



# 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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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We enjoyed our Holiday Luncheon with our Environmental Friends. Congratulations to Mike Barnett who was presented our Conservationist of the Year award. See a separate article in this newsletter about all Mike's accomplishments.

As we look forward to the new year and the promises it has to bring, let's remember that we are part of a state and national organization that have long arms and reach for the stars for the birds and the environment. With our help on a local level we enable Florida and National Audubon to spread educational information and keep our local neighbors informed about the big picture. In fact, as a local chapter of the Audubon organization, that's kind of our job.

Recently I have been perusing the Florida and National Audubon websites more and encourage all of our members to do the same. They are full of amazing information, materials, images, articles, and activities that help and impact us on a local level. In fact, at the Audubon Assembly in October 2018, we were all encouraged to not only visit the sites, but also to share the information and pictures. (The word plagiarize was even mentioned.) The information is there for the taking and use of all of the Audubon chapters. With that in mind, I wanted to share the following tidbits, links to some upcoming events, good news and helpful activities.

### **2018 Farm Bill Boosts Conservation, "Gives Birds a Lot to Celebrate"**

"This Farm Bill is a huge win for birds and it gives us real tools to work together on clean water and places birds need while increasing productivity for farmers and ranchers across the country," said David O'Neill, Chief Conservation Officer for National Audubon Society. "We are still reading the fine print, but it looks like this bill gives birds a lot to celebrate. It elevates support for water conservation for the benefit of birds and people and keeps its promises to American families by preserving nutrition programs." Read more ... <https://www.audubon.org/news/2018-farm-bill-boosts-conservation-gives-birds-lot-celebrate>

### **2019 Audubon Convention**

#### **July 26-28, 2019 | Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

For those interested, Audubon's biennial convention is designed to bring together Audubon's vast network of dedicated chapter, state, center, national, and international leaders from across all four flyways. This can't-miss event will feature an array of inspiring speakers, in-depth workshops and discussions, exciting field trips, and the camaraderie and networking opportunities that only the Audubon Convention can provide. Situated on Lake Michigan, Milwaukee is a beautiful and historic place to gather, learn, and network. The Wisconsin Audubon Council, Milwaukee Audubon Society, Schlitz Audubon Nature Center, and the Audubon Great Lakes team are excited to welcome the whole Audubon network to Milwaukee. More info ... <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/2019-convention>



Holiday Luncheon with Environmental Friends, December 2, 2018 at Trout Lake Nature Center

### **Bird Photo ID Quiz**

<https://www.audubon.org/news/a-photo-id-quiz-thats-perfect-beginner-birders>

### **15 Common Birds**

<https://www.audubon.org/news/get-know-these-15-common-birds>

### **Lake Okeechobee S.O.S. – A Healthy Lake is a Balanced Everglades**

<http://fl.audubon.org/news/lake-okeechobee-sos-%E2%80%93-healthy-lake-balanced-everglades>

### **Audubon Releases Winter State of the Everglades Report**

[http://fl.audubon.org/sites/g/files/amh666/f/audubon\\_fl\\_winter\\_2018\\_state\\_of\\_the\\_everglades.pdf](http://fl.audubon.org/sites/g/files/amh666/f/audubon_fl_winter_2018_state_of_the_everglades.pdf)

Is there a birding or environmental question you'd like to see answered? Ask the Florida Audubon experts by emailing [flconservation@audubon.org](mailto:flconservation@audubon.org).

OVAS has some exciting new programs and field trips lined up for the coming year, so keep your eyes peeled and ears open! Note that we have two programs scheduled in January. If you haven't already, visit our local website, like us on Facebook and be sure to mark your calendars for the 2019 Festival of Flight and Flowers, October 11-13, 2019.

It's all for the birds,  
Lori Patterson, OVAS President

## COMING EVENTS - Programs

All Programs are at 2:00 pm on the first Sunday of the month, Sep through June, at Trout Lake Nature Center, Eustis, unless otherwise noted

### “May All Your Blues be Birds” Sunday, January 6, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.



Bluebirds are among the favorite backyard visitors. With their striking colors, musical voices and gentle habits, who wouldn't want to welcome these beauties into the backyard? Faith Jones' (Florida Bluebird Society, Inc.) program includes information about bluebirds, their history in America, and some of the challenges they face. It also includes information you need to know before putting up a nest box, how to install a nest box, and what to anticipate if you have a nest box.

[www.floridabluebirdsociety.org](http://www.floridabluebirdsociety.org)  
floridabluebirdsociety@gmail.com

### “Travel Birding - Tours and Economics” Sunday, February 3, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.



If your idea of a fantasy vacation involves packing your bino's and a spotting scope, or you just like to hear about other's birding adventures, the February program by Gallus and Beck Quigley on “Traveling Birding” will be a satisfying way to spend a Sunday afternoon. You'll learn some of the logistics involved in traveling to spot birds: personal or group tour, cruise birding? There will be stories about spotting, or missing, that rare bird and lots of beautiful bird pictures. And because it's not all about fun, they will discuss the economic benefits to both the communities and the birds you visit when you travel to see birds.

### “Who Cares about Turtles” Sunday, March 3, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.

Tabitha Hootman, for one. Ms. Hootman is a graduate student from Jacksonville University carrying out a research project on Florida Peninsula Cooter and Florida Red-belly turtles at Wekiva Springs Park. While these two common turtle species are seen almost anywhere there is freshwater, and observations and counts of turtles have occurred at Wekiva Springs since 1999, there has never been a qualitative research project using tracking devices to determine how these turtles live their lives. Using the data collected on the turtle's behaviors, migratory nature, and habitat preference, as well as human impact, will allow wildlife managers to set policies which protect turtle habitat and by extension other species. Tabitha will tell the story of how she earned funding for the project, the technology and in the field work required to carry out the project, some of her preliminary findings, and how volunteers can help.



### “Birding in Iberia”

Wednesday, January 23, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.

**(NOTE THIS IS NOT OUR REGULAR DAY AND TIME FOR PROGRAMS)**

João Jara is in the country to attend the Space Coast Birding Festival. He has agreed to come talk about Birding in Iberia and we are delighted. This will be a photographic presentation with an emphasis on why the Iberia Peninsula is such a special region in Europe and in the world, from the birds and wildlife point of view (including several endemic bird species). Other than nature, there are also numerous other interesting facets to explore in this fascinating region. He also will talk about some of the practical aspects, should you plan a visit.

Birds & Nature Tours Portugal  
(+351) 913 299 990  
joao.jara@birds.pt



European Bee-eaters, *Merops apiaster*

## COMING EVENTS - Field Trips

Field Trips are subject to change due to weather or other circumstances. Always consult our website for updates and, also, 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/adult for each field trip for OVAS members and \$15/adult for non-members; children are free. Actual costs, such as entry fees, etc., are separate, and are noted in each write-up. Hope you can make them!

### Editor's Note

OVAS' membership is diverse, encompassing many age groups and motilities. Some of our members cannot "hike through the woods". Peg Lindsay has stepped up to accommodate the chapter's varied needs by organizing a few field trips for us. Peg's idea is to be wholly inclusive: those who can hike will still meet up and hike through the woods: enjoy the day, listen to the birds, get down on our hands and knees to inspect a lawn orchid, chase the butterflies, admire an iridescent beetle, learn from each other. Then, members and guests, including those not on the hike, will share a self-provided brown-bag lunch on a lawn and include members who cannot get out as before. In the past, friendships were made over the sharing of a meal. Peg asks that if your lawn (and bathroom) is available as a lunch spot, contact her: pegcondor@embarqmail.com 352-326-2045.

There are two birding festivals in January close-by and we encourage you to sign up for field trips associated with those festivals. Also, OVAS may add some field trips for January and February. We will send out email notices about them. Please also check our website for updates.



OVAS birders at Ahhochee Hill Sanctuary, November 2018

## St. Johns River Boat Tour January 26, 2019, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Learn about the history and wildlife of Astor and The St. Johns River. This two-hour boat tour, followed by lunch, will depart from historic Astor and take us through Blue Creek in the Ocala National Forest to the many tributaries of the St. Johns River. We will travel by the pristine Lake George, Florida's second largest lake, which is surrounded by the Ocala National forest on the west and the Lake George State Forest on the east. After Lake George we will return on the St. Johns River to Astor.

During our tour, we will experience wildlife, alligators, bald eagles, manatees, and plant life, air plants, ferns, large cypress trees and much more. We will learn the history of the River, the role it played in the Seminole Indian and the Civil wars, and about the European and American settlers.

Included Lunch choices include: Cheeseburger, Fish Sandwich or Boca Burger accompanied by French Fries OR a Chicken Caesar Salad – and a non-alcoholic beverage, and rainbow sherbet for dessert.

Reservations and Pre-payment are required for this field trip. Click here to pay online with PayPal (you don't need a PayPal account) [https://www.paypal.com/webapps/shoppingcart?flowlogging\\_id=e261a605aeca5&mfid=1545505363207\\_e261a605aeca5#/checkout/openButton](https://www.paypal.com/webapps/shoppingcart?flowlogging_id=e261a605aeca5&mfid=1545505363207_e261a605aeca5#/checkout/openButton)

or call Lori Patterson at 352-638-1654.

Meet: 10 am, at Blackwater Inn, 55716 Front St, Astor, FL 32102, USA

Cost: \$40 per person (includes nominal donation to OVAS)

Weather conditions that will cause cancellations of tours: Heavy Rain, lightning, and any advisory from the National Weather Service that includes Northern Lake or Volusia Counties, including high wind advisories for waterways making boating hazardous.



# Highlands State Park, Archbold Biological Station and Fisheating Creek February 6-8, 2019

Clyde Stephens will lead a fun three-day, two-night field trip for bird watchers, nature lovers or anyone who enjoys new experiences in the wilds of South Central Florida. The trip will include Highlands Hammock State Park, Archbold Biological Station and Fisheating Creek. These diversified preservations are all within an hour of each other and near US 27 several hours south of Lake County.

DEPARTURE ON WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 6, 2019 will be at 8 A.M from the west parking lot of Winn Dixie at the junction of County Road 48 and US 27, south of Leesburg. Carpooling is encouraged and riders should donate gas money to the driver. Riders can leave their vehicles in the same parking lot.

Day 1: Highlands Hammock State Park near Sebring has 9,000 acres and was started by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s to preserve this rare primeval habitat. We will see local and migratory birds in old-growth hammocks and wetlands. The pavilion has a museum featuring the historic role of the CCC. We will have lunch here, so please bring a picnic lunch.

Continuing Day 1, after lunch: The trip will continue south on US 27 to Archbold Biological Station, about 10 miles south of Lake Placid on Old State Road 8. This rare scrub habitat was saved by wealthy visionaries of the John Roebing family in 1929 who later gave it to a dedicated aviator-explorer-environmentalist, Richard Archbold. All acquisitions now total over 9,000 acres. Besides nature in the raw and Scrub Jay habitats, scientific and learning facilities have attracted academics and nature lovers from many places. After leaving Highlands Hammock State Park, the group will check-in to their rooms in mid-afternoon at Archbold and then have some free time. A social gathering will be held an hour before dinner, which is served at 6.

The group will stay two nights in THE LODGE on site. Modern, private rooms for two will be reserved and paid for in advance. Six meals will be served during our stay at Archbold. Socializing is planned at the end of the day.

Day 2: After breakfast, a naturalist will lead the group along the trails at Archbold that will feature habitats and behavior of the Florida Scrub Jay. Members will have free time to explore more of the vast Archbold area in the afternoon. After dinner, there will be a group discussion.

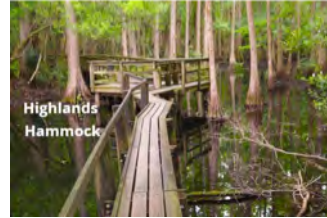
Day 3: After breakfast on Friday, February 8, members will check out and drive south on Old State Road 8 to Venus where Crested Caracaras might be seen. Our destination will be Fisheating Creek at Palmdale for birding, beauty and nature watching. Habitats will be explored at Fisheating Creek by hiking trails before eating a picnic lunch. After lunch, the trip is officially over.

## COSTS PER person:

\$60	.....	2 nights lodging per person, double occupancy
\$42	.....	6 meals at Archbold
\$20	.....	Suggested donation to OVAS
\$10	.....	Nature Tour with Scrub Jays and their habitat
\$10	.....	Estimated incidental costs
		Estimated total per person
		\$142

RESERVATION AND INFORMATION: Space and time are limited so call Clyde Stephens at 352-343-6468, or email him at [bananabyte@aol.com](mailto:bananabyte@aol.com) After putting your name on Clyde's reservation list, you will receive further details and a form to fill out.

We hope you will join us.



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## Birding4Kids February 23, 2019, 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

OVAS and Trout Lake Nature Center will team up again this year to promote youth birding. TLNC will handle registration, waivers, and logistics and OVAS mentors will guide the kids to enjoy birding. We need several birders to volunteer for this 1-day program. Contact Bob and Mary Wexler (352-308-8236) if you can help with the birding. To register a child for the program, go to <http://www.universe.com/birding4kids2019> or call 352-357-7536. We will start the day at TLNC.



## Pine Meadows Conservation Area March 7, 2019, 9:00 a.m. - lunch



We have another "Lunch on the Lawn" birding event planned for Thursday, March 7th, 2019. Stuart Anderson has graciously agreed to open his home and yard to our members. We will assemble at 9 a.m. at Pine Meadows Conservation Area, 1795 Pine Meadows Golf Course Rd, Eustis, for a leisurely walk on the trail. Around noon we will reassemble for a brown-bag lunch at the Anderson home, just around the corner from

PMCA. Stuart makes no guarantees, but he claims 5 individual Painted Buntings frequent his feeder and still should be in the area in early March. Bring water and lunch and, of course, your binoculars.

While the hike at Pine Meadows is open to all, Stuart has requested that we limit the number of people in his home to 14. Peg will keep a waiting list if more than 14 want to participate. Sign up with Peg Lindsay by email [pegcondor@embarqmail.com](mailto:pegcondor@embarqmail.com) or by text at 352-348-9258.

Suggested donation to OVAS: \$10/adult for members or \$15/adult for non-members.



Raffle tables at Holiday Luncheon



## North Shore Birding Festival January 17-21, 2019

Location: McDonald Canal Pavilion, 24600 CR 448A, Mount Dora, FL 32757

The North Shore Birding Festival is Orange Audubon Society's three-year old festival, that allows birders to add to their life lists at an amazing birding area, the 20,000-acre Lake Apopka North Shore. 360+ species have been sighted there, more than any other inland location.

Full-day trips and half-day trips, including sunrise photo and birding trips, are offered, along with keynotes and dinners. Trips are affordable and there is no additional registration fee. All proceeds go toward Orange Audubon Society's Nature and Environmental Education Center fund.

For details and registration link (registration is now open), visit the website, [www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival](http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org/festival) and please LIKE the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/northshorebirdingfestival/>. If you have any questions, call 407-637-2525.



## 22nd Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival, January 23 - 28, 2019



Discover why Florida's Space Coast is your launch pad to incredible nature-based experiences. The Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival features world-class photographers, field trips, workshops, and presentations, in addition to exhibitors and vendors representing optics companies (handle and compare optics on site), tour operators, etc. Come see why it is one of the largest birding and wildlife festivals in the United States.

Eastern Florida State College, Titusville, Florida - Adjacent to Merritt Island NWR. <https://scbwf.org>

## Conservationist of the Year

Every year Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society selects a Conservationist of the Year, and is joined by Lake Beautyberry Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, Trout Lake Nature Center, and other friends from the community for a Holiday luncheon and to recognize that person. This is an individual who shares values with all those organizations: birds, native plants, natural systems and who has made a contribution to protect natural resources for future generations. The Conservationist selected for 2018, was Mike Barnett

Mike Barnett is active with the Highlanders Chapter, Florida Trail Association, the organization that built and maintains the Florida Scenic Trail which reaches from the Everglades to the Panhandle. Mike shares his Naturalist knowledge in the Chapter's newsletter, "FootNotes" on subjects from river otters to fireflies (you may enjoy past issues online).

Mike participates in the Backyard Bird Count and encourages his friends to participate too. It is not necessary to go to a special place or time, you just record what you see in your backyard and the information gathered helps researchers learn how birds are doing and how to protect them and the environment we share. You can find more information at: Audubon Backyard Bird Count, online.

Mike and his wife Nancy have a yard certified through the National Wildlife Federation as a Backyard Wildlife Habitat. Their native plants, shrubs, and trees provide fruits and insects; as well as cover for baby birds. They believe it is important that the land be cared for thoughtfully, and as naturally as possible to share with nature.

Mr. Barnett's greatest pleasure is sharing the wonder and intricacy of the natural world with children; he does that every other Sunday morning with his Family Nature Club where he is known as "Mr Mike". A parent or relative always joins Mike and the children on their outings and all comment on the benefits of the nature walks for the children and themselves: A Grandma: "at home they always fight, but in nature they are calm and hold each other's hand". A mother: "My son is learning to be a great listener and has become much calmer on our walks". A child said: "I am happy when I am in nature and see things like the baby skink with a blue tail."

The experience with the Family Nature Club and the impact Mike saw it having on children and families carried over to his professional life as a Children's Grief Counselor for Cornerstone Hospice and Palliative Care. In his attempts to find a bereavement activity in which an entire family could participate together he turned to his experiences with the Family Nature Club and research on the therapeutic values of nature immersion and began a "Family Nature Group". Mr. Barnett stated, "We have discovered that the same healing powers of the natural world enjoyed by nature club participants are beneficial to the nature group members, as

expected. One could argue that because of their losses, the nature group members needed those therapeutic benefits all the more."

At the end of the presentation Mr. Mike, citing Richard Louv's, book Last Child in the Woods, gave an impassioned plea to all present to reach out to the young, to involve them in their organizations, providing youth with the cognitive, emotional, physical and health benefits of involvement in the nature; and the organizations with the benefits of the energy and enthusiasm of youth.



## OVAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Lori Patterson, President**  
**Lavon Silvernell, 1st Vice President**  
**vacant, 2nd Vice President**  
**Stacey Kelly, Treasurer**  
**Jean St. John, Secretary**  
**Sherry Chester, Director**  
**Judy Knizner, Director**  
**Lisa Sonietz, Director**  
**vacant, Director**  
**vacant, Director**

We can use some help! If you wish to serve on the Board, please email Lori at [president@oklawaha-valley-audubon.org](mailto:president@oklawaha-valley-audubon.org) Board meetings are at 6:30 pm on the Wednesday preceding the program meetings and are at the TLNC. Members are welcome to attend!



Board members Lori, Sherry, Stacey, Lavon, and Jean at the Holiday Luncheon.

## RENEW YOUR AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP NOW

OVAS local chapter membership renewals are due at the beginning of each Fiscal Year/Program Year (July 1 - June 30). If you join OVAS on a local basis, chapter membership per household is \$15, which supports your local chapter. Go to <https://oklawaha-valley-audubon.org/> and click on Membership and pay with PayPal, or use the renewal form below and mail your check to OVAS, PO Box 268, Eustis, FL 32727. You also may pay for your membership at the monthly programs with cash or check. You will receive OVAS newsletters.

If you wish to renew your membership on a national basis, go to [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org), click on Renew, and pay with a credit card (\$20 per person). Be sure to include your zip code so that you will be assigned to OVAS, your local chapter. Part of your National membership dues (\$7) will be applied to our local chapter and you will receive: (1) Annual membership with the National Audubon Society as well as with Audubon Florida and Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society; (2) National's *Audubon* magazine; (3) Audubon Florida *Naturalist* magazine; (3) OVAS newsletters. National memberships need to be renewed on the anniversary of your joining.

Membership is not a requirement to attend or participate in the OVAS programs or field trips.

## OVAS Membership Application

New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address(es) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Committee that you would be willing to volunteer assistance:

\_\_\_\_\_ Citizen Science Committee- help organize or participate in the annual Emeralds Christmas bird count, monthly bird counts, monitor local rookeries, and /or record field trip reports data

\_\_\_\_\_ Fundraising Committee – Assist with Donation box, 50:50, boat rides, raffles, special event

\_\_\_\_\_ Hospitality Committee – Help with refreshments for membership meetings and 2 potlucks

\_\_\_\_\_ Membership Committee – membership and e-mail list, new name tags, sign-in book

\_\_\_\_\_ Conservation Committee - attend public meetings, help write letters to legislators

\_\_\_\_\_ Outreach Committee - Set up display at events, maintain bulletin board at TLNC, advertise events in newspapers/internet

\_\_\_\_\_ Digital Communications Committee - website, e-mail blasts, Facebook and social media

\_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter Committee - bi-monthly electronic newsletter and OVAS brochures

**OVAS is a Florida Not-for-Profit Corporation**

<https://oklawaha-valley-audubon.org/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/Oklawaha-Valley-Audubon-Society>



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**TO:**