

# The **BARRED OWL**

Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Audubon Society

Volume XXXII, Number 2

March / April 2005

## Vice President's Message by Chris Carlton

### BATON ROUGE AUDUBON SOCIETY ANNOUNCES EXPANSION OF PEVETO WOODS SANCTUARY

During the past month I have had the pleasure of assisting Sanctuary Chair Victoria Bayless with the biggest new initiative in our Peveto Woods Sanctuary project in recent history. For the first time since its establishment, the Sanctuary is now one continuous piece of property. We were able to acquire the last two acres of land that broke up the sanctuary, along with the 2000 sq. ft. dwelling that sits on it (see Victoria's sanctuary report for details). With this acquisition, the long-range vision for the sanctuary of several past and present BRAS Boards is now within reach. The Peveto Woods Sanctuary House will be developed as a multiuse facility for birders and ornithology researchers visiting or working at Peveto Woods or the vicinity. We are still at the drawing board with the details, but some ideas that have been put forward include using the house for research monitoring of neotropical migrants, room rentals during peak birding seasons, and for birding miniconferences and society meetings. Renovating and customizing Peveto Woods Sanctuary House will be a challenging, but rewarding and fun project for the next few years, and we are relying on the help of the Baton Rouge Audubon membership and the Gulf Coast birding community at large to help ensure that the facility reaches its full potential as a bird watching and ornithology base of operations for this very important rest and refueling stop for neotropical migrants.

Purchase of this final piece of property and BRAS' partnership with The Nature Conservancy in acquiring other chenier properties (e.g., Hollister Woods) demonstrate the long-term commitment of BRAS to preserve remnant chenier habitats along the Gulf Coast and educate the public about their importance. You, the BRAS membership, can take pride in being a part of these efforts to make life a little easier for the hard-working creatures that we share the planet with and in turn provide opportunities for us to appreciate life a little more by studying them.



## Calendar

Unless otherwise noted, call Harriett Pooler (225.291.0077) for information.

**Saturday, March 19, 2005:** ULL Farm/Lake Martin field trip led by Jay Huner.

**April 14-17, 2005:** Mandeville's "Great Louisiana Birdfest"  
[www.northlakenature.org](http://www.northlakenature.org)

**Friday - Sunday, April 15-17, 2005:** Grand Isle Migratory Bird Celebration. Dennis Demcheck will lead two tours on behalf of Baton Rouge Audubon. 877.693.6700 or [grandisle.btneq.org](http://grandisle.btneq.org).

**Saturday, April 16, 2005:** Palmetto Island State Park field trip led by Jay Huner and Mike Musumeche.

**April 22-24, 2005:** LOS Spring Meeting, Cameron, Louisiana. Log on to [losbird.org](http://losbird.org) for more information.

**Saturday, April 23, 2005:** Magnolia Woods field trip for birds, reptiles, and amphibians led by Harriett Pooler and Chris Carlton.

**Saturday, April 30, 2005:** Tunica Woods field trip with Dorothy Prowell and Mark Skinner.

**Saturday, May 28, 2005:** Whiskey Bay road trip led by Harriett Pooler.

## FIELD TRIPS by Harriett Pooler

All fieldtrips meet at Coffee Call (1-10 and College Drive) unless otherwise stated. All trips are open to the public and there is no fee. Unless otherwise noted, contact Harriett Pooler (hapooler@bellsouth.net or 225.291.0077) to pre-register.

**Saturday, March 19 - ULL Farm / Lake Martin.** Meet Harriett at 7 am. to drive to Cade where Jay Huner will take us on a tour of the ULL Farm. It is a 600 acre unit with approximately

half located on the eastern-most extension of the coastal prairie and the remainder located on the western-most extension of the Mississippi River Valley. Jay will take us on a walk around the Ag Wetland Extension of Leopold Lane. Birds that might be seen include: Barn Owls, Eastern Bluebirds, American Pipit, Vesper Sparrow and Yellow-throated Vireo. Then we will head to Lake Martin and see the beginning activity of the rookery plus other birds seen along Rookery and Lake Martin Roads. It will take about 30 minutes to drive to Lake Martin from the Farm so bring your lunch or be prepared to stop at a fast food place. Read more about the ULL farm at [www.louisiana.edu](http://www.louisiana.edu) Pre-register deadline is March 17th.

**Saturday, April 16 - Palmetto Island State Park.** Join Mike Musumeche and Jay Huner to tour Louisiana's newest state park, Palmetto Island State Park. Meet Harriett at Coffee Call at 6:00 am; we will drive to Burger King in Abbeville to meet Mike and Jay at 7:30 am. This park is not officially open to the public yet; however, Mike and Jay have access because of their bird surveys. The park is bottomland hardwood next to the Vermilion River. Pre-register deadline is Thursday, April 14th.

**Saturday, April 23 - Magnolia Woods.** Join Harriett and Chris Carlton at 6:45 a.m. for a fieldtrip to find both birds and reptiles/amphibians. The Magnolia Woods area of Tunica WMA contains some of the best mature forest left in Louisiana, and is the closest thing to old-growth we have in this part of the state. This diverse topography contains deep ravines and steep bluffs, perfect habitat for a wide diversity of reptiles, birds, and mammals such as the eastern chipmunk. Bring a lunch (we'll likely eat in our cars), and wear walking/hiking shoes. Pre-register by April 21st.

**April 30 - Tunica Woods.** Meet Dorothy at 7 am. Walk through Tunica woods with naturalists Dorothy Prowell and Mark Skinner. They'll lead a hike through Feliciana Preserve, a private natural area, near Star Hill about 40 minutes north of BR. They'll identify birds, plants, mammals, herps, and anything else of interest. The hike will be through about 3 miles of hilly terrain, passing by Thompson's creek in route. Return to BR by 1:00pm; bring bug repellent and shoes for walking through grass. Pre-registration deadline is April 28<sup>th</sup>. Either call Dorothy at 387-0867 or email her at [dprowe@lsu.edu](mailto:dprowe@lsu.edu).

**May 28 - Whiskey Bay Road.** Meet Harriett at 6:30 a.m. to drive to the Atchafalaya Basin to search for nesting spring migrants. We might see Prothonotary, Kentucky, Hooded, and Blue-winged warblers as well as Painted Buntings, Chats, and possibly Swallow-tail kites. Bring bug spray though most of the time we'll bird from our cars. We should finish up early afternoon and stop at a restaurant on the way home. Pre-registration deadline is Thursday, May 26<sup>th</sup>.



## Conservation Report

by Cathy Coates

*(Editor's note: the following is a reprint of a letter written by conservation chairperson Cathy Coates that appeared in the February 23 edition of Baton Rouge's newspaper The Advocate):*

We at the Baton Rouge Audubon Society wish to thank you for your editorial of January 18, "Birds can be a tourism boon." It's true! More and more states are recognizing that their natural resources, resident birds, and migrating birds will attract tourism dollars.

In addition to this economic benefit, birds are also an indicator of the environmental health of a community. It was reported in Sunday's Advocate (January 23) that Louisiana's state bird, the brown pelican, was almost wiped out in the early '60s by DDT. DDT was banned by the EPA in 1972. Our community is healthier for it, and brown pelicans are re-establishing a home here after a successful restocking program with fledglings from Florida. BRAS has recently been awarded a three-year grant from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to fund the creation of an Important Bird Area Program. This is an effort well under way throughout the U.S. to identify areas most important for maintaining bird populations and to protect those areas. The IBA program will use good science to create sound conservation and preservation plans for Louisiana's rich natural heritage. We are happy to contribute to our state's environmental and economic health.

**Donation Acknowledgements for our December 2003 Fundraiser** We received donations from the following individuals over the past several months. Thanks for your support!

**Donations of \$500** - Lionel Head, River Ridge, LA **Donations of \$250** - Carol & Lane Foil, Baton Rouge, LA

**Donations of \$100** - Abner & Linda Hammond, Baton Rouge, LA and Jean Westbrook, Metairie, LA

**Donations up to \$50** - Alice Bradley, Prairieville, LA and Will & Jean Wilcox, Baton Rouge, LA



# Sanctuary Report

by Victoria Bayless

This has been an exciting month for our Peveto Woods Sanctuary! The Suire Property that is surrounded on all sides by Sanctuary property was put on the market recently and the BRAS Board of Directors had to make a quick decision about whether to purchase this valuable piece of property. We decided that

we couldn't let this opportunity slip away from us. The Sanctuary was initially formed to protect the Peveto Woods Chenier from development in the early 1980's when the area was being subdivided for housing construction. At that time one house had already been built; the Suire house, on 2 irregularly shaped lots, was surrounded by the land we eventually came to own and call the Peveto Woods Sanctuary. Over the years, as more and more people visited the Sanctuary, the owners of that property became concerned about traffic and trespassing issues. But now, there will be no more concerns about disturbing these neighbors.

Maintenance and operating expenses at the Sanctuary are covered by the BRAS Sanctuary fund. We could not deplete these resources so we elected to borrow the funds to finance this purchase. Luckily for us, B&K Bank, with the help of loan officer Martin Lanneau and loan processor Annette Smithhart, made it possible for us to borrow the \$117K necessary. Kathy Ware, of Gallerie Brokers, worked tirelessly to get everything in order and even went so far as to find insurance for us. I am very grateful for their help. PHASE ONE of this new adventure is now complete.

PHASE TWO begins and now we will be mailing an appeal to all our members and the birding community of Louisiana to help us repay the loan for this property. We have some excellent ideas about the role the Peveto House will play at the Sanctuary, but nothing has been decided yet. The long-term future of Peveto Woods Sanctuary offers some exciting potential that could have been disrupted if the house had sold to someone who objected to having large numbers of birders surrounding their house with binoculars in hand. But now, the Peveto Woods House will be an integral part of the Sanctuary, whatever its determined use. When you receive your request for donation in the mail in the next two weeks, please help us with this great project, and visit your Sanctuary this Spring. Be proud that you as BRAS members are a part of protecting this chenier habitat and making it available to local, national, and international birders alike. Please contact me at (225) 757-1769 or [vmosele@lsu.edu](mailto:vmosele@lsu.edu) if you would like to be a member of the Sanctuary committee or help us with this effort in any way. Thank you all for your continued support of Baton Rouge Audubon Society's Peveto Woods Sanctuary.

## Hollister Woods Sanctuary Report

Thanks to those who have continued to donate funds for Hollister Woods. The conservation easement is in place and The Nature Conservancy has been busy with restoration work, planting Hackberry and Live Oak trees as well as Tallow tree removal. There are plans for trails and signs. The property is not yet available for birding but will be soon. We will let you know and give you the details as soon as it is ready.

## BRAS Directory

### Officers

#### President

Dan Hendricks . . . . . 757-1593

#### Vice-President

Chris Carlton . . . . . 344-9635

#### Secretary

John MacKenzie . . . . . 387-6949

#### Treasurer

Victoria M. Bayless . . . . . 757-1769

## Committee Chairs

### Conservation

Cathy Coates . . . . . 767-9074

### Education & Publicity

Donna LaFleur . . . . . 892-4492

### Field Trips / Activities

Harriett Pooler . . . . . 291-0077

### Legal

Doris Falkenheiner . . . . . 346-8761

### Membership

Dorothy Prowell . . . . . 387-0867

### Newsletter

Ron Bayless . . . . . 757-1769

### Programs

Charles Fryling . . . . . 766-3120

### Sanctuaries

Victoria M. Bayless . . . . . 757-1769

## Board Members at Large

Jay Guillory . . . . . 927.2794

## 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](mailto: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.

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### 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 - which has no expiration date). BRAS-only subscriptions will identify the month and year in which your membership expires (e.g., BRAS Dec. 2004) while NAS will show only the year (note: NAS 2005 means your membership expires in 2005 *or some later year*). Keeping your membership current is important!

### Chapter (BRAS) and National Audubon Membership

Join NAS by going to their website ([www.audubon.org](http://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: \_\_\_\_\_  
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