



The Limpkin Call

The newsletter of the Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society, a chapter of Audubon Florida and the National Audubon Society and a not-for-profit organization.

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Number 1

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope everyone is enjoying the summer break. This summer your OVAS Board-of-Directors has been very busy working on field trips and programs for the coming 2017-2018 year that we hope you and your family will enjoy. Monthly programs will continue to be held at Trout Lake Nature Center in Eustis on the first Sunday of the month at 2 pm, September through June; social begins at 1:30 pm. Our new field trip coordinator and biologist, Becki Smith, has a fantastic line up of birding trips to some exciting new locations around central Florida that you won't want to miss.

We also are excited to have the opportunity for the first time to host Florida Audubon's EagleWatch Training on September 9th, which is being presented by the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey. If you are interested in becoming an EagleWatch volunteer, sign up to attend training. Another first this season will be our partnership with the Umatilla Chamber of Commerce as a sponsor for the new Florida Wildlife Festival October 21st which will replace the Black Bear Festival.

Conservation, which is the foundation of Audubon, is a huge ongoing concern for the chapter. Thanks to Russ Melling, Sherry Chester, Lavon Silvernell and myself, OVAS has been working diligently to support multiple environmental issues this year. Finalization of the details of the county fertilizer ordinance is currently ongoing; thanks to the resident support and OVAS, disc golf was recently terminated at Hidden Waters Preserve in Eustis. We need more help for the OVAS conservation committee so please let us know if you can volunteer.

Our first meeting this year on September 3rd is especially important because the membership will be voting on approval of the amended chapter Bylaws and restated Articles of Incorporation. Thanks to all the hard work by Sherry Chester, final copies of these documents will be posted on our web site immediately after our August 16 Board meeting for your review.

I am very proud of the coming 2017-2018 season of OVAS and all the hard work your Board has expended to make the chapter an organization that we can all be excited to have in Lake County.

Remember to mark your calendars and to check the website, email blasts, and the newsletter for updates and details of upcoming OVAS programs and events.

Sincerely,
Jim Kochanowski
OVAS President

NEWS FROM NEWS FROM CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Audubon Florida and the Central Florida Regional Conservation Committee (RCC) believe that advocating for land acquisition in 2017-2018 may best be achieved by identifying specific properties to showcase to legislators rather than asking for approval for a pot of money. Chapter leaders in the CFL RCC are now identifying important properties from the Florida Forever and the Rural and Family Lands priority lists. Legislators and decision-makers will be invited to visit these properties and see first-hand why they are special places and have economic, ecological and recreational value to their constituents. We believe they will then be more apt to say, "We need to purchase this land (or conservation easement) because it is important to my district's residents and to my priorities."

As you may remember from previous newsletters, Audubon Florida is defending Little Estero Island Critical Wildlife Area (west coast near Ft. Myers) from a proposal to erect a private boardwalk across a state-owned mangrove lagoon and into the heart of nesting and wintering habitat for declining coastal birds, including Least Terns and Snowy and Wilson's Plovers. The case is progressing and we are hopeful for a good outcome, but legal fees may exceed \$40,000. Two members of the AF Board of Directors have been instrumental in raising nearly \$14,000. To read more about the background of this issue and how you can help, go to <http://fl.audubon.org/news/distressing-news-state-greenlights-permit%E2%80%9494only-legal-action-can-stop-destruction-beach-bird>

Charles Lee and chapter leaders from Orange and Kissimmee Valley Audubon have been advocating alternate expressway routes for the SR 408 extension, Osceola Parkway Extension, and the Southport Expressway. In each case, the objective is to steer proposed expressways away from important conservation lands. At risk are conservation lands along the Econlockhatchee River, the Split Oak Mitigation Preserve, and the Disney Wilderness Preserve.

Paula Wehr
CFL RCC Representative on
AF Board of Directors

COMING EVENTS - Programs

Sunday, September 3, 2017 at 2:00 pm

“Snakes, the Good, the Endangered, and the Ones to Look Out For”



OVAS usually trains their binoculars on birds, but for the September program at Trout Lake Nature Center the focus will be on Central Florida's snakes.

Snakes are often not popular neighbors, but for

better or worse many of the things we do to protect birds benefits other wildlife species as well, including snakes.

Nick Clark, Reptile Specialist with Central Florida Zoo, will share bio-facts with the audience about these reptiles: those which might live and carry out their lives in our own neighborhoods; a few of the endangered species that live in Florida's wilder and often rapidly disappearing habitats; and the snakes whose defenses make them dangerous to when faced with a threat.

Learning to identify snakes reduces the risk to humans and to snakes, and allows them to carry out their environmental functions, perhaps even making them another animal to enjoy observing in your yard. Nick will bring some live snakes to help with you with snake ID.

Sunday, October 1, 2017 at 2:00 pm “Manatee Momma”



Manatees are large, beloved, usually coastal mammals, so it is very exciting that one has chosen to make Lake County its home. It is even more exciting because it is believed she is an expectant mother. Our manatee, nicknamed Ms. Leesburg, has not found life in Lake County without stress;

it has been a story of rescue, release, and return.

Monica Ross, a biologist with Sea2Shore, a research, education, and conservation organization, will tell Ms. Leesburg's story. Ms. Ross' research is focused on manatee behavior related to habitat selection; information collected from our manatee and others might shed some light on how they learn and make choices.

And perhaps answer the question, “will Ms. Leesburg become a long term resident of Lake County.”

OTHER COMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Saturday, September 9, 2017 1:30 to 3:00

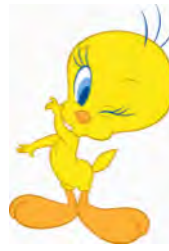
Shawnlei Breeding will be leading our Eagle Watching Training at Trout Lake Nature Center. Audubon Eaglewatch is one of Audubon's premier citizen science programs deploying boots on the ground and eyes in the field to monitor and protect Florida's eagles. With over 1,400 nesting pairs, this team spans 27 counties and more than 400 nests.

Audubon EagleWatchers collect important data on nesting eagles, including productivity, active nest locations, and possible disturbances or threats to the nesting activities. The program engages volunteers and individuals to help protect our nation's symbol.

Contact Stacey Kelly at bcx3purrx4@yahoo.com or call or text her at 352-408-2901 to register; walk-ins welcome pending available space.



Sunday, November 5, 2017 at 2:00 pm “The Basics of Birding”



“Look! Up in the sky! It's a plane! Wait, no, it's bird... a kinda grayish bird with legs and a maybe it has a head? ...Ugh, I give up!!” Dee Simpson says that was her when she first started birding. And since she married David, one of Florida's top birders, she had to get up to speed fast. So she invented lots of tricks like turning birds into cartoon characters. Dee's devices make a birding

class fun and the birds memorable for young and not so young. David will be there too, for the serious stuff like determining whether the bird is a lesser or greater yellowlegs.

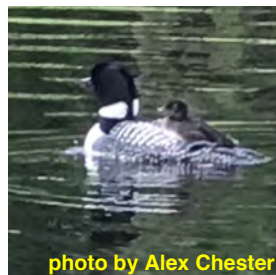
OVAS invites you to join Dee and David for a humorous but helpful introduction to basics of birding, and since it won't be dark until 6:00 pm we'll have time for a brief bird walk with Dee and David so you can start adding birds to your life list.

Dee's blog is <http://deeteightam.blogspot.com/>

December

Our December planning is still a work in progress. In the past we usually did not have a program and instead held an Environmental Friends Social with TLNC and Beautyberry Native Plant Society. This is a covered dish luncheon and auction (save your nature related white elephants to donate for sale). Details for December will follow in a subsequent newsletter and on our website.

Sunday, January 7, 2018 at 2:00 pm “How to take Better Photos of Everything, Including Birds, with your Smartphone”



John Benton, biologist with Florida Fish and Wildlife and avid photographer will share tips, techniques and even some devices which will turn that smartphone in your pocket or purse into a tool which can capture images from birds to landscapes. Images which are not just mementos of the moment, but ones you will treasure and be proud to share or frame.

COMING EVENTS - Programs

Sunday, February 4, 2018 at 2:00 pm “The year-round biology of the Swallow-tailed Kite: A hemisphere of conservation challenges and opportunities”



Ken Meyer, Avian Research and Conservation Institute, will enthrall us with the story of swallow-tailed kites. Prior to the 1900s, Swallow-tailed Kites nested in 21 states, but a decline from 1880 to 1940 resulted in the present scattered population mainly in six southeastern states.

The intricate and captivating ecology of the small, genetically distinct U. S. population of this species includes a compact nesting cycle in the Southeast, where essential habitats are rapidly disappearing; a winter range now dominated by industrial agriculture; and a naturally-dangerous long-distance migration further threatened by our impacts on global environments.

The Swallow-tailed Kite is of conservation concern to all state agencies, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Partners in Flight, Audubon, and the U.S. Geological Survey. Since 1988, the staff of Avian Research and Conservation Institute (ARCI) has studied the year-round ecology and behavior of this bird to inform management and conservation planning. There are too few nests on public lands to ensure persistence; commercial timberlands support most Swallow-tailed Kites. Vulnerability stems from marginal survival and nest success, strong fidelity to unprotected nest and communal roost sites, and complex social interactions year-round.

Since 1996, ARCI has used satellite telemetry to describe the 10,000-mile round-trip migration of U.S. Swallow-tailed Kites and to identify impacts on survival and reproduction. Southbound movements are drawn out and punctuated by layovers, particularly on the Yucatan Peninsula and in northwestern Brazil. Wintering locations surround Brazil's Pantanal region on family-owned ranchlands, which are rapidly giving way to vast tracts of soy beans and sugar cane that are heavily sprayed with dangerous pesticides.

Northbound migration begins slowly and mirrors southerly travel, then speeds up, culminating in a radiation from the northern Yucatan across the Gulf of Mexico. Unlike southbound travel via Cuba, these over-water flights often exceed 1,000 miles and are strongly influenced by winds, resulting in lengthy, meandering, and dangerous northbound crossings. Adult annual mortality is high (15-25%) and most (87%) is associated with migration. The costs of migration are high, and climate change looms as an additional threat.

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ARCI's research also has discovered critical pre-migration staging areas, with communal night roosts numbering in the thousands, and supports a rigorous population monitoring program.

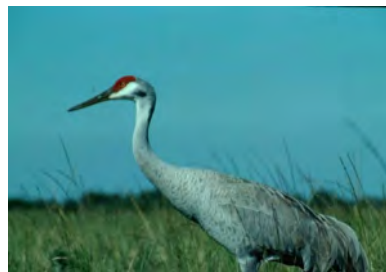
Sunday, March 4, 2018 at 2:00 pm “How Florida Audubon Helps to Protect Florida's only “Endemic” Bird: Florida Scrub-Jay”



Endemic means this bird is are found nowhere else in the world. But, their name also identifies their threat: Scrub, the same high and dry soils popular for human homes. Decreasing scrub habitat = decreasing Scrub-Jay population. The species is both state and federally listed as a threatened

species. Florida Audubon oversees Florida Jay Watch, a Citizen Science Volunteer Program. Jacqui Sulek, Audubon Chapter Conservation Manager and Jay Watch Coordinator, will present our March program to tell of this charismatic bird and its important role in the Florida ecosystem. She will also tell you how you can sign up for a Jay Watch training and then a Jay Count in the field, one of the most satisfying eco-adventures you will ever participate in - and it is all free.

Sunday, April 1, 2018 at 2:00 pm “Living with Sandhill Cranes”



One of the things we love about living in Lake County is having nature and wildlife right next door. But sometimes wildlife doesn't stay on their side of the fence, they come strolling over to ours. Then we are on the phone calling to let an

agency know the animals or our pets or property are at risk. Sandhill cranes are often the subject of those calls and Tim Dellinger is often the Florida Fish and Wildlife officer on the other end of the line. Tim will be at our April Audubon meeting to educate us about typical sandhill crane behaviors, habitat preference, what we can do, and the research FWC is doing so we can all live safely together. You can also help now by sending information about known or suspected nest sites in local urban/suburban neighborhoods or neighboring conservation lands to Tim Dellinger at email: cranes@myfwc.com. This information will be used in a study comparing the survival, reproduction, and movements of Florida sandhill cranes in suburban habitats and in conservation areas.

COMING EVENTS - Programs

Sunday, May 6, 2018 at 2:00 pm
“How to ID Common Insects”

photo by Rebecca Smith



Because we love birds and are familiar with them most of us can use the clues to figure out which group a bird belongs to: hawks, songbirds, etc. Then we use other characteristics like color, size, and markings to help

determine the specific species of bird.

With insects it's a little more difficult, often, insects are just “bugs” and not something we care to ID, unless it is to pick the best pesticide. Rebecca Smith, Environmental Scientist and OVAS Board Member, is passionate about birds and all aspects of nature, but one of her first loves was insects. At this program she will share some insect terminology and the clues which will help you determine which group or order a bug you find belongs in. With that information the next time you find a beautiful iridescent insect with hard wing covers creating a straight line on its back, you'll have a starting point to learn it's name.

Sunday, June 3, 2018 at 2:00 pm
“Catching Fish, not Sea Turtles”



Retired sea turtle biologist, Sheryan Epperly Chester, will describe how scientists and pelagic longline fishermen teamed up to figure out how to reduce sea turtle hook and line bycatch on the high seas while fishing for swordfish and tunas. They developed a close personal relationship

based on mutual trust. Their research has been published and the results were translated into federal regulations, and also were shared with the international communities that manage highly migratory species of finfish in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans.

OTHER COMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Wildlife Festival, October 20, 2017 in Umatilla

Birdapalooza, January 18-21, 2018 in Apopka

**Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival,
January 24-29, 2018 in Titusville**

Details on these and other events will appear in a subsequent newsletter and on our website.

COMING EVENTS - Field Trips

Field Trips are subject to change due to weather or other circumstances. Please contact the trip leader to confirm a space and for more information, including carpooling instructions. For most trips you will need outdoor shoes, insect repellent, sunscreen, a hat, raingear or jacket, binoculars (of course), water, and a snack or lunch. We suggest a donation of \$10/household for each field trip for OVAS members and \$15/household for non-members. Actual costs, such as entry fees, etc., are separate, and are noted in each write-up. Hope you can make them!

Tosohatchee WMA

Saturday, September 16, 2017, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm



Join OVAS and one of the top lepidopterists in the state, Edward Perry, on a butterfly walk of Tosohatchee WMA. Edward is a park ranger at the Sebastian Inlet State Park and participates in annual NABA butterfly counts. Tosohatchee WMA traditionally has some of the highest biodiversity counts

for butterflies in central Florida and has been known for such rare butterflies as Cuban Crescent, and Fulvous and Juniper Hairstreaks. Not to mention numerous species of skippers. **The meeting spot is 3365 Taylor Creek Road in Christmas, FL. Please email Becki Smith at rayesm105@aol.com or call/text 609-553-0757 to sign up in advance. Cost: donations suggested.**

Photos from OVAS July 21 field trip to Lake Louisa State Park



COMING EVENTS - Field Trips

Lake Apopka North Shore and Environs Saturday, September 23, 2017, 7:30 am



Lorne Kaldorf Malo will be guiding us on a wonderful adventure thru Lake Apopka's North Shore Trailhead, Clay Island, Ranch Road just to name a few places we will visit. Lake Apopka has become one of the premier birding areas in the state of Florida. There have been at least 362 different species of birds spotted in this area. Otters, bobcats and alligators are a few things you may see with much more wildlife

to see. The end of September is when the migratory birds are on the move so it will be great fun to see who comes calling. Please join us for a full day or half a day of adventure. **We will be meeting at the St John's River Management Field House office, 25633 County Road 448A, Mt Dora at 7:30 am. Lunch break will begin at 11:30 am at the Field House. We'll end sometime between noon and 4:00 pm. Fees are \$10.00/person for Members and \$20.00/person for Non-Members. For more information contact Stacey Kelly at bcx3purrx4@yahoo.com or 352-408-2901.**

Avian Reconditioning Center Saturday, October 28, 2017, 8:00 – 10:00 am



Calling all nature photographers. Bring your camera, tripod, lenses and join OVAS photographers for a private 2 hr photography session at Avian Reconditioning Center in Apopka. ARC will have 10-12 raptors including a bald eagle, kite, owls, kestrel, caracara, and hawks on display for you to photograph. This unique opportunity to photograph our native Florida raptors and study the birds up close will be an OVAS fundraiser and the cost is \$25 per

person, which includes our entrance fee (no additional donation expected). Adult photographers of all levels of experience are invited to participate in this special event. This is an outdoor event and there will not be a program or a tour. This is a photography event only. There is a short walk from the parking lot to the ARC outdoor site with your camera equipment. Please help support OVAS, your local Audubon chapter, and the work of the Avian Reconditioning Center which is a non-profit organization specializing in raptor rehabilitation and education. **Prepayment and sign up is required. Attendees can carpool or meet at the Center, located at 323 Lester Road, Apopka. Please contact Linda Kochanowski at 407-230-5404 or ljkochanowski@outlook.com for further details and to sign up.**

Mead Gardens

Sunday, October 15, 2017, 8:00 – 11:00 am



Join us in October for migratory bird watching at it's best! Mead Gardens is a known migrant trap in a surrounding urban area and no one knows these gardens better than Larry Martin of Orange Audubon. He conducts migratory bird walks every week during the month and has offered to

give our group a free private tour of the gardens. We have the chance to see several species of warblers, *Empidonax* flycatchers, vireos, and orioles. You may even get a lifer or two! **Meet at the back parking lot of Mead Gardens, 1300 S. Denning Dr., Winter Park. Email Becki Smith at rayesm105@aol.com or call/text 609-553-0757 to register in advance. cost: free!**

Black Point Wildlife Drive

November: Date To be Determined, 8:00 am



Oklawaha Valley's own Dennis O'Neil will be leading our November field trip to Black Point Wildlife Drive at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. Several species of early-arriving waterfowl and other waterbirds can

be viewed this time of year. We will be reserving the wildlife refuge tour van for the field trip. There will not be much walking or strenuous hiking for this field trip. A packed lunch is recommended. Space is limited to 13, so sign up as soon! Date: possibly Saturday, November 11th, or 17th as a backup (we cannot reserve the refuge tour van more than a month ahead). **Meet at the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters, 1987 Scrub Jay Way, Titusville. Email Becki Smith at rayesm105@aol.com or call/text 609-553-0757 to register in advance. Cost: donations suggested.**

COMING EVENTS - Field Trips

Lake County Christmas Bird Count December – Dates to be Determined

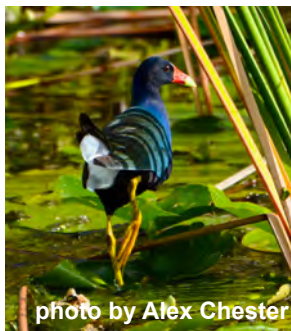


photo by Alex Chester

It's been a long-standing tradition to participate in a local Christmas Bird Count in December or into early January. What better way to help birds than to participate in an Audubon citizen science program? Birders of all ages and skill levels all over the world will be participating and counting bird species seen. This will give ornithologists more information and a better understanding of current population trends. The dates for 2017 have not been determined yet, but Lake County has 3 main counts in which you can participate. Dates will be made available as they are known. Check our website calendar of events for up-to-date information.

-Emeralda Marsh organized by Barbara Gay/Alice Horst. Email ahorst@comcast.net for details

-Zellwood/Mt Dora organized Gallus Quigley/Wes Biggs. Email infofloridanaturetours@gmail.com or gallusq@gmail.com for details

-Clermont organized by John Thomson. Email john.thomton@gmail.com for details

Please also check National Audubon Society's website for more information on Christmas Bird Counts: <http://www.audubon.org/join-christmas-bird-count>



photo by Sherry Chester

OVAS members conducting Christmas Bird Count of Haines Creek Canal and SE Lake Griffin

Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society Membership

Please support your local Audubon Chapter's Programs and Field Trips and become a yearly member by mailing your name, address, email, and phone number with a \$15 check per household to:

OVAS, PO Box 268, Eustis, FL 32727

You also can join online through our website at <http://oklawaha-audubon.com/> and pay through PayPal

2018 Field Trips

Details to be available in a subsequent newsletter and on our website; many cannot be scheduled this far in advance.

January 14 - Birding at the Circle B Bar Preserve (Lakeland) with Dennis O'Neil.

February 24th - Birding with Pelican Island Audubon to T.M. Goodwin WMA (Brevard County), focusing on wintering waterfowl.

February TBD - Botany/birding via golf cart tour of Orlando Wetlands Park (Christmas, FL), guided by park staff.

March 9th - Birding in Ocala NF with Elizabeth Ramirez for Red-cockaded and Red-Headed Woodpeckers, Flickers, and Scrub Jays. (cost: free!)

April 18th – Migration birding with Bob Sanders at Fort De Soto Park (Pinellas County).

May 12th – General wildlife observation, with a focus on birds, at Sweetwater Wetlands Park (Gainesville), guided by park staff. Anyone interested in photography will not want to miss this field trip as species are quite close and used to visitors.

May 24 - mooning night with entomologist Tom Palmer at Green Mountain Overlook (Montverde), weather permitting. We hope to see some nice Saturniid moths like *Luna*, *Polyphemus*, or *Promethea*.

June 6th - butterflying with Linda Cooper, Lake County Parks and Trails, at Ferndale Preserve (Lake County).

July TBD - Afternoon Birding/Night-time Sea Turtle Walk at the Space Coast. (We cannot make a reservation for the guided sea turtle walk until May 1.)



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