



# 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.

Published a minimum of four times a year.

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## President's Column

With Spring in full swing, I find myself enjoying life outdoors more and more. There is always something that will make you laugh-out-loud funny to being sentimental. I recently came across this book titled *A Life Lived Outdoors* by George Smith, an outdoors writer in Maine. We used to live in Maine, so I always gravitate to things with Maine mentioned. Maine is where I really started to enjoy the outdoors. Hiking and seeing all the birds and wildflowers in Maine started my love of nature. So, the long and short of that tangent is if you are looking for a good book give it a try.

Our next program May 2nd is going to be an exciting one. Our friends from the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey will be joining us along with some magnificent feathered Ambassadors.

With sadness I must announce that our May program will be our last of the year. As well, we will not have any field trips for May or June. With low attendance for both programs and field trips, we find it is in the best interest of everyone to say goodbye in May for the remainder of the year. Starting refreshed and vaccinated (if you choose to), we will be back in full swing in September 2021. So, over the Summer break we will be busy planning a fun filled year for you, our members.

Lastly, I will leave you with a "tickle" of something to look forward to...from Peg Lindsay:  
Clyde Stephens set the standard for our chapter's overseas travel adventures. It's been a few years, but another foreign trip is being planned. Archaeopteryx Tours has created a catered tour of Grand Bahama Island exclusively for our chapter. It is primarily birding-oriented, designed for us to see all the Bahamas endemic bird species, but time-out for a tour of local local brewery, sunning at the beach, and shopping in Freeport. On this trip, we should see many familiar, overwintering warbler species as well. Details are provided in this newsletter. This tour is being offered exclusively to OVAS members until November of this year. After that, Ms. Smith may open the tour to fill vacant slots. Be flexible. Have fun. Whiners and complainers not allowed. Bahaha.... :)

I hope you continue to enjoy the music of the birds you find in your backyard or on your out and about adventures. Birding truly helps you to relax and rejuvenate. See you soon at our next program. I'm really looking forward to seeing our friends from the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey.

Cheers,  
Stacey

## At-a-Glance

May 2, 2021, 2 pm - Program: Radical Raptors



Krider's Red-tailed Hawk perched on the osprey platform on the Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive, Feb. 25, 2021. 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](mailto:memishel@yahoo.com)

Our monthly programs are held on the first Sunday of the Month, at 2:00 pm, at Troud Lake Nature Center, Eustis.

### **Radical Raptors Sunday, May 2nd at 2:00 p.m.**

Ever wonder about the birds of prey you see in Central Florida? Well, to learn more about raptors, join us at this presentation by Laura VonMutius, Education Manager of the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey. The Audubon Center is a rehabilitation facility for birds of prey. You'll get to hear about what makes a bird of prey, the typical injuries they get and how we all can help birds of prey in the wild. Plus, a couple live bird ambassadors from the Audubon Center will be joining us, so you'll get to see some live birds up close!

Laura VonMutius (Von-Mew-tea-us) grew up in Orlando and has a B.S. from Florida State University in Art Education, and she continues to create art in her free time. Laura started her career as an educator at SeaWorld and then the Central Florida Zoo. She joined the Audubon team in February of 2017, and has enjoyed the ability to use birds as tools to teach about the environment. Through her years of being an informal conservation educator, Laura has hosted summer camps, public and private schools, homeschools and other programs, inspiring children and adults alike to take part in conserving wildlife. While Laura isn't supposed to have favorites – Laura is partial to a sweet Barred Owl named Maple.

OVAS will be billed for this program. Thus, we ask that attendees consider making a donation to OVAS at the time of the program. We suggest \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members.



above: American Kestrel. Photo by Sherry Chester.

below: Red-shouldered Hawk. Photo by Alex Chester.

below left: Bald Eagle. Photo by Alex Chester.



# OVAS Board of Directors

OVAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS elected March 7, 2021		
OVAS BOARD	DIRECTOR	
POSITION	Name	TERM ENDS
President	Stacey Kelly	6/30/2022
1st Vice President	Michele Cotty Loger	6/30/2023
2nd Vice President	- vacant -	6/30/2022
Secretary	Sherry Chester	6/30/2023
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	6/30/2024
Director-at-Large	Judy Knizner	6/30/2022
Director-at-Large	Lisa Cain	6/30/2022

## Times 'a Changing

Since December 2016, when David Jantz turned over editing the newsletter to me, I have edited and published our chapter's bi-monthly newsletter, *The Limpkin Call*. Over time, I have taken on more responsibilities for the chapter (e.g. Secretary, Conservation Committee Chair, Historian, etc.). I realized I was over-extended and asked for relief. This will be the last newsletter issue that I will publish. Mark Heinemann has stepped up to take over publishing our newsletter. We will work together on the first issue of the next volume (Volume XXVIII, No. 1 for Sep/Oct 2021) and thereafter Mark will be working solo. Of course, many chapter members provide input for the newsletter, and I will continue to contribute. Mark will be the one pulling it all together, though. Please welcome Mark and thank him for volunteering for this important endeavor. Mark can be reached at [heinemmg@yahoo.com](mailto:heinemmg@yahoo.com).

Sheryan Epperly Chester

# OVAS FINANCES

Treasurer's Report	OVAS		
<b>Summary of Statement from United Southern Bank</b>			
<b>February 2021</b>			
Description	Debits	Credits	Balance
Beginning Balance			11,646.35
<b>Credits</b>			
National Audubon		715.75	
Field trip (Sherry)		5.00	
Amazon Smile		6.00	
<b>Debits</b>			
Darr Schackow (D&O Insurance)	431.00		
Liability Insurance	58.99		
Ending Balance	489.99	726.75	11,883.11
<b>March 2021</b>			
Description	Debits	Credits	Balance
Beginning Balance			11,883.11
<b>Credits</b>			
Paypal transfer		1,094.85	
Membership dues		80.00	
Program donation		7.00	
Field trip		15.00	
<b>Debits</b>			
D&O Insurance	182.44		
Liability Insurance	58.99		
Ending Balance	241.43	1,196.85	12,838.53

Osprey. Photo by Alex Chester



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[smile.amazon.com](https://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](https://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](https://smile.amazon.com) will result in a donation. You can change your charity any time.

# Oklawaha Valley Audubon Birding and Wildlife Tour of Grand Bahama Island February 5-11, 2022

We have a Caribbean adventure waiting for you this February, 2022! What better time of the year to escape and end up in a tropical paradise? We'll be staying at the luxurious Island Seas Resort featuring two restaurants on the property, a bar, hot tub, and its own private beach. The resort is centrally located in Freeport, on Grand Bahama Island. This tour will not have any strenuous hiking. Instead relax in the beautiful Garden of the Groves where wintering Blackpoll Warblers abound. Other frequent avian visitors to the garden include Loggerhead Kingbird, Gray Kingbird, Cuban Pewee, Greater Antillean Bullfinch, Least Grebe, Cuban Emerald, Smooth-billed Ani, Thick-billed Vireo, and many wintering warblers. Bahama Mockingbird is sometimes seen around the island from the cruise port to Paradise cove and established populations of Peach-faced Lovebird can be seen in the market square. The eastern side of the island will produce Bahama Warbler, Western Spindalis, Red-legged Thrush, and Olive-capped Warbler. Here is a breakdown of the daily activities for this tour:

February 5th- Carpool and drive to south Florida and stay overnight at the Rodeway Inn & Suites Fort Lauderdale with cruise port shuttle

February 6th- Begin from Fort Lauderdale at 9 am and take the ferry to Grand Bahama Island. It arrives at 1 pm. We'll get to the market square in Freeport and have lunch and look for the Rosy-faced Lovebirds that live at the market. Then, we'll arrive at Island Seas resort and have dinner at the local \$2 Bar.

February 7th- The Garden of the Groves. The Garden is a beautiful botanical garden complete with butterfly garden and literature on the birds of the garden. It's a great location to get familiarized with the more common bird species of the Bahamas. We should see Red-legged Thrush, Hairy Woodpecker, La Sagre's Flycatcher, Ringed Teal, Greater Antillean Bullfinch, Black-whiskered Vireo, Smooth-billed Ani, White-crowned Pigeon, Cape May Warbler, Cuban Emerald, Western Spindalis, Northern Waterthrush, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Least Grebe, Loggerhead Kingbird, and Thick-billed Vireo. Eat lunch at the Garden.

February 8th- Eastern Pine forest. We should see Olive-capped Warbler, Pine Warbler, Bahama Warbler, and Black-faced Grassquit. In the afternoon, we'll visit the Emerald golf course for White-cheeked Pintail and other waterfowl species. Then by evening, we'll stop by the Bahamas Birder's Bnb for the Bahama Woodstar

February 9th- Explore the island to look for Bahama Yellowthroat, White-checked Pintail, and Bahama Mockingbird. Stop at the Sands brewery for tour and tasting of Bahamian local beers, the International bazaar for lunch, and the famous Fish Fry at Smith Point for dinner.

February 10th- Explore the island for Bahama Woodstar during the day. We may find them at Erika Gates' garden. We'll have plenty of time to enjoy the beach in the afternoon or stop at the marketplace for shopping. Return home to Fort Lauderdale Thursday evening. We'll plan to spend another night at the Rodeway Inn and Suites because the boat gets in very late.

February 11th- Friday morning we'll drive back north. We'll stop at Green Cay wetlands for waterbirds, American/Least Bitterns, Gray-headed Swamphen, and the Atala butterfly. The Cay is an excellent location for up-close viewing and photography of birds. Green Cay has a raised boardwalk trail over the wetlands for easy walking. After our morning at the park, we'll eat lunch and continue our drive back up north to Lake County.

\*We will do our best to accommodate all reasonable requests to make sure you are as comfortable as possible throughout the tour. That being said, no whiners or complainers, please

\*\*At this time, travel between islands of the Bahamas is restricted due to COVID-19. Should travel by ferry open up by the time of the tour, we may spend one or two days on the island of Abaco to look for the Cuban Parrot, Bahama Swallow, and West Indian Woodpecker

Anyone interested in nature will fall in love with the Bahamas if you have never been here before. There is so much natural habitat, the people are so welcoming, and the food is amazing! Vegetarians will enjoy a common Bahamian dish of pigeon peas and rice and seafood lovers will appreciate the fried conch. Price for this tour will be \$2145 per person/double occupancy (\$500 singles supplement), including a \$100 donation to our chapter. This price includes resort stay, speed boat trip out to the island from Fort Lauderdale, transportation around the islands, entry fees to parks and gardens, professional guides, and daily ebird checklists. It does not include your transportation to Fort Lauderdale, food/drinks, or tips. Minimum group size is 4 persons and maximum group size is 8.

We'll be as careful as possible in terms of COVID. We'll wear masks in the vehicle and everyone should have proof of at least the original vaccination(s) (we'll have to determine as the time gets closer how available the booster will be). We may also still be required to have proof of a negative covid test to get back into the United States. These tests are not covered by US insurance policies and cost around \$100, so this is also not included in the price of the tour.

Please email [archaeopteryxtours@gmail.com](mailto:archaeopteryxtours@gmail.com) or call 609-553-0757 for more information.



Greater Antillean  
Bullfinch



Red-legged Thrush



Olive-capped Warbler



Black-faced Grassquit

# Recap of Field Trips

## OVAS in Okahumpka March 17, 2021

It was a balmy spring evening in Okahumpka, perfect for sitting around in a circle of handmade swings that hang from large spreading oak tree branches, to listen to stories about the "old days" in that part of Florida. Red Fussell was our host and his ancestors were some of the original settlers in the Leesburg area. Red is a great storyteller and has many amusing and educational stories about growing up in Okahumpka. He's even written a few books that are full of these stories that depict their old way of life. 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*. Those were dark days of racial inequality but Red and his family were a positive force in helping those who were being persecuted or struggling to make ends meet.

We ended the evening by roasting marshmallows, over the fire pit, eating smores (thanks Sherry) and enjoying each other's company.

Oh, and we spotted a few birds to boot!

Peg Urban

## Lake Griffin State Park April 14, 2021

Our group assembled with Ranger Jan for a short talk about happenings at the park. It was a beautiful spring morning for a hike through the woods. Several spring migrants were heard singing in the forest. Three of us hiked the longer red-blazed swamp trail and also walked the short distance to the mammoth oak tree. This tree has been designated as the second largest live oak in the state. The other five of us took the park's boat ride to a wading-bird rookery on the shores of Lake Griffin. We saw nesting White and Glossy Ibis, herons and egrets, anhingas, and Double-Crested Cormorants. It was interesting because some young birds were ready to fledge, some were just hatched and some nests still contained eggs. All the baby birds made quite a noise. Turtles were sunning themselves on the Spatterdock. In total, we recorded 34 species and submitted our checklist to eBird. It was a fine day for a picnic in the park.

Our boat charter was the last for this spring at the park. After our trip, they pulled the pontoon boat. Their problem is a lack of captains. If you know someone interested in captaining the tours, please contact Ranger Jan at Lake Griffin State Park: 352-360-6760 6760 or [Janice.wichterman@floridadep.gov](mailto:Janice.wichterman@floridadep.gov)

Peg Lindsay



Photos by  
Peg  
Lindsay  
and Sherry  
Chester

Photos above by Peg Urban

# NEWS FROM CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

## 2nd Quarter, 2021

### Legislative Issues/Updates

SB 100, the M-CORES repeal bill passed with only one dissenting vote after senators voted unanimously to include an amendment that requires DOT to use M-CORES Task Force recommendations in any future road project planning and design. While SB 100 does not have an identical House companion, similar bills alive in the House are good candidates to conform and ultimately result in passage of this important legislation. See additional details in the 3/27/2021 edition of [The Advocate](#).

St Johns WMD and Lake County government went to court to stop the use of unauthorized borrow pits on the Wekiva Parkway. Future legislation may require documentation of all requisite land use permits before a borrow pit can be created. Language being formulated now will probably pass.

Florida Forever funding is requested at \$100 million in the House but only \$50 million in the Senate, most of which will be directed to conservation easements. Funding for Rural and Family Lands may go to DEP which will pick up the obligation for conservation easements.

The River Cross Development proposed for rural east Seminole County was rejected by county commissioners in 2018. A new proposal was submitted to settle a pair of lawsuits filed by the developer against the County. It is not believed that the County will approve this new proposal.

On April 27 Lake County Commission will discuss a request to approve White Water Farm Sand Mine. The Planning Board has recommended “no.”

### Chapter Activities

All reporting chapters continue to monitor local government agenda and planning/zoning agendas and meetings and stay in contact with their elected officials.

Lake Apopka Wildlife Drive continues to be a popular outdoor destination, particularly during the pandemic. Visitor attendance in nine months of 2020 (the drive was closed for 3 months) exceeded attendance in 2019 by over 8%. Hiking and bicycling numbers are on the rise as well. Friends of Lake Apopka hope to host a fishing tournament.

Several chapters are progressing with our ED&I goal by setting up student chapters at a college, a university and a grade school. *Audubon Adventures* is being used in the school and an eco-camp. Six hundred native plant seedlings were grown and will be distributed to Lyonia Preserve, Stetson University and to local residents under a Plants for Birds Program.

Chapters have found innovative ways to raise funds during the pandemic and many shared their ideas during the call.

Paula Wehr  
Central Florida Chapters Representative  
Audubon Florida Board of Directors  
[paulawehr@cfl.rr.com](mailto:paulawehr@cfl.rr.com)

# 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:**