

The **BARRED OWL**

Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Audubon Society

Volume LII - Number 3

Autumn/Winter 2025

The Lights Out Program

by Ellen Ogden

We are in the thick of migration season, and a local artist has one question, “*are Y’all for the birds, or what?*” The Lights Out Program is one way to address human-made catastrophes to our avifauna friends. Another way is to address collisions resulting from the glass architecture of our buildings. If you read our newsletter regularly, you’ll have read about a project visual artist, muralist, stained glass artisan Ellen Ogden started this year in partnership with our Baton Rouge Audubon Society. Find more details in the fourth quarter newsletter from 2024. To summarize the why: up to one billion or slightly more birds die per year in North America alone due to collisions with our glass architecture, 44% with occur at houses and multi-unit residences 1-2 stories tall, 56% at other residential and non-residential buildings 4-11 stories, and

only 1% at high rise structures 12 or more stories. Of all North American species, 29.7% have been observed as collision fatalities, and it is estimated that for every observed fatality, there are at least 3 more unobserved due to predation and morbidity away from

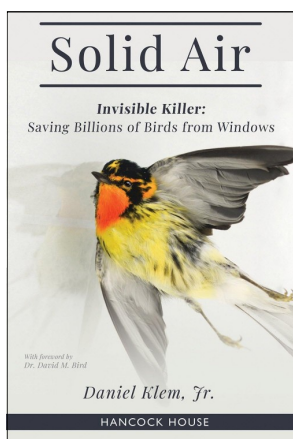
the site of impact. That said, there are many easy and effective ways to retrofit our buildings and build new architecture in a bird-safe way (see link at end of article for resources, including coloring sheets!)

Ellen and her team are fundraising to install a handpainted method that is ecologically friendly, more sustainable, long-lasting, cost effective, and matches the installation time and requirements of the most data-backed effective installation (Feather Friendly vinyl dots). There are any number of methods you can DIY (resources in link), the essential need is to make apparent to our flying friends that there is a barrier and the glass is not a habitat. The specifics of the most effective solution are:

- That there is some installation on the outside of the glass
- The deterrent is a minimum of ¼” in thickness,
- The deterrent is installed in rows or a grid or design repeated at least every 2”

Things like screens, latex paint, and paracord are all effective solutions. One of the biggest deterrents Ellen has encountered is a fear that

(Continued on page 6)



Plants for Birds - Wax Myrtle

Wax Myrtle (*Morella cerifera*) is a large evergreen shrub (6-20 feet unless you have a dwarf variety) that is often found near water in south Louisiana. The light olive-green foliage has a spicy fragrance. Pale blue fruits occur on female plants in the winter. Handsome gray bark is almost white on some plants.

Native from New Jersey west to eastern Oklahoma and east Texas, south through Mexico to Central America as well as through much of the Caribbean, this popular evergreen ornamental is used for screens, hedges, landscaping, wetland gardens, habitat restoration, and as a source of honey. Essentially a shrub, it serves as an excellent screen plant, with both standard and dwarf varieties available. Because there are separate male and female plants, if you want berries you must have male plants close enough to the berry-producing female plants for pollination to occur. The leaves are aromatic, with an appealing, piquant fragrance when crushed. Colonists separated the fruits' waxy covering in boiling water to make fragrant-burning bay-berry candles, a custom still followed in some countries.

One of our most common winter birds is the Yellow-rumped Warbler or Myrtle Warbler aka Butter Butt. It can be found in all kinds of habitats, but as the name implies, is very fond of Wax Myrtle fruit. These birds breed very far north in North America but spend the winter with us. Like many other boreal-nesting warblers, their plumage changes significantly in the winter and you may be surprised how different they look in their breeding finery. They are just arriving now, in early October. Be on the lookout!



Do you have your 2025 Baton Rouge Audubon Sanctuary patch?

This beautiful work of art features a Summer Tanager. The artwork is courtesy of the very talented artist, Donna Dittmann. If you are an active Baton Rouge Audubon member, please contact Mark Pethke, at treasurer@braudubon.org to request your 2025 patch.

BRAS PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Fall 2025 through Spring 2026

October 29, 2025

Using Merlin & eBird (for beginners) with Jane Patterson. If you're new to Merlin and / or eBird, this program might be for you. Jane will discuss the scientific value of using eBird and offer some trips and tricks for using both apps.

November 12, 2025

History of Peveto Woods Sanctuary with Dave Patton. Dave has been involved with Baton Rouge Audubon and Peveto Woods for decades and spent one of those decades as manager of the sanctuary. He will recount this history of the property and offer unique insights to the flora and fauna of the place.

Dec 10, 2025 - ANNUAL POTLUCK

Birding Down Under with Katherine Gividen and Jane Patterson. Bring a dish to share and try some Australian specialties! Katherine and Jane will regale you with tales of Birding in Australia in 2023 while you sample delicacies from down under

January 28, 2026

50 Years of Louisiana Birding with David Muth. David is one of the premier birders from Louisiana. He wrote an outstanding essay about his experiences over a half century of birding in Louisiana. He describes the birds that have started showing up and the ones that have flown the coop.

February 25, 2026

Louisiana Snake ID with The Hoods

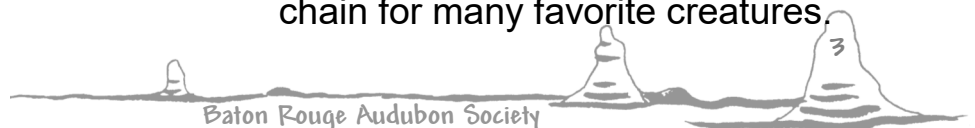
As birders, we spend a lot of time outside and inevitably we see snakes on our sojourns. It'd be nice to know what's what. Kevin and Rachel Hood - along with their family - will tell us all about Louisiana snakes and we'll learn how to tell venomous and non-venomous species apart once and for all!

March 25, 2026

All About Hummingbirds with Dennis Demcheck. Dennis is a long-time "humnut" and has been watching, photographing, and learning about hummingbirds in his yard for decades. He has also done extensive research into sugar content of various hummingbird plants' nectar. C

April 29, 2026

The Birds and The Bees with Frank Rinkevich. Insects are among the most underappreciated but most critical components of a healthy ecosystem providing many benefits to our natural systems having great influence on our culture and society. In this talk, Rinkevich will discuss the many contributions insects have had on us: natural selection, mythologies, and creating practical and valuable items for mankind. We will see how insects have benefitted the world through nutrient recycling and ecosystem services as well as their contributions to the food chain for many favorite creatures.



HUMMINGBIRD CELEBRATION !



The Second Annual Hummingbird Celebration at LSU Ag Center Research Station in Hammond generated lots of excitement! Over 250 people showed up to enjoy the hummingbirds, learn about plants that hummingbirds particularly like, buy bird-related merch from Backyard Birds & Gardens of Covington and Wild Birds Unlimited store of Baton Rouge, and appreciate the demonstration gardens at the Research Center. There was standing room only at Jane's talk about hummingbirds.

A few fortunate folks got to participate in the release of hummingbirds after they were banded by Dr. Erik Johnson. Mark your calendar for next year's celebration in the third week of September!

Many thanks for the volunteers from BR Audubon, Wild Ones Pontchartrain chapter, Tangipahoa Master Gardeners and LSU Ag Center who helped make the day possible.

~~ Girl Scouts Care ~~

Girl Scouts always leave a place better than they found it! We worked on way finding and hiking at the beautiful Baton Rouge Audubon Society's Amite River Wildlife Sanctuary. Members from Girl Scout Troop 30017 - Louisiana East (including BR Audubon's KidsWho-Bird members Charlie and Catherine) used iNaturalist along the trail to help document animals and plants.



In addition, in our planning meeting, our troop decided to donate a first aid kit for the trailhead cabinet for sanctuary volunteers and visitors.

Also, kudos to our scouts that our 4H members...they collected trash along the trail for their 4H day of service!

- Lisa Leblanc



ST. AMANT ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE CLUB CONNECTS WITH NATURE AT AMITE RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY



The St. Amant Environmental Science Club spent a beautiful Saturday morning, October 4th, at the Amite River Wildlife Sanctuary for their first nature walk of the season. The club has been exploring Louisiana's natural areas for five years, but this year, sponsor Ms. Correll introduced nature journaling. Students were invited to reflect on the prompt, "Are you connected with nature?" Some felt they already were, while others wanted to know what that meant or how they could better connect. During the walk, students hoped to spot insects and even a raccoon. Although no raccoon appeared, the group laughed as they played "limbo" with spiderwebs, dodged grasshoppers, and made friends with a few ground beetles...

...As the group made their way out of the woods, they paused to reflect on their experience. One student wrote that they hadn't realized how many fruits, nuts, and berries could be found in the forest and enjoyed learning about them. Another student shared that she had never really listened to the wind through the leaves before and found it relaxing. The club is looking forward to many more adventures this year and is grateful to have the Amite River Wildlife Sanctuary as a place to explore, learn, and grow closer to nature.

- Chantal Correll

Lights Out Program

(Continued from page 1)

views of the landscape will be impaired by any sort of bird-safe retrofitting: if you are afraid the solution will be an obstruction of your view, please go observe the proof of concept at BREC's Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center: you'll find the installation on the Northwest corner of the main facility. Please walk inside to see how minimally the view is impacted. Though the effort and ethos can be lauded for promoting awareness, many companies' products that claim to be effective are proven by data to be either not effective at all, or significantly less effective than the 2"x2" method: things such as predator-mimic stickers/decoys (not effective

at all), reflective ornaments (minimally effective), or UV stickers (significantly less effective than the 2" method).

There are currently fundraising goals for active estimates to install at BREC's Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center and at the EBRPL main Goodwood library, and the team is happy to provide estimates available upon request for any architecture in the Southeast. The team is optimistic about partnering with window-washing companies as contracted installers or consultants, as an addendum to services offered, and looking for connections to property managers as well as fundraising partners and sponsors, with sponsorship ac-

knowledge available on site at the library. Sites of interest include the new Belle Casino and the airport. The creative team is open to doing home installations for free. Please reach out to yallforthebirds@gmail.com or contact Ellen directly with any questions or fundraising help (225) 205-9820. Baton Rouge Audubon Society has agreed to be fiscal agent as an operating 501c3 Non-profit for charitable donation deductions.

Lastly, please submit images of any carcasses found in Baton Rouge, particularly at the EBRPL Main Goodwood Library to I-naturalist to be compiled in the overall data set of collisions started by Phil Stouffer, Lee F. Mason Professor at LSU. Follow the project and find resources at:

Facebook @Y'all for the birds
instagram @y_allforthebirds

Resources and more about the Project:

https://linktr.ee/Y_allforthebirds

References :

<https://www.amazon.com/Solid-Air-Invisible-Killer-Billions/dp/0888396465>

Bird-building Collisions in the United States: <https://tinyurl.com/547wc3e4>

126th Christmas Bird Count

Audubon's Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is the nation's longest-running community science bird project. Initiated by Dr. Frank Chapman in 1990 as an alternative to the traditional Christmas "Side Hunt" of that time, participants count, rather than hunt, every bird they see or hear within a given 15-mile diameter circle on a particular day within the count window (December 14 – January 5).

The Baton Rouge CBC circle is centered on the intersection of Highland Rd and Gardere Ln., and further subdivided into 17 areas. Each area has a designated leader, but anyone is welcome to join the count – we partner less experienced birders with more experienced birders and CBCers. We also

welcome those who live inside the count circle to record and submit a list of the individual birds they count in their yard or at their feeders.

The Baton Rouge CBC is traditionally held on the last Saturday of the count period, which is Saturday, January 3, 2026.

A plethora of information, including previous count results, a trends viewer, and a map of all count circles is available at www.christmasbirdcount.org

To participate in the Baton Rouge count, contact Katie Percy (katiepercy@gmail.com)

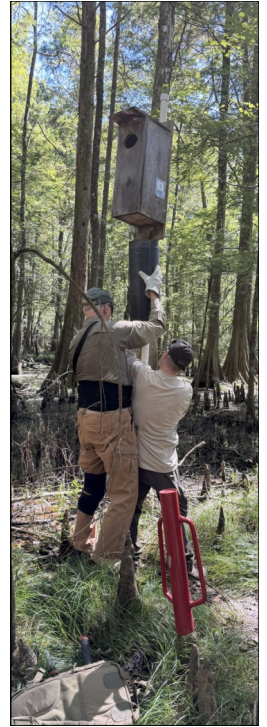


-- BRAS WORKDAYS --

~ at Amite River Wildlife Sanctuary ~

It actually felt like Fall today at the Amite River Wildlife Sanctuary (Oct 12). I want to thank all the volunteers from last Saturday and today that have cleared out the trails, cut up trees, killed and removed invasive species, and helped to get our duck box back up. The sanctuary is looking good. Come and visit!

A new project in the works is to create an outdoor classroom area in the clearing just over the hill from the picnic table. We plan to have seating for A25 or so people in an amphitheater type setting so we can hold programs and educational events. Volunteer Mark LaCour and his friends have cleared the area. Now we just need to purchase seating. Cost for concrete benches will be about \$1000. If you'd like to donate for this particular project, please use the Donate button on our website (braudubon.org) and indicate it's for ARWS classroom in the notes.



~~ meanwhile, at Peveto Woods ~~

We had a successful couple of workdays at Peveto Woods in September and October. Twelve people braved the heat and bugs. The trails have been cut and cleared and the hole in the parking area has been filled. We appreciate everyone taking the time out of their day to help. Big thanks to David Booth for the wonderful food. Watch for more work days in the future.

--text and photos by Charlotte Chehotsky



Winter Hummers

Sunday, October 12, 2025, I walked out of my front door and heard a familiar tick-tick-ticking sound....and then I saw him! A rusty, bossy hummingbird at the top of my crepe myrtle tree! An adult male Rufous-type hummingbird....my first winter hummingbird of the season! What's even more exciting is that he could be a returnee! An immature male Rufous hummingbird was banded at my house in early 2025 and this could be the same bird. I will be trying for better photos to tell.

If you are seeing hummingbirds in your yard between now and March, don't forget to report them to Erik Johnson for the official Louisiana Winter Hummingbird report. (For over-wintering Ruby-throated hummingbirds, you can wait until Nov 15 to report them)

Send an email with information about your sighting to Erik Johnson at: cassowary42@gmail.com

Please include:

- Species
- Age/sex (if known, and send photos so I can help confirm)
- Location (Town and Parish)
- First arrived date (or first observed date if you haven't been keeping daily tabs)
- Last observed date
- If banded, by whom, and when

Keep at least one feeder close to a window you use often and keep it clean and fresh. You never know what might turn up!

**Immature Rufous hummingbird in the snow in Ponchatoula, January 2025.
A feeder heater helped to keep the nectar thawed!**



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**Help out our Amite River Wildlife Sanctuary
by buying one of these beautiful t-shirts!**

**The shirts feature the beautiful artwork used for
our sanctuary sign. The shirts come in
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our channel. All of our monthly programs will be stored there, as well
as other special programs.

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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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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 online 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: _____

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