

The **BARRED OWL**

Newsletter of the Baton Rouge Audubon Society

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4th Quarter, 2014

Birds in a Changing Climate

The National Audubon Society's Science Office, led by Dr. Gary Langham, recently released a ground-breaking report illustrating how North America's bird populations will change over the next 70 years in the face of climate change. The punch line is that of 588 species analyzed, 314 will lose more than 50% of their current range by 2080.



Green-tailed Towhees, a western species, were seen all over Louisiana in winter of 2012, presumably due to drought conditions in the west.

Using nearly 50 years of citizen-science gathered Breeding Bird Survey and Christmas Bird Count data, this analysis reveals a startling pattern resulting from predicted temperature and rainfall changes. The models predict that for species like Brown-headed Nuthatch, 95% of its current breeding range will no longer be climatically suitable by 2080. For Brown Pelican, only 42% of its current breeding range will remain suitable by 2080. And 312 other species from Mallards and Wood Ducks to Rufous Hummingbirds and Mississippi Kites, share a similar and alarming story.

Scientists already know that the climate is changing – as the atmosphere warms (this is occurring disproportionately, being more pronounced at the poles), it becomes less stable leading to more extreme weather events, like more frequent and intense flooding or more extreme droughts. Plant and animal populations have some capacity to adjust to changes, but the rate at which different organisms can adjust is not always happening at the same speed. For many birds that have scheduled their migration with the emergence of summer caterpillars, these once predictably programmed events are now more often mistimed. This obviously has cascading implications for the ability of birds to raise their young or to complete their epic migrations.

What can any one of us do to help our birds? As an individual, it can feel pretty overwhelming to tackle the problem of climate change. We can buy more fuel efficient cars and appliances, conserve water, and even encourage our local, state, and federal representatives to pass legislation that will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions or increase opportunities for carbon sequestration. But each one of us can feel pretty small in this big world of 7+ billion people.

However, as collections of individuals passionate about birds, as a community, and as collections of groups working towards the same goal, we can pool resources to make important and substantial differences. This is where engaging your neighbors and colleagues and supporting local Audubon chapters and other conservation organizations can make a difference. A unified voice will help preserve and restore bird habitat and mitigate against and adapting to a changing climate. In addition, participating in citizen science programs, like Christmas Bird Count, or contributing bird watching observations to

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2014 LOS FALL MEETING

**Friday and Saturday, October 24-25
Cameron**

Please pre-register by October 17th

Friday

First Baptist Church in Cameron,
110 School Street off of Marshall Street
(the main street)

6 P.M.-7 P.M. Registration: Light snacks will be provided by the Cameron Parish Tourist Commission.

7 P.M.-8 P.M. Meeting and Evening Program

*New Guinea: Birds,
People and Natural Beauty*

John Sevenairis is a retired chemistry professor from Xavier University in New Orleans who has been an avid traveler/photographer/birder for most of his adult life. Retirement has given John the opportunity to add to his life list of birds, countries, mammals and more. He has traveled literally to the four corners of the world! Join us for a fun filled evening from the wilds of New Guinea. Will there be any photos of Birds of Paradise?

Saturday

7:00 A.M. Field Trip

Meet in the parking lot of the Cameron Motel. Ed Wallace and Marty Floyd will lead a field trip to the Cameron Parish hot spots. Bring lunch, drinks, bug spray and walkie talkies if you have them.

Saturday Evening: First Baptist Church in Cameron, 110 School Street off of Marshall Street (the main street)

6:00 P.M.-6:30 P.M. Registration

6:30 P.M.-7:30 P.M. Dinner- chicken/sausage gumbo dinner, potato salad, bread, dessert

7:30 P.M. Meeting and Evening Program, Election of officers

SATURDAY PROGRAM

*Toucan-driven Seed Dispersal in
Fragmented Costa Rican Rainforest*

Landon Jones is a 6th year PhD student in the Environmental and Evolutionary Biology Program at ULL, advised by Dr. Paul Leberg. He received his BS and MS degrees in Wildlife Conservation at Brigham Young University in Utah, where he got hooked on birds and studied Ring-necked Pheasants. Landon conducted his PhD fieldwork in Costa Rica, where he trapped and tracked two species of toucans to estimate their contribution to seed dispersal in fragmented habitats. Landon enjoys birding and traveling, and has studied and observed birds in North and Central America, the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Cameron Accommodations:

The phone number for the Cameron Motel is 337-775-5442. The Cameron Motel also has sites available for RV campers. Several lunch places are open in Cameron and Johnson Bayou and gas is available. Bring your own breakfast food. Other accommodations can be found in Sulphur or Lake Charles. East Jetty also has camper spaces with hook-ups.

**Please pre-register by October 17th!
Check www.losbird.org
for information and forms.**

Do we have your email address?

Keep up to date with all of Baton Rouge Audubon Society's events and programs by joining our email list. We won't inundate you with email, we promise! Send a request to "President@braudubon.org" and ask to be added to the list!

Also follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/BRAudubon.

BLUEBONNET SWAMP STOMPERS

by Jared Wolfe

"Why do birds leave after breeding?" the inquisitive 13 year old asks during a warm summer day at Bluebonnet Swamp. Instead of feeding them answers, Louisiana Bird Observatory (LABO is a program of Baton Rouge Audubon Society) volunteers help visiting school-aged children think critically about the problem. *"Well, what do most migrant birds eat?"*, we ask. *"Fruit and bugs"* is the reply. *"Right, and are there more fruit and bugs during the summer or winter in Louisiana?"* The student's eyes brighten with the



gratification of having found a piece to their natural history puzzle.

Providing local children these formative experiences in nature with birds is part of LABO's mission. To better fulfill this mission, we partnered with BREC's Swamp Stomper Summer Camp program to provide an in-depth lesson on birds, conservation and science during six Mondays in June and July. Typically 30 to 50 kids participate each day --- LABO volunteers break them up into small groups so each group can receive an in-door presentation, an outdoor banding demonstration and a bird walk through the swamp. This past summer Dr. Crystal Johnson (LSU) began collecting bacteria samples from cloacal swabs and Dr. Scott Duke-Sylvester (ULL) continued collecting bird blood samples for his malaria study, thereby allowing visiting campers to interact and learn from professional research biologists.



This past summer we hosted over 250 swamp stompers. Each of these participants learned a great deal about what makes birds special and why it is important to protect birds and their habitat. Ultimately, we believe these programs are critical for creating more bird-friendly communities in Louisiana and we look forward to getting more kids excited about birds, nature and science. Special thanks to all the volunteers who have made LABO's outreach a success.

Where does the plastic go?

"EVERY single piece of plastic that has ever been created since the 19th century is still SOMEWHERE on our planet. So if it never goes away, where does it go?"

This month's Baton Rouge Audubon program will be a bit different. We will feature a screening of the movie "Plastic Paradise". A description of the movie from the website (plasticparadisemovie.com)

"Thousands of miles away from civilization, Midway Atoll is in one of the most remote places on earth. And yet its become ground zero for The Great Pacific Garbage Patch, syphoning plastics from three distant continents. In this independent documentary film, journalist/filmmaker Angela Sun travels on a

personal journey of discovery to uncover this mysterious phenomenon. Along the way she meets scientists, researchers, influencers, and volunteers who shed light on the effects of our rabid plastic consumption and learns the problem is more insidious than we could have ever imagined."

We will also feature a local tie-in by hearing from speakers from PaddleBR, a local grassroots organization that has been working tirelessly to clean up and improve waterways around Baton Rouge, focusing particularly on Bayou Fountain and Bayou Manchac.

The program will start at 6:30 pm on Thursday, Oct. 23. Please RSVP by sending an email to (crystal.johnson.lsu@gmail.com) so that we

can add your name to the Bluebonnet Swamp guest list. Admission is free for Baton Rouge Audubon members, \$3.00 for non-members.

Please note that the Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center's Education Center is the newly renovated building just to the south (the left) of the Nature Center. Parking is accessible by turning west onto North Glenstone Place; the Education Center will be straight ahead on the right as the street curves.

This should be a fascinating program and we hope to see everyone there!

Baton Rouge Audubon Society



Go Birding With J.J. Audubon!

On Friday, November 14, the West Baton Rouge Museum will host a very special speaker, Mr. John James Audubon himself! Or at least the closest thing we're likely to see to the grand master! Storyteller Brian "Fox" Ellis plays Audubon and will enchant you with stories of his travels and travails as he perfected his art.

In his second local performance on Saturday, November 15th at Audubon State Historic Site at Oakley Plantation in St. Francisville, Fox Ellis will talk about bird behavior, focusing on the birds you are most likely to see when you go birding in

Louisiana. Accompany Ellis on a bird walk with lessons on field ecology, the scientific method, art history, and bird migration and discuss the natural history of birds in our area.

Storyteller Brian "Fox" Ellis portrays Audubon in these entertaining and meticulously researched monologues drawing from Audubon's journals, essays, and letters to his friends and colleagues. Fox Ellis has performed as Audubon in museums, nature centers, schools and libraries across the United States, including Audubon's home in Henderson, Kentucky.

The times for these events have not been announced as of this writing. Please visit the West Baton Rouge Museum's website www.westbatonrougemuseum.org or call 225-336-2422 or Toll Free 1-888-881-6811 for more information. All programs are free and open to the general public.

These programs are supported by On The Road: National Endowment for the Humanities, Atchafalaya National Heritage Area, and Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism.

Report Your Wintering Hummingbirds

Keep your feeders fresh - some hummingbirds winter in Louisiana!



Buff-bellied Hummingbird

Hummingbirds from western states or even Mexico sometimes decide to make LA their winter home. Our most common wintering species is Rufous Hummingbird, but we also see Buff-bellied Hummingbird, Calliope Hummingbird, Black-chinned Hummingbird, and several other species. Even a few Ruby-throated Hummingbirds decide not to migrate farther south.

Report your sighting to Erik Johnson at ejohnson@audubon.org.

Please include:

- Your Name
- Your Address (town only is fine)
- First & Last Observed Dates
- Species
- Age (adult, immature, unknown)
- Sex (male, female, unknown)
- Whether banded, and by whom

Note: Only report Ruby-throated Hummingbirds that stay after November 15.



Rufous Hummingbird

SAVE THE DATE!

Baton Rouge Christmas Bird Count

National Audubon's 115th Christmas Bird Count will take place for the Baton Rouge circle on January 3rd, 2015. If you are interested in participating, please contact our Count Compiler Dan Mooney (birds@birdnerds.com) You will be assigned to a team and each team will have a territory within the count circle. All are welcome -- even if you're not an experienced birder you can help by spotting birds. It's a great way to learn! At the end of the count day, we will gather to tabulate totals. Location to be determined. If you're new to the Christmas Bird Count and wish to learn more, visit the National Audubon webpage at <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>. You can also view results from previous Baton Rouge CBC's by following the link on that page.

See you all on January 3rd!



BIRDS AND WINDOWS DON'T MIX HOW TO PREVENT WINDOW STRIKES

by Erik Johnson

Thud! You may know the sound a bird makes when it hits your window. Sadly, this happens all too frequently, and it is thought to be a substantial source of mortality especially for migratory birds. One Prothonotary Warbler the Louisiana Bird Observatory banded as a nestling this year at Bluebonnet Swamp has already been the casualty of a window strike in August, just as it was beginning its migration south. As fall migration picks up over the next several months, we're back into window strike season.

Essentially there are two parallel and related problems that contribute to "bird strikes". First, is the issue of glass being clear or reflective. Birds did not evolve with this magic material in nature, so they fly into glass not knowing it's there. Second, is the issue of lighting. Migrating birds

in particular, somewhat like moths (but for different physiological reasons), are attracted to bright lights which disrupts their ability to navigate. This either steers them towards buildings or towers such that they crash into them (again with glass and reflective surfaces being an issue), or they circle around the lighted object until they become exhausted. Just imagine what it can take for a bird to navigate over a metropolitan city, like Baton Rouge or New Orleans.

It is one thing for us to recognize the problem, but what can we do about this? The good thing is that these threats can be reduced, but will require action by individuals and industry alike.

Bird conservation organizations, such as the National Audubon Society and the American Bird Conservancy, are working to reverse this threat. Lights Out programs have begun to encourage building managers in large cities to turn building and skyscraper lights off at night during migration. This saves in energy costs, and the reduced lighting isn't as disorienting for a migrating bird.

For the homeowner, there are many possible solutions that range from adding decals on glass, to landscaping your yard and decorating your home to reduce glass reflections. You can even buy special bird-safe glass for windows now that has UV patterns embedded, which humans cannot see, but birds can.

In the meantime, you may come across a window strike either in your yard or in your community.

What do you do?

- If the bird is alive (but stunned) and uninjured, put it in a quiet dark place (like a box with a cloth over it) outdoors until it revives and flies off.
- If the bird is injured, call a local rehabilitation facility, a list of which can be found on the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries website.
- If the bird has expired, you can donate it to the Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Sciences where the bird can be saved for scientific study. Put the bird in a freezer bag along with some basic data (date; location; bill, leg, and eye color; your name) and keep it on ice or in the freezer until you can deliver it or have someone deliver it on your behalf. If the bird happens to have a band, report the number to the Bird Banding Laboratory.

For more information about how you can prevent bird strikes in your home and in your community, please visit the following websites to get started.

<http://bird-friendly.audubon.org/>

friendlybuildings

<http://www.flap.org/bird-safe-buildings.php>

<http://collisions.abcbirds.org/>

Climate Change

(Continued from page 1)

eBird will help scientists track changes in bird populations in real time.

Baton Rouge Audubon Society, through its partnerships with local universities and other conservation organizations, is poised to protect and enhance local habitats that will benefit birds. Working together to protect and enhance habitat will reduce risks and increase bird populations today, and your voice and involvement is critical in ensuring that we do not face a silent future.

For more information about Audubon's climate science, please visit <http://climate.audubon.org>.

Erik I. Johnson
Vice President,
Baton Rouge Audubon Society



Baton Rouge Audubon Society



Baton Rouge Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Baton Rouge Audubon Society

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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*.

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.

If you would prefer to receive the newsletter in electronic form only rather than a printed version, please email our Membership chair and let her know! Membership@braudubon.org

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.

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.)
- Electronic version **only** of newsletter (do not mail)

Name: _____ Ph: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

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