



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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PO Box 268, Eustis, FL 32727-0268

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Number 1

President's Column

As we feel that we have been knocked off our axis, know that the birds and nature are still moving onward. The Coronavirus has made life literally stop for us in mid-flight. I always look for a silver lining when things get tough. For me, and many others, it is a realization that we all have busy lives, but do not take notice to the little things, such as the birds in our backyard. These past few months may have led us to look out the window a bit more, or to step outside to listen to nature. It is something that we all can truly enjoy. It is the little things in life that lift up our spirits.

During this time my family created a beautiful butterfly and hummingbird garden. Many butterflies and skippers come to visit throughout the day. It makes me smile... I am happy to report that we have two Ruby Throated Hummingbirds that grace us with their beauty every day. I had no idea that we had any hummingbirds around. We created a lovely bird feeding sanctuary for our yard birds friends. With Fall Migration amid, we have seen some new bird friends: a Yellow-Throated Warbler and Northern Parula; along, with the resident birds: Mourning Dove, Northern Cardinals, Eastern Bluebirds, Carolina Chickadees, Tufted Titmouse/mice, Blue Jays, and several species of Woodpeckers (Pileated, Downy, Red-Bellied, Hairy and the occasional Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker). Last, but not least is the juvenile Barred Owl that visits us each evening - noisy little buggers.

As we commence our new year we find that times are way different. We will be offering our programs virtually at least through September. Kicking off our programs for the year will be Holley Short with Audubon Florida. She will be talking about all the wonderful world of shorebirds. Our good friend and OVAS Board member Judy Knizner, from Wild Birds Unlimited, will be doing a great series of programs for us throughout the whole year. Starting off will be Lake County's Top 25 Birds. We have many more fantastic programs planned for the upcoming year so stay tuned for future announcements. We will send out a survey asking how you would like to do field trips and view programs whether it be virtual (Zoom, Facebook Live, or YouTube) or in person. Results from the surveys will give us the direction that everyone would like to go. If we do have programs in person, we of course will follow all CDC guidelines - social distancing 6 feet apart, etc. Please know that all programs will be available virtually if you feel that attending a program in person is not the right fit for you at that time.

Sadly, we canceled our October 2020 Festival of Flight and Flowers, and rescheduled it for October 8-10, 2021. We are partnering with IFAS and are planning 3 days of Festival field trips and 2 days for the Festival itself.

There has been a change in our fiscal year. It now is July 1 through June 30. We also made a change in our membership dues. Since 2006 it was \$15 per household, but due to circumstances we raised it to \$20 per household this FY. With many unknown's in the future we are now more than ever dependent upon membership dues and donations. So, please, if you haven't already, renew memberships [here](#)

At-A-Glance

Sep 13 - Program: Why Shorebirds Should Matter to You

Sep 17 - SUNF: Learn more about the Lake and Sumter County Solar Co-op

Oct 4 - Program/Social: How did you spend your "Quarantine Summer"?

Oct 5 - Field Trip: Pine Meadows Conservation Area



Red-bellied Woodpecker.
Photo by
Dennis O'Neil

and donate something extra if you can. Anything would be greatly appreciated.

I, and the rest of the OVAS Board are looking to an adventurous year to come with you and our bird friends.

Cheers,
Stacey

PROGRAMS 2020-2021

This autumn we would love to see you in person, but we know things are complicated, so we will be offering some different options for our meetings. The first program this fall will be via Zoom so we can all stay safe and healthy. This September 13th we are bringing you the program we had to cancel this spring- Holley Short's "Why Shorebirds Should Matter to You". I'm so glad we won't miss out on her important presentation. We will be reaching out to hopefully reschedule more of the speakers we had to cancel this spring, so keep your eye out for more program announcements shortly.

Reducing our carbon footprint is a direct action we can take as nature lovers to fight climate change, so on we encourage you to attend the virtual meeting on Sept 17 offered by Solar United Neighbors of Florida to answer your questions about a current program that is bringing solar to Lake and Sumter County homeowners. Details can be found in this newsletter.

How did you spend your "Quarantine Summer"? This October 4th we are hosting a socially-distanced outdoor get-together so we can catch up with each other and find out. Please send us a picture of yourself and up to three pictures of how you spent your "Quarantine Summer" with a short description. All submissions we receive by September 28th will be incorporated into a slide show. Send your RSVP and pictures to Peg Lindsay at pegcondor@embarqmail.com (her backup email is peg26805@icloud.com). We will send you the compiled slide show. When you come to the meeting bring along a snack and a lawn chair along with the slideshow, downloaded to your tablet or smartphone. Please remember to respect social-distancing guidelines to reduce the risk of viral transmission, staying six feet or more apart from people you are not in regular contact with and wearing a mask if you need to go indoors to use the facilities.

We would like to hear from you about how you want to participate in our upcoming programs this year, so please watch for an email from us with a short survey to let us know what you prefer going forward, and make your voice heard.

Michele Cotty Loger, OVAS Program Coordinator



OVAS field trip led Greg Miller to Daytona Beach in February 2018. One of those birds is an Iceland Gull.
Photo by Alex Chester

Why Shorebirds Should Matter to You Sunday, September 13, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.

You might be thinking, how can this program be relevant or of interest to me, I don't live on the coast. But this coastal bird and stewardship program is not just meant for birders on the beaches!

Florida is mostly coastline, and birds are using every inch of it. Even though we live in the middle of the state, we are just an hour and a half from the east coast and a couple hours from the west coast. Coastal birds, specifically shorebirds, use these beaches that all of us Floridians flock to (pun intended!) for vacations, day trips, etc. Plus, Florida is at risk of sea level rise, and these coastal birds will have to find other habitats to use. For example, a few years ago Least Terns were found either using or scoping out potential nesting habitat on gravel rooftops in Sanford and Deland. Terns can be sighted on our Central Florida lakes during the Winter as well. And most of us make at least one pilgrimage to the Beach during the year so knowing a little about shorebird etiquette will be useful. Even if we never see another shorebird, we can vicariously enjoy tales of shorebird rescue and knowing how they are safely living their lives at the beach. So join Holley Short, Project Manager for Audubon's Bird Monitoring and Stewardship Program for OVAS' September program.

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://audubon.zoom.us/j/93345356731>

Meeting ID: 933 4535 6731
One tap mobile
+13126266799,,93345356731# US (Chicago)
+16465189805,,93345356731# US (New York)

FIELD TRIPS 2020-2021

How do you plan a field trip for 20 or so participants with COVID-19 threatening our health, using Social Distancing guidelines? The fun part of the field trip is meeting up with friends and sharing time in the outdoors. 20 people all staying six feet apart makes for an obviously long line of people. The Board of Directors has suggested some changes in the structure of future field trip events, at least until the risk of COVID-19 is diminished.

Past field trips were usually planned as a morning activity followed by a BYO picnic lunch. We can all still enjoy a picnic lunch after the hike, but probably not with everyone within the same pavilion. If you bring a picnic lunch to enjoy following the hike, it's probably a good idea to bring along a lawn chair and maybe a small folding table so we can sit a safe distance from each other.

The Pod concept (described below) with multiple leaders may give us more flexibility to hold the same field trip at different times during the same day, or even on different days to accommodate everyone. Please share your thoughts about field trip planning with me directly at peg26805@icloud.com. I'm really looking forward to the new season.

1. We will select locations with a large open parking lot so we can all initially meet and greet, while still keeping our distance from each other.
2. Locations selected will also have wide trails or open paths so we can hike (or amble) while still keeping our distance from each other.
3. We will use a "Pod" concept. Participants will join a Pod of no more than six people and each Pod will have a leader/captain. Pods will hike independently of each other. The Pod captain will use a laser pen to identify the location of interesting things to see, without having to stand close to a participant to point to the item of interest. Pod captains will carry a cell phone to keep in communication with the other Pods, sharing location of interesting things to see or even photographs.
4. Since we will all be outside and keeping our distance from each other, masks are optional. If you are seriously concerned, we will create a Pod where everyone must wear a mask.
5. This structure obviously requires more than one field trip leader. If you have above-average naturalist knowledge or are enthusiastic about all things outdoors, please volunteer to be a Pod captain.
6. This structure limits the maximum attendance to six times the number of volunteer Pod captains. So, pre-registration is a requirement.
7. Let's all be diligent and remind each other of respecting distancing rules. Participants who put themselves or other at risk may be barred from future events.

Peg Lindsay, OVAS Field Trip Coordinator

Pine Meadow creatures: gopher tortoise, ribbon snake, and a green heron on a nest with chicks.

Photos by Stacey Kelly



Pine Meadows Conservation Area
Monday, October 5th, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.
RESERVATIONS REQUIRED
due to necessary COVID precautions

Our first field trip of the season will be at Pine Meadows where we can enjoy the fine October weather, enjoy Mother/Father Nature, and make new/renew friendships. October weather is typically in the high 70s/low 80s so we can plan on a very pleasant morning. Fall wildflowers should be in bloom and late bird migrants may be seen. Join the group at the far parking lot where we can meet and greet at a safe social distance. Terri Pietroburgo, Park Ranger, will give us an overview of the property before we begin our hikes. For more information about these public lands, see https://www.lakecountyfl.gov/offices/parks_and_trails/public_land_management/acquisitions.aspx

Pack a lunch, lawn chair and maybe a small folding table if you want to enjoy a social distanced lunch with friends.

QUESTIONS: If you have questions contact Peg Lindsay at pegcondor@embarqmail.com

MEET: 9 a.m. at Pine Meadows Conservation Area, 280 Pine Meadows Golf Course Rd., Eustis. Meet in the far parking lot.

RESERVATIONS: Register and pay online at <https://oklawaha-valley-audubon.org/events>.

COST: Free, but we suggest a donation to OVAS (\$10 for adult members and \$15 for adult non-members)

OVAS Partnerships

OVAS PARTNERS WITH SUNF

Learn more about the Lake and Sumter County Solar Co-op

Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.



We love our sunshine here in Florida, and we see solar panels popping up more and more on rooftops and in big arrays along some highways. Sometimes we wonder.....how do solar panels

work? How much do they cost? Would solar panels work on my roof?

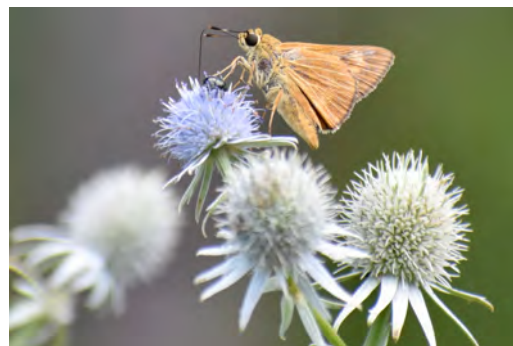
Now, there is a nonprofit called Solar United Neighbors of Florida (SUNF) which is helping homeowners answer those questions. The National Audubon Society [supports going solar](#), sharing that "climate change is the #1 threat to birds." Florida is prime for solar energy and home to many bird species, such as the [Hermit Thrush](#), which stands to lose 73% of its Summer range to climate change.

Solar United Neighbors of Florida, with leadership from local partners, has launched the Lake County Solar Co-op, which is open to all of Lake and Sumter Counties. Solar United Neighbors brings homeowners together into a group, or co-op. They provide unbiased, installer-neutral support through each stage of the process of going solar. Their experienced team ensures you understand how solar works, how it can be financed, and how it can be installed on your home. So far, 1,750 homeowners in Florida have "gone solar" as co-op participants. The Lake Solar Co-op is #56 in the state.

Co-ops take advantage of the group's bulk-purchasing power to get discounted pricing and a quality installation. Co-op volunteers choose an installer on behalf of the entire group through an open and competitive bidding process (happening now!). The selected installer provides everyone in the group with a personalized proposal for their consideration; there is no obligation to install.



The group is open to The Villages, Lake and Sumter Counties. Co-op partners include the [Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society](#), [Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lake County](#), [Poder Latinx](#), [Sierra Club Central FL Group](#) and the [Trout Lake Nature Center](#). The group also announced it will host an information meeting on Thursday, September 17 at 6:00 pm to educate the community about solar and the co-op process. Register for the online event on SUNF's website at solarunitedneighbors.org/lake. If you cannot make the info webinar, you can watch on their website a recorded session (in English and Spanish) for general information on solar, how co-ops work, and what to expect if you join.



Byssus Skipper nectaring on *Eryngium aquaticum*, Corn Snakeroot. Photo by Stacey Kelly

OVAS Endorses the ECHO Volusia Forever Campaign

Volusia Forever buys and protects land, while ECHO provides facilities that enhance some of the Volusia Forever lands. In addition, ECHO grants have helped fund more than 70 miles of the County-wide master trails program in Volusia County. Some ways ECHO has helped further education about the Environment is through properties like these: The Lyonia Environmental Learning Center (where our friend, Steve Kintner is the head volunteer), Marine Discovery Center, Marshall & Vera Lea Rinker [Rinker] Environmental Learning Center. For more information see their website at <https://www.echovolusiaforever.org>

Mr. Apopka Update

A few years ago OVAS helped subsidize a satellite transmitter for a Swallow-Tailed Kite released by the Avian Research and Conservation Institute. We've been following his progress since, keeping track of his seasonal migrations. ARCI reported that by late March, Mr. Apopka made it back to Altamonte Springs, FL from Brazil (the kites' overwintering area). He flew due north to Mississippi and took 4 days to get "home". Once Mr. Apopka was ready to start southward from his St. Johns River pre-migration location, he spent a night in the Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest, flew over the Florida Keys the next day (August 9th), then crossed the Straits of Florida to Cuba. After a night near Havana, he headed due south, skipping Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula altogether and making it all the way to Honduras! He must have well-prepared for this ~570-mile over-water flight because he kept moving south once over land. As of August 28th, Mr. Apopka is safe in Panama!! Thank you, Gina Kent, ARCI, for keeping us advised about Mr. Apopka. You can follow Apopka at <http://www.swallow-tailedkites.org>



Red-winged Blackbird along the LAWD - photo by Alex Chester

Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive

The St. Johns River Water Management District closed the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive (LAWD) to motorized access on March 13, 2020, as a COVID-19 precaution. The LAWD has re-opened for access on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and federal holidays. We were informed by Orange Audubon that now there are different hours than before. Currently the drive opens at 7 am and the entrance is blocked at 3 pm. All visitors must exit the drive no later than 5 pm. The SJRWMD's website has not been updated to reflect this information, though.

The North Shore is accessible throughout the week via the regular walking/biking trail entrances, and is currently open for non-motorized vehicular recreational activities, with the expectation that users are practicing appropriate social distancing.



An adult Limpkin showing a juvenile how to extract a snail. Photo by Dennis O'Neil



Black and White Warbler.
Photo by Dennis O'Neil



Mourning Dove.
Photo by Dennis O'Neil

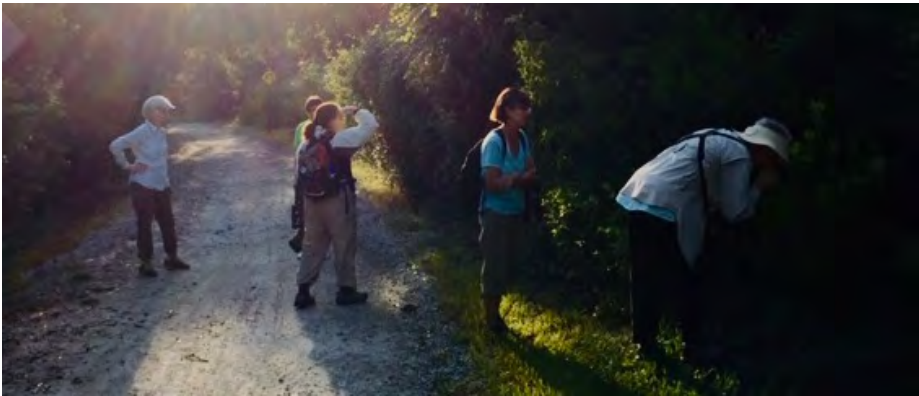
OVAS Property in Orange County

In our March/April The Limpkin Call newsletter we updated you about our property in Orange County. We discussed the issue in detail at our March 1st Annual Membership Meeting and the edited newsletter article was made available to all attendees. We also informed membership that the property was taken off the market on November 6, 2019 - the day after the donor's counsel contacted OVAS through Audubon Florida - and remains off the market today. Since that last update, there have been more developments. Below is our statement developed to address media inquiries.

Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society ("OVAS") is a small, non-profit Audubon society located in Lake County, Florida. In March, Kenneth Rubinson brought a lawsuit against both OVAS and certain current and past individual board members seeking a declaratory judgment and alleging OVAS and its individual board members breached a fiduciary duty arising from a dispute over a six-acre agricultural property located in Mount Dora, Florida.

While OVAS and its board members cannot comment on the specifics of Mr. Rubinson's allegations, OVAS and its board members adamantly deny the allegations and claims, and have moved to dismiss Mr. Rubinson's Complaint. The parties are currently coordinating their availability to attend the motion to dismiss hearing. Nonetheless, OVAS and its board members are confident the factual flaws underpinning of Mr. Rubinson's claims will be revealed in due course.

OVAS is dedicated to and remains committed to supporting the conservation of birds, and wildlife, and local habitats including the property in North Orange County. This small chapter will focus their energy on educational programs, field trips, and conservation efforts.



Throughout the summer OVAS members independently organized naturalist field trips with social distancing. This one occurred on the Green Mountain Overlook and Trail in August. Photo by Peg Urban

OVAS Board of Directors 2020-2021

POSITION	NAME
President	Stacey Kelly
1st Vice President	Michele Cotty Loger
2nd Vice President	vacant
Secretary	Sherry Chester
Treasurer	Lisa Cain
Director-at-Large	Jane Lovejoy
Director-at-Large	Maria Distefano
Director-at-Large	Peg Lindsay
Director-at-Large	Judy Knizner
Director-at-Large	vacant

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smile.amazon.com

Do you order from Amazon.com? If so, you can identify OVAS as your charity of choice to receive 0.5% of your eligible purchases. You use the same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile. Your shopping cart, Wish List, wedding or baby registry, and other account settings are also the same. On your first visit to AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com), you need to select a charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. They will remember your charity selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation. You can change your charity any time.

OVAS - Join/Renew/Support

You are what hope looks like to a bird.

We're in a race against time to give birds and wildlife a fighting chance in a changing world. Show your love today by joining, renewing, or donating to Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society (OVAS).

Membership benefits include: Household membership (\$20/yr); Timely, relevant news about birds, their habitats, and the issues that affect them; Planned birding, environmental, and community events happening near you; A powerful voice in the fight to protect birds and wildlife, plus advocacy opportunities; Receive Oklawaha Valley Audubon's bi-monthly newsletter and other communications; Helping support OVAS partner organizations; Special offers and discounts available only to members.

By joining or renewing your local Audubon chapter, you support Oklawaha Valley Audubon directly. All funds stay with our chapter and support the organization of educational programs, field trips, our conservation efforts, as well as allow us to help our partner organizations locally.

We appreciate your support annually at the beginning of each FY/program year, which is July 1. Membership is not a requirement to attend or participate in the OVAS programs or field trips. There are 3 ways to join/renew OVAS locally.

You can use the renewal form below. Mail your check to OVAS, PO Box 268, Eustis, FL 32727.

You can pay at a monthly program with cash or check.

You can go to <https://oklawaha-valley-audubon.org> and pay with PayPal.

OVAS Membership Application

New _____ Renewal _____ Today's Date _____

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, boat rides, raffles, and special events

_____ 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> (352) 432-8866

<https://www.facebook.com/Oklawaha-Valley-Audubon-Society>



Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society

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Eustis, FL

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TO: