

# The JAY

*The mission of the Seminole Audubon Society is to promote awareness and protection of the plants and animals in the St. Johns River basin in order to sustain the beneficial coexistence of nature and humans.*

September – October 2018      A Publication of Seminole Audubon Society

## A Win for Seminole County!



The Seminole County Commission voted to deny approval for the River Cross development at the August 14, 2018 county commission meeting. The River Cross development proposal to add 520 single-family homes, 270 townhomes, 500 apartments, 80 estate homes, and 1.5 million square feet of commercial space in the environmentally-sensitive Econlockhatchee River Basin would have caused serious environmental degradation in an area that contains a high-quality mosaic of valuable wetland and upland systems.

The River Cross development was proposed *within the rural boundary*, an area established by the citizens of Seminole County when they passed the Rural Boundary Amendment to the County Charter in 2004. The rural boundary was established so that development would be limited to large-lot residential and agricultural uses, preserving the rural lifestyle for future generations and protecting the valuable natural resources in the area. The Seminole County Comprehensive Plan incorporated policies to support the mandate of the voters and prohibited building densities and intensities such as those proposed in the River Cross development proposal.

More than 200 citizens joined Seminole Audubon and other environmental organizations to express their opposition to such an intense development within the environmentally-sensitive east rural area. Seminole Audubon expressed concerns about the degradation of the Econlockhatchee River, damage to the Geneva Freshwater Lens, potential restrictions to the use of prescribed fire in the adjacent Econlockhatchee River Wilderness Area and the extension of McCulloch Road over the Econlockhatchee River.

The final vote of the commission was 4-0 to deny River Cross. The developer has stated that he plans to file a federal lawsuit against Seminole County for violating the Fair Housing Act and we will remain proactive in our efforts to protect east rural Seminole County from intense development.



Many thanks to all the Seminole Audubon members who attended the meeting: Marguerite, Leslie, Phyllis, Faith and Pam. A special thanks goes to Charles Lee, Director of Advocacy,

Audubon Florida, for his attendance and remarks. And, as always, we send a huge thank you to all our members who made calls or sent emails opposing this development. You can make a difference!

**Pam Meharg**

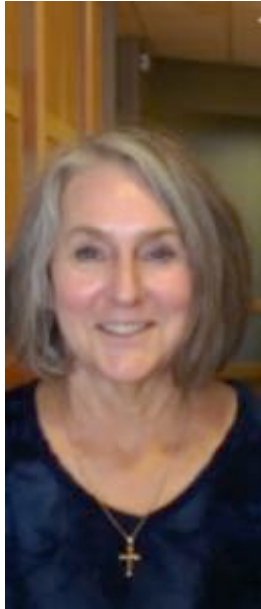
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Shirley Folse	Telephone Communication	407-797-4636

## Welcome New Board Members

Seminole Audubon Society would like to welcome new Board members Phyllis Hall and Michelle Vaughn, along with returning Board member Corrinne Wertz. Phyllis became Committee Chair for Outreach during our last season and will continue with that while also heading up our

Website committee. Phyllis's bio and photo were in the last issue of *The Jay*. Michelle is Committee Chair for Eagle Watch and Hospitality. Corrinne will continue with publications.



## New Board Member Michelle Vaughn

Growing up in a small town outside of Knoxville, Tennessee, Michelle developed an interest at an early age in birds, wildlife and plants. That focus continues today. She is married with two grown children and is eagerly anticipating the birth of her fourth grandchild.

Michelle graduated from Florida Atlantic University with a Master of Education and taught elementary students for twenty-eight years before retiring. She continues to volunteer at Hamilton Elementary as a reading tutor. Michelle is a docent at the Central Florida Zoo and Botanical Garden where she educates and advocates for conservation of the animals she exhibits. She is also a proud Eagle Watch volunteer.

Michelle became involved with Seminole Audubon after posting a question concerning painted buntings on a neighborhood web page. That question was answered by Sarah Donlan. Sarah invited Michelle to her first Seminole Audubon meeting and she has been enjoying the field trips, programs and the information the other members share ever since. She is honored to be a part of Seminole Audubon's efforts to protect the animals and plants of Florida.

# WELCOME

## NEW MEMBERS & NEW to OUR CHAPTER

Jennifer Buchanan	DeBary
Gianmario Denaro	Lake Mary
Frank Giordano	DeBary
Dixie Hyde	Geneva
Sue Lamonte	Casselberry
Joan Lichtenberger	Sanford
Eiko Magner	Lake Mary
Nancy/Gerald Michaluk	Lake Mary
Cristina Nelson	Lake Mary
Ladona Ovitz	Sanford
Jeannie Smith	Lake Mary
Charles Zeiger	Deltona

## Thanks to SAS Volunteers

### Audubon JayWatch

Once again this summer, Seminole Audubon Society was well represented at JayWatch. Members assisted with surveys at Blue Spring State Park, Lyonia Preserve, Lake Monroe Conservation Area, and Buck Lake Conservation Area. These surveys are critical for the future of our endemic bird, the Florida Scrub-jay.

We also have members who are volunteering their time at Lake Monroe Conservation Area and Blue Spring State Park to assist with the time-consuming conditioning that is required before these birds can be banded. Banding is essential for scientists to accurately monitor the movements and activity of the birds.

### **Purple Martins**

It was another successful year for the Purple Martins at the Lake Monroe lakefront. The gourds were again used for nesting spots. Thank you to Jan and Jim Peters for taking on this project.

# **SAS History January 1978 – May 1980**

*Summarized from Minutes and other SAS records*

*9<sup>th</sup> in a series by Myra Eisencoff Platel*

### Programs

For the January 1978 program Michael Krypers, Urban Forester, used slides to tell of his work which included protection from fires, education of the public, reforestation and preserving the environment.

The speaker for the October 1979 meeting was Dick Barnett from the Chamber of Commerce who spoke of the many ways we can be conscious of conservation.

At the December 1979 meeting, Mr. Paine of the Friends of the St. Johns, Inc. gave the program on the crisis of the river. He gave a report on the Florida Waterways film which had been shown at the Sanford Civic Center. As an outcome the following five-point plan was presented to a meeting of the Seminole County Commission.

*We respectfully request the Seminole County Commission:*

- 1. To consider the restoration of the St. Johns River a prime objective.*
- 2. To appoint someone with official authority to check on the river and to implement changes.*
  - a. Attend commission meetings.*
  - b. Attend St. Johns River Management Board meetings.*
- 3. To make regular reports on the deterioration of the river to State government.*
- 4. To insist on the restoration of former marshland at the headwaters of the River.*
- 5. To seek the appointment of a representative from Seminole County to the St. Johns River Water Management Board.*

*Signed by J.T. Turnipseed*

*Mr. Paine, Friends of the St. Johns, Inc.*

*Edith J. Winchell, President Seminole Audubon*

### Alaska Wild Lands Bill

In November 1978, letters were mailed to National Audubon in support of the Udall Alaska Wild Lands Bill. At the following meeting, a reply was received from President Jimmy Carter invoking the Antiquities Act for the protection of wild lands there. At the April 1979 meeting several members were asked to write U.S. Representative Bill Chappell of Ocala urging him to support the Udall Alaska Wild Lands Bill. A reply came from Rep. Chappell saying that he voted "NO!" on this bill. It was felt he was a bit blunt.

### Meetings & Miscellaneous

With the exception of picnics and November meetings at Audubon House in Maitland, regular meetings were held at the F.P.L. Building on Myrtle Avenue in Sanford. There were generally thirty people in attendance. A number of active members came from DeLand and DeBary.

Seminole Audubon donated \$100.00 to Florida Audubon for use in constructing a new aviary at Audubon House in Maitland. Upon its completion, circa 1979, Seminole Audubon attended a guided tour.



In February 1980, it was announced that Florida Audubon headquarters might be transferred from Maitland to Tallahassee, but the new aviary and some offices would remain at the Audubon House in Maitland. It was noted at the March 1980 meeting that there are 48 Chapters of Audubon in Florida, which was more than any other state.

## Upcoming Programs

### Sunday September 9, 2018 Birds of Magee Marsh by Ken Schmidt

Magee Marsh Wildlife Area, situated on the southern shore of Lake Erie, is a prime stopover for North American warblers during spring migration. Every spring thousands of birders, photographers, and nature lovers flock to this location to witness the unforgettable spectacle of large concentrations of songbirds preparing to migrate across the great lake toward their breeding grounds in the north.



Each May for the past nine years, **Ken Schmidt** has been one of the birding photographers enjoying the birds at Magee Marsh. Ken started birding 14 years ago after taking Seminole Audubon Society's (SAS) Birding Basics course. His passion for bird photography was fostered by Roger Grimshaw, a past President of SAS.

Ken's Florida list currently stands at an impressive 385 species. He has traveled extensively throughout Florida, including five pelagic trips, to see and image that many birds. In addition to his travels in Florida and his trips to Magee Marsh, Ken has photographed birds in Texas, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador,



Trinidad and Tobago.

Please join us on Sunday September 9 when Ken will share some of his experiences and some of the spectacular images he has captured at Magee Marsh. **Photo: Magnolia Warbler by Ken Schmidt**

### Sunday October 14 The Big Sit

Instead of our regular meeting at the library, SAS will participate in the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Big Sit! Sunday October 14<sup>th</sup> from sunrise until 1:00 pm at Lake Jesup Wilderness Area (LJWA) in Sanford.

The Big Sit! is an annual international birding event hosted by *Bird Watcher's Digest*. Some call it a "tailgate



party for birders". Find a good spot for birding, create a circle 17 feet in diameter and sit inside the circle and count all the bird species you see or hear.

Take a break from the circle and play Bio Bingo on a nature walk.

If high water is covering the Lake Jesup circle again this year, The Big Sit will be moved to the Lake Harney Observation Tower.

## Warbler Class Wednesday September 19<sup>th</sup>



Some of our most beautiful birds are in the warbler family and yet they present some of the biggest identification challenges. Learn distinguishing features of these confusing little birds from Faith Jones during this two-hour class to be held on Wednesday September 19<sup>th</sup> in the Ed Yarborough Nature Center in Geneva Wilderness Area 3485 N. CR 426, Geneva, FL. Registration 1:00-1:30 pm. \$5.00. Class starts at 1:30 pm. Details: [faithaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:faithaudubon@gmail.com) or 407-415-0705.

**Photo: Blackthroated Green Warbler by Ken Schmidt**

# Upcoming Trips

## Saturday September 15, 2018 Enchanted Forest, Titusville



Originally purchased as an Environmentally Endangered Lands Property, it is a diverse 472-acre property with Coquina and boardwalk hiking trails. Wildlife, nature photography and hiking with a first class education center is a highlight of the trip. A wealth of plant life including beautyberry, many host plants for butterflies, and an array of trees and bushes, including native hibiscus are found there. Shady trails abound. A regularly scheduled walk leaves every Saturday at 10 am and we will have a guide. Arrive at the Education Center at 9:30 am to participate. 444 Columbia Blvd., Titusville

**Friday October 5, 2018 Yankee Lake Treatment Facility, Sanford**

Guided tour of this protected property, home to Florida Scrub-jays. Meet 8 am at the facility on Yankee Lake Road. Contact Phyllis Hall at



[phylliscath814@gmail.com](mailto:phylliscath814@gmail.com) to sign up. **Photo: Florida Scrub Jay by Ken Schmidt**

**Sunday October 21, 2018 Bird Banding at Lake Lotus Park**

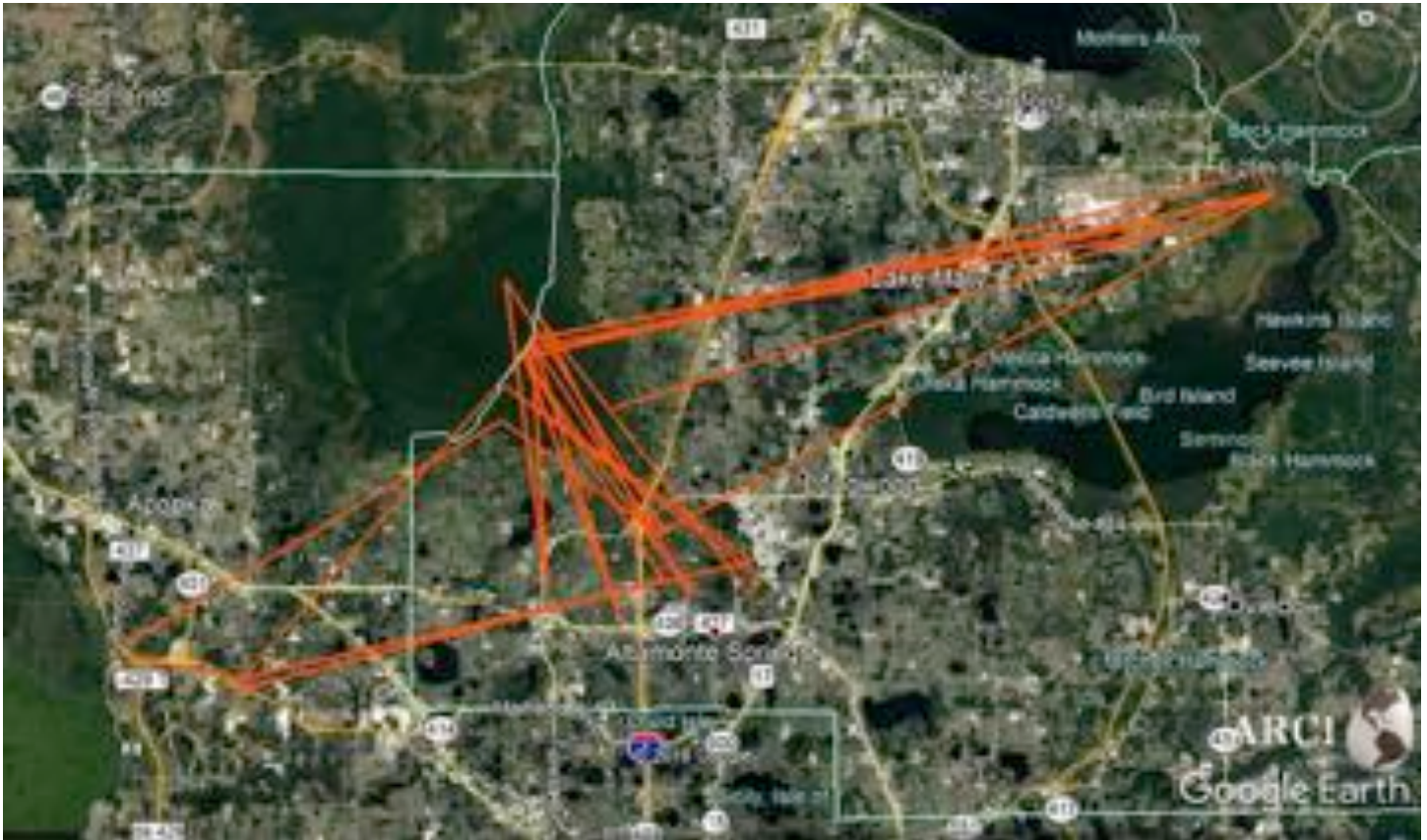
Wekiva Basin Banding Station is located in Altamonte Springs at Lake Lotus Park. This is an all-volunteer citizen science project led by certified bander, Andy Boyle. Mist nets are set in approximately 6 acres of mixed habitat. The



banding station runs from the beginning of August when fall migration starts until the end of May when all migrants have left the state and the local birds continue to raise their broods. Peak season is usually October/November. Meet in parking lot at Publix, 851 S State Rd. 434, Altamonte Springs at 7:00 am. We will carpool the short distance to the location.



# Apopka, the Swallow-tailed Kite



Gina Kent with the Avian Research and Conservation Institute emailed Seminole Audubon Society an update on the tagged Swallow-tailed Kite named "Apopka" that they have been monitoring now for almost a year. Seminole Audubon Society helped by making a donation towards the tracking device being used.

Gina stated that "Apopka" has been moving around more from his Altamonte Springs summer locations. No nest was found. Now he seems to be on the Wekiva River quite a bit. A map is included of his early July movements. It will be interesting to know when he leaves for South America. We all wish him a safe trip!

# Environmental Roundtable



Phyllis Hall represented Seminole Audubon Society at a roundtable meeting with Florida Senator Linda Stewart on August 16th along with representatives from a variety of environmental groups in Central Florida. Senator Stewart reviewed the multiple bills she has sponsored and co-sponsored to protect the environment. In previous sessions she has been on several committees related to the environment so she is well aware of the needs throughout the state. The group reinforced the need to protect funding for *Florida Forever*. Among other issues, there was also discussion of the current water and algae issues.

**Phyllis Hall**

## **WILD SPOTTER™**

A New National Effort to Increase Citizen Science Capacity to Map Invasive Species in America's Wild Places.



In partnership with Wildlife Forever, USDA Forest Service, and other organizations across the United States, the University of Georgia - Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health has launched a nationwide citizen science volunteer capacity-building program called Wild Spotter. **Designed to help locate and map aquatic and terrestrial invasive species** in Wilderness Areas, Wild & Scenic Rivers, and other wild places this new program engages and empowers the public to help the Forest Service confront the threats from harmful exotic plants, animals, and pathogens that invade America's

beautiful and economically important wild places. The Wild Spotter program provides the tools these volunteers need to help locate, quantify, map, and report invasive species infestations in a simple and effective manner, while raising public awareness about invasive species and promoting collaborations across the landscape.

Utilizing a targeted list of "most wanted" species, volunteers receive information and support to get started as a Wild Spotter volunteer, all free. Once a Wild Spotter volunteer identifies and reports a species, the data is verified by experts and then made publicly available through a networked invasive species inventory database hosted by the University of Georgia.

"We are very proud that Wild Spotter is expanding citizen science volunteer capacity against invasive species by capitalizing on the outdoor activities of millions of people who are already enjoying some of the most beautiful places in America, to help us gather information on the locations of these harmful exotic invaders in any ecosystem. Like the idea of 'see-something, say-something' the Wild Spotter greatly enhances the early detection and rapid response capabilities of agencies like the Forest Service", said Chuck Barger, Associate Director of the University of Georgia's Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health.

Wild Spotter utilizes a free mobile mapping app for Apple and Android devices including a comprehensive website that boosts volunteer capacity and training to help increase capacity. "This program has tremendous appeal and ability to engage citizen scientist volunteers, friends' groups and the entire conservation community into taking action against America's greatest threat to our public lands - invasive species", said Pat Conzemius, Executive Vice President for Wildlife Forever, "and don't forget to check out the new Wild Spotter Facebook page," Conzemius added.

If you want to become a Wild Spotter or learn more about the program, visit the website: [www.wildspotter.org](http://www.wildspotter.org)

## News from Central Florida Regional Conservation Committee (RCC)

Charles Lee, the Director of Advocacy for Audubon Florida, reminds us all about the proposed changes to the Lake County Comprehensive Plan. Of particular concern is a change in the definition of "Open Space" from undeveloped or minimally developed, such as trails and boardwalks..."; to the uses such as "...sports fields, playground equipment, and golf courses..." and "...plazas and urban squares..." to count for up to 20% of required "Open Space" in any development plan (throughout unincorporated Lake County, and within the Wekiva Protection Area and Wekiva Study Area).

This change would have a negative impact on the Wekiva River Protection Area in particular and could impact all rural and semi-rural Lake County residents as new developments are built. Any change to the carefully thought out and much debated Comprehensive Plan should be carefully considered and monitored by all residents who wish to protect the life style we are so fortunate to enjoy in Lake County.

Charles Lee requests interested citizens to attend the Planning & Zoning Workshop on **Wednesday, September 5**, at 315 West Main Street, Tavares, FL. The meeting will be held in the Board of Commissioners' Chambers on the second floor at 9:00 am. The final version of CP-18-01 and other materials will be posted to the Board's website about 5 days prior to the meeting. The website is:  
[https://www.lakecountyfl.gov/board\\_agendas/zoning\\_agendas\\_and\\_actions.aspx](https://www.lakecountyfl.gov/board_agendas/zoning_agendas_and_actions.aspx)

The next meeting of the Central Florida RCC is scheduled for **September 16** at 10 am at the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland. At this meeting we will approve one or two regional conservation goals, which will be ratified by the general membership at Audubon Assembly in October and become part of Audubon Florida's work plan for 2019. These goals coordinate the work of all Audubon chapters in the Central Florida Regional Conservation Committee and align with State and National priorities. Should you know of a project of regional

scope and concern that you want to nominate for discussion at our meeting, either contact your chapter president or conservation chairperson.

**Paula Wehr**  
**C FL Chapters Representative**  
**Audubon Florida Board of Directors**



## Audubon Eagle Watch

Florida's Bald Eagles will be returning soon and they need your help. Each year a dedicated volunteer group monitors nests to collect data, identify threats to the nests and hopefully document the healthy development of the eaglets produced. If you are interested in being trained and participating in this awesome program please contact the Eagle Watch Manager at [eaglewatch@audubon.org](mailto:eaglewatch@audubon.org) for more information.

**Michelle Vaughn**

## Think Twice Before Using That Plastic Straw

We have become accustomed to some unnecessary conveniences that we are now learning to be detrimental to our environment, wildlife, and ourselves. This article focuses on one part of the problem, but one that you can easily influence.

According to a recently released Environmental Protection Agency report and peer reviewed studies, Americans discarded more than 33 million tons of plastic in 2014, the vast majority of which was not recycled. Globally 1/5 of all plastic gets recycled. In the US less than 10% of all plastics get recycled. It was estimated there are 270,000 metric tons — and more than 5 trillion particles — of plastic in the world's oceans. If we don't change the way we produce and use plastics, there will be more plastics than fish in our oceans by 2050.

Straws and stirrers make up more than 7 percent of plastic products found in the environment. They are on the "top ten" list of items picked up on beach clean-ups. Kasey Turner, an Australian scuba diver, picked up 319 straws in a 20-minute snorkel. She went back to the same spot 24 hours later for another snorkel and found 294 straws. World-wide, McDonald's striped straws are the second-most-common brand found in the environment. The most common is the bright green Starbucks straw.

How can the plastic straw—a diminutive item used for about 20 minutes before being thrown away—cause that much damage? First, there is the sheer volume of plastic straws. In the United States alone, 500 million straws are used every day.



Very few straws are recycled. "Unfortunately, most plastic straws are too lightweight to make it through mechanical recycling sorters, so they end up in landfills and waterways and, eventually, our oceans," explains Dune Ives, executive director of Lonely Whale. Once in the ocean, straws do not biodegrade. Instead, they slowly fragment into smaller and smaller pieces known as microplastics, which are frequently mistaken for food by marine animals.



Of course, straws are just part of the monumental waste that goes into our oceans. "Over the last 10 years, we have produced more plastic than in the whole of the last century, and 50 percent of the plastic we use is single-use and is immediately thrown away," says Tessa Hempson, operations manager for Oceans Without Borders & Beyond. "One million seabirds and 100,000 marine mammals are killed annually from plastic in our oceans. Forty-four percent of all seabird species, 22 percent of whales and dolphins, all sea turtle species, and a growing list of fish species have been documented with plastic in or around their bodies."

Most people don't think about the effect the simple act of reaching for or accepting a plastic straw has on their lives and the lives of generations to come. Saying NO to straws is a simple action. Actions like these really do make an enormous difference to our environment. While not using a straw is best, some people prefer them or need them, like those with disabilities or sensitive teeth or gums. If you want to use a straw, reusable metal is ideal.

**Faith Jones**

## Nature: See It! Snap It! Save It!



In an effort to foster an appreciation of our natural world, Seminole Audubon Society, Friends of the Wekiva River and the Wayne Densch Performing Art Center are sponsoring a Nature photo contest for students at Midway Elementary School.

Students have been asked to visit one of our area parks, trails, or natural areas. During the visit, while enjoying being outdoors, they should look for a plant or animal. Take a photo of it, and enter the saved image in our contest. The entry needs to be accompanied by an identification of what is featured in their photo and an explanation of why it drew their attention.



Reg Garner Photography will provide the students with an introduction to photography. The deadline for entries is September 28, 2018. There will be a Grand Prize winner, and winners in Wildlife and Plant categories. We hope to entice students to participate with some valuable prizes. Chianti's Pizza & Pasta will provide the food for a celebration at the school.

We are grateful to the Administration of Midway Elementary School for their cooperation and assistance in making this contest possible. In our next issue of *The Jay* we hope to share with you some of the winning photos.

**Faith Jones**

## Find Us!

If you have bird photos or information of interest to members, please email it to [seminoleaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:seminoleaudubon@gmail.com).

If you have a Facebook account, please take a few minutes to 'like us' and invite your friends to like us as well.



Follow us on Twitter at: **Seminole Audubon @AudubonSeminole.**



Scan the QR Code with your mobile device to go to our web site.

## Calendar from page 16

**Crystal Lake Preserve, Lake Mary. Work mornings.**

**Thu. Sep. 13, Oct. 18** Time and meeting location 407-323-4506 or [bdenslow@cfl.rr.com](mailto:bdenslow@cfl.rr.com)

**Other**

**Seminole County Natural Lands Guided Hikes. Online registration [recreation.seminolecountyfl.gov](http://recreation.seminolecountyfl.gov)**

**Sat. Sept. 8** Swamp Walk

**Sat. Sept 22** Night Hike

**Sat. Sept 29** Free Public Lands Hike

**Tues. Oct. 2** October Native Plant Month Program, Leu Gardens. 6:30 - 9:00 pm.

# Membership Application

## For New Audubon Members Only

JOIN for the special rate of \$20.00 for one year - that's \$15 off the regular membership dues!

Joining Seminole Audubon Society makes you also a member of Audubon of Florida and the National Audubon Society. Membership benefits include our newsletter *The JAY*, *Audubon Magazine*, and the *Florida Naturalist*. Your membership will help us work for better preservation of the environment for the benefit of all species, including mankind.

Make checks payable to: **National Audubon Society**, and mail with this form to: **Seminole Audubon Society, P.O. Box 2977, Sanford FL 32772-2977**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

If you join elsewhere, please use our Chapter Code: **C8ZE310Z**

Seminole Associate Membership is available to Audubon Society members assigned to other chapters.  
Make check payable to Seminole Audubon Society.  
\$10.00 / year

**Memberships are good gifts!**

# The JAY

Seminole Audubon Society  
PO Box 2977  
Sanford FL 32772-2977

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



## Calendar of Events

[www.seminoleaudubon.org](http://www.seminoleaudubon.org)

**Program Meetings** are held at 2:00 pm on Sunday afternoons in the Meeting Room of the Seminole County Public Library located at 150 N. Palmetto Ave., in downtown Sanford. Call 407-797-4636 for details.

**Sun. Sep. 9** The Birds of Magee Marsh by Ken Schmidt

**Sun. Oct. 14** Big SIT! Lake Jesup Park, 5951 S Sanford Ave. Dawn – noon. Plans may change if the water is high

**Sun. Nov.11** Lake Apopka North Shore – A Restoration Success for the Lake and the Birds by Maria Zondervan

**Field Trips** Details and registration information for all of these trips are in this issue of The JAY and on [www.meetup.com/seminoleaudubon-com](http://www.meetup.com/seminoleaudubon-com), [sarahdonlan42@gmail.com](mailto:sarahdonlan42@gmail.com), or 407-687-6087

**Sat. Sep. 15** Enchanted Forest, Titusville

**Fri. Oct. 5** Yankee Lake Treatment Facility

**Sun. Oct. 21** Bird Banding at Lake Lotus Park

### Bird Class

**Wed. Sept. 19** Warbler Class 1:30 pm – 3:30 pm, Ed Yarborough Nature Center, Geneva

**See Calendar on page 14**

The printing and mailing of this newsletter is made possible in part by the generous donations of Bob and Inez Parsell and ACE Hardware stores in Sanford, Longwood, Casselberry, and Oviedo.