North Shore Birding Festival
(This is a pdf version of the text that appears on the website, updated January 8, 2020)

Descriptions of field trips and keynotes

01/16/2020: Thursday
Thursday Keynote Speaker
Greg Miller – The Big Year – A 2011 Film about Three Men Obsessed with Birding
Location: Harry P. Leu Gardens, Camellia Room, 1920 N. Forest Avenue, Orlando, FL. Free. 6 p.m.—9:00 p.m. Every January 1st, birders storm out across North America for a spectacularly competitive event called a Big Year. For three men in particular, 1998 would become a grueling battle for a new North American birding record. The 2011 movie, The Big Year, starring Steve Martin, Owen Wilson and Jack Black, was based on journalist Mark Obmascik’s 2004 book about this competition. The charming and often hilarious Greg Miller, played in the film by Jack Black, was birding advisor on the film and had the opportunity to go birding with Jack and meet the other stars. Thanks to his consultation, the film shows the actual birding hotspots around the country where birders go to add to their Big Year lists (or life lists). Most of us have seen the movie previously, and if not, it is widely available in libraries and online streaming. In this program, we will watch the full movie (1 hour and 42 minutes) and Greg will periodically turn down the volume and provide commentary. The meet-and-greet with light refreshments (no dinner) and the opportunity to purchase nature-inspired merchandise starts at 6:00 p.m., and the film (with Greg’s commentary) will be shown starting at 6:30 p.m. Free, but donations at the door are appreciated. See Greg Miller’s bio under the Speakers and Leaders tab. Greg will also be leading several trips.

01/17/2020: Friday

Trip 1: Sunrise Photography and Birding – Mostly driving, some walking. McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $35, includes lunch. Leaders: Lynn Marie Folts (Lynn Marie Photos), Mark Hainen (Wildlife Impressions), and Steve Shaluta (Steve Shaluta Photography). 6:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m. Maximum participants: 15. Lake Apopka has remarkable opportunities for sunrises from northwestern locations like Clay Island. Sunrise will occur at 7:19 a.m. on this date. Since it takes a while to drive on the dirt roads of the North Shore, we will meet at the McDonald Canal Pavilion at 6:00 a.m., form carpools, and drive through normally locked gates to the Clay Island Observation tower overlooking beautiful Lake Apopka. From there we will explore other areas. Your trip leaders will provide both photo and bird identification tips at sunrise and throughout the morning (See Trip 2 for possible sightings.) The trip includes lunch back at the McDonald Canal Pavilion, which will allow you to conveniently participate in an afternoon trip (Trips 6 to 10).

Trip 2: Early Birding the Lake Apopka North Shore – Mostly driving, some walking. McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $60, includes lunch. Leaders: Alex Lamoreaux with Lorne Malo (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission) and Tom Rodriguez (Orange Audubon Society). 6:30 a.m.—4:00 p.m. Maximum participants: 22. Note the earlier start time for this trip compared to Trip 3, allowing time to bird the McDonald Canal area, form carpools, and head out to pre-scouted areas. Due to limited parking along the roads, forming carpools is required.

The trip will traverse the canals and wetlands of the Lake Apopka North Shore and the lakeshore in search of ducks and wading birds, and then explore the North Shore’s sandy upland edge near Ranch Road.

Possible sightings include Purple Gallinule, Limpkin, Wood Stork, Black-bellied and Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Wood Duck, Mottled Duck, Sora, American Bittern, and Sandhill Crane, along with most of North America’s wading bird species and other waterfowl listed under Trip 5. Raptors typically seen are Osprey, Red-shouldered Hawk, Barn Owl, American Kestrel, Merlin and Peregrine Falcon. Target warblers are Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-throated Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Orange-crowned Warbler, Prairie Warbler, and Ovenbird. Other possible sightings are Roseate Spoonbill, Black Skimmer and American Avocet. While most of our breeding Black-necked Stilts and Least Bitterns are on their more southerly wintering

1 updated 9/15/19. www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival
grounds, a few are recorded each year on Christmas Bird Counts, and we’ll be looking and listening for these species. As many as 13 sparrow species are seen, including rarities like LeConte’s and Clay-colored. Western flycatcher species like Ash-throated and Vermillion are seen most years, and Western, Cassin’s, Tropical, and Scissor-tailed show up many years. White-faced Ibis are out-of-range birds that are repeatedly seen. Groove-billed Anis from the Southwest were seen each winter between 2015 and 2017, and a Smooth-billed Ani from South Florida was an exciting find in winter 2019.

With such a large restoration area on the shore of Florida’s 4th largest lake, in the middle of the Florida peninsula, off-course rarities frequently show up. Past rarities have also included Say’s Phoebe, Rough-legged Hawk, Swainson’s Hawk, Eurasian Kestrel, Wilson’s Phalarope, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Whooping Crane, White-cheeked Pintail, and Ross’ Goose. With skilled leaders and many eyes, we will be searching for what has turned up. The trip includes lunch back at the McDonald Canal Pavilion. After this field trip, if you have registered in advance, you can tour the Mid-Florida Research and Education Center, 1075 S. Binion Rd., Apopka, FL 32703 (approximately 35 minutes’ drive away) for a meet-and-greet, Friday Keynote presentation and dinner.

**Trip 3: Birding the Lake Apopka North Shore** – Mostly driving, some walking. McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $60, includes lunch. Leaders: Greg Miller (Wildside Nature Tours) with Jason Ward (National Audubon Society) and Audrey Whitlock (Carolina Bird Club). 7:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Maximum participants: 22. *Note that this trip starts later than Trip 2.* See Trip 2 for more details and possible sightings. Due to limited parking along the roads, forming carpools is required. The trip includes lunch back at the McDonald Canal Pavilion. After this field trip, if you have registered in advance, work your way over to the Mid-Florida Research and Education Center, 2725 S. Binion Rd., Apopka, FL 32703 (approximately 35 minutes’ drive away) for a meet-and-greet, Friday Keynote presentation and dinner.

**Trip 4: Sparrows, Buntings, and other Wintering Birds** – Mostly walking. Ferndale Preserve, 19220 County Rd 455, Clermont, FL 34715. $35, includes lunch. Leaders: Gullus Quigley (Lake County Parks and Trails), Rebecca Smith (Archaeopteryx Tours), and Gigi DelPizzo (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission). 7:30 a.m.–11:00 a.m. Maximum participants: 22. Ferndale Preserve is a 192-acre Lake County Preserve on the western shore of Lake Apopka, a few miles from Sugarloaf Mountain, the highest point in peninsular Florida. We will bird on foot from the parking lot to the lakeshore and back. With a mix of red maple-dominated wetlands, remnant oak hammocks, and other habitats in various stages of restoration, over 190 bird species have been recorded in the area. Lunch will be served at the McDonald Canal Pavilion, about 20 minutes’ drive from Ferndale Preserve and the starting place for afternoon Trips 7, 8 & 9. If you are taking afternoon Trip 10, it is about 45 minutes’ drive from Ferndale to Seminole State Forest in a very rural area without convenient places to buy food, and the McDonald Canal Pavilion lunch stop is basically on the way. Trip 6 is 17 minutes away from the McDonald Canal. Possible sightings include Savannah, Swamp, Vesper, and Grasshopper Sparrows, plus if we are lucky Le Conte’s, Clay-colored, and others of the 12 winter sparrow species recorded here, as well as other wintering songbirds.

**Trip 5: Waterfowl of the Lake Apopka North Shore** – Mostly driving, some walking. McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $35, includes lunch. Leaders: Mitchell Harris (Space Coast Audubon) and Earl Horn (Florida Ornithological Society). 7:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m. Maximum participants: 20. Due to limited parking along the roads, forming carpools is required, as we traverse the canals, wetlands and shore of the Lake Apopka North Shore in search of ducks and other waterfowl. Your trip leaders will point out field marks to identify each species and distinguish the often brightly colored and distinctly patterned drakes from the often plainer and not-always-so-easy-to-identify hens. Information about migration and molting cycles will be shared. Lunch is back at the McDonald Canal Pavilion which will allow you to conveniently participate in an afternoon trip (Trips 6 to 10). Possible sightings include Fulvous Whistling Duck, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Wood Duck, and Mottled Duck, seen in the North Shore wetlands throughout the year, plus overwintering ducks, such as the Blue-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, and Northern Shoveler, and less common Ruddy Duck, Northern Pintail, American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, and Lesser Scaup. We may turn up a Horned Grebe or Common Loon and will see Common Gallinule, Purple Gallinule, American Coot, and Pied-billed Grebe, along with Limpkin, American Bittern, Black-crowned Night-Heron, and other wading birds on this morning trip.

**Trip 6: Avian Reconditioning Center Behind-the-scenes Tour** – A minimum of walking. Avian Reconditioning Center, 323 W Lester Road, Apopka, FL 32712. $20 (half will be donated to the Avian Reconditioning Center). Leaders: Carole McCorkle and Avian Reconditioning Center staff. 12:00 p.m.–1:30 p.m. Maximum participants: 20. The Avian Reconditioning Center (ARC) is a not-for-profit rehabilitation and education facility that works to physically recondition birds of prey (raptors) that have been inactive for an extended period of time while recovering from illness or injury. Located on 10 acres in Apopka, ARC uses falconry techniques to evaluate a bird’s chances for survival in the wild after recovering from an injury and to teach young birds to hunt. In this behind-the-scenes visit, staff of the Avian Reconditioning Center will share how reconditioning work is done and demonstrate flight for several of the raptors. Possible sightings: Great Horned Owl, Crested Caracara, Short-tailed Hawk, Merlin, Mississippi Kite, Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks, Osprey, Barred Owl, and Eastern Screech Owl.

2 updated 9/15/19. [www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival](http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival)
Trip 7: Birding by Kayak– Paddling. McDonald Canal Boat Ramp, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $30, $15 if you bring your own kayak. Leaders: Mitchell Harris (Space Coast Audubon Society) with Renee Thomas (Orange Audubon Society). 12:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m. Maximum participants: 10. Starting at the kayak launch by the McDonald Canal Boat Ramp, we will paddle down the McDonald Canal to where it meets the Apopka-Beauclair (A-B) Canal and then down the A-B Canal, about 5 miles round-trip to Lake Apopka. This trip will provide a different view of the Lake Apopka North Shore, its birds and lake restoration efforts. Kayaks will be provided by Adventure Outdoor Paddle, LLC, a festival sponsor and co-owner Katrina Aho will provide kayaking instruction. Two 2-person kayaks are available as well as 7 single kayaks. You can also bring your own, space permitting. Email festival@orangeaudubonfl.org to let us know you will be bringing your own. Possible sightings include Limpkins, Purple Gallinules, Common Yellowthroats, and other wetland and water birds. Snail Kites have recently colonized Lake Apopka, eating the introduced apple snails, and we’ll be on the lookout for these. After this field trip, if you have registered in advance, work your way over to the Mid-Florida Research and Education Center, 2725 S. Binion Rd., Apopka, FL 32703 (approximately 35 minutes’ drive away) for a meet-and-greet, Friday Keynote presentation and dinner.

Trip 8: Digiscoping– Mostly driving, a minimum of walking. McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $20. Leader: Robert Wilson (Kowa Sporting Optics). 12:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m. Maximum participants: 10. Due to limited parking along the roads, forming carpools is required. This afternoon field trip from the McDonald Canal Pavilion to several North Shore locations will allow you to learn how to take great photos through a spotting scope. Digiscoping—attaching a camera or smart phone to a spotting scope—minimizes impact on wildlife with extended focal lengths and eliminates the challenge of manual focus. Robert, a retired professional photographer who is now one of our country’s top digiscopers, may share tips on capturing bird photos with your cell phone even when a spotting scope is not available. Bring your own scope or share those Robert will bring from Kowa Sporting Optics, one of our festival sponsors. Email festival@orangeaudubonfl.org to let us know you will need to use a loaner during the trip. Possible sightings: Wading birds are great subjects on which to focus, and Red-shouldered Hawks and Ospreys often perch cooperatively. The early end time on this trip allows you time to bird on your own and then if you have registered in advance, work your way over to the Mid-Florida Research and Education Center, 2725 S. Binion Rd., Apopka, FL 32703 (approximately 35 minutes’ drive away) for a meet-and-greet, Friday Keynote presentation and dinner.

Trip 9: Raptors of the North Shore – Mostly driving, a minimum of walking. McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $25. Leaders: Bob Sanders (Orange Audubon Society) with Larry Martin and Bill and Joyce Stefancic (Orange Audubon Society). 12:30 p.m.–4:00 p.m. Maximum participants: 20. Due to limited parking along the roads, forming carpools is required. The Lake Apopka North Shore, with marshes and grasslands that support rodents, gallinules and other prey, hosts many wintering and resident raptors (birds of prey). Possible sightings include Osprey and Bald Eagle, plus American Kestrel, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper’s Hawk, Northern Harrier, Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks. Other possible sightings include Short-tailed and Broad-winged Hawks. Past rarities have included Krider’s Red-Tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Swainson’s Hawk, Eurasian Kestrel, and Golden Eagle. After this field trip, if you have registered in advance, work your way over to the Mid-Florida Research and Education Center, 2725 S. Binion Rd., Apopka, FL 32703 (approximately 35 minutes’ drive away) for a meet-and-greet, Friday Keynote presentation and dinner.

Trip 10: Scrub-Jays and other Pineland Species – Mostly driving, some walking. Seminole State Forest, south entrance, SR 46, just west of Wekiva River bridge, approximately 14 miles west of Sanford. $25. Leaders: Ralph Risch (Florida Division of Forestry) with Gallus Quigley (Lake County Parks and Recreation) and Rebecca Smith (Archaeopteryx Tours). 1:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m. Maximum participants: 24. Due to limited parking along the roads, forming carpools is required. The endemic Florida Scrub-Jay is restricted to Florida’s ever-decreasing sand pine scrub habitat. The 25,812-acre Seminole State Forest hosts the nearest relatively stable population of this friendly and charismatic bird. After everyone gets up close and personal with scrub-jays, the group will search for other species throughout the afternoon. Possible sightings include Sandhill Crane, Wild Turkey, Eastern Towhee and pine land specialties such as Bachman’s Sparrow, Red-headed Woodpecker, and Brown-headed Nuthatch. After this field trip, if you have registered in advance, work your way over to the Mid-Florida Research and Education Center, 2725 S. Binion Rd., Apopka, FL 32703 (approximately 35 minutes’ drive away) for a meet-and-greet, Friday Keynote presentation and dinner.

Friday Keynote Speaker
Alex Lamoreaux (Wildside Nature Tours): Adventures of a Research Birder
University of Florida Mid-Florida Research and Education Center, 2725 S. Binion Rd., Apopka, FL 32703. $20, includes dinner. 4:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m. Maximum participants: 65. Alex is a nature tour guide for Wildside Nature Tours (a festival sponsor), a well-respected birder, field biologist and wildlife photographer, who has traveled extensively throughout North America, Central America, and South Africa. He has worked on wildlife research projects ranging from Whimbrel migration along the coast of Virginia to Yellow-billed Cuckoo nesting in the desert southwest. As migration counter at the Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory, he has

3 updated 9/15/19. www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival
documented the massive visible migration of raptors and songbirds along Lake Superior. In this interesting presentation full of natural history information, he will tell some of the highlights of his research career as a field biologist. Meet-and-greet starts at 4:30 p.m., dinner starts at 5:30 p.m., and the talk starts at 6 p.m. Upon registration you can specify vegetarian or vegan option, if desired.

01/18/2020: Saturday

Trip 11: Sunrise Photography and Birding – Mostly driving, some walking
McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $35, includes lunch. Leaders: Lynn Marie Folts (Lynn Marie Photos) and Reinhard and Jutta Geisler (Friends of Orlando Wetlands Park). 6:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m. Maximum participants: 15. Lake Apopka has remarkable opportunities for sunrises from northern locations like Clay Island, and sunsets from Magnolia Park in Apopka and Newton Park in Winter Garden. Sunrise will occur at 7:19 a.m. on this date. Since it takes a while to drive on the dirt roads of the North Shore, we will meet at the McDonald Canal Pavilion at 6:00 a.m., form carpools, and drive through normally locked gates to the Clay Island Observation tower overlooking beautiful Lake Apopka. Your trip leaders will provide both photo and bird identification tips at sunrise and throughout the morning (See Trip 2 for possible sightings.) The trip includes lunch back at the McDonald Canal Pavilion, which will allow you to conveniently participate in an afternoon trip (Trip 18, 19 or 20).

Trip 12: Ocala National Forest Woodpecker Extravaganza – Walking. Clearwater Lake Recreation Area, Clearwater Lake Recreation Area, 24511 Co Rd 42, Paisley, FL 32767. $35, includes bag lunch. Leaders: Gallus Quigley (Lake County Parks and Trails) and Rebecca Smith (Archaeopteryx Tours). 6:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m. Maximum participants: 22. The well-burned pine forests of the Ocala National Forest host all of the species of woodpecker that breed or winter in Florida. Possible sightings: The target species will be the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker, but we will also search for Red-headed, Red-bellied, Pileated, Downy, and Hairy Woodpeckers, as well as Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and Northern Flickers. Brown-headed Nuthatches and Bachman’s Sparrows are other well-burned Southern pine land specialties that we should be able to find, and possibly other sparrows and winter songbirds. This trip can be taken in combination with an afternoon trip (Trip 18, 19 or 20).

Trip 13: Birding by Ear – Walking. McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $35, includes lunch. Leaders: Larry Martin, Tom Rodriguez and Scott Simmons (Orange Audubon Society). 6:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m. Maximum participants: 22. This walking field workshop will focus on recognizing birds by their sounds. Birds are not so vocal in January in Florida as in breeding season, but there are still vocalizations that can help with identification. The early start time may allow us to hear owls and see and hear American Woodcocks. Trip tip: To get a head start on this walk, you might review sounds posted on the website of Cornell Lab of Ornithology (a festival sponsor). Particularly review sounds of Common Gallinule, Red-winged Blackbird, and Boat-tailed Grackle, as these are our most vocal wetland species. See possible sightings under Trip 2. The trip includes lunch back at the McDonald Canal Pavilion, which will allow you to conveniently participate in an afternoon trip (Trip 18, 19 or 20).

Trip 14: Early Birding the Lake Apopka North Shore – Mostly driving, some walking. McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $60, includes lunch. Leaders: Alex Lamoreaux (Wildside Nature Tours) with Gigi DelPizzo (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission) and Lorri Lilja (Orange Audubon Society). 6:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Note early start time. Maximum participants: 22. Due to limited parking along the roads, forming carpools is required. See Trip 2 for possible sightings. The trip includes lunch back at the McDonald Canal Pavilion. After this field trip, if you have registered in advance, work your way over to the Mid-Florida Research and Education Center, 2725 S. Binion Rd., Apopka, FL 32703 (approximately 35 minutes’ drive away) for a meet-and-greet, Saturday Keynote presentation and dinner.

Trip 15: Leaders’ Choice, Morning – Mostly driving, some walking. McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $35, includes lunch. Leaders: Chris Newton (Kissimmee Valley Audubon Society) and Audrey Whitlock (Carolina Bird Club). 7:00 a.m.–11:30 a.m. Maximum participants: 22. Due to limited parking along the roads, forming carpools is required. This morning trip will look for exciting sightings of the previous days and other rarities, at the discretion of your trip leaders. See possible sightings under Trip 2. The trip includes lunch back at the McDonald Canal Pavilion, which will allow you to conveniently participate in an afternoon trip (Trip 18, 19 or 20).

Trip 16: Birding the Lake Apopka North Shore – Mostly driving, some walking. McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $60, includes lunch. Leaders: Greg Miller (Wildside Nature Tours) with Mitchell Harris (Space Coast Audubon Society), David Hartgrove (Halifax Audubon Society) and Lorne Malo (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission). 7:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Maximum participants: 22. Note that trip starts later than Trip 14. Due to limited parking along the roads, forming carpools is required. See Trip 2 for possible sightings. The trip includes lunch back at the McDonald Canal Pavilion. After this field trip, if you have registered in advance, work your way over to the Mid-Florida Research and Education Center, 2725 S. Binion Rd., Apopka, FL 32703 (approximately 35 minutes’ drive away) for a meet-and-greet, Saturday Keynote presentation and dinner.

4 updated 9/15/19. www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival
Trip 17: Green Mountain Trail Hiking and Birding—Walking, approximately 4 miles, mostly level. Green Mountain Scenic Overlook and Trailhead, 20700 County Road 455, Montverde (28.645932, -81.710156). $35, includes lunch. Leaders: Greg Gensheimer (Green Mountain Scenic Byway) with Renee Thomas (Orange Audubon Society). 7:00 a.m.–11:30 a.m. Maximum participants: 16. This walking birding trip will start from the Green Mountain Overlook, which sits 132’ above sea level on the west side of Lake Apopka with a view of Lake Apopka and the Lake Apopka North Shore. This trail, part of the state-designated Green Mountain Scenic Byway, connects to the Lake Apopka Loop Trail. We will hike several miles while birding in the oak hammock and open fields. Take the opportunity to bird this area with one of the founders of the Green Mountain Scenic Byway. Possible sightings: Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-throated Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Orange-crowned Warbler, Prairie Warbler, and Ovenbird as well as various sparrows and other songbirds. The trip includes lunch back at the McDonald Canal Pavilion, which will allow you to conveniently participate in an afternoon trip (Trip 18, 19 or 20).

Trip 18: Youth and Family Photography Trip – Some walking. McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. Children under 17, $2, adults, $5. Leader: Jack Rogers (Orange Audubon Society) with Lee Ann Posavad. 12:30 p.m.–2:30 p.m. Maximum participants: 18. Jack Rogers is a prize-winning nature photographer and photography teacher, who works as a geology professor at Valencia College. Through previous photography trips for Orange Audubon Society, he has mentored young photographers who have won the Youth category of OAS’ annual Chertok Nature Photography Contest. Children under 14 must be accompanied by a registered adult, and all adults must have a child signed up for the trip. Possible sightings: Wading birds and Wilson’s Snipe are some typical birds the group might see and photograph in the McDonald Canal area.

Trip 19: Birding for Millennials and Others – Mostly driving, some walking. McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $25. Leaders: Jason Ward (National Audubon Society) with Melissa Gonzalez (Orange Audubon Society) and Audrey Whitlock (Carolina Birding Club). 12:30 p.m.–4:00 p.m. Maximum participants: 20. On this afternoon trip, we will look for exciting sightings of the previous days, and new areas at the discretion of your trip leaders. See possible sightings under Trip 2. The trip will end in time to work your way over to the Mid-Florida Research and Education Center, 2725 S. Binion Rd., Apopka, FL 32703 for a meet-and-greet starting at 4:30 p.m. followed by dinner and the Saturday Keynote presentation.

Trip 20: Leaders’ Choice Afternoon – Mostly driving, some walking. McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $25. Leaders: Chris Newton (Kissimmee Valley Audubon Society), Greg Bretz (Orange Audubon Society), and João Jara (Birds & Nature Tours Portugal). 12:30 p.m.–4:00 p.m. Maximum participants: 20. This afternoon trip will look for rarities in the area and explore some new locales at the leaders’ discretion. See possible sightings under Trip 2. After this field trip, if you have registered in advance, work your way over to the Mid-Florida Research and Education Center, 2725 S. Binion Rd., Apopka, FL 32703 (approximately 35 minutes’ drive away) for a meet-and-greet, Saturday Keynote presentation and dinner.

Saturday Keynote Speaker
João Jara: Bird Migration through Portugal and Spain
University of Florida Mid-Florida Research and Education Center, 2725 S. Binion Rd., Apopka, FL 32703. $20, includes dinner. 4:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m. Maximum participants: 65. João Jara, owner of the birding tour company Birds & Nature Tours Portugal, will share some of the fabulous experiences you can expect if you go birding in Portugal. Despite being relatively small in terms of territory, Portugal is regarded as one of the best destinations in Europe for bird watching, because of its diversity of habitats and the fact that 21% of the country is protected in natural parks and reserves. Around 330 bird species occur here regularly, some of which are endemic to the Iberian Peninsula (Portugal and Spain). Near Lisbon, estuaries boast a great wealth of species and enormous flocks of flamingos and spoonbills are a common sight, coloring the salt pans and marshes. Just as birds fly north and south in migration in the Americas, many birds migrate seasonally between Europe and Africa. Due to its strategic geographical position and topography, the southwest coast of Portugal is a particularly rich migration corridor. By October most of the trans-Saharan migrants will have already passed through Portugal and are beyond the Sahara Desert, but more than a half dozen species of raptors pass through this narrow peninsula. There southbound migrating raptors congregate before attempting to fly across the Mediterranean Sea to Africa. Whether you plan a trip to Portugal or will just be armchair traveling, this will be a fascinating presentation. Read more about João under Speakers and Leaders. He will be co-leading trips also. Meet-and-greet starts at 4:30 p.m. Dinner starts at 5:30 p.m. The presentation is at 6 p.m. Upon registration you can specify vegetarian or vegan option, if desired.

01/19/2020: Sunday

Trip 21: Sunrise Photography and Birding – Mostly driving, some walking. McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $35, includes bag lunch. Leaders: Milton Heiberg (Orange Audubon Society) with Earl Horn (Florida Ornithological

5 updated 9/15/19. www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival
Society). 6:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m. Maximum participants: 15. Lake Apopka has remarkable opportunities for sunrises from northern locations like Clay Island. Sunrise will occur at 7:19 a.m. on this date. We will meet at the McDonald Canal Pavilion at 6:00 a.m. (it takes a while to drive to the lake shore). We will drive through normally locked gates to a tower overlooking beautiful Lake Apopka. Your trip leaders will provide both photo and bird identification tips at sunrise and throughout the morning (See Trip 2 for possible sightings.) The trip includes lunch at the McDonald Canal Pavilion, which will allow you to conveniently participate in an afternoon trip.

Trip 22: Intensive Birding the Lake Apopka North Shore – Mostly driving, some walking. McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $60, includes bag lunch. Leaders: Gian Basili (USFWS), and João Jara (Birds & Nature Tours Portugal). 6:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m. Maximum participants: 20. This trip is for the more avid and tireless of our festival participants. Due to limited parking along the roads, forming carpools is required. See Trip 2 for possible sightings.

Trip 23: Bird Banding at Lake Lotus Park – Some walking
Lake Lotus Park, 1153 Lake Lotus Park Road, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714. $20, no lunch included. Leaders: Andrew Boyle (Wekiva Bird Banding Station) with Melissa Gonzalez (Orange Audubon Society) and Jason Ward (National Audubon Society). 7:00 a.m.–10:30 a.m. Maximum participants: 15. The Wekiva Bird Banding Station began in the 1990s, and now operates at Lake Lotus Park, a 150-acre park in Altamonte Springs. Over 75 species have been banded since the program began at Lake Lotus Park, with over 2,500 individual birds processed. Andrew Boyle, who leads the banding station, will demonstrate banding and explain what the station’s studies have shown about migration patterns and life cycles of the birds. Depending on how many birds we capture, participants may be able to hold a bird after it gets banded to release it! Depending on how many birds we capture, participants may be able to hold a bird after it gets banded to release it! For possible sightings, check out the Wekiva Basin blog at wekivaband.blogspot.com.
After this trip, you can go out to lunch at one of the many nearby restaurants and catch an afternoon field trip – Trips 27– 31.

Trip 24: Birding the Lake Apopka North Shore – Mostly driving, some walking. McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $60, includes bag lunch. Leaders: Greg Miller (Wildside Nature Tours) (morning only) with John Thomson and Lorri Lilja (Orange Audubon Society). 7:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Maximum participants: 22. Due to limited parking along the roads, forming carpools is required. Possible sightings see Trip 2.

Trip 25: Pine Meadows: Sparrows, Buntings, & Other Wintering Songbirds – Mostly driving, some walking.
Pine Meadows Conservation Area, 2280 Pine Meadows Golf Course Rd, Eustis, FL 32726. $35, includes bag lunch. Leaders: Gallus Quigley (Lake County Parks and Trails) with Gigi DelPizzo (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission) and Beck Smith (Archaeopteryx Tours). 7:30 a.m.–11:00 a.m. Maximum participants: 20. Pine Meadows Conservation Area is a 770-acre public land that features more than six miles of passive recreational trails. Pine Meadows consists of open water, wetlands, wet meadow, and a small upland area of Pine Flatwoods. Habitat restoration continues to improve the wetlands, uplands and meadows to increase biodiversity of fish, birds and other animals. Possible sightings: The property is a popular destination for birders due to the nearly 120 species seen there, including the Henslow’s Sparrow and Bald Eagle.

Trip 26: Waterfowl of The Villages by Golf Cart– Mostly driving, some walking. Orange Blossom Hills Country Club, 1542 Water Tower Circle, Lady Lake, FL 32159. $25, no lunch included. Leaders: Alice Horst and The Village Birders. 8:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m. Maximum participants: 18. The Villages is an enormous Central Florida 55+ community spanning 32 square miles in Lake, Sumter, and Marion Counties. Its many golf courses have retention ponds that attract some great waterfowl each winter. For example, a Long-tailed Duck was present in winter 2019. Bald Eagles, Great Horned Owls, and other birds are also viewable. Members of The Village Birders will share their 4-person golf carts with trip participants on a pre-scouted survey of waterfowl in the area. After this field trip, we will dine out (not included in trip price) in a popular lunch spot. Possible sightings see Trip 5.

Trip 27: Dora Canal Birding Boat Ride – Boating
Rusty Anchor - Dora Canal Tours, 400 W. 4th Avenue, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $40. Leader: Greg Miller (Wildside Nature Tours). 12:30 p.m.–2:30 p.m. Maximum participants: 17. We will travel with Captain Scott in his 38-foot pontoon boat across Lake Dora into the Dora Canal and back, with Greg Miller identifying birds and sharing information about them. Possible sightings include Ruddy Ducks, Wood Ducks, nesting Ospreys, Bald Eagles, Great Blue Herons (possibly nesting), Limpkins, and other wading birds, and wintering songbirds.

Trip 28: Digiscoping – Mostly driving, some walking. McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $20. Leaders: Robert Wilson (Kowa Sport Optics). 12:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m. Maximum participants: 10. This afternoon field trip from the McDonald Canal Pavilion to several North Shore locations will allow you to learn how to take great photos through a spotting scope. Digiscoping—attaching a camera or smart phone to a spotting scope—minimizes impact on wildlife with extended focal lengths and

6 updated 9/15/19. www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival
eliminates the challenge of manual focus. Robert, a retired professional photographer who is now one of our country's top digiscopers, may share tips on capturing bird photos with your cell phone even when a spotting scope is not available. Bring your own scope or share those Robert will bring from Kowa Sporting Optics, one of our festival sponsors. Email festival@orangeaudubonfl.org to let us know you will need to use a loaner during the trip. 

Possible sightings: Wading birds are great subjects on which to focus, and Red-shouldered Hawks and Ospreys often perch cooperatively. For other possible sightings see Trip 4.

Trip 29: Recording What You See: eBirding and Checklists – Mostly driving, some walking. McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $25. Leaders: Chris Newton (Kissimmee Valley Audubon Society) with Kathy Rigling (Orange Audubon Society) and Jason Ward. 12:30 p.m.‒4:00 p.m. Maximum participants: 25. On this afternoon field trip from the McDonald Canal Pavilion into various Lake Apopka North Shore locations, you will not only find many species of birds but also learn how to record your sightings on eBird and achieve recognition for levels of Florida birding achievement. Due to limited parking along the roads, forming carpools is required. For possible sightings on this trip, see Trip 4.

Trip 30: Dora Canal Birding Boat Ride – Boating. Rusty Anchor - Dora Canal Tours, 400 W. 4th Avenue, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $40. Leader: Greg Miller (Wildside Nature Tours). 3:00 p.m.‒5:00 p.m. Maximum participants: 17. We will travel with Captain Scott in his 38-foot pontoon boat across Lake Dora into the Dora Canal and back, with Greg Miller identifying birds and sharing information about them. Possible sightings include Ruddy Ducks, Wood Ducks, nesting Ospreys, Bald Eagles, Great Blue Herons (possibly nesting), Limpkins, and other wading birds, and wintering songbirds.

Trip 31: Sunset Photography and Birding – Mostly driving, some walking. McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $20. Leaders: Steve Coleman with Lynn Marie Folts (Orange Audubon Society). 5:00 p.m.‒7:00 p.m. Maximum participants: 20. Lake Apopka has remarkable opportunities for sunsets from Magnolia Park in Apopka and Newton Park in Winter Garden. The Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive closes at sunset, so that opportunity is not available. Sunset will occur at 5:54 p.m. on this date. We will meet at the McDonald Canal Pavilion at 5:00 p.m. We will form carpools and drive through normally locked gates across the A-B canal to an area with beautiful sunset views of the marshes. Your trip leaders will provide both photo and bird identification tips (See Trip 2 for possible sightings.)

01/20/2020: Monday

Trip 32: Sunrise Photography and Birding – Mostly driving, some walking. McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $35, includes bag lunch. Leaders: Mark Meifert (Orange Audubon Society) and Sam Mitcham (Orange Audubon Society). 6:00 a.m.‒11:00 a.m. Maximum participants: 15. Lake Apopka has remarkable opportunities for sunrises from northern locations like Clay Island. Sunrise will occur at 7:19 a.m. on this date. We will meet at the McDonald Canal Pavilion at 6:00 a.m. (it takes a while to drive to the lake shore). We will drive through normally locked gates to a tower overlooking beautiful Lake Apopka. Your trip leaders will provide both photo and bird identification tips at sunrise and throughout the morning (See Trip 2 for possible sightings). This trip can be taken in combination with afternoon Trip 37.

Trip 33: Best of Birding the Lake Apopka North Shore – Mostly driving, some walking. McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757. $35, includes bag lunch. Leaders: Alex Lamoreaux (Wildside Nature Tours) with Tom Rodriguez (Orange Audubon Society). 7:00 a.m.‒11:30 a.m. Maximum participants: 22. This half-day trip will focus on the best birds seen on the all-day Lake Apopka North Shores trips of the previous three days. See Trip 2 for possible sightings. This trip can be taken in combination with afternoon Trip 37.

Trip 34: Wekiwa Springs Sandhill Tram Birding – Tram tour with some walking. Wekiwa Springs State Park, 1800 Wekiwa Cir, Apopka, FL 32712. $35, includes bag lunch. Leaders: Greg Miller (Wildside Nature Tours) with Paul Lammardo (Wekiwa Springs State Park) and Kathy Rigling (Orange Audubon Society). 7:30 a.m.‒11:30 a.m. Maximum participants: 18. Wekiwa Springs State Park is a 7,000-acre state park that is considered one of the crown jewels of Florida’s award-winning state park system. The park will provide a tram allowing us to reach many interesting areas. Possible sightings: At Wekiwa we will look for pine land specialties, including Brown-headed Nuthatches, Bachman’s Sparrows, Eastern Towhees, Eastern Bluebirds, Pine Warblers, Red-headed Woodpeckers, and overwintering songbirds. This trip can be taken in combination with afternoon Trip 37.

Trip 35: Emeralda Marsh, Waterfowl and Sparrows – Mostly walking, some driving. (Emeralda Marsh Conservation Area, 36645 Emeralda Island Road Leesburg, FL 34788). $40, includes bag lunch. Leaders: Gallus Quigley (Lake County Parks and Trails) and Beck Smith (Archaeopteryx Tours) with Mary and Bob Wexler (Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society). 7:30 a.m.‒2:30 p.m. Maximum participants: 18. Emeralda Marsh is near the headwaters of the Ocklawaha River, on the eastern side of Lake Griffin, and historically
spanned more than 10,000 acres, before being utilized for farming. The St. Johns River Water Management District acquired approximately half of this 6,577-acre area for restoration in 1991. We will first bird Area 3, the 4.5-mile round-trip wildlife drive from the comfort of our vehicles, and see Northern Harriers, ducks, and waders, including American Bittern. Some songbirds are possible and rare birds have included Lazuli Bunting, Pine Siskin, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Snail Kite, and White-faced Ibis. After birding the wildlife drive, we will eat our bag lunches, and then explore Area 2 and possibly Areas 6 and 7 for LeConte’s and Grasshopper Sparrows, Painted Buntings, and more ducks. This trip can be taken in combination with afternoon Trip 37.

**Trip 36: Orlando Wetlands Park**  – Half walking, half tram riding. Orlando Wetlands Park (25155 Wheeler Road, Christmas, FL 32709). $35, includes bag lunch. Leaders: João Jara (Birds & Nature Tours Portugal), and Reinhard and Jutta Geisler (Orlando Wetlands Park volunteers). 9:00 a.m.–1:30 p.m. Maximum participants: 20. The Orlando Wetlands Park is an award-winning, man-made wetland designed to provide not only advanced treatment for reclaimed water from the City of Orlando and other local cities, but also a habitat for wildlife. Located in Christmas, FL in the far eastern part of Orange County, the park is 1,650 acres in size and has 21 miles of berm trails crisscrossing it. It has become a wildlife haven and birding hot-spot. We will walk and bird in the morning, eat our bag lunches, and then take a tram ride toward midday. **Possible sightings:** Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, Green Winged Teal, Northern Pintails, Marsh Wrens, Roseate Spoonbills, Limpkins, and Purple Gallinules. As you are already in easternmost Orange County, near I-95, this trip can be conveniently taken in combination with afternoon Trip 37, which is straight up I-95 in Daytona Beach Shores.

**Trip 37: Gull Congregation at Daytona Beach Shores**  – Some walking. Frank Rendon Park (2705 S Atlantic Ave, Daytona Beach Shores, FL 32118-5701). $25. Leaders: Michael Brothers (Marine Science Center) with David Hartgrove (Halifax Audubon Society) and Greg Miller (Wildside Nature Tours). Maximum participants: 40. 3:30 p.m.–6:30 p.m. Daytona Beach Shores, about an hour north of Lake Apopka, hosts an amazing birding spectacle each late afternoon and evening during the winter months. Gulls from the northeastern U.S. and Canada winter here, feeding during the day at Daytona Beach’s Tomoka Landfill. Tens of thousands of gulls fly for the evening to the beach at Daytona Beach Shores. After gathering on the beach, close enough for identification by birders, at dusk the gulls settle beyond the breakers offshore. Fast-flying Pomerine and Parastic Jaegers try to pick off the less aware individuals. Michael Brothers, gull expert and recently retired director of the Marine Science Center in Ponce Inlet, discovered this amazing phenomenon about 10 years ago and has been monitoring the gulls almost every winter evening since. Michael and co-leaders will help us identify the various species and their age classes. **Possible sightings:** Laughing, Ring-billed, Herring, and Great Black-backed are common, but Bonaparte’s, Franklin, Lesser Black-backed, Glaucous, Iceland, Thayer’s, and California Gulls are also possible. Vega Gull, European Herring Gull, Yellow-legged Gulls and Slaty-backed Gull are rarities that have turned up. Along with directions for this trip, the festival organizers will send suggestions of birding stops on the way to Daytona Beach Shores.

8 updated 9/15/19. [www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival](http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival)