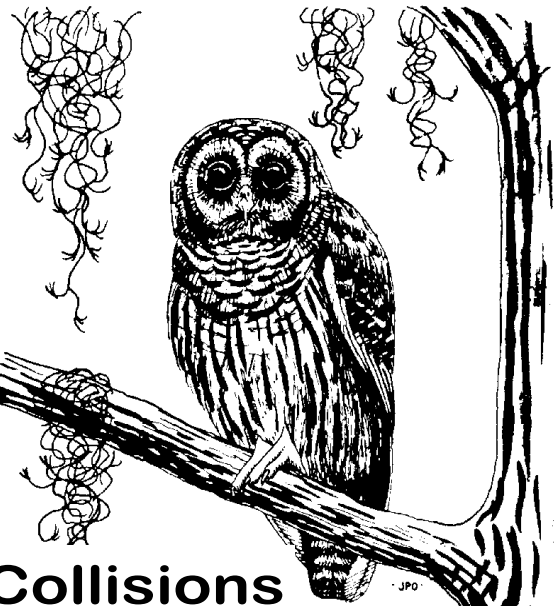


The **BARRED OWL**

Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Audubon Society

Volume L I - Number 4

4th Quarter, 2024



Help Prevent Bird Window Collisions

The Baton Rouge Audubon Society is proud to sponsor visual artist Ellen Ogden in seeking donations for a mission to install bird collision prevention art on windows at the East Baton Rouge Parish Main Library (EBRPL) on Goodwood as a prototype and education opportunity. The artistic design proposal will be funded in part by an Audubon Collaborative Grant (applied for by the artist with assistance by Jane Patterson) to support community-oriented approaches to conservation.

A frequent visitor and patron of the library, Ellen was initially shocked to observe a ruby-throated hummingbird lying next to her workstation outside the window circa ~2019. Since that initial impact, she has observed the demise of many beautiful specimens impacted by the reflective architecture, leading her to discover the dire statistics of annual bird building collisions (300 million-1 billion annually), and subsequently expand her awareness of the science of effective prevention. Only about 40% of birds survive collisions, making the estimate a difficult one to calculate as the specimens found on site do not represent the full fatalities. Phil Stouffer, Lee F. Mason Professor, School of Renewable Natural Resources has an ongoing survey of collision data from LSU facilities on iNaturalist, which Ellen will reference in her design to highlight the particular birds affected in our region.

As an artist and muralist, Ellen frequently works in architectural spaces, particularly windows. In fact, the purple martin window at this very library is one that she redesigned, selected glass, and built based on original design by LSU Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture Professor Emeritus Jon Emerson, as an apprentice with Stephen Wilson Stained Glass. A space between things: windows are not only a literal reflective space, but also a liminal figurative space to gaze, reflect, and teleport both within and without, and their capacity for bird harm is antithetical to this uplifting function. The ethos of Ellen's personal commission work is to alchemize discordance like this: from apathy or despondency to contemplation, joy, and action.

As a site of education and public programming, the project at EBRPL is one that could inspire real change, to inspire retrofitting at other sites,

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Installation of collision prevention solution at a facility in South Carolina

125th 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 4th 2025. To participate in the Baton Rouge count, contact

Katie Percy at katiepercy@gmail.com

Winter wren is one of the expected species of winter visitors seen on the annual Christmas Bird Count.



Photo by Jane Patterson

Don't Forget To Report Your Winter Hummingbirds!

If you are seeing hummingbirds in your yard this winter, don't forget to report them to Erik Johnson for the official Louisiana Winter Hummingbird report.

Send an email with information about your sighting to: Erik.Johnson@audubon.org
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

This year is shaping up to be a good year for Broad-billed Hummingbirds, which are generally more rare than other species in Louisiana. Put at least one feeder close to a window you use often and keep it clean and fresh. You never know what might turn up!

Adult Male Broad-billed Hummingbird in the yard of Rusty and DeeDee Mahoney in Tangipahoa parish, Nov 2024



Fall Field Trips

by Carson Lambert

Over the past several months, Baton Rouge Audubon has led a handful of field trips, giving participants a chance to get outside and observe a variety of birds. Of course, this begins with our monthly walks at Bluebonnet Swamp Sanctuary in Baton Rouge. We've been averaging 15-20 participants each month, ranging from expert birders to those just getting interested. It is always enjoyable to see how the birdlife and environment changes from month to month along our usual route at Bluebonnet. In the late summer, we saw many young birds who had just hatched this year in the park, and got to observe their juvenile plumages and family behaviors. As fall rolled on through September and October, our summer birds began to leave and were replaced with neotropical migrants using the swamp along their journey south, such as flycatchers and warblers. Once November arrived, we started seeing our wintering species, such as kinglets and hermit thrushes. No matter the season, the hawks, barred owls, and wading birds are always a treat to see.

As a break from the summer heat, we planned a trip to the LSU Museum of Natural History in Late August. After a brief introduction in the public side of the museum, ornithologist Dr. Nick Mason and two of his graduate students gave us

a behind the scenes tour of the outstanding bird collection in the museum. They were able to share insights about the museum's rich history, and the importance of maintaining these collections for science. Seeing these specimens up close was a rare opportunity to observe intricate details of plumage and morphology. Highlights included seeing members of popular groups such as owls, as well as the colors and diversity of the museum's impressive tropical bird collection.

In October, we led our quarterly walk at the Oakley Plantation in St. Francisville. In addition to being a great birding location, this site is also culturally significant to our organization, as it is a former home of John James Audubon. The birds he saw here helped inspire his famous world-famous paintings. This walk was co-lead by Seth Blich, Director of Conservation for The Nature Conservancy Louisiana, who provided additional background on the birds, plants, and environmental issues in our area. Highlights included a gray-cheeked thrush, great views of American redstarts, and the arrival of our earliest wintering birds. Afterwards, we were able to explore the interpretive center, and enjoy snacks generously provided by the Friends of Oakley Plantation.



As fall turned to winter, we had one more special event just across the border in Mississippi, at the Gloster Arboretum. This hidden gem is only about an hour from Baton Rouge, and has a plethora of great birding habitats, as well as rare plants and other interesting nature. We were hosted by Linda Auld, who gave us background on the history of property and helped teach us about some of the unique species there. There were many highlights, including Tennessee warblers, multiple woodpecker species, and many butterflies flying. At the end, the John James Audubon Foundation provided us with snacks and conversation in the property's historic building.

If you're interested in attending trips, please keep a watch on the Baton Rouge Audubon email listserv- we would love to see you out in the field with us! Remember our monthly Bluebonnet walks and quarterly Oakley Plantation walks. Other trips around the area will pop up here and there. If you would like to suggest or request a trip anywhere, please email

fieldtrips@braudubon.org



Life Scout Wyatt Kuhn completed his Eagle Scout project at our Amite River Wildlife Sanctuary with the installation of several more bog bridges on the trails. These low bridges are designed to allow visitors to traverse muddy spots more easily. Thanks to Wyatt, his mom, and friends for their great work in building these bridges! We have three other scouts lined up for projects at the sanctuary as well.

Also in progress at the sanctuary is the construction of two foot bridges over two of the spots on the trails that tend to have standing water. These bridges are being built by the members of the Rotary Club of Gonzales, led by Mark Lacour. We look forward to the completion of these projects! There are a half dozen more spots that have been identified as sites for foot bridges, so hopefully we'll be able to find more volunteers to complete these in the future!



KidsWhoBird

The October KidsWhoBird meeting was all about owls and the kids dissected owl pellets. So interesting to find the prey remains of small rodents and even a bird!

KidsWhoBird is a club for kids ages 9-16 who are interested in birds. We meet once a month, generally at the Fairwood branch of EBR public library on Harrell's Ferry Rd. in Baton Rouge on the third Sunday at 2:30. We also occasionally do field trips. If you've got a kid who might be interested, send an email to education@braudubon.org to be added to the mailing list.



Donate To Help Prevent Bird Window Collisions

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and even policy that mandates protecting birds from collisions. Ellen has the artistic passion, skill, and craft to design and implement artwork, educational programming, flyers, and wall plaques with the Library's approval. She is inspired to create something that highlights Baton Rouge as a site of not only the environmentally conscious, but also invites new birders into BRAS. With her

experience in community engagement via public art, as a Fellow of the Institute of Environmental Communications at Loyola University, and experience as a graduate of Louisiana Master Naturalist of

Greater Baton Rouge (LMNGBR) this project is the culmination of years of care, study, and love for our local ecology. If you are interested in resources and actionable

steps to prevent collisions at your property, Ellen can send you a curated list of articles and products, or help you design something unique.

Please consider donating to this large scale potential for bird-collision prevention. The scale of the project will be subject to the amount of funding; a large scale project could run in the tens of thousands of dol-

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Finding and Reporting Rare Birds

by Jane Patterson

For birders, finding or seeing a rare bird is always a thrill. A rare bird may be one that is truly rare in all the world, like our Whooping Cranes, or a bird that is not rare population-wise, but is unexpected in our area. In eBird, a bird qualifies as a rarity if it's present in Louisiana outside of its expected season. An example of this might be a Yellow-throated Warbler; these breed in LA in summer and are expected, but exciting to see in your yard in winter.

How do you know if a bird is rare?

If you use eBird to record your bird sightings, eBird will flag the bird when it's entered on your list, and prompt you to provide documentation before you submit your list. Documentation should include a description of the bird and its habitat, as well as how you determined that it was this particular species vs something else. Providing photos or video is an excellent idea and greatly aids the reviewer.

The Louisiana Birds Record Committee, under the auspices of the Louisiana Ornithological Society is the determinant of the official species on the bird list for Louisiana. The official list is maintained at:

<http://losbird.org/lbrc/checklist.pdf>

There is also the Review list <http://losbird.org/lbrc/ReviewListcurrent.pdf> which includes species that require documentation for the LBRC. Any bird species on the Review List should be documented for the LBRC by using the Rare Bird Report forms at <http://losbird.org/lbrc/submitreport.html>

Finding rare birds:

Occasionally people come across a rare bird on their own. It's a great feeling to discover a species that has not been reported yet! That excitement increases exponentially when it's a first record for your area or even for the state! Most of the time however, someone else has discovered the bird and you are interested in seeing it and adding it to your own list, be it life list, parish list, year list, etc. So how do you find out when rare birds have been spotted?

▶ eBird Rare Bird Alerts: On the eBird website under the Explore tab, you can find Alerts. Here you can sign up for hourly or daily reports of rare birds in your parish or in your state and those alerts will come to you in the form of an email. If you are a lister, you can also use these alerts to find out when birds that are not on your parish or state list are reported so you have a chance of seeing them.

▶ GroupMe LA Rare Bird Alerts: For even more timely notifications about rare birds in the state, you can use the GroupMe app on your smartphone to sign up for the LARBA group that is being used by Louisiana birders to report rare birds in the field, often as soon as the bird is seen and often including exact location of the bird with GPS coordinates.

In any case, the LBRC requests that you submit a Rare Bird Report to them, even if you are not the original finder of the bird. It helps to corroborate the record and ensure that it will be accepted in the official record for the species.

Sensitive species: For conservatively sensitive species, like our Whooping Cranes, care should be taken when reporting these birds. Exact locations should NOT be reported, so as to minimize stress on the birds.



Black-capped Vireo first state record reported April 21, 2020 by Jane Patterson in St. John parish.



Prevent Bird Window Collisions

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lars. It is hoped that this project could inspire others like it at sites around Baton Rouge. The Baton Rouge Audubon Society is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and all donations are deductible on federal tax returns to the limits provided by law.

You may contribute by sending a check (PO Box 67016, BTR, LA 70896) or by using the Donate button on our website to pay with PayPal (<http://braudubon.org>). If you'd prefer Venmo, please contact our treasurer Mark Pethke (treasurer@braudubon.org) for instructions.

In any case, please be sure to also send an email to Mark indicating that your donation should be allocated to the Window Collisions project.



The exterior windows at the Main Goodwood East Baton Rouge Library that is the planned site for a window collision prevention solution.

Baton Rouge Audubon

Officers

President

Jane Patterson
president@braudubon.org

Vice-President

Katherine Gividen
vice-president@braudubon.org

Treasurer

Mark Pethke
treasurer@braudubon.org

Secretary

Donna LaFleur
secretary@braudubon.org

Committee Chairs

Conservation

Richard Condrey
conservation@braudubon.org

Education

Jane Patterson
education@braudubon.org

Fieldtrips

Carson Lambert
fieldtrips@braudubon.org

Hospitality

Debbie Taylor

Membership

Heather Wilson 985/768-9285
membership@braudubon.org

Newsletter

Steve Mumford
newsletter@braudubon.org

Programs

Colette Dean and Katie Percy
programs@braudubon.org

Sanctuaries

Dave Patton
sanctuary@braudubon.org

Webmaster

Daniel Patterson
webmaster@braudubon.org

At Large Members...

Erik Johnson
Casey Wright

The Barred Owl

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

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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 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: _____

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