



# 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 3

## President's Column

Greeting and Salutations,

Winter is upon us officially in just a few days. That means our winter birds are here and enjoying the warmer weather (or supposed to be warmer weather). A nice flock of Gold Finches and a pair of Yellow Throated Warblers have taken up residency in our backyard. Keeping the bird feeders and butter bark filled has not been easy. They make quick work of what is in the feeders. I hope that you also are seeing many winter feathered friends in your backyard.

With the new year just around the corner we are looking forward to bringing you some new programs and cool field trips. Michele and Peg have been busy putting together some great things for us to enjoy.

I hope that everyone is staying safe and are healthy. Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, Happy Hanukkah, Kwanza, Feliz Navidad, Bon Natali, Frohe Weihnachten, Pete Noel...

Cheers,  
Stacey



Goldfinches at feeder in Stacey's backyard. Photo by Stacey Kelly.

## At-a-Glance

**January 3, 2021**, 2 pm - Program: L Apopka Wildlife Dr.

**January 9, 2021**, 1 pm - Field Trip: Lake Louisa State Park

**February 6, 2021**, 1 pm - Field Trip: Clermont Stormwater Treatment Proj./Victory Pointe Park & Historical Village

**February 7, 2021**, 2 pm - Program: Lake Wales Ridge Florida Forever land

**March 7, 2021**, 2 pm - ANNUAL Mtg & Florida Springs

**March 13, 2021**, 10 am - Field Trip: PEAR Park

**April 17, 2021**, 9 am - Field Trip: Lake Griffin State Park

**May 8, 2021**, 8 am - Field Trip: Ellis Acres



Eastern Bluebird in Stacey's backyard. Photo by Stacey Kelly.

## PROGRAMS

Because of the pandemic, few people are willing to have a meeting indoors. And, honestly, Michele is having a hard time finding speakers who are willing to do an outdoor venue with no screen to show their presentation. And we're sure the speakers she has approached have their own legitimate fear of contracting COVID as well. We on the OVAS board are trying to come up with enjoyable programs so we can continue to meet as an Audubon chapter and also keep everyone safe. What to do? Please send your suggestions to Michele at [memishel@yahoo.com](mailto:memishel@yahoo.com)

Our monthly programs are held on the first Sunday of the Month, at 2:00 pm, either in person or perhaps on Zoom.

### Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive Slideshow Sunday, January 3rd, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.

For January's program, we encouraged our members to make the trip along Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive or trails and send their best photos from November and December 2020 to Peg Lindsay by December 30th. Peg is compiling the slideshow and OVAS will send out a link to it via email, no later than January 2nd. If you attended the November program meeting, you know how this will work. Please download the slideshow onto your own device. We will scroll through the photographs together at the January 3rd meeting.

We're using the PEAR Park building patio (University Ave entrance) for the January meeting; it is outdoors. Bring a chair and please wear a mask.

PEAR Park Nature Center: 4800 University Ave.  
Leesburg, FL 34748



### Conservation and Preservation Efforts near Lake Wales Ridge Florida Forever Land Sunday, February 7th, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.

Join us on February 7. We tentatively scheduled Deborah Shelley as our speaker. She will discuss her ongoing conservation and preservation efforts near the Lake Wales Ridge Florida Forever land. Together with a neighbor, Deborah has already preserved 90 acres. For over thirty years they have owned the property, which includes pine woods, oak, and marsh habitats, they've observed sandhill cranes, gopher tortoise, bald eagles, among many bird species, and in the past, scrub jays, fox squirrels and flying squirrels. Now, over 800 acres nearby are up for sale, offering a great opportunity for Florida Forever, Lake County, and the City of Groveland to coordinate to preserve these lands for wildlife.

As February 7th nears, we will inform you via email about the place for this program or how to access the program online. This program is subject to change.



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher photographed by Alex Chester on Keene Rd., Apopka, on November 29, 2020.

### Annual Meeting Health and Protection of Florida Springs Sunday, March 7th, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.

On March 7 we will have our annual meeting. Please plan to attend this meeting as it is the main business meeting for our chapter, as well as when we always try to schedule a dynamic speaker. We will elect a slate of board members at the meeting.

We tentatively scheduled Dr. Robert Knight of the Florida Springs Institute, as our speaker. He will present on the health and protection of our springs.

As March 7th approaches, we will inform you via email (and the March/April newsletter) about the place for this program or how to access the program online. This program is subject to change.

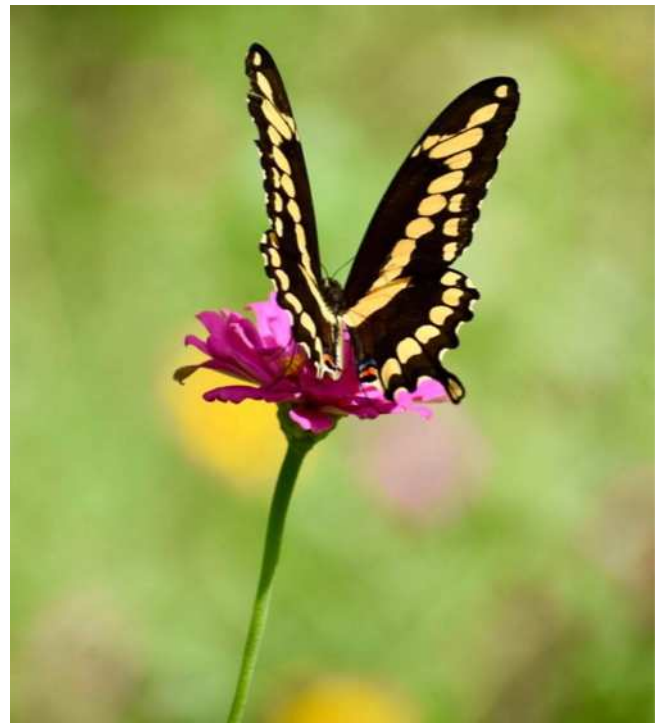
American Avocet, Black-necked Stilts, and a Yellowlegs. Photo by Sherry Chester, November 29, 2020 on the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive.



## FIELD TRIPS 2020-2021

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/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. Check our [website](#) for updated information and to register, and to view photos from recent field trips.

Depending on the number of participants, we may use the pod concept to limit group size. If you have questions about field trips, please contact Peg Lindsay at [peg26805@icloud.com](mailto:peg26805@icloud.com)



Giant Swallowtail in Mead Gardens, September 2020.  
Photo by Stacey Kelly.

### Social Distance Nature Hike Lake Louisa State Park Saturday, January 9th, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

Lake Louisa State Park showcases a diversity of wildlife, including deer, bobcat, gopher tortoises, fox squirrel and flighted creatures like flying squirrels, bald eagles and osprey. The park is home to 11 distinct natural plant communities and lies within the eastern boundary of the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern and the northern boundary of the Lake Wales Ridge. While we won't be able to experience all that LLSP offers, we can enjoy an afternoon together on an enjoyable hiking trail. Because January weather can be chilly, we've planned this as an afternoon hike. Pay your \$5 at the ranger station and pick up a map. Continue on the main entrance road for about a mile and a half and take the first right. Go about another mile to the second parking area – Wilderness Point Parking. (It's the closest parking area to trail marker #28.) We'll be met for a brief introduction to the park by a Park Ranger.

From this location there are two trailheads, each about a one-hour hike that returns you back to your starting point. After our group hike, you can go exploring on your own.

**Meet:** Lake Louisa State Park, 7305 U.S. Hwy 27, Clermont FL 34714, Wilderness Point Parking at 1 pm.

**Cost:** \$5 per vehicle entrance fee; We suggest a donation to OVAS (\$10 for adult members and \$15 for adult non-members).

### Clermont Stormwater Treatment Project/Victory Pointe Park and Clermont Historical Village Saturday, February 6th, 2021 at 10:30 a.m.

Our February field trip will begin with an informative talk then walkabout the ponds of the Clermont Stormwater Treatment project. This is a massive project funded by multiple government agencies to clean stormwater runoff before it reaches Lake Minneola. We can climb the observation tower there and look out past Victory Pointe Park to Lake Minneola.

It's just a few steps back to the Train Depot in the Historical Village, where we can spread out on the many picnic tables and enjoy a BYO brown bag lunch. Following lunch, we'll get a guided tour of Clermont Historical Village (\$5 pp donation requested.) Within the Historical Village is a WW-II museum (\$5 donation requested.)

**Meet:** Meet at 10:30 am. Park either on West Ave or in the Historical Village parking lot, 490 West Ave. Clermont, FL 34711. It's a short walk through the Historical Village to the ponds and tower of the Stormwater Treatment Project.

**Cost:** \$5 donations each to the Clermont Historical Village and the WW-II Museum. We also suggest a donation to OVAS (\$10 for adult members and \$15 for adult non-members).

# Expanding Solar in Florida



Solar United Neighbors, with whom OVAS has partnered, is leading a campaign to help Florida schools, government buildings, churches, and other non-profit organizations go solar. The campaign will educate Floridians and decision makers about Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs). PPAs allow customers to benefit from solar with low to no upfront costs. PPAs allow customers to lower their electric bills from day one. Florida's law does not allow organizations to enter into PPAs. SUNF aims to change that!

## How PPAs work

A developer installs, owns and operates the solar system. Their customer locks in their energy rates from the system through a contract (those rates are less than rates charged by their local utility). The developer is able to earn the federal solar tax credit.

## Why PPAs would benefit birds and Florida

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.

PPAs are an important way to increase access to solar. Non-profit organizations do not pay income taxes. This means they are unable to benefit from the solar tax credit if they decide to purchase a solar system. With a PPA, a third-party owns the system. This third party can take the tax credit and pass the savings along to the customer.

Power Purchase Agreements can provide immediate savings to solar customers. This is because the customer's contract enables them to purchase electricity for less than what they are paying to their utility.

Increasing solar adoption will benefit birds and all Floridians. Adding more distributed energy sources like solar makes our electric grid more resilient. This is a valuable defense against the damage caused by violent storms.

PPAs are legal in most states including Georgia, Texas, Arkansas, and Arizona. They are not yet legal in Florida. Legalizing PPAs for solar energy would only require our state to pass simple, no-cost legislation. SUN is supporting legislation to make PPAs legal in Florida. You can help by sending a letter to legislators (see their website to sign on).

For more information about PPA's please access SUN's website [here](#).

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## OVAS FINANCES

We normally provide our members financial information by displaying recent bank statements, annual financial reviews, etc. on the sign-in table for our program meetings. Because we have not been able to meet indoors in a while – and likely will not for months to come – we are providing information to our members via newsletter.

### Summary of Statements from United Southern Bank

#### October 2020

<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Beginning Balance		\$2585.29
3 Credits (donations)	\$90.00	
3 Debits (2 insurance policy premiums, and deductible for litigation)	-\$1159.69	
Ending Balance		\$1515.60

#### November 2020

<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Beginning Balance		\$1515.60
1 Credit (Amazon Smile deposit)	\$13.37	
4 Debits (2 insurance policy premiums, annual payment to FL Sunbiz and for website domain)	-\$313.94	
Ending Balance		\$1215.03

**Chapter Leader Calls**

Back in late March, before most chapter members realized the immense impact that Covid would have on our worlds, Jacqui Sulek, AF Chapter Conservation Manager, set up the first conference call with chapter presidents to provide support and guidance. This call was so successful that subsequent calls were scheduled every 2 weeks. Leaders from most of our RCC chapters have participated in some or all of these calls. As chapters settled in to the new normal, AF staff members made cameo appearances on the calls, and we moved from audio only to video calls via Zoom. Calls originally focused on how to communicate with members and what, if any, chapter activities could continue – and how they could continue safely. These calls continue on a monthly basis, usually scheduled for the 3rd or 4th Tuesday evening of each month. If you or your chapter leaders aren't receiving details about how to login, contact Jacqui directly at Jacqui.Sulek@audubon.org.

**Audubon Assembly**

Members of eight chapters from the Central Florida RCC registered for and participated in the first-ever digital Audubon Assembly held over 4 consecutive evenings and Saturday morning. Sessions included panel discussions, presentations, goal setting and a keynote speaker. Assembly opened with an "Introduction to Audubon" presentation targeted to tell the public at large what Audubon is all about. Total registration for Audubon Assembly was under 600, but the recorded version of the introduction has been viewed about 1,000 times.

**2021 Regional Conservation Goals**

RCC members reapproved our existing on-going goals during our Zoom meeting in September and added a third goal to address equity, diversity and inclusion. Stephanie Gaspar, President of Kissimmee Valley Audubon Society presented our goals to the general membership during Assembly. Goals from each RCC as well as State-wide goals were all reviewed and approved via digital voting. See all the 2021 conservation goals at <https://fl.audubon.org/news/read-audubon-floridas-2021-conservation-action-agenda>.

Paula Wehr  
Central Florida Chapters Representative  
Audubon Florida Board of Directors  
paulawehr@cfl.rr.com

**OVAS Board of Directors 2020-2021**

In January 2021, the Board of Directors will identify a nominating committee. We need members to step-up and fill the existing and upcoming vacant positions on our Board. If you are interested, contact one of the existing Board members and they can put you in touch with the Nominating Committee. The committee will present a slate of nominees at our March Annual Meeting. The new Board will be seated on July 1, 2021. Please support your chapter and do what you can. The Board has been pulling a heavy load and needs help!

POSITION	Name	TERM ENDS
President	Stacey Kelly	6/30/2022
1st Vice President	Michele Cotty Loger	6/30/2021
2nd Vice President	- vacant -	6/30/2022
Secretary	Sherry Chester	6/30/2021
Treasurer	Lisa Cain	6/30/2022
Director-at-Large	Jane Lovejoy	6/30/2023
Director-at-Large	Maria Distefano	6/30/2023*
Director-at-Large	Peg Lindsay	6/30/2021
Director-at-Large	Judy Knizner	6/30/2022
Director-at-Large	- vacant -	6/30/2022

\* indicates director was appointed by the Board and must be voted on at our next Annual Meeting



# Recap of Field Trip and Picnic at Hickory Point Park December 6th, 2020

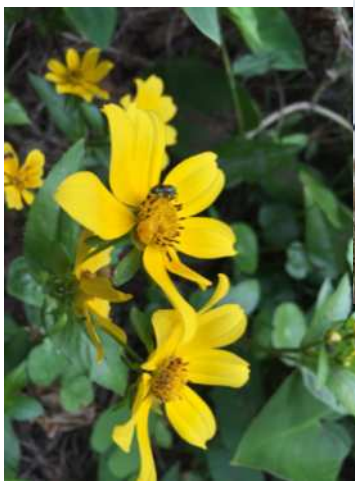
In lieu of our Emerald Marsh Christmas Bird Count and in lieu of our Holiday Luncheon - both of which were canceled - ten of us showed up to hike the boardwalk and enjoy a pleasant winter morning together. Everyone wore a mask and we kept a safe distance from each other. We recorded 28 species and submitted a checklist to eBird.

Our group started birding at the boat dock, checking out a collection of gulls and terns. An Osprey and immature Bald Eagle flew overhead and 3 Boat-tailed Grackles joined the party on the dock. We moved on to the picnic area with the tall pines and cypress trees above. We all saw a number of warblers, but exhaling into a mask on a cool morning caused fogged-up glasses and binoculars, and made identification difficult. Palm Warblers were easy to identify by their tail-bobbing, characteristic for that species. The boardwalk was quiet, bird-wise. But we enjoyed the winter-blooming wildflowers Burmarigold and Climbing Aster as well as the colorful Red Maple, Dahoon Holly, Bald Cypress and Sweetgum.

In the orange grove at the end of the boardwalk, we observed a number of Eastern Phoebes, as well as heard several House Wrens in the dense shrubbery. Welcome, Snowbirds! I think the highlight for most of us were the Bald Eagle sightings. Two adult Bald Eagles were observed over the soccer fields with three more in the far distance.

After the trek back to the picnic area we spread out onto 5 picnic tables to enjoy lunch.

Bird photos by Alex Chester. Other photos by Peg Urban.



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## Recap of MacDonald Pavilion Picnic after the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive Sunday, December 13th, 2020

Two vehicles from OVAS made the trip along Lake Apopka's Wildlife Drive. It was very crowded and the Stephens vehicle got stuck in traffic. There were many, many people from the area out enjoying the day, the wildlife, and the scenery. There are different route choices one can make through the North Shore Restoration Area. The Putman vehicle took a different route than the Stephens vehicle and arrived at the McDonald's Canal pavilion ahead of schedule. We met the Warners and birded the parking lot for sparrows. The Stephens vehicle arrived a little after 1 pm and we all enjoyed lunch together.



photos by Peg Lindsay



# 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>





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**TO:**