

The **BARRED OWL**

Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Audubon Society

Volume XLIII, Number 2

3rd Quarter, 2016

SUMMER CAMP FOR BIRDERS!

Remember going to summer camp as a kid? Cookouts, s'mores, adventures, making life long friends? Have you considered doing that again as an adult?

When I asked our membership for ideas for newsletter articles, a couple of people mentioned Hog Island in Maine. Hog Island is now run by Project Puffin, a department of the National Audubon Society science division and has been a residential camp since 1936. One of the very first teachers at the camp was none other than Roger Tory Peterson, inventory of the modern field guide and birder extraordinaire. Dr. Stephen Kress, founder of Project Puffin, now runs the camp.

If you're looking for a way to escape the Louisiana summer heat, you couldn't ask for a more extraordinary treat. The camp is beyond picturesque, located off the southeast coast of Maine, north of Portland. Travel to and from the island is done by lobster boat....in fact, travel on

Dear Members,

Last month we published a wonderful article on Monarch butterflies and their life cycles by the "Bug Lady" Linda Auld. However, I inadvertently included a photo of a Viceroy instead of a Monarch butterfly! Mea Culpa! It seems this is a common problem and Linda has stepped up again with wonderful information to set us all straight. Please see Page 3 in this issue of the Barred Owl for the amazing comparison of the two species! Thanks, Linda!

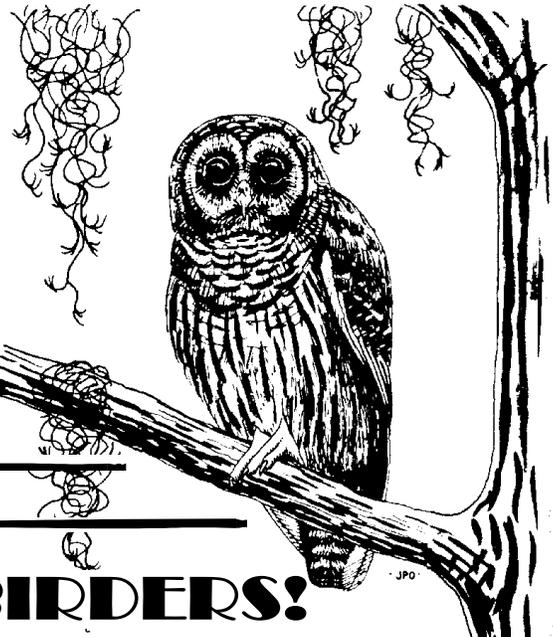
-- Jane Patterson

many of the field trips offered by the camp is done by lobster boat as well. The accommodations vary from private cabins to dorm rooms. The food is wholesome and offered in a congenial shared dining room. And yes, we ate lobster and chowdah.

But the really special part of Hog Island is the opportunity to meet and share experiences with the "big guns" of the north American birding world. The classes, field trips and bird walks are all led by names birders all recognize and admire. When I was there, I met Kimberly and Kenn Kaufman. Kenn took us on bird walks in the morning and taught classes on bird natural history. Scott Weidensaul, author of several important bird books, taught classes and demonstrated bird banding, as did Sara Morris, an ornithology professor and researcher. Greg Budney, collections development curator for the world-renowned bird sound recording McCauley library at Cornell was with us, and we watched as he demonstrated how he collected and preserved his sound recordings. But the highlight of the trip had to be the field trip personally conducted by the Puffin Whisperer himself, Dr. Stephen Kress who took us out to Egg Rock, one of the locations where Atlantic Puffins now successfully breed, thanks to Dr. Kress and his team of researchers who reintroduced the puffin to North America after it was extirpated in the 1800's. We also saw and celebrated the adorable Black Guillemot, a small black seabird with bright red feet. We never did learn exactly what Kenn Kaufman has against them :)

The wonderful setting, complete with weathered clapboard buildings, pungent conifers, nesting Osprey, singing Blackburnian warblers, and loons calling eerily at night, all combine for an unforgettable experience. I highly recommend a visit next year, for birders of any age!

For more information about Hog Island, visit: <http://hogisland.audubon.org/>



The Year in Review

We recently held our end of year meeting, held officer elections, and recognized special volunteers that helped out in outstanding ways this year. May basically represents the end of our year. Regarding elections: this year's slate of officers was collected and presented by Melanie Driscoll. The nominated officers were Jane Patterson - President, Erik Johnson - Vice President, Kimberly Lanka - Treasurer, and Donna Lafleur - Secretary. The slate was accepted by the membership, no nominations were added, and the new officers were voted in with a unanimous vote. . The additional board members for BRAS as it now stands, are as follows:

Heather Mancuso -
Membership chair

Richard Condrey -
Conservation chair

Dave Patton -
Sanctuary chair

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

2016 LOS FALL MEETING

Friday and Saturday, October 28-29
Cameron

Please pre-register by October 14th
www.losbird.org

Please join LOS for our fall meeting in Louisiana's premiere birding parish. The speaker on Friday will be BTNEP biologist Delaina LeBlanc speaking to us on "Monitoring Piping Plovers at the Caminada Headland Beach and Dune Restoration Projects (BA-45/BA-143)". All day Saturday fieldtrips will be led by Ed Wallace, Marty Floyd, Donna Dittmann and Steve Cardiff. Saturday evening's program will be presented by Dr. Autumn-Lynn Harrison from the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and her topic will be "Discovering Unknown Migrations of Birds of the Western Hemisphere". For more information and a registration form check the LOS website. Please register early!

Dan Mooney -
Field trips chair

Crystal Johnson -
Programs chair

These board members are appointed by the President (with consensus of the rest of the board). We did have a resignation this year. Melanie Driscoll has decided to resign as a Board-member-at-large. We are sad to see Melanie go; she served as a secretary as well as "at large" board member and was a valuable, contributing member to our board, but her full-time, travel-intensive responsibilities with National Audubon are very demanding of her time. We would like to replace Melanie and our previous board member Beverly on the board, and are currently looking for a couple of "at large" board members. If you would like to serve on the BRAS board, please contact me at President@braudubon.org and we can discuss. We encourage any potential board members to visit our monthly board meetings for several months before jumping into serving on the board. Our board meetings will resume in September after the summer hiatus.

At the suggestion of Dave Patton, we also honored two outstanding volunteers, who helped to build benches and mark trails in our Peveto Woods Sanctuary this year. Many thanks to Gene Barnett and Bill Gover for their hard work!

Regarding our land acquisition project: we are still searching for the right parcel of land. If you have any ideas or know of anyone who might be able to help, please let me know!

Monthly bird walks (and possibly other field trips) will continue during summer. Be sure to check the Calendar on the braudubon.org website! I will also be teaching a fall Beginning Birder class -- please pass along if you have friends or family that might enjoy (sign up via the LSU Continuing Education class website).

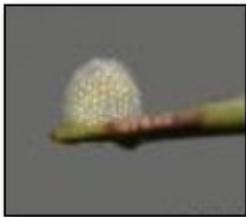
See y'all in the woods!

Jane Patterson

Viceroy Versus Monarch- Life Cycle Mimicry

The VICEROY BUTTERFLY:

Stage 1: The EGG:



The life cycle begins when the female Viceroy butterfly tastes the leaves of trees with her feet— Yes, I said feet. When she finds a Cherry, Cottonwood or Willow tree with young tender leaves, she then lands on the leaf and backs up to the very end so that she can lay a single

egg on the tip. She is very careful to position her egg deposit precisely to ensure the successful beginning of the very unique behavior of the caterpillar!

Stage 2: CATERPILLAR:



First, the freshly hatched caterpillar eats its eggshell then proceeds to nibble bits of the leaf. It pays particular attention to leaving the main leaf rib intact because that becomes its new

home. This tiny caterpillar mimics a bird dropping and creates what is called a “frass chain” of feces and silk as its camouflage from predators. As it grows, it consumes more foliage but returns to its “plank” while resting. After molting a couple of times, the growing caterpillar is large enough to reside on the leaf top but it goes through great lengths to position itself to resemble a large bird poop splat. The pair of knobby antennae give this crawling creature quite an adorable personality.

Stage 3: CHRYSALIS or PUPA:



During the pupal stage, the caterpillar is transforming from a “crawling thing to a flying thing” or what is better known as the miracle of metamorphosis! The pupa is relatively defenseless except for the two behaviors it uses to help its self preservation: 1) because it tastes good to birds, lizards and wasps, it tries to look like a leaf to blend in with its surroundings.

2) When it feels the presence of trouble, it makes jerky movements to startle and to shun off predators.

Stage 4: ADULT VICEROY BUTTERFLY:



When admiring the Viceroy butterfly, one can easily notice two identifying factors: 1) the single black bar leading from left to right across the lower two wings and 2) see the solid black body.

When observing the Viceroy butterfly in the wild, look at the flight pattern. Viceroy butterflies tend to make obvious choppy forward spurts or thrusts when flying. After Viceroy male butterflies find the host plant trees, they drive away other potential male suitors and “hang out” waiting for the females to arrive. A female Viceroy butterfly is a woman on a mission to find trees on which to lay eggs—all 400 of them!

MONARCH BUTTERFLY LIFE CYCLE:

Stage 1: The EGG :



After busily hunting and tasting various leaves, the female Monarch butterfly finds the milkweed plant then arcs her abdomen to lay a single egg in no particular place. It could be laid on the top or bottom of

the leaf or even on the flowers. She could fly around, visiting all the garden area only to return to the same plant to lay more eggs. Some plants with tender young leaves could be loaded with eggs laid by several different female Monarchs.

Stage 2: CATERPILLAR:



The baby caterpillar eats its eggshell then proceeds to chew a hole in the leaf where the egg was laid. A milky sap ring of latex encircles the void space creating a “keyhole” in the leaf.

Chewing and cutting the leaf rib stops the flow of latex, helping prevent their jaws from being covered with gummy latex. In the bug world, the caterpillar’s use of bright white, yellow and black colors sends a signal or message to predators that they taste bad.

STAGE 3: CHRYSALIS or PUPA:



Again the Monarch caterpillar repeats its predator protection using showy coloration. Folks viewing the exquisite Monarch chrysalis for the first time remark in disbelief, “ Is this REAL?” , “Is this jewelry?”, “Did you paint those gold dots on there?” to which I reply, “Yes, it’s real, no, it’s

not jewelry and no, God did that!” Instead of blending with its surroundings, it chooses to sport a beautiful Jade colored exterior with a neon sign of sparkling gold dots that represent the idea, “You will be sorry if you eat me!”

(Continued on page 4)

Viceroy Versus Monarch

(Continued from page 3)



Stage 4: ADULT MONARCH BUTTERFLY:

The Monarch caterpillar eats Milkweed which contains toxins that help the caterpillar to taste bad to predators. The Viceroy caterpillar does not eat milkweed so it has to use other self defense methods. Notice that the Monarch butterfly's body is black with white dots — another coloration warning signal. Monarch butterflies do not have the black bar across the bottom wing but instead only the male has a single round black dot located on the middle of each of the two bottom wings. These are the pheromone sacks used to attract the females. Only butterflies that eat milkweed as a caterpillar will have these marked distinctions. When observing Monarch butterflies flying in the wild, you will enjoy watching them gracefully glide across the garden then couple with another Monarch to swirl in the air!

Written by Linda Auld, The BugLady
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Do we have your email address?

Keep up to date with all of Baton Rouge Audubon Society's events and programs by joining our email list! We won't inundate you with spam, we promise! Simply send a request to president@braudubon.org and ask to be added to the e-list!

AND If you would prefer to receive the BRAS "Barred Owl" newsletter in electronic form **ONLY** (rather than the printed version thereby lessening your carbon footprint) please email our Membership chair and let her know! Drop her a line at membership@braudubon.org

Also please follow us on Facebook at
www.facebook.com/BRAudubon

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Changes of address and other official correspondence should be sent to:

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Bluebonnet Swamp and Louisiana Bird Observatory Helping to Understand Urban Wildlife

By Kristin E. Brzeski,
NSF Postdoctoral Fellow,
Princeton University.

Baton Rouge Audubon Society and Louisiana Bird Observatory (LABO) have been banding birds at Bluebonnet Swamp for 6 years and have more recently expanded banding operations to three other stations throughout the state. These banding operations have led to numerous scientific articles and enhanced our understanding of bird molt, disease, behavior, and toxin exposure in Louisiana. In addition to publishing great science, LABO has provided the opportunity for a multitude of undergraduate and graduate students from LSU and ULL to study our local bird communities. Continuing LABO's contributions to ornithological research, partners from Princeton University, the US Forest Service,

ULL, and Audubon Louisiana, are setting the stage to use LABO data to evaluate how urban and rural birds are affected by their environments.

Urban birds are exposed to unique stress that their rural counterparts do not have to contend with, such as disruptive noise, light pollution, and increased disease and toxin exposure. Birds can change their ecology to avoid or mitigate stress associated with city life. They can also respond through physiological or molecular changes, such as changes in how genes are replicated and used by their bodies. These types of molecular effects, called epigenetics, can result in changes in an individual's observable physical characteristics (what scientists call the 'phenotype') without actual changes in DNA. Urban birds could be



experiencing different epigenetic change that rural birds do not experience, change which may help birds adapt to urban environments but alternatively could lower their ability to survive.

Using blood collected by LABO volunteers, we will explore how Northern Cardinals and Carolina Wrens in

Baton Rouge (i.e., Bluebonnet Swamp) may be affected by epigenetic change in response to the stress of urban living compared to birds living in Palmetto Island State Park – a more rural and pristine environment. Results from this work will help us better understand how wildlife adapt to city living, ultimately contributing to our understanding of how biodiversity is maintained in a human-dominated world. This work is in preliminary stages, but data collected by LABO and its partners will help us better understand larger conservation and ecological questions that can inform wildlife conservation throughout the country.

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Pollination Celebration

"An Educational Experience for All Ages"

September 24, 2016 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.—Gates open at 8:15

Dr. Gary Noel Ross Dr. Allen Cwings Dr. Kathryn Fontenot Dr. Charles Allen

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\$10 per non-commercial vehicle
<https://tpmgblog.wordpress.com/>

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If you have any questions or if you need a special accommodation for your participation in the event, please contact Whitney Wallace, wwallace@agcenter.lsu.edu (985) 748-9381 at least 2 weeks prior to the event. The LSU/AgCenter is a statewide campus of the LSU system and provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.



Baton Rouge Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Baton Rouge Audubon Society

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Keep Your Membership Current!

If your membership expires, you will no longer receive *The Barred Owl*. We'll eventually take your name off the list. It is expensive to produce and membership dues help to cover that cost. Please see the expiration code on the first line of the label above your name. The month and year in which your membership expires are indicated after your membership organization (e.g., BRAS DEC 09 for BRAS-only members and NAS DEC 10 for NAS members).

Keeping your membership current is important!

BRAS and National Audubon Membership

You may join NAS by going to their website (audubon.org) and you automatically become a member of both NAS and BRAS. You will receive the quarterly award-winning *Audubon* magazine as well as the quarterly BRAS newsletter, *The Barred Owl*.

BRAS Only Membership

If you want all of your dues to support local conservation and education, join BRAS only. You will NOT receive the *Audubon* magazine. You WILL receive *The Barred Owl* and a free sanctuary patch. You may join on-line at any level by visiting our website www.braudubon.org, or send this form with your check to: BRAS, P.O. Box 67016, BR LA 70896.

Patches!

Extra sanctuary patches or patches for NAS members are \$10 each and can be ordered by using the form to the right. If you are joining BRAS and want a **free** patch, you must put "1" in the blank.

Baton Rouge Audubon Society (BRAS)

Please enroll me as a member of BRAS! Enclosed is my check for:

- \$25 Individual Membership
- \$30 Family Membership
- \$50 Wood Thrush Membership
- \$100 Rose-breasted Grosbeak Membership
- \$250 Louisiana Waterthrush Membership
- \$500 Painted Bunting Membership
- \$1000 Cerulean Warbler Membership
- \$ _____ Additional Contribution
- \$ _____ Total remitted with form

#____ of patches (indicate 1 which is **free** with BRAS membership. Additional patches are \$10 each; NAS member patches @ \$10 each; no patch will be sent if there is no indication.)

- Electronic version of newsletter **only** (do not mail)
- Add me to the BRAS email list (to be informed of field trips, etc.)

Name: _____ Ph: _____

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