

# The **BARRED OWL**

Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Audubon Society

Volume L - Number 1

1st Quarter, 2023



## Trail Cam Action At Amite River Wildlife Sanctuary!

We've set up a trail camera at the ARWS to see what we could find out about wildlife at the sanctuary. So far, we have documented 8+ species of mammal, mostly active at night. These include White-tailed Deer, Raccoon, Opossum, Armadillo, Red Fox, Squirrel, Rabbit, Mink,, a couple of small rodents, and Bobcat. I'm pretty excited about that Bobcat!

In addition to this, Mark Pethke was also able to photograph a River Otter in the sanctuary one morning.



Join Us on April 13th for

## "Birding Without Borders" with Noah Strycker

The Baton Rouge Audubon Society is proud to announce a talk by Noah Strycker, Associate Editor of *Birding* magazine, the official publication of the American Birding Association, and acclaimed author of *Birding Without Borders*, *The Thing with Feathers*, and co-author of the National Geographic Backyard Guide to the Birds of North America.

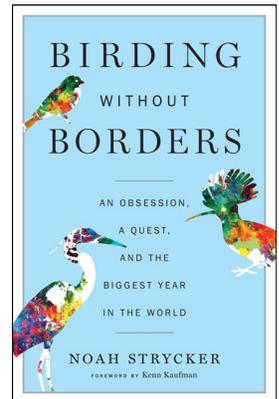


In 2015, bird nerd Noah Strycker of Oregon became the first human to see more than half of the planet's bird species in a single, year-long, round-the-world birding trip. Anything could have happened, and a lot did. He was scourged by blood-sucking leeches, suffered fevers and sleep deprivation, survived airline snafus, car breakdowns, mudslides, torrential floods, skirted war zones, and . . . had the time of his life. Birding on seven continents and carrying only a pack on his back, Strycker enlisted the enthusiastic support of local birders to tick more than 6,000 species, including Adelie Penguins in Antarctica, a Harpy Eagle in Brazil, a Spoon-billed Sandpiper in Thailand, and a Green-breasted Pitta in Uganda.

This humorous and inspiring presentation about Strycker's epic World Big Year will leave you with a new appreciation for the birds and birders of the world.

Noah's website: [noahstrycker.com](http://noahstrycker.com)

**BRAS meetings are now in person, but hybrid/ zooming capabilities are offered if you register in advance. Social hour is 6:30 p.m. and talks begin at 7 p.m. Please attend in person, if possible, to make our speakers feel welcome!**



## 2023 BRAS Sanctuary Patches Are Here!



Do you have your 2023 Baton Rouge Audubon Sanctuary patch? This beautiful work of art features a male Indigo Bunting. The artwork is courtesy (once again) of Donna Dittmann. If you are an active Baton Rouge Audubon member, please contact our membership coordinator, Heather Wilson, at [membership@braudubon.org](mailto:membership@braudubon.org) to request your 2023 patch.

# Naming Our Legacy Trees

If you've been following along with the progress at the new BR Audubon Amite River Wildlife Sanctuary, you are aware that we plan to feature two legacy trees on the property. There is a bald cypress tree that was dated by the Louisiana Purchase Legacy Cypress project to be between 400 and 600 years old, dating to as far back as the early 1400's. The legacy live oak, judging by its size, would likely be between 350 and 400 years old, dating back to the early 1600's. Both pre-date the European settlers to the area, which got me wondering which indigenous peoples might have lived here prior to colonization. After researching, there were a



couple of possibilities, but the Chitimacha tribe inhabited basically what is now called the Atchafalaya river basin. This is one of the 4 sovereign tribes of Louisiana, recognized by the federal government, and the only one still living on their ancestral lands, though their reservation is significantly south of Ascension parish in Charenton LA. I contacted the Chitimacha museum to ask about translating a couple of words to use as names for our legacy trees so that I could tie in this cultural significance to our sanctuary site. When I asked for these translations, I didn't imagine it was a big deal as I was just asking for translations for what I sup-

posed were fairly common words. But I didn't get an answer right away. As circumstances would have it, I ended up not far from the museum in Charenton in November so I decided to stop by and ask about it. Theresa, who greeted me, asked if I'd like the museum tour. She said the tour started with a film. As the film began, I realized that the simple request to translate a few words from English to the Chitimacha language was far from simple. The film was all about the fact that their language had been, in fact, extinct. The last speakers died in 1940. However, a linguist had come to their village in the 1930's and recorded over 200 hours of language from that last two native speakers. The recordings were on wax spools and were very scratchy and often garbled, but at least it was something, and over a decade ago, the tribe began the effort to reclaim their language. They worked with **Rosetta Stone** to create a language learning series that is now used in schools and for their adult tribe members. They start teaching Chitimacha as young as nursery school and throughout all grades in their school. They are trying to reclaim and preserve their heritage through their language.

After the tour, it was explained to me that they were having trouble with the translations of one of the words I'd asked for and that's why the response to the request was taking so long. She said they were working on it and hoped to have an answer soon.

Shortly after this visit, I received that answer.



For the legacy cypress tree, I'd asked for the translation for "strong spirit". In Chitimacha, that is *Yaagi Niksta* (pronounced Yah-Gee Neek-Stah [hard "G"]). This tree has indeed had a strong spirit to have lived for as many as 600 years.

For the legacy live oak tree, I'd asked for the translation of "heart" because this tree is in the heart of our sanctuary, the branches look like a heart and it also has had a lot of heart to survive in the middle of the swamp where a live oak really doesn't even belong. The translation is *Puxna* (pronounced Poosh-Nah), our Heart Oak.

Many thanks to the Chitimacha Indian tribe for their approval of my request and assistance with these translations!

Due to overwhelming support I was able to get plaques for each of these trees that properly honors them. Thank you again to everyone who donated!

So, please, when you visit the sanctuary, visit each of these trees and say "*huya*" (thank you) to our ancient trees!

- Jane Patterson

# 2022-23 Christmas Bird Count Wrap-up!

**The Baton Rouge Christmas Bird Count (CBC)** was held on Thursday, January 5th, 2023. This was a reschedule date – and a departure from our tradition of holding the count on a Saturday – because of weather. On count day, temperatures started in the mid-40s and rose to the low-70s F; skies stayed mostly clear and the wind was variable, but relatively calm throughout the day (max wind speeds were 10 mph).

A total of 138 species were recorded on count day this year, which is roughly the average for

the Baton Rouge count since the 1990s.

New to the circle (with exact count in parentheses) included Mountain Bluebird (1), Great-tailed Grackle (4) and Limpkin (1)!

Rare species included Horned Grebe (2), Common Gallinule (4), Broad-tailed Hummingbird (1), Ash-throated Flycatcher (1), Black-and-white Warbler (2), Yellow Warbler (2; new high count), and Painted Bunting (3; tied for high count).

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Native Plants Wanted!

This is garden show season and lots of the shows are now featuring native plants. We would \*love\* for you to consider buying a plant or two to donate to the Amite River Wildlife Sanctuary. It not only benefits the sanctuary but you also get to feel like you have made a permanent investment in the place!

Any type of native tree, shrub, or perennial is fine. We plan to plant these along the trails and feature them in our interpretive signage. In particular, we have dubbed the short trail from the clearing to the north border as the "Iris Trail" and I have planted several Louisiana irises along this stretch. They are doing very well and I can't wait to see them bloom in a month or so! If you do decide to donate iris, be sure they are Louisiana iris, which do not have a rib in the center of the leaf. Please contact me ([seejanebird@gmail.com](mailto:seejanebird@gmail.com)) for any plant contributions so that we can coordinate planting most effectively.



## Walk With Audubon



Baton Rouge Audubon has partnered with the Friends of Oakley Plantation to feature new guided bird walks at the Audubon Historic Site in St. Francisville. These walks will be held quarterly on the second Saturday of the month in January, April, July, and October from 9-11:30am. Please join our mailing list ([braudubon+subscribe@groups.io](mailto:braudubon+subscribe@groups.io)) to receive notifications as to dates and times and registration information. Registration will be required to manage the number of attendees. Bring your own binoculars. There is no fee.

Oakley Plantation is where John James Audubon spent a summer as a tutor in 1821. It is said that this is where his career as an artist pivoted and he began work on the masterpieces that would comprise part of his Birds of America portfolio. No doubt Audubon himself traipsed in these very woods where you can visit and enjoy the bird life that inspired his passion and his art.



# Christmas Bird Count - Recap

(Continued from page 4)

Additional high count records included Wilson's Warbler (14) and Scaly-Breasted Munia (15; the species is now on the official state checklist and, thus, does count towards our CBC species total).

Low counts included Wilson's Snipe (2), Fish Crow (1) and Common Grackle (229). And altogether misses (i.e., no individuals documented) included Cattle Egret (for the second year in a row).

Over 50 people participated this year, and we thank every single person for their contribution – whether in the field or watching feeders! If you have any questions or would like additional information about the count this year, please email our compiler, Katie Percy (katiepercy@gmail.com).

Historical CBC records for all count circles and species can be accessed at: [netapp.audubon.org/cbcobservation/](http://netapp.audubon.org/cbcobservation/)

Next year, for the 124th CBC, we will again plan to hold the Baton Rouge count on the last Saturday of the count window, which falls on December 30th, 2023. Mark your calendars now!

- Katie Percy

## Baton Rouge Audubon YouTube Channel

**Do you subscribe to the Baton Rouge  
Audubon YouTube channel?**

<https://tinyurl.com/28h2cjxt>

Subscribe now and get a notification when a new video is uploaded our channel. All of our monthly programs will be stored there, as well as other special programs.

## **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! To be added to the email list, simply send an email with only your name in the body of the email to [braudubon+subscribe@groups.io](mailto:braudubon+subscribe@groups.io)

**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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Jane Patterson  
[president@braudubon.org](mailto:president@braudubon.org)

### Vice-President

Katherine Gividen  
[vice-president@braudubon.org](mailto:vice-president@braudubon.org)

### Treasurer

Mark Pethke  
[treasurer@braudubon.org](mailto:treasurer@braudubon.org)

### Secretary

Donna LaFleur  
[secretary@braudubon.org](mailto:secretary@braudubon.org)

## Committee Chairs

### Conservation

Richard Condrey  
[conservation@braudubon.org](mailto:conservation@braudubon.org)

### Education

Jane Patterson  
[education@braudubon.org](mailto:education@braudubon.org)

### Fieldtrips

Daniel Mooney  
[fieldtrips@braudubon.org](mailto:fieldtrips@braudubon.org)

### Hospitality

Debbie Taylor

### Membership

Heather Wilson 985/768-9285  
[membership@braudubon.org](mailto:membership@braudubon.org)

### Newsletter

Steve Mumford  
[newsletter@braudubon.org](mailto:newsletter@braudubon.org)

### Programs

Collette Dean, Katie Percy,  
& Marie Varnes  
[programs@braudubon.org](mailto:programs@braudubon.org)

### Sanctuaries

Dave Patton  
[sanctuary@braudubon.org](mailto:sanctuary@braudubon.org)

### Webmaster

Daniel Patterson  
[webmaster@braudubon.org](mailto:webmaster@braudubon.org)

### At Large Members...

Erik Johnson  
Debbie Taylor  
Casey Wright

## The Barred Owl

is published quarterly by the  
Baton Rouge chapter of the NAS.  
Submissions should be emailed to  
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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

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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](http://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](http://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: \_\_\_\_\_

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