

# The **BARRED OWL**

Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Audubon Society

Volume XLV, Number 1

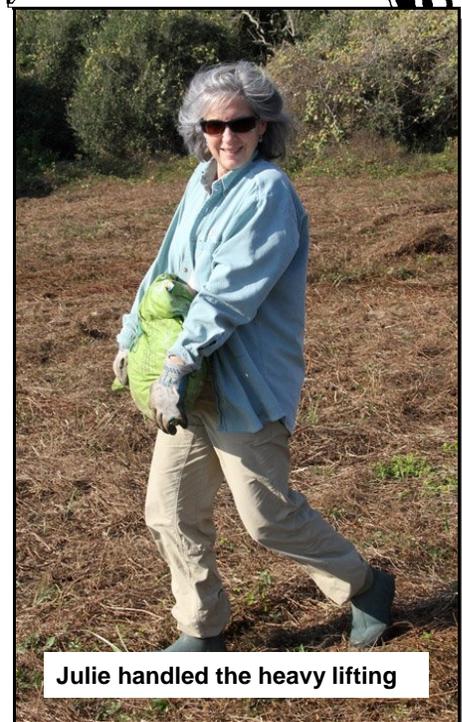
1st Quarter, 2018

## Peveto Woods Sanctuary, December Work Day

A nice turnout of volunteers and great weather resulted in a very productive work day. We planted 58 trees, repaired and weather sealed benches, and cleared trails. Acorns and seeds from live oaks, honey locusts, and prickly ash were collected two years ago, and were grown in pots. They were ready for planting and

December 2nd was a great day to get them in the ground. We hired a tractor and auger to do the digging and a several very energetic teams worked to get the trees planted, watered, and staked. Special thanks to the SW Louisiana Master Naturalists from the Lake Charles area that handled most of the planting. They were represented by Edith Holland, David Booth, Ian Booth, Dane Booth, Julie and Larry Amy, and Brittany Manuel. Mac Myers and Phillip Wallace provided support with watering, flagging and fertilizer. Kevin Leigh and Justin Lehman spent the day trimming branches back from the trails and liberating a few of

the badly enshrouded young trees from vines. Gene Barnett and Bill Gover washed, repaired, and sealed the wooden benches, many of which they have built and installed over the years. Also a thank you to Scotty Badon and his tractor for working with us to get the holes drilled for planting the trees.



Julie handled the heavy lifting



Scotty with the work saver

Thanks to all,  
**Dave Patton**  
(more photos page four)

# *Happy Holidays To All of Our Members!*

**This has been an especially busy year** for Baton Rouge Audubon! We have, of course, continued our regular, well-attended, bird walks each month, led by our own Dan Mooney. BRAS field trips saw over 200 participants in 2017 and field trip participants observed over 100 species of birds. In addition to the monthly walk at Bluebonnet we visited the Atchafalaya National Wildlife Refuge and South Farm Wildlife Management Area for other events.

Our new Programs Coordinator, Katie Percy, has taken the reins from our previous chair, Crystal Johnson, and our outstanding programs continue! We have featured programs this year on a wide variety of subjects from wildlife rehabilitation, tracking bird movement with new technology, avian diseases, monitoring bird predation, and studies regarding fruiting plant use by birds. And more great programs are planned for the upcoming year, so stay tuned!

New birders are being created each semester via our Birding Basics classes that are offered through the LSU Leisure Class and now the Osher Lifelong Learning (OLLI) system. The next class starts on February 19 and registration is opening soon, so be sure to sign up before the classes fill up! I am also going to be offering a "*Birding Beyond the Basics*" class starting in January. You can read about this elsewhere in this newsletter. It's designed for those that have taken the Basics class but are eager to learn more!

In keeping with National Audubon's nationwide effort to create more bird-friendly habitat, our efforts regarding "*Native Plants for Birds*" are well underway! We have created a page on our website that lists many places in and around Baton Rouge where native plants can be sourced. And speaking of our website, it is undergoing a facelift to make it more "mobile friendly" and we hope to have it ready in time for the New Year! We are also working with local partners to sponsor an event early next year that will feature information regarding what native plants to plant to help birds (and you'll be able to buy plants, too!).

**Peveto Woods**, our sanctuary in Cameron Parish, is flourishing. It was a good year for nature to continue the recovery process from Hurricanes Rita and Ike. Fortunately Harvey spared us the worst of its fury. Plenty of rain generated a lush growth of vines and understory in the sanctuary.. Trails and water features were maintained, and a nice list of visitors from all parts of the country signed the register. A volunteer work weekend took place on December 2nd and 3rd for maintenance and tree planting. Several varieties were germinated from seeds gathered along the coast and after 2 years of growing in the nursery, were ready to plant. The MOTUS Wildlife Tracking tower receiver that was erected in the sanctuary by LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries as part of network spread along the Gulf Coast has been doing its job. Several tagged birds were detected in the sanctuary as they passed in migration. The Osprey tower has been investigated by potential nesters, but no nest building yet. We plan to "seed" the platform with branches to encourage a nesting pair of Ospreys.

Work continues on our quest to add to our sanctuary portfolio. We have two very attractive pieces of land under consideration, and both are very close to Baton Rouge. We are anxious to put the sanctuary fund dollars and donations to work, so we have our fingers crossed that a purchase will be worked out shortly.

**The Louisiana Bird Observatory**, a network of four year-round banding stations, continues monitoring the health of Louisiana's songbirds, and we captured and recaptured over 1,500 birds of 65 species this year. We were excited to recapture a Brown Thrasher at least 6 years and 3 months old, a Northern Cardinal 6 years and 7 months old, and a tiny Orange-crowned Warbler at least 5 years and 8 months old – caught in the same net 5 years to the day after its initial capture!

If you have followed the many activities throughout the past year in our "*Barred Owl*" newsletter, then you know that Baton Rouge Audubon remains a vibrant chapter and one that you can be proud of supporting. We are very interested in hearing about initiatives that are important to our membership. Please respond to our on-line survey to indicate what you'd like to see from Baton Rouge Audubon in the future. Also, please consider a tax-deductible financial gift this season, and please be assured that your donations will be put to good use to help our birds here in Baton Rouge! You may send a check with the form on the back page of this newsletter, or you can contribute via PayPal by sending a donation from your PayPal account to treasurer@braudubon.org (Please include "donation" in the comments section).

Many, many thanks to all of our members for your ongoing support! We have a great chapter here in Baton Rouge and are doing good things for birds and the people who love them!

*Jane Patterson — BRAS President*



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# BRAS Speaker Series 2017 - 2018

We had another excellent line up of speakers this fall, and we are grateful to each for taking the time to share their fascinating work with the local community. We would also like to thank the staff at BREC's Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center for continuing to accommodate our speaker series.

**In September**, Dia Windhoffer presented results from her recent graduate research. Ms. Windhoffer deployed video systems on Royal and Sandwich tern colonies on Louisiana's barrier islands to determine specific causes of nest failure and the effectiveness of mammalian removal efforts to increase nest success. During her presentation, Ms. Windhoffer shared video footage that was the first ever to confirm depredation of Royal and Sandwich tern nests by nutria!

**In October**, we were delighted to host Michael Seymour, Nongame Ornithologist for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Natural Heritage Program. Mr. Seymour presented on Louisiana's SPDOR VHF Network for Wildlife Tracking, a network of VHF receiver stations that are able to detect and log codes from tiny, radio tags (i.e. nanotags) attached to birds and other organisms.

**In November**, Dr. Kevin Ringleman, Assistant Professor in the School of Renewable Natural Resources at LSU, gave an overview of his waterfowl research and training program. Dr. Ringleman's current research on waterfowl ecology and management includes the use of drone-mounted thermal cameras to monitor nest predators in Manitoba, as well as high-resolution GPS telemetry on Mottled Ducks in Louisiana.

It has been extremely exciting to hear about the use of these varied and novel technologies to study wildlife populations, particularly birds, in Louisiana. If you have any suggestions for future speakers, please let us know

([programs@braudubon.org](mailto:programs@braudubon.org)).

## The first two speakers of 2018 are scheduled:

**On January 11th**, Doug Meffert, Vice President of the National Audubon Society, will present the findings of Audubon's Birds and Climate Change Report. Scientist with the National Audubon Society analyzed three decades of data from the Christmas Bird Count, as well as the North American Breeding Bird Survey, and found that 314 North American bird species are threatened by climate change. If you are anxious to find out more before the presentation in January, please visit [www.climate.audubon.org](http://www.climate.audubon.org).

**On February 22nd**, we will host Dr. Peter Marra, Director of the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center. Dr. Marra's research in avian conservation is primarily focused on the ecology of migratory birds, urban ecosystem ecology and disease ecology. In February, Dr. Marra will be presenting on his recent book (co-authored with Chris Santella) titled *Cat Wars - The Devastating Consequences of a Cuddly Killer*, which tells the story of the threats free-ranging cats pose to biodiversity and public health throughout the world. This book and lecture traces the historical and cultural ties between humans and cats from early domestication to the current boom in pet ownership. Dr. Marra accessibly explains the science of extinction, population modeling, and feline diseases. This event is intended to promote civil discourse around an important and emotional conservation topic. In order to accommodate more people, we will host this presentation at the East Baton Rouge Parish Main Library, located on Goodwood Blvd.

You do not have to be a BRAS member to attend any of these presentations. Feel free to share the announcements and bring a friend!

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## Birding Beyond the Basics with Jane Patterson

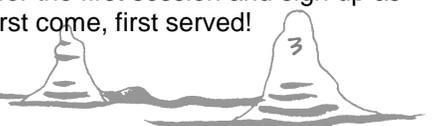
So you've taken Jane Patterson's Birding Basics class and you're asking "now what?" Well the answer is "Go birding! Go birding a lot!" But if you feel still like you need some guidance along the way...here's a new option for you!

Beginning next year, Jane will be holding half and whole day birding sessions. The group will travel to different birding locations in the state. But this is not just about ticking off bird names on a list; this is about education. We will talk through the birds as we are seeing them, taking time to note their habits. And after we are done, we will compile a list and then spend some time talking about what we've seen and giving people an opportunity

to ask questions.

The "class" size will be limited to 12 and you must be an alumnus of Jane's Birding Basics class. You will sign up via the BRAS website and there will be a small fee for each session. Each session is independent so you can sign up for any for which you are available. You must provide your own transportation to each location, although we will try to carpool as much as we can.

So be on the look out for the first session and sign up as soon as you can; it's first come, first served!



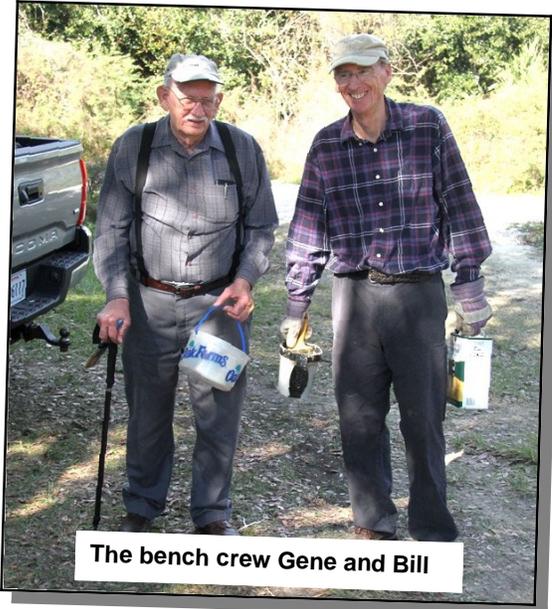


Experts with a hammer Phillip and Mac

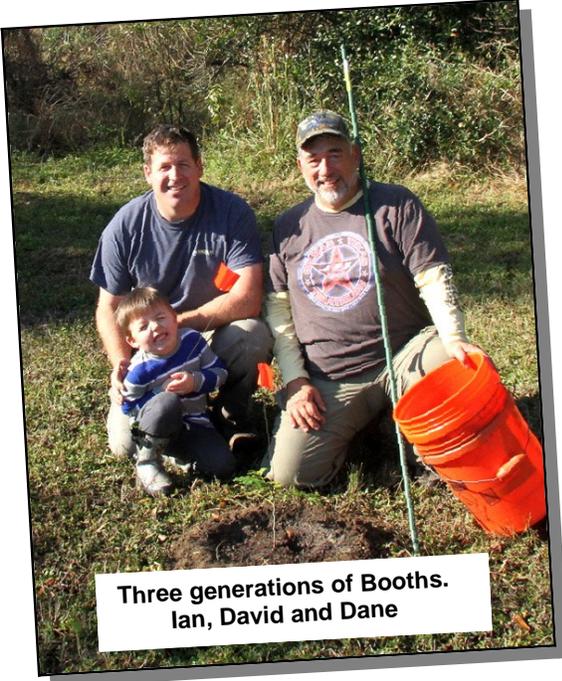


Julie and Larry always a good team

PEVETO WOODS  
WORK DAY  
DECEMBER 2017



The bench crew Gene and Bill



Three generations of Booths.  
Ian, David and Dane



Edith provided the know how

# Hilltop Arboretum 2018 Symposium

## ***PLANTING IN A POST-WILD WORLD:***

*Designing Plant Communities for Resilient Landscapes*

Featuring Claudia West

**Saturday, January 13, 2018**

**Registration: 8:15am**

**Program: 9:00am – 1:00pm**

**Post Program Sales: Until 2:00pm**

**LSU Design Auditorium**

CEU's for master gardeners and landscape architects!

**Claudia West** reveals the future of planting design in an inspiring presentation about a powerful alternative to traditional horticulture: designed plantings that function like naturally occurring plant communities. You will learn how plants fit together in nature and how to use this knowledge to create landscapes that are resilient, beautiful and diverse.

As always you will have time to enjoy the **Hodge Podge Volunteers** hospitality offerings, plants Claudia will discuss during her presentation, book and gift shop sales at 8:15-9:00am, at the mid-morning break, and after the program until 2:00pm. Claudia will be available to sign copies of her new book published by Timber Press you can purchase the day of the symposium.

Another special treat you can look forward to from our volunteers are tastings from their new cookbook "***Passalong Recipes from the Podge – Digging Deeper***" hot off the press and ready for you to purchase. This cookbook is the second to be undertaken and published by our volunteers and has been in the works for over two years. The recipes are all tested and delicious!

**It pays to be an Early Bird!**  
**Register by January 5, 2018 for savings.**

**EARLY REGISTRATIONS:** \$55 (Members), \$70 (Non-Members) and \$20 (Students).  
**LATE REGISTRATIONS:** \$65 (Members), \$80 (Non-Members) and \$30 (Students).

A ticket to the symposium is a great holiday gift for the gardeners in your family!

Visit the Hilltop Arboretum website for registration information!

# *Euonymus americana*

By the nature dude (Bill Fontenot)

**Strawberry Bush** (*Euonymus americana*; aka "Bursting Heart" or "Hearts-a-Bustin") is a woodland shrub native to the southeastern U.S., including most Louisiana parishes outside of the Mississippi River floodplain. It normally grows to 4-5' in height and features a sort of flimsy/airy growth habit -- almost "see through". It very much appreciates light shade, and looks its best in bright filtered light -- the type of light quality found beneath tall mature shade trees. I've seen it planted under direct sun; and though it fruits heavier in full sun, its leaves tend to look stressed/tortured and its stems quickly fill with lichens. Essentially, its life is probably shortened under direct sun conditions....



Named for its strawberry-shaped/colored (or heart-shaped/colored if you prefer) seed pods which pop open to reveal several luscious-looking orange berries, Strawberry Bush puts on quite a show when it fruits at summer's end. It also possesses excellent fall foliage color ranging from cream(!) to pink to bright shades of crimson.

Biologists who study wildlife food habits tend to dismiss Strawberry Bush fruits as a minor food source (< 5% of total diet) for birds and mammals. Personally, the fruits look too good for me to believe that.

**Consider Strawberry Bush  
for your shade garden needs!**



The Early Bird Catches The Word - solution  
(from our previous Barred Owl)

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## Christmas Bird Count season is upon us!

Audubon's 118th Christmas Bird Count will be conducted this coming season, with all counts held between the dates of Thursday, December 14, 2017 through Friday, January 5, 2018. Look on the National Audubon website to find a map of circles expected to be included in this year's count. If you're interested in participating this season, check out the map to find a count near you. The Baton Rouge Christmas Bird Count takes place on December 30th this year. Please contact the Baton Rouge CBC compiler Katie Percy at [kpercy@audubon.org](mailto:kpercy@audubon.org) to sign up.

If you're so inclined you can participate in more than one, or many, CBC's in Louisiana! For a full list, check out [losbird.org](http://losbird.org) (Louisiana Ornithological Society) web page. How does participation work?

There is a specific methodology to the CBC, and all participants must make arrangements to participate in advance with the circle compiler within an established circle, but anyone can participate. New birders are encouraged; you may not be able to identify everything but you can help spot birds.

Each count takes place in an established 15-mile wide diameter circle, and is organized by a count compiler. Count volunteers follow specified routes through a designated 15-mile diameter circle, counting every bird they see or hear all day. It's not just a species tally—all birds are counted all day, giving an indication of the total number of birds in the circle that day.

If you are a beginning birder, you will be able to join a group that includes at least one experienced birdwatcher.

If your home is within the boundaries of a CBC circle, then you can stay at home and report the birds that visit your feeder on count day as long as you have made prior arrangement with the count compiler.

We need all the help we can get! Hope to see you on the 30th!

## *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](mailto: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](mailto:membership@braudubon.org)

**Also please follow us on Facebook at**  
[www.facebook.com/BRAudubon](http://www.facebook.com/BRAudubon)

## Baton Rouge Audubon Officers

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## The Barred Owl

is published quarterly by the Baton Rouge chapter of the NAS. Submissions should be emailed to [newsletter@braudubon.org](mailto:newsletter@braudubon.org)

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

Baton Rouge  
Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 67016  
Baton Rouge, LA 70896



Baton Rouge Chapter of the National Audubon Society

**Baton Rouge Audubon Society**

P.O. Box 67016

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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: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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

MAIL COMPLETE FORM TO:  
**Baton Rouge Audubon Society**  
**PO Box 67016**  
**Baton Rouge, LA 70896**