



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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VOLUME XXXVII

March - April 2021

Number 4

President's Column

Greeting and Salutations,

With Spring upon us we are/will be treated to an explosion of visitors. Not the human type that enjoy theme parks and the beaches, but birds migrating north to their nesting sites to raise their young. With the weather turning warmer it will be nice to get out to do some birding and enjoy nature. You are welcome to share pictures of your happy finds to our Facebook page.

Our Annual March Meeting is right around the corner. We need some new Board Members and Directors-at-Large. At our March meeting we hopefully will be presenting a slate of new nominees (at this time we have no one new to present), and may have to take nominee from the floor. We, have several open spots that need to be filled since we have folks rotating out (see separate article in this newsletter). We need help!!!!

Lastly, I regret to share with you due to low attendance, we may cut short our field trip season this year. The March and April field trips could be the last trips for the fiscal year. Peg Lindsay has worked hard to offer such wonderful monthly field trips for us, which I know we all greatly appreciate. Thank you, so much Peg...)

Happy birding....
Stacey



Black-necked Stilt chick. Photo by Stacey Kelly.

At-a-Glance

March 6, 2021, 10 am - Field Trip: PEAR Park

March 7, 2021, 2 pm - ANNUAL Mtg & Program: Wekiva River and Springs

March 17, 2021, 5:30 pm - Field Trip: Okahampka

April 7, 2021, 9:00 am - PEAR: Native Plant & Collectibles Sale

April 11, 2021, 2 pm - Program: Top 25 Birds of Lake Co.

April 14, 2021, 9:30 am - Field Trip: L. Griffin State Park



Barred Owl owlets. Photo by Alex Chester

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

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

Annual Meeting and Program: How to protect the flow and water quality in the Wekiva River and its tributary springs and streams Sunday, March 7th at 2:00 p.m.



Join us Sunday March 7 at Trout Lake Nature Center for our annual meeting and an excellent program speaker. We will hold our annual business meeting first, during which we will elect new Board members. It is essential we have a quorum present to hold a vote on the slate of nominees (see plea for volunteers in a separate column in this newsletter).

The meeting will be followed by a presentation by Mike Cliburn. The topic of his talk is what will be and what can be done to protect flow and water quality in the Wekiva River and its tributary springs and streams. He will review current flow and water quality conditions and provide a brief overview of the state's plans for maintaining flows and protecting water quality. He also will review the Friends of Wekiva River's main concerns about those plans, and then summarize what we can do as environmental advocacy groups and citizens.

Mike Cliburn is a retired environmental engineer who received his Master's degree in Environmental Engineering from the University of Florida. He has over 40 years of experience planning, designing, permitting, and constructing water supply and wastewater reclamation facilities for central Florida utilities, including OUC, Orlando, Kissimmee, Seminole County, Orange County, and the Toho Water Authority. Since retiring, he has become active in the Friends of the Wekiva River (FOWR), currently serving as Secretary, and previously as its representative on FDEP's Advisory Committee for the Wekiwa & Rock Springs Basin Management Action Plan. He is also Secretary of the Florida Springs Council, an organization of springs protection advocacy groups.

Watch for a reminder email about this talk where you will find the link to download Mike's presentation to your mobile device. This method enables us to offer programs outdoors and distanced from each other. Wear a mask and bring a chair, along with a snack if you choose. We'll meet in the outdoor screened pavilion, with overflow on the grounds beside the pavilion.

Top 25 Birds of Lake County Sunday, April 11th at 2:00 p.m.



Join us on April 11, for board member Judy Knizner's presentation on the top 25 birds of Lake County. Find out which feeder species make the list and how to attract them to your backyard. Learn fun facts about our beautiful and talented feathered friends! Judy is a retired second grade teacher who moved permanently to Lake County from Fort Myers in 2015 to own and open a franchise of Wild Birds Unlimited with her

husband, Dave.

Watch for a reminder email about this talk where you will find the link to download Judy's presentation to your mobile device. This method enables us to offer programs outdoors and distanced from each other. Wear a mask and bring a chair, along with a snack if you choose. We'll meet in the outdoor screened pavilion, with overflow on the grounds beside the pavilion.



Wekiwa Springs

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

A note from your field trip coordinator

What do I do when I plan a field trip for the group and very few people show up? These past few months, we have had some really fun field trips. I've participated in every one. Every participant has been respectful of Covid protocols. We all wear masks and keep a safe distance from each other.

But because of the low participation, I am losing my desire to continue planning any more field trips. I personally have always enjoyed the adventure. The Audubon name has allowed us access to places and spaces that are sometimes off-limits to the general public. I've made friends. I've learned about birds, solitary bees, green lynx spider, yaupon holly, lawn orchids, palmetto bugs and all manner of wondrous life forms from the other participants.

So write me or text me. What's keeping YOU home?

Peg Lindsay
peg26805@icloud.com
352-348-9258

PEAR Park Saturday, March 6th at 10 a.m.



March can be a month full of surprises in Central Florida. Spring flowers are emerging. Overwintering birds are leaving for points North. You still might find one or two winter

birds hanging around. Summer nesting birds and , just passing through, can be found if you're looking. And of course, there are always the year-round birds. And, the weather can be troublesome or just plain lovely.

Our March field trip begins at the buildings at the end of the University Avenue entrance. Depending on the weather and our scouting reports, we will follow one of the trails through the meadow or through the woods.

Following our short hike, those who choose to stay can enjoy the camaraderie of a social-distance brown bag lunch at one of the pavilions or the porch.

As always, be prepared for the weather. Wear your masks and keep a safe distance from your fellow hikers.

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

Cost: We suggest a donation to OVAS (\$10 for adult members and \$15 for adult non-members)

Sandhill Cranes (above) and moonlit pine trees (right).
Photos by Peg Urban.

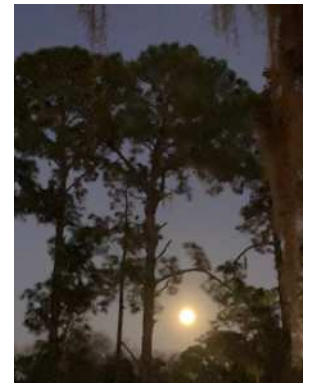
Okahumpka Wednesday, March 17th at 5:30 p.m.

Red Fussell, a native Floridian who calls Okahumpka home, has invited us to his yard for an evening gathering around his fire pit. We probably will have a fire if conditions permit, but otherwise we will place a camp lantern in the pit for pretend flames His yard is arranged with many handmade swings in a huge circle so that we can all gather around the "fire" and socially distance at the same time. You may want to bring a chair just in case we do run short on swing space. Sunset will be around 7:30 pm so let's plan to gather at around 5:30 pm for a walk about the property to do a little birding. Around dusk or so we will gather around the fire pit for storytelling.

Red is a great storyteller and has many amusing stories about growing up in Florida. He's even written a few books that are full of cute anecdotal stories about growing up in the area. Red and his father were also mentioned in both of Gilbert King's historical documentary books about events in Okahumpka. King wrote the Pulitzer Prize winning *Devil in the Grove*, *Thurgood Marshall*, *the Groveland Boys* and *the Dawn of a New America*, and *Beneath a Ruthless Sun*. (I've read them both and recommend them for a local history lesson.) Bring your own snacks, food and drinks. We'll supply the marshmallows.

Meet: Red's house is a little hard to find, but here is the address. Red Fussell. 26245 Main Ave., Okahumpka 34762. When you sign up, we'll give you specific directions.

Cost: We suggest a donation to OVAS (\$10 for adult members and \$15 for adult non-members)





Note date change from previous Limpkin Call. Let's begin with the expected weather. On April 14, the typical temperature in Leesburg ranges from 62°F to 80°F and is rarely below 53°F or above 87°F. So, we should expect a very pleasant day.

We will meet up at the one and only pavilion in the park and begin our adventure with a Ranger talk at 9:30. Ranger Jan

recommends the 1.8-mile hiking trail for our group.

Following our hike, we will have a socially-distanced brown bag lunch for those of you who wish to stay and enjoy the camaraderie.

We have a possibility of a boat tour. As of this writing, the boat is out of service and it is unknown if it will be repaired by April. However, should the boat be repaired, there is a four-person limit per trip and masks are required. The cost per person is \$20 plus tax. The boat tour is optional.

April is peak bird migration season in Florida. Those of you who are avid birders may wish to arrive earlier to bird the forest edge of Lake Griffin.

Meet: Lake Griffin State Park, 3089 U.S. Highway 441-27, Fruitland Park FL 34731

<https://www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/lake-griffin-state-park/history>

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

Treasurer's Report			
Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society			
Summary of Statement from United Southern Bank			
December 2020			
Description	Debits	Credits	Balance
Beginning Balance			1,215.03
Lake Cares Grant		10,130.00	
Capital Premium BOD liability	100.70		
Check to pay 2019 FFF speaker	350.00		
General liability insurance	58.99		
Ending Balance			10,835.34
January 2021			
Description	Debits	Credits	Balance
Beginning Balance			10,835.34
the balance of grant funds		500.00	
Membership dues		20.00	
Transfer from FFF		350.00	
Liability Insurance	58.99		
Ending Balance	58.99	870.00	11,646.35

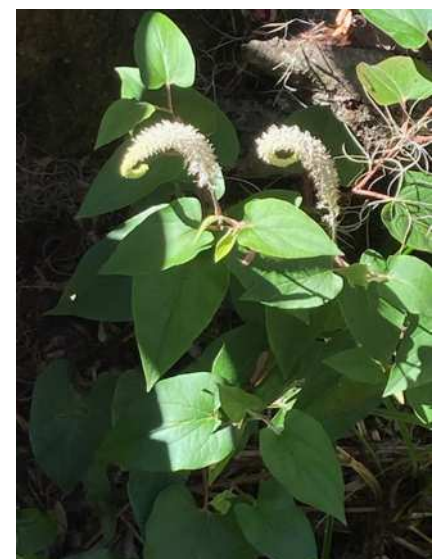
Native Plant Sale and Collectibles - "Barb's Beauties"
Wednesday, April 7th at 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. at PEAR Park.

Thanks to the generosity of Barb Grigg, long time Lake Beautyberry FNPS (BB) member and PEAR volunteer, members from those organizations were allowed to rescue a small, but nice, selection of native plants from her home property in Sorrento. All of these plants have benefits for our local wildlife. The PEAR Association will offer these plants to our local environmental friends for a donation. Since her husband Tony's passing, Barb has been residing at Brookdale Lake Tavares, an assisted living facility. Barb has been a native plant mentor to many of us over the years and she and Tony were faithful Pear volunteers for many years.

There will also be some of Barb's collectible vintage items available for donation. These include, grey enamelware, old glass bottles, and other neat items.

If anyone wants to donate any extra native plants from their own gardens to the mix, that would be great. BB and Pear volunteers are doing so. Please bring them a half hour or more before the sale.

The sale will take place at the nature center building at PEAR Park, 4800 University Ave, Leesburg, FL 34748. If you have questions, contact Peg Urban at 352-530-7479.



OVAS Board of Directors - Nominees Needed!

Mark Heinemann is the contact for the current nominating committee. We need members to step-up and fill the existing and upcoming vacant positions on our Board. If you are interested, please contact Mark (heinemmg@yahoo.com). The committee will present a slate of nominees at our March 7th Annual Meeting. The new Board will be seated on July 1, 2021 (or sooner in the case of existing vacancies). Please support your chapter and do what you can. The Board has been pulling a heavy load and needs help!

Note that the positions highlighted in yellow are expiring and may need to be filled. Some members whose terms are expiring may agree to serve an additional term, but note also the existing vacancies. The Board is meeting monthly using Zoom.

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	*Jane Lovejoy	6/30/2022
Director-at-Large	- vacant -	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	*Lisa Cain	6/30/2022

* indicates director was appointed by the Board and must be voted on at our next Annual Meeting
 NOTE: TERMS ARE STAGGERED. OFFICERS' TERMS ARE 2 YEARS AND DIRECTORS' TERMS ARE 3 YEARS.

How we are Meeting at Trout Lake Nature Center

Last month we welcomed Deborah Shelley as a presenter and she covered a lot of ground, prompting interest and additional questions from the membership. OVAS would like to thank Deborah for her great talk and her advocacy and personal investment in conservation.

Below are some photos taken of Deborah and our members at Deborah's presentation in the screened pavilion. Everyone downloaded the presentation slides ahead of time and viewed the presentation on their own devices, while being able to maintain social distance. Photos are by Stacey Kelly.



NEWS FROM CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

1st Quarter, 2021

Borrow Pits – Wekiva parkway

In December an editorial in the *Orlando Sentinel* and a strongly-worded letter from Lee Constantine notified Gov. DeSantis of FDOT's use of unpermitted borrow pits in Lake County. Because of lack of communication between FDOT and FL Dept of Ag & Consumer Svc (FDACS), Lake County and SJRWMD have pursued litigation. FDOT suspended accepting fill from 1 of 2 companies under litigation, so the outcome is moving in the right direction.

Sheryan Epperly Chester (OVAS) spoke to the Lake County Board of County Commissioners on February 9 and followed up with a letter thanking them for doing the right thing.

EPA Grants FL Sole Authority on Fill Material Permits

[Section 404](#) grants sole authority to the State. Audubon Florida and most other environmental organizations do not support this decision for reasons below:

1. The State of Florida (and the Water Management Districts) doesn't have the capacity due to budget and personnel cuts under the Scott administration.
2. The Corp of Engineers has been a check/balance for pressure on FL to allow bad permits. With sole responsibility, there is no oversight on State decisions.

Note: Section 404 is not universal. Permits for dredging and filling in and adjacent to navigable waters (bays, rivers, estuaries and major lakes) will remain under the control of the Corps of Engineers and EPA.

M-CORES

Recommendations from the task forces for all 3 roads were nearly identical:

- there is no demonstrated need for new roadways; if/when needed, existing roads should be expanded rather than new roads built
- roads shouldn't invade environmentally sensitive lands
- environmental study must be done for all property within 10-mile radius of proposed new site.

Stay informed about Audubon Florida activities during the Florida legislative session by signing up to receive [The Advocate](#).

Audubon Florida Climate Work

[Olivia Sciandra](#), Audubon Florida Climate Team Organizer, has a variety of ideas regarding how chapters can advocate for climate change with local governing bodies. Or visit [Audubon Florida's Climate Change Advocacy](#) web page for more information. [Sign up here](#) to receive Audubon Climate Updates.

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



Great Crested Flycatcher. Photo by Alex Chester.

Recap of Field Trip and Picnic at Victory Point and Historic Village, Clermont February 7th, 2021

It was an educational, entertaining and fun day along the southwest shoreline of Lake Minneola in Clermont. We first strolled through Victory Point, a pretty 10 acre passive wetland park planted with native aquatic species, which serves as a filter for cleaning regional stormwater before it enters the lake. We enjoyed seeing many species of waterbirds including Great Egret, Great, Little Blue, and Tricolored Herons, Cormorant, Anhinga, Purple Gallinule, Gulls, Terns, Killdeer; alligators and turtles were also spotted in the area.

After lunch, we visited the quaint Historic Village where we toured century old structures, including a school, library, train depot, 2 homes and a WWII-era Quonset hut. The friendly and knowledgeable volunteers led us back through time to experience some of the fascinating history of the area and its residents. Peg L was observed dancing to big band WWII music which was emanating from an old player piano. (contribution by Peg Urban)



top photo by Sherry Chester; other two photos by Peg Urban

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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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