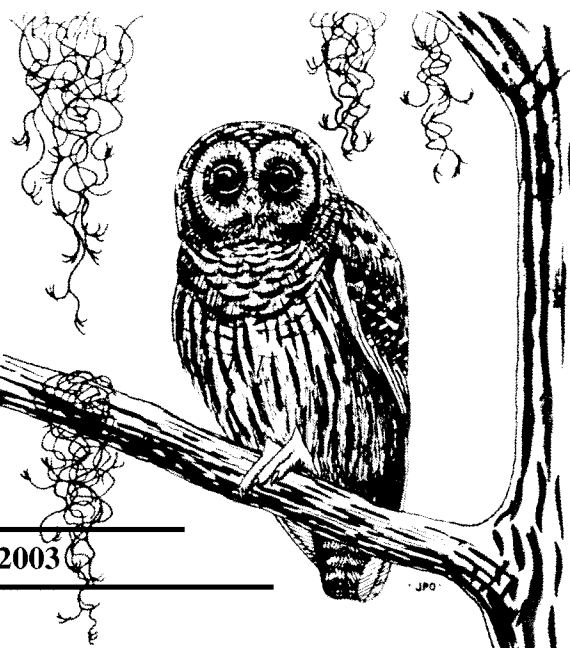


The **BARRED OWL**

Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Audubon Society

Volume XXVIX, Number 1

February / March 2003



President's Message

As 2002 came to a close and I reflected on the year that's gone by, I was particularly pleased with the accomplishments of officers and committee chairs running your BRAS chapter. On the Sanctuary front, Victoria coordinated a productive workday and took copious notes on future projects and new signage. We recruited a new board member as Newsletter Publisher, Ron Bayless. This is his first issue. You may notice a few layout changes, but the most significant improvement is the electronic formatting and transmission of the Barred Owl to the printer. In 2003, we expect to give our members the option of receiving it electronically via email. Although still learning the ropes, our Conservation and Education Committee Chairs have also been active. Mark has written several letters on behalf of BRAS regarding national and state conservation issues. Chris has recruited one Audubon Adventure elementary class. The new website (www.braudubon.org) looks great and has many new options including purchasing gifts, patches, and memberships on-line using Paypal. It's worth checking out just to see the fabulous bird photos contributed by Michael Seymour. Thanks to our web master, Stacy Clayton, for her hard work. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all board members for committing time and energy to keep BRAS alive and active. We have a long history as a presence in Louisiana and maintaining that presence is sometimes challenging given that we are an all-volunteer organization. If you want to help out by volunteering some of your time, please get in touch with one of us or send me an email from our website.

As for 2003, the board members will be putting their heads together in March to chart a short and long term course for BRAS. We'll be

discussing programs, projects, and functions of our chapter and assessing what's working and what isn't. We'll try new approaches to some things and drop others. We learned a great

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Clipart courtesy of Corel Gallery

Calendar (details inside)

February 13 BRAS Board Meeting (Dan Hendricks' house)

February 15 Saturday Field Trip to Sherburne WMA South Farm Complex

March 13 - BRAS Board Meeting (check website for location)

March 16 Peveto Woods Sanctuary Work Day

March 22 Saturday Evening (Dusk) Field Trip to Lacassine Pool

April 4 - 6 Audubon Country Bird Fest

April 10 BRAS Board Meeting (check website for location)

April 10 - 12 Southwest Louisiana Migration Sensation

April 10 - 13 The Great Louisiana Bird Fest

April 11 - 13 Grand Isle Migratory Bird Celebration

April 25 - 27 Louisiana Ornithological Spring Meeting

May 8 BRAS Board Meeting (check website for location)

May 24 Saturday Field Trip to Lake Martin Rookery

June 14 Saturday Field Trip to Whiskey Bay Road in the Atchafalaya Basin.

President's Message

(continued from page 1)

deal from our recent visit with NAS Director of Chapter Services, Lynn Teneffoss, and will keep her insights in mind as we do our planning. If you have opinions, suggestions, or ideas send us an email. We'd love some feedback from our members. The next Barred Owl will focus on results of this planning process. In the meantime, have a great 2003! May the New Year bring you more opportunities to bask in the beauty of nature and log in some interesting birds.

Field Trips



All BRAS field trips cost \$1 per person and are open to the public.

February 15 - Sherburn WMA South Farm Complex, Atchafalaya Basin
Meet at 8:30 AM in the overflow parking lot at the LA Wildlife & Fisheries Dept. Bldg. on Quail Drive in Baton Rouge to carpool 23 miles to the WMA. In the winter this site is host to a menagerie of wintering waterfowl and other avian critters, including Bald Eagles. South Farm is truly a birder's paradise right in our own backyard! We will be joined by Tony Vidrine, LDW&F biologist for Sherburne WMA, who will tell us about the history of South Farm and explain the successful water management practices that have produced such an abundance of birdlife since they were implemented by the Department in 1998. Expect to walk 3 miles to see the most birds. Bring water, snacks, and insect repellent and wear appropriate clothing and footwear. PRE-REGISTRATION REQUESTED. To sign up or for more info call Al Troy at 225/766-7784 or Email at aatroy@aol.com. NOTE: To legally enter a WMA, a valid Wild Louisiana Stamp or current hunting or fishing license is required if you are between 16 and 60 years old. Stamps can be purchased where licenses are sold.

March 22 - Late Evening (Dusk) at Lacassine Pool

Meet at Coffee Call (College Drive @ I-10) at 12 noon. Join Joe Kleiman on a trip to the rice fields around Rayne to see Teal, Shovelers, Gadwall, Fulvous Whistling-Ducks, lingering geese, Western & Least Sandpipers, Yellowlegs, Black-bellied Plover & maybe Golden Plover. We will reach Lacassine Pool in time to explore a little and see many waterfowl, shorebirds, and wading birds moving out to feed or roost - quite a spectacle. Target bird will be American Bittern though many raptors should still be around. Dress appropriately for weather and limited walking. Bring something to eat and drink since it will be late before we return. Call Joe at 751-8716 for more information.

Month of April, 2003

April is spring migration and Louisiana has several birding festivals. In lieu of a specific April BRAS fieldtrip, We encourage you to participate in one of these festivals. Look at www.birdlouisiana.com to learn more.

May 24 - Lake Martin Rookery (near Breaux Bridge, Louisiana)

Meet at Coffee Call (College Dr. @ I-10) at 6 a.m. Join Harriett Pooler to see different types of egrets and herons (& maybe Roseate Spoonbills) nesting at the Rookery. We'll take a walk around the lake and look for birds such as Indigo Buntings, Prothonotary Warblers, and Bluebirds. Bring bug spray and see "Field Trips" on page 3

Conservation Report

by Mark Skinner

Folks, remember you can learn about conservation issues through Audubon Advisory, a biweekly publication that summarizes important bird conservation issues. You can receive a copy by calling 1-800-659-2622 or emailing to audubonaction@audubon.org. Audubon Advisory makes participation in conservation advocacy easy, so please have a look. You also might want to look at <http://www.capitolconnect.com/audubon/> for other conservation issues and for information on how you can help; let's all do what we can to protect our environment for birds and the other living beings we share the planet with! Be caring, be active, love nature and each other.

Presidential Healthy Forests Initiative. Although lawmakers refused to enact President Bush's "Healthy Forests Initiative" this fall, the White House is enacting core provisions of the President's plan anyway. These include acceleration of environmental review by bypassing the need for a comprehensive environmental impact statement and limiting legal appeals. Additionally, timber cutting will continue while appeals are being heard. The

initiative is a plan for reducing the incidence of catastrophic wildfires by cutting up to 190 million acres of timber. Opponents, including forest managers, feel that a combination of selective burning and thinning around inhabited areas is the best way to accomplish this goal. The plan is seen by environmentalists as an effort to skirt environmental regulations and increase timber harvests in environmentally sensitive areas, though the White House insists that "thinning" will not occur in wilderness areas or endangered species habitats.

Clean Air Act "New Source Review"

The Bush Administration has recently weakened an EPA regulation that required power plants to upgrade pollution controls during expansion and modernization (the so-called "New Source Review" provision of the Clean Air Act). According to the EPA, this change will exempt approximately 50% of facilities from New Source Review requirements, resulting in an increase in particulate pollution and acid rain, and making it difficult for northeastern states to comply with existing EPA air quality regulations.

The good stuff, 2002. Lest you think this column is all about gloom and doom and not enough room (for wild things), several good things did happen in conservation in 2002. No new protections, but at least we held the line in several areas:

see "Conservation" on page 3

Field Trips *(continued from page 2)*

shoes/boots for some walking. We'll break around noon and stop for lunch on the way back to Baton Rouge. Call Harriett @ 291-0077 for more information.

June 14 - Whiskey Bay Road, Atchafalaya Basin

Meet at Coffee Call (College Drive @ I-10) at 6 a.m. Join Harriett Pooler to walk/drive down Whiskey Bay Road to look for nesting birds. Species which might be seen include Yellow-breasted Chat, Kentucky Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Swainson's Warbler, Painted Bunting and Swallow-tailed Kite. Bring water and a hat - we'll break by noon and stop for lunch on the way back to Baton Rouge. Call Harriett @ 291-0077 for more information

Conservation *(continued from page 2)*

- The Department of Defense (DOD) was denied by Congress its request for a blanket exemption from the Federal Endangered Species Act.
- The Arctic Wildlife Refuge was spared drilling, at least for one more year.
- The US Court of Appeals upheld Roadless Area Conservation Rule legality, thus protecting nearly 60 million acres of public land roadless areas.
- The EPA, under tremendous pressure from Audubon members, denied use of 4,500 pounds of granular carbofuran on Louisiana rice fields. Carbofuran is an insecticide that is exceedingly poisonous to birds.

Sanctuary Report *by Victoria Moseley Bayless*

On November 9th we had a work day with my new husband, Ron, Mark Skinner, Chris Carlton, Dorothy Prowell, and I. Al Heath, our on-site care taker, and his wife Chris were there as well. We all worked hard and had a great time. Chris Heath made us some awesome cookies that we devoured during a break on Saturday. The weather was perfect and we ate our boudin off the great picnic table donated last year by the Gulf Coast Bird Club.

The big news since the last report was Hurricane Lili. Thankfully our Peveto Woods Sanctuary was spared serious damage. A large tree fell over the pond and took out a lot of branches of smaller trees. We cut and removed the tree and cleared downed limbs and vines from around the pond. It is a different look for sure but one that will allow more viewing from the benches. We also discussed how to make the pond hold more water in the dry season though it was hard to imagine it being dry at the time since everything was flooded that weekend. Al reported this month to me that he built a small coffer dam on west side of the small pond, 36' long, and has the pump filling the pond.

The work crew washed and cleaned the kiosk, disturbing the many anoles and gecko's that call the kiosk home (they all seemed to be doing alright when we left). The kiosk looks a bit bare right now but not for long. In addition to the kiosk, we cleaned out the shed and found a snake friend who had been keeping the rodent population from exploding. From his size, he had plenty to eat. We also found the prettiest snake I have ever seen, a brilliant red immature hog nose snake. We got some great pictures and have them posted on our website.

We are working right now on the design and purchase of interpretive panels for the kiosk walls. I am really excited about these panels. They are very professional looking and pretty! We are aiming for having the first of six ready in April (we'll get the first one and see how it looks). Also in the works is a big sign for the highway - look for it soon!

Remember, if you want to join the fun and help our incredible sanctuary become even better, contact me at vmosele@lsu.edu or at home 225-757-1769. Let me know you want to help and I will contact you when we plan another work date. I hope you all will be able to visit the sanctuary soon.

BRAS Directory

Officers

President

Dorothy Prowell 923-1070

Vice-President

Dan Hendricks 757-1593

Secretary

JoAnn Fryling 766-3120

Treasurer

Fred Sheldon 763-6113

Immediate Past President

Donna LaFleur 892-4492

Committee Chairs

Conservation

Mark Skinner 201-0078

Education

Chris Carlton 344-9635

Field Trips / Activities

Harriett Pooler 291-0077

Legal

Doris Falkenheiner 346-8761

Membership

Elaine Kilgore 667-3206

Newsletter

Ron Bayless 757-1769

Publicity

Donna LaFleur 892-4492

Sanctuaries

Victoria M. Bayless 757-1769

LAC Representatives

Doris Falkenheiner 346-8761

Charles Fryling 766-3120

Donna LaFleur 892-4492

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January 15 for the Feb/March issue
March 15 for the April/May issue
May 15 for the June/July issue
July 15 for the August/September issue
September 15 for the Oct/Nov issue
November 15 for the Dec/Jan issue.
Submissions may be sent via e-mail to bayles_r@bellsouth.net or mailed to:

Editor, *Barred Owl*

Baton Rouge Audubon Society

P.O. Box 82525

Baton Rouge, LA 70884-2525

Changes of address and other official correspondence should be sent to the mailing address shown above.

Baton Rouge Chapter of the National Audubon Society
Baton Rouge Audubon Society
 P.O. Box 82525
 Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70884-2525

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Dues for BRAS 2003 memberships are due now!

THIS MAY BE YOUR LAST BARRED OWL if you are not a member of the National Audubon Society (NAS) or the Baton Rouge Audubon Society (BRAS). Please renew now! THANKS!

In Memory of Christopher Jon Hall

Baton Rouge Audubon was chosen as the recipient organization for donations to honor the memory of Chris Hall. Chris died on Nov. 10, 2002 at age 29. He graduated from LSU in 2000 with a major in Forestry and a minor in Wildlife Management. He was an avid bird watcher and enjoyed attracting birds to his home. He reveled in the outdoors and spent much time hiking, camping, fishing, biking, and hunting. Chris had an appreciation of the natural wonders of life and will be missed by many. He is survived by his wife, Christi Hall, his parents, Tom and Judy Hall, his brother, Ben Hall, and his in-laws in the Lenfant and Mahiger families. Baton Rouge Audubon appreciates the many generous donations in memory of Chris.

BATON ROUGE AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership Type	Amount	2003 Patch?	Total
____ National Audubon Society (new members only)	____ \$20	__ Yes __ No	_____
____ Baton Rouge Audubon Society (local chapter only)	____ \$20	__ Yes __ No	_____
____ Continuing National Audubon Members “BRAS patch option only” (must be a paid member of National Audubon Society)	____ \$10	__ Yes __ No	_____
____ Extra 2003 patches (for members only)	____ \$10	__ Yes	_____
____ Additional Contribution	____ \$		_____
GRAND TOTAL: \$			_____

Name: _____ Phone: (____) _____
 Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____
 E-mail: _____ Zip Code: _____ Local Chapter Code: **7XCH8 K01**

Please send this form to (and make your check out to): **Baton Rouge Audubon Society**
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Baton Rouge, LA 70884-2525