

The **BARRED OWL**

Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Audubon Society

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January / February 2005



President's Message by Dan Hendricks

BATON ROUGE AUDUBON SOCIETY ANNOUNCES IBA GRANT

Meeting at the Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center on Wednesday November 17, a gathering of 46 Audubon members and guests heard the good news and it's official: the Baton Rouge and Orleans Audubon Chapters have received a grant for \$162,300 to establish an Important Bird Area Program and hire an IBA coordinator. The grant will fund 75% of the costs for the three-year program with the two chapters providing the program balance of 25%. The IBA program will unite environmental, citizen and government groups to identify special places in Louisiana which support critical bird populations.



Slated to begin January 1, 2005, our local chapters will use the grant awarded by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fish Agency to hire an IBA coordinator. The National Audubon Society will team with Baton Rouge and Orleans to carry out a national search for the coordinator. The office for the IBA program will reside in the Bird Resource Center of LSU's Natural Science Museum, under the leadership of Dr. Fred Sheldon.

Michael and Kathleen Crago represented the Orleans Audubon Chapter at the event. Michael exclaimed to the gathering, "We did it!" Michael has been working to establish an IBA in Louisiana since 1996. He presented prepared remarks from the New Orleans Chapter and gave Baton Rouge Chapter President, Dan L. Hendricks, an official sign that read:

IMPORTANT BIRD AREA

This site is part of a global network of places recognized for their outstanding value to bird conservation.

Calendar

Sunday, December 26, 2004: New Orleans Christmas Bird Count (CBC). For contact names or other information, log on to the LOS website at losbird.org.

Tuesday, December 28, 2004: Northshore-Slidell Christmas Bird Count.

Thursday, December 30, 2004: Christmas Bird Counts for Lafayette, Pine Prairie, and St. Tammany.

Sunday, January 02, 2005: Christmas Bird Counts for Baton Rouge, Bossier-Caddo-Bienville, Cheneyville-Lecompte, New Iberia - Cade, Reserve-Bonnet Carre, Thibodeaux, and Venice.

Monday, January 03, 2005: Tensas River Christmas Bird Count.

Tuesday, January 04, 2005: Christmas Bird Counts for Crowley and Fort Polk.

Monday, January 03, 2005: Johnson's Bayou Christmas Bird Count.

Saturday, January 15, 2005 8 a.m. wintering hummingbird field trip in Baton Rouge. Email Dennis Demchec at ddemchec@usgs.gov if you would like more information.

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Such signs will identify IBAs all over Louisiana when the program is up and running. This is an unprecedented opportunity for the Baton Rouge Audubon Society. The benefits for Louisiana birds and wildlife may be incalculable. I will have more to share with you as the program unfolds.

Dan L. Hendricks, President

What Is An Important Bird Area?

Important Bird Areas, or IBAs, are sites that provide essential habitat for one or more species of birds. IBAs include sites for breeding, wintering and/or migrating birds. IBAs may be a few acres or thousands of acres, but usually they are discreet sites that stand out from the surrounding landscape. IBAs may include public or private lands, or both, and they may be protected or unprotected.

To qualify as an IBA, sites must satisfy at least on of the following criteria. The site must support:

- ❖ Species of conservation concern (e.g. threatened and endangered species)
- ❖ Restricted –ranges species (species vulnerable because they are not widely distributed)
- ❖ Species that are vulnerable because their populations are concentrated in one general habitat type or biome
- ❖ Species, or groups of similar species (such as waterfowl or shorebirds), that are vulnerable because they occur at high densities due to their congregatory behavior

What Can You Do?

You can help identify and conserve Important Bird Areas. First, contact your IBA coordinator (Michael Crago will help in this capacity for now).

- ❖ Nominate a site in your area.
- ❖ Support the IBA program through citizen science and stewardship by conducting bird censuses at IBAs, volunteering to help land managers or being a conservation advocate.

Help us grow the IBA Program by making a donation. The IBA Program depends on private donations like yours for continued success.

Season's Greetings



Goals of the IBA Program

- Complete the inventories of IBAs in all 50 states
- Integrate IBA data into the global World Bird Database
- Maximize the use and dissemination of IBA data
- Promote sensible management of IBAs
- Increase the protected status of IBAs
- Involve local communities, conservation groups, landowners and the general public
- Monitor IBAs to understand changes and provide feedback for conservation initiatives



Sanctuary Report

by Victoria Bayless

Baton Rouge Audubon^{Inc.} exploring our options regarding the availability of the Suire property. For those of you familiar with the Sanctuary, you'll remember driving past this house as you approached the

Sanctuary's parking lot. The house is unique in that it is the only one in Little Florida subdivision that is completely surrounded by the Sanctuary.

We were recently contacted by the owner and asked if Baton Rouge Audubon would be interested in purchasing the property. At our most recent board meeting, a motion was made to investigate the matter further and to report to the board the pros and cons of such a purchase. I'm asking each of you to let me know what you think those pros and cons are. You can either email me (at "vmosele@lsu.edu") or call me at home (225.757.1769).

Christmas Bird Count (CBC) 2004

It's that time of the year again for the annual Christmas Bird Count. Following this paragraph, I've included excerpts from an Audubon News Release that provide a bit of background about this important event. Please consider contacting the CBC coordinator in your area and participating in this year's count (log on to the LOS website at "losbird.org" for more information).

The CBC began over a century ago when 27 conservationists in 25 localities, led by scientist and writer Frank Chapman, changed the course of ornithological history. On Christmas Day 1900, the small group posed an alternative to the "side hunt," a Christmas day activity in which teams competed to see who could shoot the most birds and small mammals. Instead, Chapman proposed to identify, count, and record all the birds they saw, sounding what is now considered to be the world's most significant citizen-based conservation effort and a more than century-old institution.

Today, as we approach Audubon's centennial in 2005, over 55,000 volunteers from all 50 states, every Canadian province, parts of Central and South America, Bermuda, the West Indies, and Pacific Islands will count and record every individual bird and bird species seen in a specified area. During the 104th count, about 63 million birds were counted. Count results from 1900 to the present are available through Audubon's website: www.audubon.org/bird/cbc.

Contact me if you are interested in participating in this year's Baton Rouge count (it will be held on Sunday, January 2, 2005).

BRAS Directory

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Vice-President

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Fred Sheldon 763-6113

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Sanctuaries

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The Barred Owl

is published bi-monthly by the Baton Rouge chapter of the NAS. Submissions should be received by: Dec 15 for the Jan/Feb issue, Feb 15 for the Mar/Apr issue, April 15 for the May/ Jun issue, Jun 15 for the Jul/Aug issue, Aug 15 for the Sept/Oct issue, and Oct 15 for the Nov/Dec issue. Submissions may be sent via e-mail to vbayless2@cox.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.

Membership Expiration Code

This issue's mailing label has a membership expiration code on the first line of the label above your name. There are three basic membership codes: Baton Rouge chapter (identified as BRAS), National Audubon (NAS), and library/news media, etc. (GRATIS). Except for GRATIS subscriptions, the code will indicate the year (and for BRAS subscriptions, the month) in which your membership expires (e.g., BRAS Dec. 2004). Keeping your membership current is important!

Chapter (BRAS) and National Audubon Membership

Join NAS by going to their website (www.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 bi-monthly BRAS newsletter, The Barred Owl. Sanctuary patches are \$10 extra and can be received by mailing in this form and indicating the number of patches you want and that you are a NAS member.

BRAS Only Membership

Join BRAS if you want all of your dues to support local conservation and education. You will receive The Barred Owl newsletter every other month, first priority for field trips and educational programs, and a sanctuary patch if desired (check off options on form). To join BRAS, make checks payable to Baton Rouge Audubon Society and send this form along with your check to:
BRAS, P.O. Box 82525, Baton Rouge, LA 70884.

Local Chapter Code: 7XCH8 K01

Baton Rouge Audubon Society (BRAS)

Please enroll me as a member of BRAS. Enclosed is my check for:

- \$20 **Individual Membership**
- \$30 **Family Membership**
- \$100 **Rose-breasted Grosbeak Membership**
- \$250 **Louisiana Waterthrush Membership**
- \$500 **Painted Bunting Membership**
- \$1000 **Cerulean Warbler Membership**
- \$_____ **Additional Contribution**
- _____ **# of patches** (1 free with BRAS membership, additional patches @ \$10 each, NAS member patches @ \$10 each)

Name: _____ Ph: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____