

# The **BARRED OWL**

Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Audubon Society

Volume XXXVII, Number 2

2nd Quarter, 2010

BRAS Spring Program Announced

## "Introduction to the Status and Identification of Louisiana's Raptor Species"

By Lindsay Seely

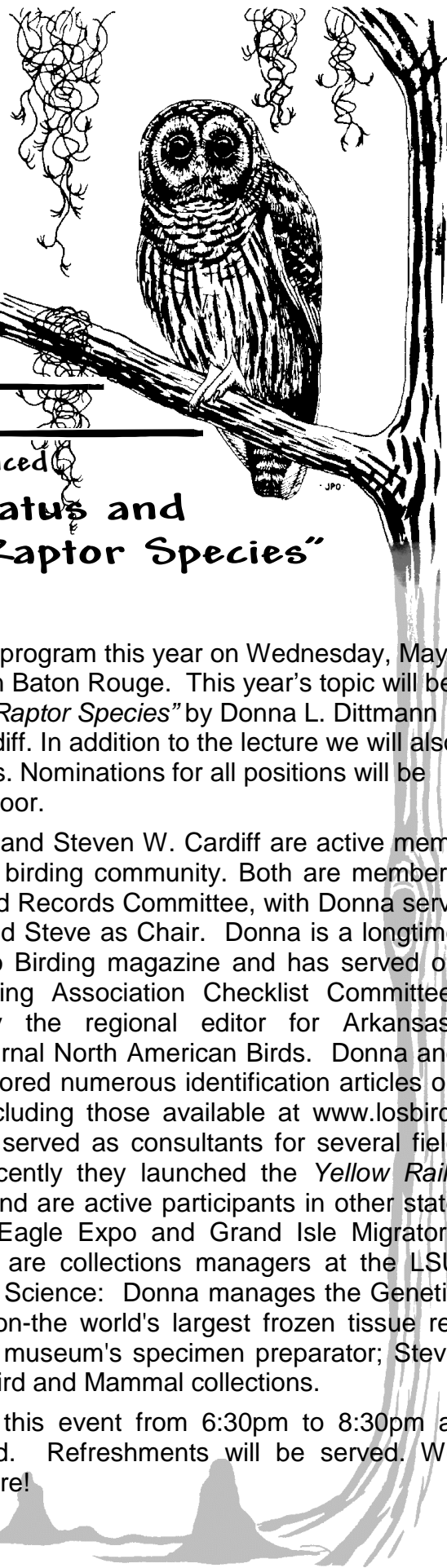
**W**e will be hosting our annual meeting and spring program this year on Wednesday, May 12th at the National Audubon Society state office in Baton Rouge. This year's topic will be "Introduction to the Status and Identification of Louisiana's Raptor Species" by Donna L. Dittmann and Steven W. Cardiff. In addition to the lecture we will also be voting for officers. Nominations for all positions will be accepted from the floor.



Bald Eagles have recovered to the point of being taken off the Endangered Species list. There have been regular sightings this winter and spring in downtown Baton Rouge. This eagle nest is just 20 miles west of Baton Rouge -- a single chick is in the nest.

Donna L. Dittmann and Steven W. Cardiff are active members of Louisiana's birding community. Both are members of the Louisiana Bird Records Committee, with Donna serving as Secretary and Steve as Chair. Donna is a longtime technical advisor to Birding magazine and has served on the American Birding Association Checklist Committee. Steve is currently the regional editor for Arkansas-Louisiana in the journal *North American Birds*. Donna and Steve have co-authored numerous identification articles on Louisiana birds, including those available at [www.losbird.org](http://www.losbird.org) and have also served as consultants for several field guide projects. Recently they launched the *Yellow Rails and Rice Festival* and are active participants in other state festivals including Eagle Expo and Grand Isle Migratory Bird Festival. Both are collections managers at the LSU Museum of Natural Science: Donna manages the Genetic Resources Collection-the world's largest frozen tissue repository and is the museum's specimen preparator; Steve is manager of the Bird and Mammal collections.

Please join us for this event from 6:30pm to 8:30pm at 6160 Perkins Road. Refreshments will be served. We hope to see you there!



# A Message From The President...

*What a great time to be a birder...*

If you aren't totally hooked on birding and completely in the know you might want to read this. Technological advances had afforded dozens of opportunities for birder's and nature lovers alike. There have been some amazing strides in the recent past in optics (binoculars, scopes and cameras), computers/phones and social networks which can greatly enhance the birding experience.

Improvements in the quality and price of optics have made it possible for almost everyone to be able to afford a quality set of binoculars. If you are still using your old Bushnell's from the 70's I highly encourage you to get to a store soon. With a very small outlay of say, \$100 you can be the proud owner of a new set of binoculars which will rival and sometimes exceed the performance of binoculars which cost many times that amount just a few years ago.

And cameras! A new 15x zoom, 10 megapixel camera for \$350 dollars! Oh, the satisfaction of being able to go back, look at the photo and figure out what you saw. In order to have done this 10 years ago would have cost thousands and required quite a bit of knowhow. Now amateurs with very little experience, and perhaps with more than a few hundred to spend, can truly take breath-taking, magazine-quality photos.

For those of you with a computer and an interest in avian identification there is "Labird." This is the "birding on the net" mailing list overseen by LSU ornithologists. Professional ornithologists, and amateurs of every level are able to post their sightings here. This is perhaps the best new resource for birding in our area as it gives one "what" and "where" information from professionals and some very gifted amateurs. This is also the place where sightings of rare birds and much other useful information is posted.

The method that most use to submit their observations is with a checklist program developed by ebird. Ebird was launched in 2002 as a collaboration between the Cornell lab of Ornithology (which has a great online bird guide) and the National Audubon Society. Since its' beginning ebird has collected literally millions of bird observations across North America. These observations are accessible to the public through very easy to read seasonal graphs similar to the one found in George Lowery's "Louisiana Birds." If you don't own a copy of this book, a copy of the graph is available online.

And lastly, for those out there with an Iphone, you are in luck. In addition to all of the other things that they can do, for about thirty dollars you can purchase one of the birding "apps." I don't think that there is a consensus yet as to which one is best but they are all incredibly useful. In addition to being a portable field guide these programs are able to play the songs and calls from 99% of the birds in our region. For those who haven't seen it in use, the playing of birdsongs produces amazing results if you are in the right habitat at the right time of year.

All together, computers, the internet and optical technology have made leaps and bounds recently which for me personally has added tremendous enjoyment (though it is sometimes nice to leave all the gadgets at home when getting back to nature). Below are some of the websites mentioned above and a few useful ones that I left off. I hope to see you at some of our field trips or functions this spring.

Labird-Birding on the net  
Lowery's Seasonal Graph of Louisiana Birds  
Allaboutbirds (Cornell)  
LSU Bird Resource Center  
LOSbird - Louisiana Ornithological Society  
BRAudubon

*Best Wishes,  
Eric Liffmann*

## Baton Rouge Audubon

### Officers

#### **President**

Eric Liffmann 225/766-8775

#### **Vice-President**

Richard Gibbons 225/578-6901

#### **Past President**

Harriett Pooler 225/291-0077

#### **Treasurer**

Jay Guillory 225/927-2794

#### **Secretary**

Donna LaFleur 225/892-4492

### Committee Chairs

#### **Conservation**

Paul Kemp 225/772-1426

#### **Education**

Jane Patterson 225/753-7615

#### **Fieldtrips**

Jeff Harris 225/270-6141

#### **Sanctuary**

Dave Patton 337/232-8410

#### **Membership**

Dorothy Prowell 225/387-0867

#### **Programs**

Lindsay Seely 225/744-3962

#### **Newsletter**

Steve Mumford  
newsletter@braudubon.org

### At Large Members...

Beverly Smiley 225/383-0653

#### **IBA Program**

Melanie Driscoll 225/578-6901

#### **LSU Bird Resource**

Richard Gibbons 225/578-6901

### The Barred Owl

is published quarterly by the  
Baton Rouge chapter of the NAS.  
Submissions should be emailed to  
newsletter@braudubon.org

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

**Baton Rouge  
Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 67016  
Baton Rouge, LA 70896**

## Thanks to our Members!

*Baton Rouge Audubon is appreciative of one and all who make it possible for us to send you this publication, maintain our sanctuaries, and the other projects we undertake on behalf of conservation and birds. We can't do it without you!*

Jan. 1 thru Mar. 1, 2010

### LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH (\$200-250)

Lionel H. Head, River Ridge, LA  
Jay Huner, Boyce, LA

### ROSEBREASTED GROSBEAK (\$100-125)

Amy E. Grose, Abita Springs, LA  
Frederick T. Billings III., Baton Rouge, LA  
Peter Craig, Blanchester, OH  
Robert C. Dunnell, Natchez, MS  
Keith Gibson, Baton Rouge, LA  
Nell Hennessy, Washington, DC  
Helaine Moyse, Baton Rouge, LA  
Curtis C. & Helen Sorrells, Kenner, LA

### WOOD THRUSH (\$50)

J. A. Bennett, Monroe, LA  
Doris Falkenheiner, Baton Rouge, LA  
Susan Heath, Lake Jackson, LA  
Chad Phillips, Baton Rouge, LA  
James & Krista Roche, Baton Rouge, LA  
Harold Roscoe, Baton Rouge, LA

## Peveto Woods Sanctuary

The first spring migrants are being reported in Peveto Woods Sanctuary. The Live Oaks are looking good as they begin the flowering and releafing process of spring. We are still waiting to see how the Hackberry, Prickley Ash, Honey Locust, and other trees will respond to the second growing season following Ike. Red Mulberry were planted around the sanctuary in January, and are now sprouting new leaves. Hopefully spring and summer will provide good conditions for these young trees to get established. The old stalks of dried Ragweed stand waiting for the new growth to replace them. Trails running through the sanctuary are filling with the early green beginnings of spring. The mister and water hole are getting good action from the winter residents and early migrants. A photo blind is being discussed and a new bench or two will be placed around the sanctuary for spring birders. Come down and enjoy the spring birding.



**BRAS wishes to acknowledge  
Downtown Kiwanis Club  
of Baton Rouge**  
for their support of our  
Education Programs

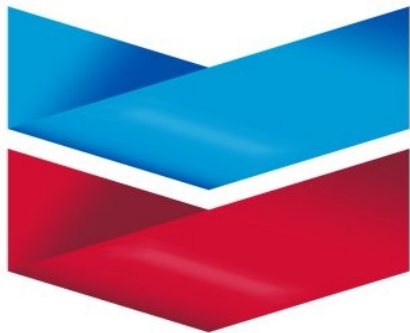


*Thank you so much!*

Dave Patton  
Sanctuary Chairman

Baton Rouge Audubon thanks

# Chevron



for their sponsorship of  
our education programs!

## What Our Friends Are Doing

**Orleans Audubon Society Joint Banquet with the Crescent Bird Club**

*Molt is Interesting!*

**Speakers:** Donna L. Dittmann and Steven W. Cardiff

**Date:** Tuesday, May 18

**Time:** 6:30-7:00 p.m. social and cash bar, 7:00 p.m. banquet,  
8:00 p.m. program

**Place:** The Imperial Room of Five Happiness Restaurant, 3605 S. Carrollton Ave.,  
New Orleans, LA 70118

---

---

# BRAS EDUCATION IN ACTION



Dr. Van Remsen treated the KidsWhoBird club to a "behind the scenes" tour of the Bird Range at the LSU Museum of Natural Science in January.



Eight Boy Scouts earned their Bird Study merit badge at the annual Merit Badge day held on LSU campus. With the help of their instructor, Jane Patterson, the boys found 28 different birds in an hour on the LSU campus!



Students in Jane Patterson's "Birding Basics" LSU Leisure Class enjoy a wonderful birding field trip to Sherburne South Farm.

---

---

# BAYOU BIRDING BON TEMPS 2010

**T**he Bayou Birding Bon Temps is a statewide birding event that promotes birding in Louisiana and develops checklists for birding sites. There are a few changes for 2010 including a change to the classic ABA-style Big Day and expanding the date range to include all of April. We hope you will check out the website and consider submitting a checklist for one or more of the Louisiana Birding Trail locations, state wildlife management areas, or National Wildlife Refuges.

**Who:** Everyone is encouraged to participate.

**When:** April 1 - April 30, 2010

**Where:** Birding trail sites, National Wildlife Refuges, and Louisiana Wildlife Management Areas

Louisiana has a long tradition of nature study with ornithological giants such as Catesby, Wilson, and Audubon exploring the Louisiana Purchase. The Pelican State is rich in bird abundance and diversity with a stalwart community of birdwatchers. Louisiana's birding largesse primarily is enjoyed by residents whereas neighboring states have promoted their natural heritage successfully as a tourist draw.

In the last few years, birding trails were developed for Louisiana. This is an excellent resource for both residents and visitors. The Bayou Birding Bon Temps will promote our birding trails with residents and visitors with a statewide birding competition. Further, we will use eBird.org to enter checklists by birding trail site. These checklists will provide valuable information for visitors curious about what has been seen where and when. This is precisely the information birders want while planning a birding trip.



In addition to the birding trails, Louisiana's Wildlife Management Areas (1.4 million acres) and U.S. National Wildlife Refuges (600,000 acres) are included as event locations.

## REGIONS

Because Louisiana is a large and diverse state, the Bayou Birding Bon Temps will be divided into three regions: Northern Interior, Southern Interior, and Coastal.

**Northern Interior parishes:** Bossier, Webster, Claiborne, Union, Morehouse, West Carroll, East Carroll, Madison, Richland, Ouchita, Jackson, Lincoln, Bienville, Red River, De Soto, Natchitoches, Catahoula, Concordia, LaSalle, Grant, Winn, and Sabine

**Southern Interior parishes:** Acadia, Allen, Ascension, Assumption, Avoyelles, Beauregard, Calcasieu, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Livingston, Point Coupee, Rapides, St. Helena, St. James, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Vermillion, Washington, West Baton Rouge, West Feliciana

**Coastal parishes:** Cameron, Iberia, Lafourche, Jefferson, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Mary, Terrebonne, Vermilion

## CATEGORIES

### **Big Day**

(species count with adult and youth divisions)

This is a classic big day restricted to Louisiana. We recommend you review and follow the American Birding Association Big Day Count Rules (pdf).

### **Big Location**

(species count)

Single day and total period divisions

This category will be the most beneficial for developing location checklists. Choose a location and bird it for a day or the whole month. The location within each region with the most species takes the bragging rights.

### **Most Locations**

(total period location count)

This category is for the explorers. The participant that enters checklists for the most locations wins.

### **Lagniappe Award**

(Random birding trail location, all entries from location eligible for drawing) A little something extra.

<http://www.lsu.edu/departments/labird/index.html>

Baton Rouge Chapter of the National Audubon Society

**Baton Rouge Audubon Society**

P.O. Box 67016

Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70896

"Address Service Requested"

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Baton Rouge, LA  
Permit No. 29

**Keep Your Membership Current!**

If your membership expires, you will no longer receive *The Barred Owl*. Well, eventually we 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*.

**Patches** Extra sanctuary patches or patches for NAS members are \$10 each and can be ordered by mailing the form below. If you are joining BRAS and want a free patch, you must put "1" in the blank.

**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.

**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
- # \_\_\_\_\_ of patches (indicate 1 which is free with BRAS membership; additional patches \$10 each; NAS member patches @ \$10 each; no patch will be sent if there is no indication.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL COMPLETE FORM TO:  
Baton Rouge Audubon Society; PO Box 67016; Baton Rouge, LA 70896