Recap of Our Year with Thanks to the Board and Volunteers…

This has been quite the year for all of us, especially recently dealing with the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Because of the social gathering restrictions, our April end-of-the-year meeting was cancelled. In accordance with our by-laws, we had planned to vote to approve the 2020/2022 board members at our April meeting. We will postpone that to our September meeting. However, be assured that your SAS board, committee members and other volunteers will continue their work over the summer to plan another outstanding year of programs and field trips.

Thanks to Marguerite Terwilleger, Faith Jones and Phyllis Hall who served on the nominating committee. And a special thanks to these board members for the 2020/2022 term:
- Phyllis Hall – President
- Mindy Hellman – Secretary
- Shirley Reilly – Jay Watch
- Jim Denslow – Crystal Lake Preserve Liaison, Member-at-Large

And thanks to these continuing Board Members for the 2019/2021 term:
- Sarah Donlan – Vice President
- Jan Peters – Treasurer
- Marguerite Terwilleger – Past President, Scholarships
- Lewis Gray – Jane Isle Survey
- Leslie Martin – Christmas Bird Count, Backyard Bird Count

We are very thankful for this board and for their contributions of time and talent to SAS. We also have many unsung heroes at SAS who work behind the scenes to keep SAS an active and vibrant chapter. We wish to express our thanks to them for their volunteer time and work.

Our outstanding programs and field trips are organized by Sarah Donlan, Michelle Vaughn and Leslie Martin.

Marty Shepherd spends countless hours keeping track of updates to our membership roster. Cecilia Carey maintains the SAS email distribution list for the monthly meeting and field trip reminders. She develops the PowerPoint for the monthly meeting updates as well as provides those updates on Meet Up and Facebook. Marguerite Terwilleger and Phyllis Hall also update Facebook.

Do you recognize this family? Not sure? See this issue’s Features Species on page 3.
Faith Jones and Corrinne Wertz develop a very informative and interesting Jay newsletter. Each issue is distributed via email blast and available on the SAS web site. Peggy Stickney informs the Orlando Sentinel and Sanford Herald of SAS programs and field trips. We have many guests as a result of this publicity. Peggy also is the keeper of the signed field trip waiver/release forms. Joy Rector and Cecilia Carey are the contacts for elementary education and outreach. Margaret Loring sends a welcome letter to each new member. Chuck Honaker is the contact for SAS Premiums offered at the monthly meetings. Chuck Honaker and Phyllis Hall maintain the history archives. Special thanks to Faith Jones who has maintained the archives and stored the physical boxes. She has also provided electronic versions of items for SAS history. We have history documents dating all the way back to 1949! Shirley Folse is the contact for telephone communications. Marguerite Terwilleger is the coordinator for hospitality (greeting table) and refreshments at the monthly meetings. Michelle Vaughn monitors the SAS Post Office box. Eagle Watch participants are Michelle Vaughn, Shirley Reilly and Sarah Donlan. Jay Watch participants are Faith Jones, Shirley Reilly, Marty Shepherd, Chuck Honaker, Becky Jobson and Jane Miller.

These SAS members are also on the board of Crystal Lake Preserve: Betty Leidigh, Jim Denslow, Corrinne Wertz, Shirley Reilly, Neta Villalobos-Bell, and Faith Jones. Cuplet Fern Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society is also involved in helping to survey plants and maintain that property.

Conservation Committee members are Phyllis Hall (chair), Cecilia Carey, Sam Kendall, Jim Denslow, Faith Jones, Mindy Hellman, Marguerite Terwilleger and Sarah Donlan. Mindy monitors the Seminole County Planning and Development Committee agenda each week. Phyllis and Cecilia attend the Wild and Scenic Wekiva River Advisory Committee meetings as well as the Wekiva River Basic Commission meetings. We also attend various conservation-related meetings to stay on top of issues and plans. Sam Kendall serves as the resource for energy-related issues. Sam is also monitoring the M-CORES meetings.

Outreach Committee members are Phyllis Hall (chair), Cecilia Carey, Marty Shepherd, and Leslie Martin. Last year we had our SAS tent at the Lyonia Festival and the Seminole Garden Expo. Earth Day events scheduled in April were cancelled because of COVID-19. As a part of outreach, Phyllis also serves as the liaison with Seminole State College, working with the adviser to the Environment Club, Dr. Debra Socci. SAS gave 5 memberships to student leaders who have attended meetings and field trips when their schedules permit.

Purple Martins at Lake Monroe. Jim Peters installs and maintains the Purple Martin nests. Michelle Vaughn monitors the nests along with other SAS members who live nearby. SAS received a collaborative grant for $1,000 from National Audubon Society to place an educational kiosk by the nests. Cecilia Carey and Phyllis Hall worked on the grant with Mr. Robert Beall, Operations Manager for the Parks and Recreation Department of the City of Sanford. Cecilia developed the educational material and collected the artwork. The final draft was reviewed by the president of the Purple Martin Conservation Association and Dr. Anna Forsman, Biology and Ornithology Professor at UCF. We expect the kiosk will be installed sometime this summer.

A new project, coordinated by Leslie Martin and Marguerite Terwilleger, was added this year to schedule periodic clean-up days at Lake Jesup Park.

And thanks to you, our members! Your support, donations and attendance at monthly meetings and field trips are the essence of our fantastic Audubon chapter! You are what hope looks like to a bird!
**Featured Species: Limpkin**

*Order: Gruiformes*
*Family: Aramidae*
*Genus: Aramus*
*Species: guarauna*

Like other members of the Order Gruiformes (cranes and rails), Limpkins are freshwater wetland-dwelling birds with long legs and necks that wade in water in search of food. Limpkins are usually found near cover. Their name is derived from their slow walking behavior that has been described as “limping.”

Limpkins were a Species of Special Concern on Florida’s “Imperiled Species” list until 2017 when they were delisted. They are still part of the Imperiled Species Management Plan.

**Description:** Limpkins are about 26" in length with a 40" wingspan. They weigh about 2 pounds. Both sexes are similar in appearance. Their plumage is dark brown. Most of the bird, except the rear, is marked with white. This makes the body look streaked, and the head and neck look light gray. They have a long down-curved, yellowish bill with a dark tip. Limpkins can be confused with juvenile white ibis.

**Range:** Found from peninsular Florida and Mexico, through South America to northern Argentina.

**Diet:** Although they will eat insects, worms, and mussels, the predominant staple of the Limpkin's diet is apple snails (*Pomacea paludosa*). The distribution of apple snails is the best predictor of where Limpkins can be located. In recent years, the channeled apple snail (*Pomacea canaliculata*), an aggressive species from South America, has displaced the native apple snail in many part of Florida. The channeled apple snail is one of the 100 World’s Worst Invasive Species (Lowe et. al. 2000).

During the late 1990s through about 2014 there is a direct correlation between the decline in the native

These two images are of a Limpkin nest, one from a distance and the other close up. The adult bird is in the circle of both images. The very well camouflaged nest is located in a cypress overhanging the St. Johns River in Sanford.

*Photo by Faith Jones*
apple snail population and decline of the Limpkin population. In 2004, regular surveys on the Little Wekiva River located only four or five limpkins. Fortunately, by 2010 there were records of Limpkins eating the non-native channeled apple snails. This has led to a come-back for local Limpkin populations, and their delisting in 2017.

When a Limpkin finds an apple snail, he carries it to land where it is placed in mud with the opening facing up. The limpkin’s closed bill has a gap just before the tip that makes the bill act like a tweezer. This aids in the quick extraction of the snail from its shell.

**Voice:** The Limpkin’s loud and distinctive “kkrrraaow” or “kree-ow, kra-ow” may best be described as a scream or wailing call. Indians called it the “crying bird.” If you listen to the soundtrack of old Tarzan movies (especially those filmed at Wakulla Springs) you will hear the call of the Limpkin in the background jungle sounds. It was also used for the hippogriff in the film *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban.*

**Breeding:** Limpkins nest in Florida between February and June. They nest in a variety of locations, but usually hidden and not far from water. There is one clutch per year with four to eight eggs that are incubated for about 27 days.

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**JayWatch Webinar Training Dates Announced**

Audubon Florida has announced three Florida Scrub Jay Watch online training webinars led by Dr. Marianne Korosy, PhD, Audubon Florida’s Director of Bird Conservation. If you would like to attend any one or all three sessions, please contact Jay Watch Coordinator Jacqui Sulek at Jacqui.sulek@audubon.org. The webinars will be as follows:

- **June 3, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm** *Florida Scrub-Jay Ecology* – The basics for new Jay Watchers and those looking for a refresher
- **June 5, 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm** *Jay Watch Protocol* - The basics for new Jay Watchers and a good refresher for all
- **June 10, 10:00 am – 12 Noon** *Advanced Training* – A deeper dive into Florida Scrub-Jay behavior and data
BOOK REVIEW

'WILDING' by ISABELLA TREE

Reviewed by Christine Brown

What would happen if we let nature manage itself, instead of trying to micromanage the landscape for human benefit? Isabella Tree soon found out when she and her husband, Charlie Burrell, decided to stop farming on his ancestral estate in Sussex, England. They walked knee-deep through ox-eye daisies, bird’s foot trefoil, ragged robin, knapweed, red clover, lady’s bedstraw, crested dog’s tail and sweet vernal grass, kicking up clouds of butterflies – common blues, meadow browns, ringlets, marbled whites, small and Essex skippers, and grasshoppers, hoverflies and all sorts of bumblebees. They hadn’t known they had been missing the low-level surround sound thrumming of insects.

One of the birds they wanted to encourage to return is the turtle dove. In the 1960s there were 250,000 turtle doves in Britain. Today there are fewer than 5,000. They face challenges from desertification and hunting in their wintering grounds in Africa, and the firing squads of the Mediterranean countries on their migration to England. Once they arrive they are faced with changes in land use, particularly intensive farming. They are now listed as ‘vulnerable’ on the IUCN red list.

You may be familiar with the Wildlands Network here, which in 1991 embarked on an initiative to reconnect, restore, and rewild North America so that life in all its diversity can thrive. Instructive is the story of what happened when wolves were reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park. Following their predation of the herbivores such as elk, vegetation was allowed to regrow to the extent that rivers were restored to their original courses.

North America still has large expanses of natural landscapes. But what do you do in England, which has been heavily cultivated for centuries? The farm on the Knepp Estate, 3500 acres of arable and dairy, was struggling to survive and make a profit in the late nineties. The decision to stop farming was hard, especially for the staff, who had to be laid off, and the herds and farm machinery had to be sold. However, the decision to restore the land as close as possible to its original state became a positive and fascinating project.

Of course, laws, rules and regulations from the likes of the Dept. for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and the EU Common Agricultural Policy had to be taken into account. But with help and advice from ecologists, naturalists, English Nature, the British Trust for Ornithology, the Woodland Trust and the Wildlife Trusts, and grants from the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, they embarked on eliminating chemicals, restoring the soil and encouraging native plants.

Any of you with an HOA will understand the reaction of the neighbors! People were used to the English countryside being neat and tidy, with ploughed fields bordered by hedgerows or fences, so they were not happy with the unkempt land that soon emerged!

Even more concern was voiced when large herbivores were introduced. Isabella and Charlie wanted to mimic the original, but sadly now extinct, animals such as aurochs (ox) and tarpan (horse), so they used ancient breeds such as longhorn cattle and Exmoor ponies, and Tamwoth pigs to represent wild boar, together with the native deer.
Large predators such as European wolves and lynx are another matter, however, and would be too problematic in the sleepy English countryside. You will be aware of the perceived problems caused by wolves in the American West! So to control the populations of the large herbivores they have developed a ‘Wild Range’ organic meat business, which brings in extra income.

Sometimes it was hard to sit on their hands and let nature take control. A case in point was the ‘yellow peril’, or common ragwort, long vilified by livestock owners as a poisonous plant. When it flourished at Knepp, the outrage was enormous. But research shows that ragwort seeds seldom travel more than 36 meters from the plant, and so they cut a 100-meter strip, as recommended by DEFRA, around certain sensitive areas.

A happier outcome was letting sallow (goat willow and grey willow) flourish, which led to an increase in the scarce and elusive purple emperor butterfly for which sallow is a host plant.

Isabella and Charlie take pleasure now whenever they hear the ‘turr-turr-ing’ of a turtle dove on their land, knowing their small scrap of land will help it survive. Other birds benefiting from the resurgence of wild landscape are nightingales, little owls and peregrine falcons.

The end result was an increase in many species of native plants, invertebrates and vertebrates. Such was their success that they are now a destination for wildlife enthusiasts of all types, and run ‘glamping’ [glamour camping] stays and safari tours from the estate.

There is a fascinating 15-minute video tour of the estate, which you can access here: https://youtu.be/mP3-TsRRSys

Since this was originally written, wild white storks have hatched in UK for first time in hundreds of years. Birds born in one of three nests at Knepp estate (property rewilded in the book) in West Sussex as part of breeding project.

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/16/wild-white-storks-hatch-for-first-time-in-hundreds-of-years

EagleWatch

Another Bald eagle nesting season is winding down in Florida. Eagle Watch volunteers have watched as most of this year’s eaglets have fledged and left the safety of their nests. Each year however Audubon Center for Birds of Prey needs to rescue and rehabilitate some of these young birds. One such bird was from an Orange County nest and was rescued on March 6th. It was rehabbed and banded in Maitland and then successfully released on March 22nd. On April 11th it was spotted in North Carolina at Cape Hatteras National Seashore! Eagle Watch volunteers from all over the state rejoiced at this news. If you would like to become a volunteer and help protect these magnificent creatures please contact Shawnlei Breeding at eaglewatch@audubon.org
Future Brightens

The Florida Grasshopper Sparrow has been called the most endangered bird in the continental United States. They are native to the remote, treeless prairies of south central Florida. In 2017, biologists located 40 females and 72 males. One year later the population had declined to 22 females and 53 males in the wild. Knowing the species was in serious peril, a captive breeding program was initiated in 2015. The first three birds were released on May 6, 2019. Since then over 125 captive-raised birds have been released into the wild.

Recently, researchers have documented at least 25 of the released birds are defending territories, eight are nesting, and two of the birds have already fledged young! This news brings great hope for the future of this species.

Keep Up With SAS
Visit our website SeminoleAudubon.org or follow us on:

- MeetUp
  MeetUp.com/SeminoleAudubon-com
- Twitter
  Seminole Audubon @AudubonSeminole
- Facebook
  Find us on: facebook

Invasive Plants
by Richard Poole

Foreign plants introduced into Florida spread quickly, destroying local plant communities. These non-native plants do not have natural enemies in Florida to control their growth. Loss of Florida plant communities destroys food and shelter on which insects, birds, and butterflies depend. Deer, squirrels, doves, ducks and other Florida wildlife diminish in number.

Invasive plants affect forest health, productivity, access and use, forest management costs and limit species diversity on millions of acres in Florida. Foreign plants alter natural processes such as fire frequency and water flow and damage human economy and human health in Florida.

Some invasive, non-native plants that adversely affect Florida are: air potato (Asia), Brazilian pepper (Brazil), camphor tree (Asia), Chinese tallow (China), golden rain tree (Asia), melaleuca (Australia) and water hyacinth (Amazon).
Pandemic’s Unexpected Consequences

Stay-at-home orders and sheltering in place have resulted in less human impact on our environment. With less travel on ground and in the air there has been a world-wide improvement in air quality. Several parts of the world are reporting significant declines in air pollution corresponding to reductions in industrial activity and vehicular traffic. A 2019 Travel & Leisure Magazine article reported due to poor air quality it is no longer possible to see the Taj Mahal clearly from the Great Gate. Not only is the view being obscured by pollution, the white marble structure is changing color. Visitors were advised to wear masks. Recent reports indicate the air in the vicinity of the Taj Mahal is now clear. The visibility in Los Angeles is farther than it has been in decades.

Although these are short-term environmental benefits, there has been a substantial decrease in nitrogen levels over major metropolitan areas. It was surprising how quickly the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions improved the air quality.

Closed beaches in Florida resulted in less human debris on our beaches and an increase in sea turtle nests. I can’t forget about the birds, some of whom seemed to venture back into previous territories that have been converted to housing for humans. Red-headed Woodpeckers have been seen in neighborhoods in Orlando, and Wild Turkey in Longwood and Altamonte Springs. Migrating birds found new stop-over spots.

While confined during the pandemic, Jim Peters took the opportunity to spend more time observing the birds in his neighborhood. He not only found the Limpkin family pictured in this issue’s Featured Species article, he documented a Snail Kite in the Sylvan Lake area. Federally listed as Endangered, the Snail Kite is another species whose historic primary food source is our native Apple Snails.

Audubon for Kids!

In many ways every child is born a scientist - exploring their world, leading small experiments, asking questions, searching for answers. That innate curiosity and drive to inquiry is what Rachel Carson, the groundbreaking conservationist and author, called a sense of wonder. “A child’s world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement,” she wrote. “It is our misfortune that for most of us that clear-eyed vision, that true instinct for what is beautiful and awe-inspiring, is dimmed and even lost before we reach adulthood.”

National Audubon Society has created a section on their website that aims to bring together activities from across Audubon’s national network of environmental educators, including the classroom curriculum Audubon Adventures, plus related DIY activities and content from Audubon’s editors. These activities can be done at home or in a yard or park, sometimes with the help of a computer. The goal isn’t to teach a child how to name and identify bird species, but rather to give them space to explore and feel connected to the natural world. If you’re a parent or caretaker, that means you don’t need to worry about your own knowledge of birds or plants. All you need to be is a companion to your child’s curiosity, or your own. After all, aren’t we kids at heart?

Crystal Lake Preserve (CLP) History to Date

Crystal Lake Preserve is a 40-acre tract of land west of Crystal Lake and south of the Timacuan subdivision. It was purchased by Darrell and Bettye Leidigh in 2000 to protect it from residential development. The Leidighs gave the property to the City of Lake Mary with the understanding that the City would hold and maintain the undeveloped property in perpetuity for the benefit of wildlife, native plants, and water conservation.

By October 2006 the City had revised their future land use designation from Low Density Residential and Conservation to Public/Semi-Public and Conservation. Even though the revision made some people nervous, the City said the revision in land use designation ensured that the subject property would not be utilized for residential development.

In October 2009 the process was begun for the City of Lake Mary to quitclaim the CLP property to CLP, Inc., a 501(c) 3, as the property was not being maintained properly. By December 2009 the property was deeded to CLP, Inc.

Current restrictions are that CLP, Inc. will maintain a firebreak and manage the property. Informational signage may be installed, not to exceed 6 sq. ft. each. The north and west boundaries are fenced. Public visits (not including maintenance) are limited to 16 per year and no more than two per month. A maximum of four vehicles may be parked on the property at a time. Field trips can be arranged.

Seminole Audubon members who are also on the CLP Board are: Jim Denslow, Faith Jones, Betty Leidigh, Shirley Reilly, Neta Villalobos Bell, and Corrinne Wertz.

The Cuplet Fern chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society had hoped to hold a bioblitz of the property in June 2020. Hopefully it will be rescheduled.

Notes from March SAS Activities

Due to early voting at the Library in Sanford, our March 8th program meeting was held in the auditorium of the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Seminole County. After our usual announcements and updates, Corrinne Wertz provided an overview of the history of Crystal Lake Preserve and SAS’s relationship with the property.

We were then treated to highlights of Leslie Martin’s November 2019 birding trip to Ecuador.

That was followed by Faith Jones sharing tales from the adventures and images of some of the birds seen on the January SAS trip to Columbia. The group recorded 249 avian species including 33 species of hummingbirds, 6 species of antpittas, and 21 species of tanagers.
New Members and New to Our Chapter

James Birmingham  Sanford
Kay Clark  Lake Mary
Jenelle Davis  Lake Mary
Diane Forrest  Sanford
Rebecca Kurek  DeBary
Michael Mainelli  Lake Mary
Marcia McGovern  Sanford
Michael Palombi  Sanford
Merrie A. Pope  Oviedo
Linda Provost  Longwood
Barbara Simons  Sanford
Judy Singleton  Lake Mary
John Stockham  Lake Mary
Kim Van Gundy  Lake Mary

SAS Board Meeting Video Conference Sunday June 7 2:00 p.m.
All members welcome!
If you are interested in attending this meeting to learn what our Board has been accomplishing and to assist in planning our season, please contact Phyllis at phylliscath814@gmail.com for instructions on how to join this meeting.

Orlando Wetlands Park
On Thursday March 12, just before shelter in place and social distancing orders went into effect, we traveled to Orlando Wetlands Park for an amazing morning of birding. A total of 58 species were documented by the group. Our e-Bird list is below. We thank Cecilia and John Carey for making the arrangements.

All other meetings and trips for the season were canceled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We hope to resume activities in the Fall. Details will be in the next issue of The JAY.

SAS Birders with guides on the Birds of the Central Andes trip
### 2020-2021

**Board of Directors & Committee Chairs (eff. 7/1/20)**

SeminoleAudubon@gmail.com

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- Faith Jones: Newsletter Compiler
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- Jim Peters: Purple Martin Project
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- Marty Shepherd: Membership
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- Peggy Stickney: Publicity, Corresponding Sec.
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- Corrinne Wertz: Newsletter Editor
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**AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

*Introductory offer For New Members Only* $20.00/1 year

*Join on our website SeminoleAudubon.org using Chapter Code COZ310Z*

Make checks payable to **National Audubon Society**. Complete this form and mail with your check to:

Seminole Audubon Society, P.O. Box 2977, Sanford FL 32772-2977

**Seminole Audubon Associate Membership** $10.00/year

Available to Audubon Society members assigned to other chapters.

| Name:   | ____________________________________________ |
| Address:| ____________________________________________ |
| City, State, Zipcode: | ____________________________________________ |
| Phone/ e-mail: | ____________________________________________ |

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Calendar of Events

Wed. June 3 Florida Scrub-Jay Ecology 10:30 am – 12:30 pm Webinar Training
        Audubon Florida will host this training for new Jay Watchers and those looking for a refresher. Contact Jacqui at Jacqui.sulek@audubon.org if you would like to attend.

Fri. June 5 Jay Watch Protocol 1:00—3:00 pm Webinar Training
        This basic training session for new Jay Watchers is also a good refresher for all. It will be hosted by Audubon Florida. Please contact Jacqui at Jacqui.sulek@audubon.org

Sun. June 7 SAS Board Meeting via video conference. 2:00 pm
        All members welcome to attend. If you are interested in attending this meeting to learn what our Board has been accomplishing, and to assist in planning our season, please contact Phyllis at phylliscath814@gmail.com for instructions on how to attend the meeting.