

# The **BARRED OWL**

Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Audubon Society

Volume XXVIX, Number 3

June / July 2003

## President's Message

by Dorothy Prowell

Several interesting, positive things happened with BRAS in April and May. BRAS received the President's Award from the Louisiana Ornithological Society (see full write-up on page 3). I attended my first LOS meeting on Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, to accept the award. It was one of those great spring birding days with migrants everywhere. Harriett Pooler, myself, and a new birder on the scene, Claudia Husseneder, spent Saturday night at our sanctuary manager's bunkhouse and had a great time on Sunday birding from Lighthouse Rd. to Rutherford Woods chasing an elusive blackbilled cuckoo for Harriett's life list. Instead, I got a lifer, the Rutherford woods barn owl. What? Surprised I even have a life list? Most of you don't know me as a birder but I spent the first half of my adult life birding every chance I got across most of the USA and many other countries. I could have sworn I'd seen that owl before. The 24 hour birdathon by the LSU Museum and the LOS official count on Saturday night ended up with almost the same numbers, 211 and 212, a new record for the LSU group. An unfortunate side-effect of the traffic at Peveto Woods was near-overflowing port-a-potties (I took people's word for it). Sorry, we are having some communication problems with Waste Management. Thanks LOS for the award and the excuse to go birding.

While I'm on the sanctuary topic, another exciting accomplishment is THE NEW SIGN. I had been meaning to do that as sanctuary chair several years ago and it kept falling off my radar. Victoria got it done in her first year as sanctuary chair. What a feat! Thanks Victoria! It's a great looking sign, one you can't miss seeing from the highway. A photo of it appeared in the Cameron paper.

see "President's Message" on page 2



## Calendar

**June 7** Jones State Forest Field Trip  
(713.681.8433 or  
[www.HoustonNatureCenter.org](http://www.HoustonNatureCenter.org)).

**June 14** Saturday Field Trip to  
Whiskey Bay Road in the Atchafalaya  
Basin.

**June 19 - 21** Awareness of Coastal  
Habitat, Mad Island, Texas State  
Marine Education Center and  
Matagorda Island (713.681.8433 or  
[www.HoustonNatureCenter.org](http://www.HoustonNatureCenter.org)).

**July 26** Coastal Habitats Field Trip  
(Houston).

**September 6** Xtreme Hummingbird  
Xtravaganza, Gulf Coast Bird  
Observatory Sanctuary (Lake Jackson,  
Texas).

**October 9** Pot Luck / Nature Art Sale  
(location to be announced).

**Thanks! (and Happy Birthday)**  
to Gloria McKinnon for the  
contribution in her name to Peveto  
Woods Sanctuary.



Clipart courtesy of  
Corel GALLERY

## President's Message

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BRAS hosted the reception on Louisiana Coastal Restoration and Related Issues with NAS and Orleans Audubon on May 8<sup>th</sup> in New Orleans. It was held at Metairie Park Country Day School which was unlike any school I ever attended. The setting was impressive and the food incredible. I'm not sure if it was Emily Byram (NAS) or John Morton who arranged the catering but it was a special treat. Even our gourmet board member, Mark Skinner, was impressed. Glenn Olson talked about the current vision and action plan for NAS. Len Bahr represented Governor Foster's office and gave a presentation on the current status and causes of coastal land loss and ended with potential solutions. Mark Davis, Director of the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, gave a heartfelt plea for political approval and funding of efforts outlined by Len. The question and answer session was particularly enjoyable, entertaining, and educational. We're lucky to have such committed people working on our behalf to save the coast. I was convinced that momentum is building for the Lower Mississippi to receive the national attention it warrants and for the Louisiana coast to become a national focus. I left the reception feeling like we succeeded in bringing some important groups together and in educating others. Our role as individuals and an organization is to support candidates for public office that make coastal restoration a priority in their campaign. If you care about birds, you know that most of the birds in our state are found in the coastal zone.

Our first year with the current officers is coming to a close and most of us were reelected for a second term. I think we've accomplished a great deal this year. I appreciate the help I've received from the board and support from our members. Hang with us as we head into another exciting, proactive, productive year.

## Conservation Report by Mark Skinner



Conservation chair Mark Skinner

Folks, remember you can learn about conservation issues through Audubon Advisory, a biweekly publication that summarizes important bird conservation issues. You can receive a copy in your email or regular mail by calling 1-800-659-2622 or emailing to [audubonaction@audubon.org](mailto:audubonaction@audubon.org). Audubon Advisory makes participation in conservation advocacy easy, so please have a look. You also might want to consult the web at <http://www.capitolconnect.com/audubon/> for updates and information on other conservation issues and how you can help. You can also sign up for Audubon Advisory at this website.

### US Fish & Wildlife Service Promotes Killing Migratory Cormorants

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) has proposed new regulations to allow the unlimited slaughter of Double-crested Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*). Unfortunately the comment period for this proposal ends May 16<sup>th</sup>, so all we can do is hope that USFWS—the federal agency responsible for protecting wildlife and plants—reverses its position.

The USFWS proposal would allow the killing of an unlimited number of Double-crested Cormorants without a permit in 24 states when it is believed the birds are responsible for declines in fish populations—without requiring any scientific evidence! This proposal completely disregards and ignores any other reasons for the declines, specifically development and other human impacts. In fact, available scientific evidence clearly indicates that cormorants have no impact on commercial

fisheries and little impact on sport fisheries. Currently, the USFWS requires permits for any take of cormorants except in aquaculture facilities in 13 states where cormorants can be shot without permits. The FWS now conducts its own preliminary scientific review before issuing permits outside of the aquaculture facilities. This is a sound scientific process that should not change!



## Lacassine Pool Trip by Joseph P. Kleiman

On the 22nd of March, Harriett Pooler and I led a field trip to the rice fields and eventually to Lacassine Pool. Our plan was to end at Lacassine late in the afternoon and stay until dusk to watch the evening flight of birds. Lacassine Pool at dusk can be very impressive.

Our first stop was the the erstwhile Vincent Refuge, still a good stop for waterfowl, wading birds, and shorebirds. A pair of Wilson's Phalaropes was either early or they overwintered somewhere in the area. Other interesting sightings in the area included good numbers of both yellowlegs, Long-billed Dowitcher, and Black-bellied Plover. We were also lucky in finding a Gull-billed Tern, a species of concern but a regular winter resident in the ricefields.

We birded our way to Lacassine Pool, arriving late in the afternoon. Along the way we saw many of the expected birds of the rice fields: shorebirds, herons, egrets, good numbers of White-faced Ibis, waterfowl such a Fulvous Whistling-Duck, and raptors such as Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, and Northern Harrier.

As we arrived at Lacassine Pool, we were greeted by a light shower that soon ended but gave a bonus later. We found the expected coots and common Moorhens along with returning Eastern Kingbirds and Barn swallows. One of the species we hoped to find was American Bittern and we did see two flying off in the marsh. An unexpected find was the sighting of a Sora in the open for quite a few minutes, enough time for the photographers with us to get some good pictures. While we watched the Sora, an Anhinga landed about 30 yards away and spread out its wings to dry, another good photo-op.

We continued on around Lacassine Pool. At the eastern edge of the drive, we came upon several nests of Great Blue Herons, on one of which we could see two young. As we were looking at the nests and the Neotropic Cormorants, we got that bonus I mentioned earlier. We saw two rainbows, one of which extended from horizon to horizon. Along with this, we had a very interesting, beautiful sunset, a great way to end a good birding day.

## BRAS Receives LOS President's Award

by Dorothy Prowell

On April 26, 2003 at the spring meeting of the Louisiana Ornithological Society, Marty Guidry presented Dorothy Prowell with the President's



Award. BRAS was given Lowry's book, *Birds of Louisiana*, and a plaque with the following comments. "The LOS recognizes and honors BRAS for being a leader in wildlife and habitat conservation throughout Louisiana and the U.S. In the 1980s BRAS established the first chenier sanctuary in the world to protect some of the last remnants of this critical habitat on the Louisiana Gulf Coast. BRAS continually improves the Peveto Woods Sanctuaries by land acquisition, planting native chenier vegetation and removing non-native species. By opening this unique habitat to the public, BRAS not only allows wildlife enthusiasts to enjoy it, but also educates the public on the value of Louisiana's cheniers and the special role that they play in the life cycle of migratory birds and butterflies." We were thrilled to receive the award. Thanks LOS!

## BRAS Directory

### Officers

#### President

Dorothy Prowell . . . . . 923-1070

#### Vice-President

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#### Secretary

JoAnn Fryling . . . . . 766-3120

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Doris Falkenheiner . . . . . 346-8761

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### Newsletter

Ron Bayless . . . . . 757-1769

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Charles Fryling . . . . . 766-3120

Donna LaFleur . . . . . 892-4492

### *The Barred Owl*

is published bi-monthly by the Baton Rouge chapter of the NAS. Submissions should be received by:

January 15 for the Feb/March issue

March 15 for the April/May issue

May 15 for the June/July issue

July 15 for the August/September issue

September 15 for the Oct/Nov issue

November 15 for the Dec/Jan issue.

Submissions may be sent via e-mail to bayles\_r@bellsouth.net or mailed to:

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Changes of address and other official correspondence should be sent to the mailing address shown above.

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## HELP DESIRED FOR BLUEBONNET SWAMP BIRD WALKS

Bluebonnet Swamp needs our help with their beginner bird walks. On the first Saturday of each month, 7AM to 9AM, interested new birders are guided through the swamp and taught to recognize our local birds and migrants. The Park provides a guide and BRAS helps out by providing the bird expert. Please help us out with this if you can. It's a great opportunity to have an impact on a budding naturalist's life. The schedule for the rest of the year is:

June 7<sup>th</sup> - Dorothy Prowell, July 5<sup>th</sup> - Doris Falkenheiner, August 2<sup>nd</sup> - [Open], September 6<sup>th</sup> - [Open], October 4<sup>th</sup> - Mark Skinner, November 1<sup>st</sup> - Donna LaFleur, December 6<sup>th</sup> - Harriett Pooler.

Call or email Dorothy at 923-1070 or [dprowe@lsu.edu](mailto:dprowe@lsu.edu) if you want to lead a walk. THANKS!

### BATON ROUGE AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership Type	Amount	2003 Patch?	Total
___ National Audubon Society (new members only)	<u>\$20</u>	___ Yes ___ No	_____
___ Baton Rouge Audubon Society (local chapter only)	<u>\$20</u>	___ Yes ___ No	_____
___ Continuing National Audubon Members "BRAS patch option only" (must be a paid member of National Audubon Society)	<u>\$10</u>	___ Yes ___ No	_____
___ Extra 2003 patches (for members only)	<u>\$10</u>	___ Yes	_____
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