuse systems as a condition of wastewater discharge permits. The complete revised conservation priorities can be read at the AOF website: www.audubonofflorida.org. The 5 main areas of conservation are: Land Conservation and Public Land Management; Growth and Transportation; Wildlife and Protected Species; Water for the Environment; and Climate Change.

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

<http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org>

Natives Rule in Photo Contest Themes Past and Present

Orange Audubon Society's Chertok Nature Photo Contest was conceived 20 years ago with two major objectives in mind: creating an interest in Florida's native flora and fauna and creating an interest in nature photography. Just as past contest themes were selected with those objectives in mind, so were the 2008 themes: "**Florida's Avian Wonders**" and "**Florida—Beyond Birds**".

Subject matters! Only Florida native species may be entered. A species is considered native to Florida if its natural range included Florida at the time of European contact or if the species arrived in Florida and established itself unaided by man.

In the category "Florida's Avian Wonders", only birds that are **native** to Florida may be entered. Many of Florida's native birds are year-round residents; others winter in Florida and breed to our north; others breed in Florida and winter to our south; still others use Florida only briefly during spring and fall migrations. Most non-natives (exotic species) for example, Eurasian Collared Doves and European Starlings, stay in Florida all year. The Black Swans that call

Lake Eola in downtown Orlando their home are native to Australia, not Florida.

In the category "Florida—Beyond Birds," any of Florida's other **native** fauna and/or flora may be entered. Hence, the subject matter in this category is wide open, from native insects to land and sea mammals to Florida landscapes and seascapes. Use caution, many common species are exotic. Citrus trees, for example, are native to south-east Asia, not Florida.

Photography is an excellent reason to get outdoors to enjoy Florida's remaining wild places; and the contest is an excellent way to enrich your outdoor experience by learning about Florida's native species. These and other reputable resources may aid you in plant and/or animal identification: Florida Museum of Natural History, www.flmnh.ufl.edu/resources/#id; USF Atlas of Vascular Plants, www.plantatlas.usf.edu; University of Florida, edis.ifas.ufl.edu; Florida Ornithological Society, www.fosbirds.org; Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission,

myfwc.com/wildlife; and Florida Native Plant Society, www.fnps.org.

As a courtesy and to enhance your knowledge of Florida's natives, the screening committee will pre-screen all entries received by April 17, 2008. Entrants will be notified shortly thereafter of images not meeting contest eligibility criteria and have the option of replacing those images at no additional charge. Replacements must be made in accordance with contest deadline and all other rules.

Final entry deadline is May 15, 2008 (postmark date) or you may hand deliver them to Teresa Williams at OAS' meeting at Leu Gardens that evening. Application forms containing complete contest rules and regulations can be picked up at all future OAS meetings or at Colonial Photo and Hobby, 634 N. Mills Avenue, Orlando, FL. You may also download and print the application form (PDF file), available soon on OAS' website: www.orangeaudubonfl.org or call 407-644-0796 for more information. Teresa Williams, Chair

Valencia to Offer Florida Birds Class in the Spring

Are you looking for a supplement to OAS' Beginning Bird Watching Class? Are you or do you know a teacher that could use recertification points? Or are you just looking for an outdoor, interactive, and fun way to earn 3 biology credits and learn about birds in our state? If either applies to you, check out the Florida Birds class that will be taught this spring at Valencia Community College's Winter Park Campus by OAS VP Leesa Sward.

When:

Fridays: Feb 15, 22 & 29 6:00p-8:00p

Saturdays: Feb 16 & 23 8:00a-2:00p

Saturdays: March 1 & 8 8:00a-2:00p

Where:

Winter Park Campus of VCC

Area Parks (Lake Island Park, Mead Garden, Merritt Island NWR, and more)

For more information on how to register for this class, please contact Patti Riva at 407-582-6845 (BSC 2933, CRN 24690). For more information about the class, please get in touch with Dr. Leesa Sward at LSward@valenciaccc.edu or 407-582-6925.

Are You Still Buying Bottled Water?

If so please go the Natural Resources Defense Councils website and learn why it's a bad idea and getting worse; www.nrdc.org/water/drinking/bw/bwinx.asp.

"Got Water?" Almost everyone in the United States does – clean, safe, healthy water, right from the tap in their home. Several large cities in the US are trying to phase out the sale and use of bottled water, including San Francisco. By December 1st of this year the City must switch from bottled water dispensers to water dispensers using water from the municipal water supply, instead of supplying bottled water to its employees. This water initiative is part of the city's Local Climate Action Plan. It's not just the cost of bottled water versus the cost of tap water that's a big problem, although it's considerable.

According to the Sierra Club website; Tap water, on average in the US, costs \$.0015 per gallon; while bottled water costs an average of \$1.27 per gallon. One of the big-

gest problems of bottled water is the bottles. According to the Container Recycling Institute, 28 BILLION single-serving water bottles are sold in the US each year and more than 80% end up in landfills or incinerators! Manufacturing these plastic bottles requires more than 47 million gallons of oil, which is equivalent to one BILLION pounds of carbon dioxide released in the atmosphere.

There is some innovation happening in the bottled water industry. One is the manufacture of bottles from renewable resources and that are biodegradable. An example is BIOTA Brands of America in Colorado that makes bottles for spring water that are completely biodegradable, made from corn. They still fill them with Colorado Spring Water but maybe these bottles could be made for other products that currently use plastic, making a giant step towards eliminating the amount of plastic discarded by consumers into our overflowing landfills.

Peggy Cox, Conservation Chair

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Calendar of Events

December 1, 2007 - Saturday

LARA Bird Survey; 7:30am-Noon.
Pam Bowen 386-329-4870/pbowen@sjrwmd.com

December 8, 2007 - Saturday

Wekiva River Buffers Conservation Area Bird Survey
Lorne Malo 407-349-2536/407-659-4853(w)

December 14, 2007 - Friday

Emeralda Marsh CBC
Peg Urban 352-326-3868

December 15, 2007 - Saturday

Wekiva River CBC
Jay Exum 407-804-1331 / JExum@Glatting.com

December 15, 2007 - Saturday

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

December 20, 2007 - Thursday

General Meeting, 7:00pm, Leu Gardens.
OAS Board Meeting takes place prior to the
General Meeting at 5:30pm. All welcome.
Dick Smith 407-257-7361

December 21, 2007 - Friday

Zellwood-Mt. Dora CBC, Wes Biggs 407-384-9766
407-376-6967(cell) / birdsatfnt@bellsouth.net

December 22, 2007 - Saturday

Econlockhatchee River CBC
Lorne Malo 407-349-2536/407-659-4853(w)

December 29, 2007 - Saturday

Seminole Ranch (North) Butterfly Survey.
Mary Keim & Randy Snyder 407-851-5416

January 5, 2008 - Saturday

LARA Bird Survey; 7:30am-Noon.
Pam Bowen 386-329-4870/pbowen@sjrwmd.com

January 12, 2008 - Saturday

Bird of Prey ID Class #3 - LARA
Bob Sanders 407-766-5490

January 17, 2008 - Thursday

General Meeting, 7:00pm, Leu Gardens.
OAS Board Meeting takes place prior to the
General Meeting at 5:30pm. All welcome.
Dick Smith 407-257-7361

January 19, 2008 - Saturday

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

January 23-27, 2008 - Wed-Sun

Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival
Neta Harris 321-268-5224 / 800-460-2664
www.nbbd.com/fly

BoP ID Class

What do you get when you combine 20 enthusiastic birders, great weather, and a mess o' hawks? One great field trip! On November 10th we convened the second Bird of Prey ID Class at the Lake Apopka Restoration Area (LARA). Ten species of raptors were observed and studied including: Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Bald Eagle (still in good numbers), Northern Harrier (everywhere!), Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, and American Kestrel. In all, the group identified more than 50 species of birds including: 1 female Northern Shoveler, Black-crowned Night Heron, Purple Gallinule, and 2 Western Kingbirds. We also saw several good sized alligators and one very tiny, very young yellow rat snake. The next BoPID Class is scheduled for January 12th. Call Bob Sanders at 407-766-5490 for more information.

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