

# 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.*

January—February 2019

A Publication of Seminole Audubon Society

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## Wekiva Christmas Bird Count



*Wilson's Snipe at pond on Primera Blvd. in Lake Mary*

*Chuck Honaker*

The weather was not the best for this year's Wekiva Christmas Bird Count (CBC), and the final results are not yet tabulated, but here are a few comments and photos from some of those who participated on December 15th.

Zones 10 and 11 brought the A team with Lewis Gray starting at Liberty Park, Pam Meharg, Phyllis Hall and Kate Dolamore at the cemetery in Sanford, Chuck Honaker finding a Wilson's Snipe on Primera Blvd. and Connie Dolan with 31 species at Crystal Lake Preserve! Sarah Donlan had 6 Painted Buntings and 1 Indigo Bunting at her famous feeders.

Marguerite Terwilleger was missing her usual partner in counting, but Joy Rector and I were fortunate to have Beth, a newcomer to the area from Long Island, bring some expertise. We found a group of limpkins and a Black-crowned Night Heron tucked away off Seminole Blvd. and just before calling it a day, two beautiful Baltimore Orioles showed up at Park on Park in Sanford.

Faith & Jim Jones assisted by counting a section of zone 3. Their species total was 44 with the most surprising find being a flock of 75 Black-bellied Whistling Ducks near Black Bear Wilderness Area in Sanford.



*Sundew at Crystal Lake Preserve*

*Connie Dolan*

On December 29th SAS members also participated in the Econ CBC. Our team consisted of Faith Jones, Ken Schmidt, Lewis Gray and Leslie Martin. They covered zone 3 of that circle and documented an amazing 67 species in a well-developed area of Winter Springs and Oviedo.

Leslie Martin



**Eastern Bluebird**

*Judy Black*

## Leucistic Birds

In December, a white bluebird was seen in Spring Hill, Hernando County. Judy Black took the accompanying photo. By the size, shape, behavior, and faint color pattern we know this to be an Eastern bluebird. But what went wrong for this bird, and why does it not have normal colored feathers?

You are no doubt familiar with albinism, the genetic condition that affects all pigments. An albino bird has no pigment in its feathers, skin, or eyes. Their eyes, legs, feet and bill appear pink or reddish due to the visibility of their blood vessels. These birds usually do not survive for long as they have lost any camouflage provided by their normal feather colors and are very visible to predators. Their white feathers are weaker, and do not last as long as feathers with pigment. If they do survive to maturity, they have difficulty attracting a mate. As a result, the recessive gene for albinism is less likely to be passed on to the next generation.



If you take a close look at the photo of the Eastern Bluebird, you will realize this bird is *not* an albino. It has normal colored eyes, legs, feet and bill. This bird has a genetic mutation which has resulted in leucism, a condition that affects the pigment in feathers. Some birds will display patches of white feathers, others will display a pale version of the normal color pattern for their species. A third way leucism manifests is with overall white plumage, as seen in the bluebird in the picture. Leucistic birds can face the same survival challenges as albino birds.



*Male Red-winged Blackbird and Northern Cardinal exhibiting leucistic feathers*

*Ken Schmidt*

Leucistic birds are often a surprising sight. You do not expect to see a bluebird, a Red-winged Blackbird or a Northern Cardinal with white patches of feathers, or all white feathers as in these pictures.

We know that leucism is caused by a genetic mutation, but there are still lots of questions regarding this condition which are yet to be answered. Are there external factors that may cause or increase the instance of these mutations? One report I read indicated exposure to pesticides and herbicides may attribute to this mutation. Are the numbers of leucistic birds increasing, or are there more reports because the popularity of birdwatching has greatly increased and there are more people watching birds? Further research is needed to answer these and the many other questions regarding leucism.

*Faith Jones*



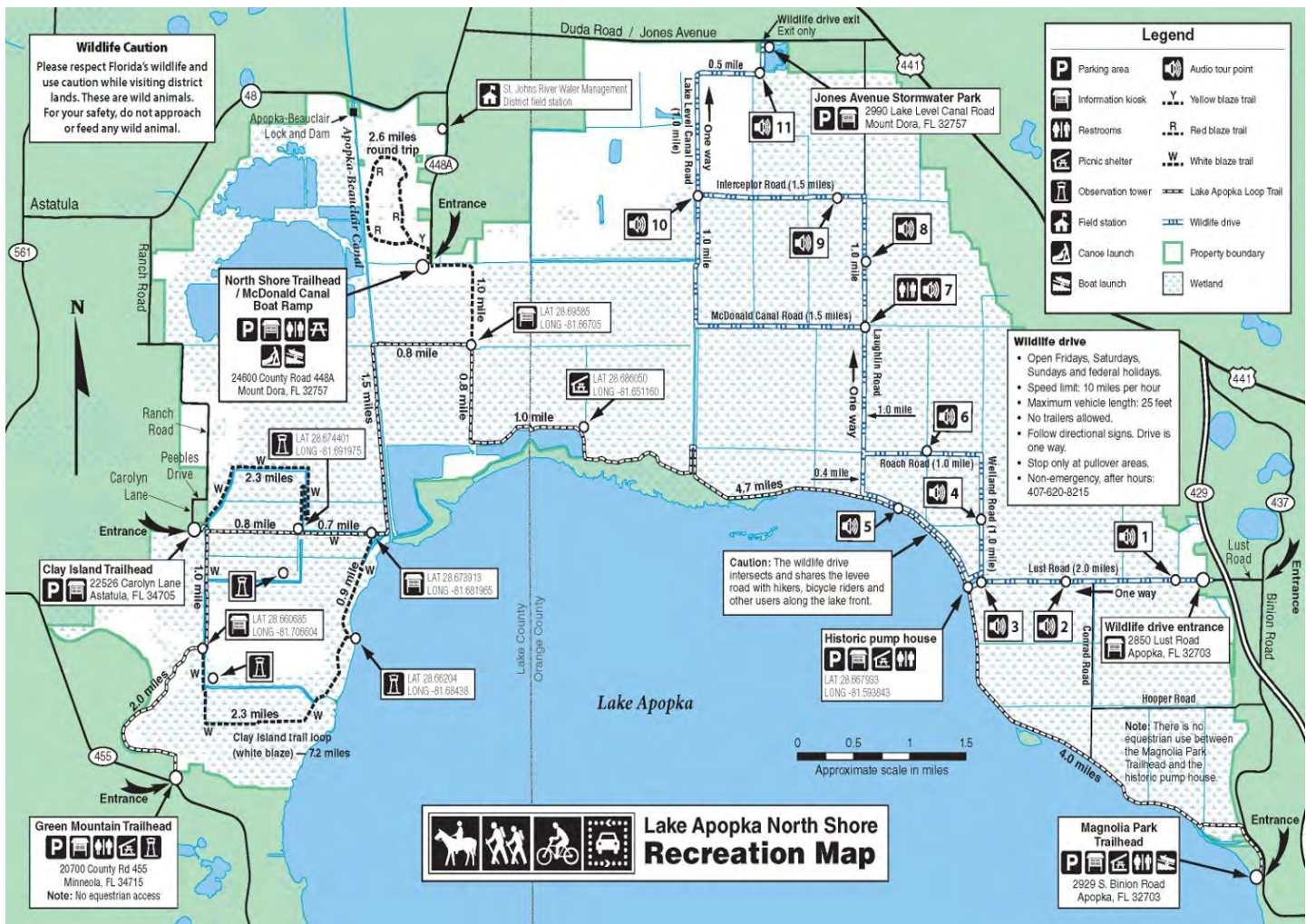
*Chipping Sparrow*

*Leslie Martin*



# Program Notes

## Lake Apopka North Shore Restoration



Maria Zondervan, St Johns River Water Management District, presented **Restoration of Lake Apopka North Shore: High Hopes, Tough Times, and Persistent Progress** during our November 11<sup>th</sup> meeting. She explained the timeline of events leading to the pollution of, as well as the restoration of, this area. We viewed before and after photographs which illustrated the various stages of restoration. For many years nutrient-rich water was sent into the lake, polluting what was once known as the “most dependable bass fishing lake in the Southeast.” This high nutrient loading fed chronic algal blooms in the lake for many years. Rep Everett Kelley named Lake Apopka “Central Florida’s Emerald Badge of Shame.” Fortunately, things changed. The St. Johns River Water Management District bought this land and began a restoration project. The 2013 Land Management Plan Vision for Lake Apopka North Shore was put in place and included: actively managed healthy uplands and marsh systems, and providing natural resource and recreational benefits. The complex restoration plan benefited birds and wildlife as well as the local economy. The 20,000-acre former agricultural area is now a mecca for birds. Lake Apopka is one of the top three birding areas in Florida and the bird list for Lake Apopka North Shore is over 364 species.





The Florida Bluebird Society (FBS) provided our December 9<sup>th</sup> program. Faith Jones, FBS Charter member and Treasurer, presented an interesting program featuring one of our beautiful songbirds. The program began with an explanation of the importance and benefits of birds to humans. Declining bird populations were discussed. The bulk of the program featured Eastern Bluebirds and what we can do to help them.

A nestbox with predator guard was on display. Faith explained the important features of a nestbox for use in Florida, and the need for predator guards. Nestbox location, installation, and monitoring were discussed. The presentation concluded with video clips taken inside a bluebird nestbox of activities from nest building to fledging.

Construction plans, monitoring guidelines, and a wealth of information about bluebirds is available on their website: [floridabluebirdsociety.org](http://floridabluebirdsociety.org). They also have a Facebook page.



## Lake Apopka

### Clay Island

Some Seminole Audubon members enjoyed watching the sun rise November 18<sup>th</sup> on our tour of Clay Island, Lake Apopka Restoration Area. Rosi Mulholland of St. Johns River Water Management District was our guide on this special, early morning field trip on Sunday, November 18<sup>th</sup>. We enjoyed viewing the flora and fauna.

# Upcoming Programs

January 13

## Water For Florida's Future

Florida faces major challenges with water supply and getting our diverse and changing population to conserve water. People want to do the right thing but may not know the right things to do. Audubon's Water for Florida's Future program shares the importance of conservation and practical individual actions for saving water and energy resulting in greater use of water and energy conservation practices. Saving water helps save birds and important habitats and ecosystems in Florida. Reducing energy use creates more sustainable communities. Saving water and energy saves money. There are many simple steps individuals can accomplish to make an impact for conservation inside their home, outside their home and in their community. Visit [WaterForFloridasFuture.org](http://WaterForFloridasFuture.org). A **Burrowing Owl** and **gopher tortoise** will also join us at the program.



February 10

## Florida Native Plants Help Feed Migrating Birds

Each Spring tiny song birds fly thousands of miles from their winter homes in the Tropics to their nesting grounds in North America. Each Fall they make the journey in reverse. Faith Jones, SAS Birding Instructor, will be our presenter for this program that will explain migration and the vital role native plants play in bird's survival. In addition to images of birds and plants, you will learn what you can do the help the birds.



*Prairie Warbler on Walter's Viburnum*

*Ken Schmidt*

# Upcoming Trips

Saturday January 19

## Black Hammock Wilderness Area



This year's field trip to one of the Seminole County Natural Lands takes us south of Lake Jesup to Black Hammock Wilderness Area, a 700-acre property acquired as part of a comprehensive effort to preserve significant habitat along the shores of the lake. The variety of habitats and beautiful boardwalk & trail system makes this property a popular destination for hikers, photographers and other outdoor enthusiasts. Join us for 4.5 miles of birding and exploring. Meet 8:00 am at the Trailhead, 3276 Howard Ave. Oviedo. Parking is limited. For more information visit [www.seminolecountyfl.gov/locations/Black-Hammock-Wilderness-Area.shtml](http://www.seminolecountyfl.gov/locations/Black-Hammock-Wilderness-Area.shtml)



**Saturday February 16**

## **Bird Count at Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge**

Home to many endangered species Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge seasonally boasts inhabitants like Manatees, Eagles, Swallow-tailed Kites, Gopher Tortoises, a variety of wading birds and 230 species of migrating birds. Water levels are usually lower in February, and fish and food sources are concentrated in fresh water ponds surrounded by man-made dikes.

This will be a guided hike, leaving no later than 8:30 am at the trailhead. Restrooms available. Carpool to be announced. Bird count from today's hike will be submitted to The Great Backyard Bird Count 2019. The GBBC is Friday, February 15, through Monday, February 18, 2019. <http://gbbc.birdcount.org>

## **2019 Community Outreach for SAS**

### **2019 Seminole County Gardening Expo Sat, February 23, 9:00 am – 2:30 pm**

UF/IFAS Extension Seminole County, 250 W. County Home Road, Sanford, FL 32773

Join UF/IFAS Extension Seminole County and Master Gardener Volunteers for a fun filled day featuring hydroponic demonstrations, organic & butterfly gardening, children's activities, "how-to clinics," vendors selling plants and gardening related products, "ask the Experts", food, entertainment and much more. Guest speakers include Tom McCubbin among others.

### **Lake Lotus Earthfest Saturday, April 20, 2019, 9:00 am – 2:30 pm**

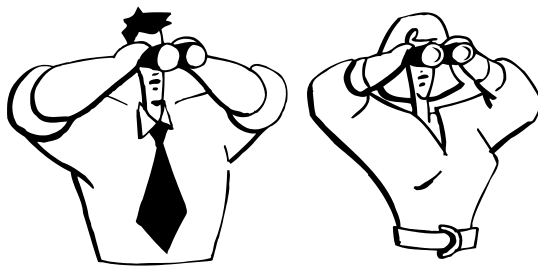
1153 Lake Lotus Road, Altamonte Springs

Lake Lotus Park in Altamonte Springs is a 150-acre nature preserve dedicated to protecting our wildlife and ecological systems. Event activities include: Live Music & Guest Speakers, Nature Exhibits & Park Tours Plant & Tree Giveaways, Butterfly Gardening & Release, and more.

If you would like to volunteer at our SAS booth, please contact Phyllis Hall at [phylliscath814@gmail.com](mailto:phylliscath814@gmail.com)

## **Birding Basics Course**

Seminole Audubon Society, in partnership with Seminole County Natural Lands, will offer a 4-session beginning bird-watching course designed for students of all ages.



Each session includes classroom and field experience. Topics will include use of bird-watching tools, how to look at and identify birds, creating wildlife habitat and more. Classes will be held at the Ed Yarbrough Nature Center in Geneva Wilderness Area, 3485 N. CR 426, Geneva, FL. Cost of the full course is \$40.00. Dates are February 12, 14, 19, 21 from 1-4:00 p.m. or February 9, 16, 17, 23 from 9 a.m. – noon. To register send your name, address, telephone number or email address with your check to Seminole Audubon Society P.O. Box 2977, Sanford FL 32772-2977. For more information call 407-797-4636, email [faithaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:faithaudubon@gmail.com), or visit [seminoleaudubon.org](http://seminoleaudubon.org). Pre-Registration Required.

**2018-2019**  
**Board of Directors & Committee Chairs (eff. 7/1/18)**  
**407-797-4636**

seminoleaudubon@gmail.com

Marguerite Terwilliger	President	mterwilliger51@gmail.com
Sarah Donlan	Vice President	sarahdonlan42@gmail.com
Lewis Gray	Treasurer/Jane Isle	lewisngray@bellsouth.net
Shirley Reilly	Secretary	shirleyreilly34@aol.com
Vacant	Conservation	
Marty Shepherd	Membership	gindad@cfl.rr.com
Jim Denslow	CLP Liaison	bdenslow@cfl.rr.com
Phyllis Hall	Outreach/Education	phylliscath814@gmail.com
Leslie Martin	Programs/Field Trips	leslielou63@gmail.com
Michelle Vaughn	Hospitality/Eagle	michellevaughn329@gmail.com
Faith Jones	Ornithology	faithaudubon@gmail.com
Shirley Reilly	Jay Watch	shirleyreilly34@aol.com
Jim Peters	Purple Martins	jim@jameshpeters.com
Corrinne Wertz	Publications	cwertz127@aol.com
Boni Sivi	Newsletter Editor	bonisivi@comcast.net
Peggy Stickney	Press	peggyrn@bellsouth.net
Pam Meharg	Facebook	pam.semaudubon@gmail.com
Sam Kendall	Meetup	samuelk32@embarqmail.com
Shirley Folse	Phone Communication	407-797-4636



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Debora Xavier	Lake Mary



# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

## For New Audubon Members Only

When you join Seminole Audubon Society, you also become a member of Audubon of Florida and the National Audubon Society. Your member benefits will include our newsletter *The JAY*, Audubon Magazine, and the Florida Naturalist. Most importantly, your membership will help us work for better preservation of the environment for the benefit of all species, including humankind.

### Introductory offer \$20.00 / 1 year

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 Chapter code **C9ZE310Z**

## Seminole Audubon Associate Membership

Available to Audubon Society members assigned to other chapters. Make check payable to Seminole Audubon Society.

**\$10.00 / year**

# The JAY



Seminole Audubon Society

PO Box 2977

Sanford FL 32772-2977

## **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. Jan. 13** Water For Florida's Future

**Sun. Feb. 10** Migration and What Traveling Birds Need

**Sun. Mar. 10** Reg Garner Landscape Photographer in Seminole County

**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), [seminoleaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:seminoleaudubon@gmail.com)

**Sat. Jan. 19** Black Hammock Wilderness Area

**Sat. Feb. 16** Bird Count at Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge

**Sat. Mar. 16** Boat trip to New Smyrna Beach

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

**Thu. Jan. 17, Feb. 14** Time and meeting location 407-323-4506 or [bdenslow@cfl.rr.com](mailto:bdenslow@cfl.rr.com)

**Birding Basics Course** Feb. 9, 16, 17, 23 or Feb 12, 14, 19, 21 See page 7 for details, or [faithaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:faithaudubon@gmail.com)

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

**Jan 26** Forest Therapy Walk – Spring Hammock Preserve 9:00 am

**Feb 23** Nocturnal Animals 7:30 pm

**North Shore Birding Festival** January 17 – 21, 2019

**Space Coast Birding Festival** January 23 – 28, 2019

**Birds of a Feather Festival** Palm Coast Feb 7 – 10, 2019