



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 column

Hi, Everyone...

With a New Year upon us OVAS will be saying Goodbye...

How OVAS started....

The first documented attempt at a bird club in Lake County was in April 1951. The group met at 8:00 pm in the Mt. Dora Community Building and continued to meet on the second Friday of each month. The stated purpose was to have bird walks and 'water trips'. There were no dues but members had to be a member of Florida Audubon Society (\$3 at the time); bills were paid by passing a collection plate.

How OVAS will be ending...

Our last gathering will be held at Trout Lake Nature Center on Sunday, March 3rd, at 2:00 PM. We will have Birds of Prey with us for a spectacular program. A luncheon will also be held with our conservation friends from the Lake County Conservation Council with Jan Hepting.

The time has been fun, but sadly all good things come to an end... this is something that has been anticipated for sometime now. Actually since 2016... Sherry, Peg and myself stepped up to not let the chapter go into dissolution at that moment. This time around it seems it will finally be coming to fruition. Unless a new Board is secured before the last program on March 3rd...

I want to give a heartfelt thanks to all past and present Board Members.

To an Infinity and Beyond Thank you, Sherry - Secretary, Peg - Field Trip Coordinator, Michele - Vice President, Jane - Treasurer, Maria - Director at Large, Lori - Webmaster, Mark - Newsletter Master. For being present for OVAS during these last 7 years...

With all that said I will end with cheering on the Lake County Conservation Council with their wonderful EcoExpo "Lake County - Let's Go Green" that will be held on March 2nd at Lake County Square Mall from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM....

Lots of great Guest Speakers with awesome presentations. One example is Food and Farming. Learn about how to protect the natural resources of Lake County. There will be interactive exhibits to see. Along with student posters and awards.

Happy birding and gardening....



Regards,

Stacey

At-a-Glance

March 2—Lake County EcoExpo 2024, Lake Square Mall 9AM

March 3 — Annual Meeting, Trout Lake Nature Center 2PM

OVAS Property Update

We last updated you about the status of the property we owned in Orange County in our March/April 2020 The Limpkin Call newsletter (<https://oklawaha-valley-audubon.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2020-Mar-Apr-Limpkin-Call-reduced.pdf>) and followed up with an explanation to members attending the Annual Meeting on March 1, 2020. Since, the issue was litigated and upon the advice of our attorney, we could not discuss the matter further.

We were fortunate to have Business and Management Insurance that covered the costs to defend OVAS and the individual defendants (Board members). We now are happy to report that the matter has been resolved. The property has been transferred to the Catholic Diocese of Orlando at no cost to OVAS. Upon the transfer, the property is encumbered with a Conservation Easement.

Get Involved

You don't have to be a Board Member to support and represent OVAS

Florida Audubon Jay Watch is continuing to look for volunteers to conduct scientific surveys that measure annual nesting success and count the total number of Florida Scrub-Jays.

More information can be found here: [Jay Watch](#)

Information about [Jay Watch Training](#)

Another way to get involved with Florida Audubon is participating in the **EagleWatcher** Community Science program.

More information can be found here: [Be an EagleWatcher](#)

Audubon Climate Watch

A new community science program explores how North American birds are responding to climate change

According to Audubon's 2019 climate change report, '[Survival By Degrees.](#)' up to two-thirds of North American birds are vulnerable to extinction due to climate change. The good news is that there are [plenty of opportunities to protect birds](#) from this existential threat, and Audubon members have been leading the way for years.

Using the **Audubon Native Plant Database** you can get a list of plants based on your zip code, and the birds they will attract.

Enter your ZIP Code to get a list of native plants for your area, along with additional resources: [Native Plant Database](#)

(You do not need to enter your email address) This is the list based on [32726](#)

EcoEXPO 2024 - BIGGER AND BETTER THAN EVER

Lake County EcoExpo 2024 will happen Saturday March 2 in the Lake Square Mall at 10401 US Hwy 441 in Leesburg. The theme of this year's EcoExpo is "Lake County – Let's Go Green!". OVAS will be a Supporter and exhibitor, as it has been for the two previous EcoExpo's. This year's event will be much bigger than last year, taking advantage of the large and comfortable space available at the Mall. There will be more than 50 exhibits, from conservation organizations and numerous government agencies, and from green businesses, included for the first time this year. Among the first time exhibits is a gallery of twenty environmental maps of Lake County produced by GIS. Climate First Bank is sponsoring a poster contest for high school students, and 50 posters will be on display. Trout Lake Nature Center will have an interactive exhibit. The exhibits will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

More than 20 speakers from government and academia and business will speak on topics including smart growth, sustainability, energy alternatives, climate change, and community resilience. The **keynote speaker** will be Lake County Commissioner Doug Shields. The prizes for the poster contest will also be awarded. The speaker sessions will be from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

This will be an exciting day devoted to conservation and the environment. Come and learn and enjoy it! Bring friends – the EcoExpo is free and is open to all. Don't miss it!

For more information, go to lccconservationcouncil.org

Conservation Groups: Alachua Conservation Trust, All About the Ballots, Aquatic Preserve Alliance of Central Florida, Dark Sky International, Farm Worker Association of Florida, Highlander Chapter of the Florida Trail Association, Friends of the Wekiva River, Lake Beautyberry Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, Lake County Conservation Council, Live Wildly Foundation, Mount Dora Friends of the Environment, Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society, Tavares Family Nature Club, Tri-City NAACP's Environmental and Climate Justice Committee, Tri-County Unitarian Universalists, UF/IFAS Lake County Extension Master Gardener Volunteers, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lake County, and Wekiva-Middle St. Johns Aquatic Preserve.

Government Agencies: Cities of Eustis, Groveland, and Mount Dora, Lake County Agencies including the Office of Parks & Trails, Water Lab/Water Atlas, Mosquito and Aquatic Plant Management, and the Water Authority (Shoreline Enhancement, Fertilizer Ordinance, Best Management Practices, and Conservation Lands), District Agencies including the St. Johns River Water Management District and the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council.

Green Businesses: Climate First Bank, The Roof Guys, Eco Construction Group, Prestige Ford, Tower Gardens, Naventure (manages Juniper Springs and Alexander Springs), The Neighborhood Center of South Lake (reduces food waste), and The Villages Grown (gardens hydroponically), BCM America (electric bicycles).



Lake County Conservation Council

2024 EcoExpo

“Lake County–Let’s Go Green!”

Saturday, March 2, 2024 ♦ 9 am- 5 pm

FREE

LAKE SQUARE MALL 10401 US Hwy 441, Leesburg, Florida 34788

LEARN TO: ♦ Live sustainably ♦ Protect natural resources ♦ Address climate change
♦ Create resilient communities ♦ Reduce pollution & greenhouse gases

Presentations: Smart Growth ♦ Sustainability ♦ Energy Alternatives ♦ Food/Farming
♦ Climate Change & Health ♦ Community Resilience ♦ Preparedness/CPR

Exhibits: Conservation ♦ Government ♦ Green Businesses ♦ GIS Map Gallery
♦ Interactive Displays ♦ “Going Green” Student Posters & Awards

SUPPORTERS



SPONSORS



For More Information, go to lccconservationcouncil.org or EcoExpo2024@gmail.com



Count birds in your backyard, local park, or wherever you spot a bird, and submit your observations online.

birdcount.org

Ruby-crowned Kinglet/*Corthylio calendula*.
Photo: Mason Maron/Macaulay Library

Great Backyard Bird Count

27th Annual • Feb 16–19, 2024



Sponsored in part by:



Information can be found [HERE](#)

Participation information can be found [HERE](#)

From the Central Florida Regional Conservation Committee meeting January 28, 2024

Per: Charles Lee, Audubon Florida, Director of Advocacy

RCC Members and Friends:

The pace of success conserving lands important to wildlife habitat and water resources in Florida increased markedly in 2023. Because of significantly increased conservation land and easement purchase funds provided by the Legislature, the state acquired land and easements preserving some 111,399 acres from January through December, at a total cost of \$305,118,465.

That is over 174 square miles of Florida that will never be developed, where birds and wildlife can thrive, aquifers can be recharged by rainfall, and water stored naturally in wetlands, lakes and streams. **That is an area significantly larger than the City of Orlando!**

The properties purchased or placed under protective conservation easements include land vital to the Everglades and the Kissimmee River system, including over 10,000 acres in the Fisheating Creek watershed, 17,000 acres in the Devils Garden Swamp in Hendry County, and 8,000 acres in the Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge; all places needed to assemble the Florida Wildlife Corridor. The places protected span the entire geography of the state, with over 12,000 acres now in state ownership within the Telogia Creek watershed in Liberty County in Florida's panhandle, and important sections of the Rainbow River and the Ocala National Forest in Marion County.

Florida land managers demonstrated good judgment and effective negotiation by bringing this land into protection at remarkably reasonable prices, with the cost per acre averaging \$2,738, which is only a small fraction of the price often paid for land in our rapidly growing state. We are truly excited about the opportunity to participate in the effort to bring about more great land and easement purchases in 2024!

(NOTE – The lands & easements covered in this report are only those purchased through the Florida Forever and Rural programs that were the subject of final decisions by the Governor and Cabinet. There are MORE lands that were acquired under local government environmental land purchase programs and Water Management District land purchase programs that are not reflected in the list above, so the actual total acres protected statewide would be higher if those acres were added to this list.)

You can find out more about Florida Forever [HERE](#)

The 2023 Florida Forever Plan can be found [HERE](#)

Additional Resources can be found [HERE](#)

Annual Meeting

March 3, 2pm at Trout Lake Nature Center

As, our only program of the year. We will be hosting the folks from the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey with live bird ambassadors. These birds have sustained injuries which make them unreleasable. So, they now help teach the public about their unique abilities and importance in the wild. Like how they use their camouflage, where they live, the food they eat and so much more. This program will give us all the opportunity to experience the intense presence of these magnificent creatures.... Don't miss it this will be an experience like no other!!!!

You can find out more about the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey [HERE](#)

OVAS Possible Dissolution

As mentioned in an [email sent 1 December 2023](#), OVAS is again on the verge of dissolution. We cannot continue serving with low participation and we need a full suite of new Board members. The existing Board members all indicated a desire to resign at the end of our FY (June 30, 2024) or not run for vacant positions. If you are interested in serving on the Board, the Board encourages you to contact Stacey by [email](#).

PROGRAMS

Our monthly programs are held on the first Sunday of the Month, at 2:00pm, either in person or perhaps on Zoom, and usually at Trout Lake Nature Center, unless indicated otherwise. Bring a chair for our outdoor meetings.

Balancing Development And Nature Preservation In Lake County, Florida

[Watch Video Here](#)

As some of you know, Lake County would like to have a land acquisition referendum on the 2024 general election ballot, for voters to decide to use (or not) a property tax to fund natural lands and trails.

This video clip was written and directed by Lake County Commissioner Sean Parks with the help of a local videographer, two senior students from UCF studying Environmental Science and Political Science. His wife is the narrator's voice. No one was paid to do this video.

Those that value conservation land and our fragile ecological system understand there is so much more to the process than monetary value. Something we have found ourselves up against is combating the high monetary value developers are placing on our precious wildlife corridors, high recharge areas, wetlands, trees, agricultural and generally rural lands and how quickly they are obtaining these properties and converting them to urban living. The best we have been able to hope for is advocating lower density and bigger buffers.

In this introductory video, an attempt was made to begin to put conservation in monetary terms. Our "Green Infrastructure" is so much more than just low impact development techniques. It's more holistic and hopefully showing the monetary side will attract more support for a referendum and generally better educate those supporting clearcutting and bulldozing their way through Lake County. The concept of "Ecosystem Services" is used to show the economic importance and link to Green Infrastructure. In this introduction video TDR (Transfer of land Development Rights) is mentioned. There is a hope to make more videos that will also focus on outright acquisition or less than fee acquisition

OVAS Field Trip, Peg Urban's House (Leesburg, FL), 18 Nov 2024

Nine OVAS members gathered at Peg and Hal Urban's home in Leesburg, FL. The main purpose was to tour Peg's native plant garden surrounding all 4 sides of her house – the entire lot! She and her granddaughter had marked surplus plants for the taking. At one time Peg had counted 60 native species planted in her yard and she believes there are more now. When we finished pilfering plants, potting them for the trip to our homes, we sat down to consume our brown bag lunches and catch up on what everyone had been doing. We ended by singing Happy Birthday to Peg Lindsay and eating a beautiful cake provided by Peg Urban. We did create an eBird checklist for the visit.

Species noted are: Double-crested Cormorant , Black Vulture , Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle , American Kestrel , Blue Jay , American Crow , Carolina Chickadee , Tufted Titmouse , House Wren , Northern Mockingbird , Palm Warbler

OVAS Program Meeting – My Favorite Plants for Birds Chester Residence, Tavares, FL 15 Oct 2023

OVAS members (7) and guests (1) gathered on the shoreline of Lake Harris for today's meeting. Peg Lindsay had compiled a PowerPoint from photos submitted by members of their favorite plants for birds. The presentation had been circulated as a pdf beforehand so that participants could download the presentation onto their individual tablets or phone to follow along. Each member discussed their favorite plants and explained why they chose them. Often discussions ensued. Afterwards we shared native plant seeds and Peg Urban taught us to distinguish between the *Hamelia* species and cultivars to be able to identify the native one.



Discussing the Program



Exchanging Seeds

Here are some additional websites that might help you in your quest for more information. *Please note that our inclusion of a link on this page is not an endorsement of the host site.*

Audubon Societies:

National Audubon Society: <http://www.audubon.org/>
Florida Audubon Society: <http://fl.audubon.org>
Seminole Audubon Society: <http://seminoleaudubon.org/>
Orange Audubon Society: <http://www.orangeaudubonfl.org/>

Wildlife Centers:

Audubon Center for Birds of Prey: <http://fl.audubon.org/chapters-centers/audubon-center-birds-prey>
Avian Reconditioning Center: <https://www.arc4raptors.org/>
Back to Nature Wildlife Refuge: <http://www.btnwildlife.org/>

Wildlife Rescue:

Ahopha Wildlife Rescue: <https://ahophawildlife.org> or <https://www.facebook.com/AhophaWildlifeRescue/>

County Sites:

Lake County Lake Parks: <https://www.lakecountyfl.gov/parks-and-trails>
Trout Lake Nature Center: <http://www.troutlakenaturecenter.com/>

Lake County Water Authority: lcwa.org

Local Resources:

[Backyard Birding](#) – offers seed, feeders, nature gifts and advice.
[Bird Rescue and Rehab in Orlando and Central Florida](#)
[List of Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission \(FWC\) wildlife rehabilitators](#)

Other useful links:

[Guide for Beginners](#) – A great guide for the beginning birder.
[Homeowner's Guide to Birdwatching From Your Backyard](#)
[Wildflowers and scenic drives to them](#) – Lake County along with Lake County Parks & Trails created an interactive web map showing sites of wildflowers and scenic drives to them.
[How to Attract Hummingbirds](#) – By catering to their preferences, you will likely see these tiny beautiful visitors in your garden come springtime.
[Bird Watching Guide](#) – New York Audubon
[Bird Identification Tool – Fish and Wildlife Collection of Ornithology Resources – UK](#)
1000 Friends of Florida: <https://1000fof.org/>
1000 Friends of Florida Past Webinars: <https://1000fof.org/upcoming-webinars/past/>
[Florida Native Plant Society](#)
Lake County FL Native Plant Society Chapter: [Lake Beautyberry](#)
Florida Wildflower Foundation: flawildflowers.org
Sierra Club Florida Chapter: <https://www.sierraclub.org/florida>
Sierra Club Central FL Group: <https://centralfloridasierra.org/>

Yellow-throated Warbler

Picture by Mark Heinemann



Treasurer's Report		Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society	
November 2023			
Summary of Statements from United Southern Bank			
Description	Debits	Credits	Balance
Beginning Balance			10,720.28
PayPal Transfer		86.24	
Ending Balance		86.24	10806.52
December 2023			
Description	Debits	Credits	Balance
Beginning Balance			10,806.52
PayPal Transfer		62.23	
Membership Renewal		20.00	
LCCC (EcoExpo)	50.00		
Audubon Birds of Prey	210.00		
USPS PO Box 6 months	83.00		
Ending Balance	343.00	82.23	10,545.75



Bald Eagle
Picture by: Stacey Heinemann

Bring the wonder of migration to everyone with the [Bird Migration Explorer](#), a state-of-the-art interactive platform created by Audubon and nine partner organizations. The Explorer uses the most recent science to showcase the epic migrations of more than 450 North American migratory bird species. Learn about the migratory birds where you live, where they travel, and the conservation challenges they face. Available in English and Spanish.



Audubon Florida's website has several Educational Webinars if you are interested:

[Educational Webinars | Audubon Florida](#)

OVAS Board of Directors

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



Oklawaha Valley Audubon Society

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TO: